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Here Now:

Latinx Youth Language Brokers
and the Politics and Possibilities of Ultratranslation

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics

by

Audrey N. Lopez

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September 2020

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September 2020

Here Now:
Latinx Youth Language Brokers
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A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

I'm going to keep it simple: I could not have done this without the constant love, support, guidance, and patience of my family, friends, and academic committee. I am incredibly grateful for your ultrapresence each step of the way, and I remain honored and inspired by your generosity and kindness.

Thank you.

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- Lopez, Audrey. 2018. " 'Without me, that wouldn't be possible': Latinx Peer Discussions of Language Brokering." In *Feeling It: Language, Race, and Affect in Latinx Youth Learning*, edited by Mary Bucholtz, D. Inés Casillas, and Jin Sook Lee, 187-211. New York: Routledge, 2018.
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ABSTRACT

Here Now:

Latinx Youth Language Brokers
and the Possibilities and Politics of Ultratranslation

Audrey N. Lopez

Begun as the documentation of a student interpreters program at a Southern California high school, this dissertation examines the visionary, disruptive, and everyday contributions of Latinx youth interpreters' work as language justice activists through a combination of collaborative research, ethnographically-informed reflection, and artistic engagement. In 2011, despite ongoing processes of erasure and exclusion (Irvine & Gal 2000; Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa 2016), multilingual Latinx youth in Santa Barbara who interpreted for their families started to gain institutional recognition and validation for their linguistic abilities and expertise. Realizing that questions of language access were key to engaging Spanish-speaking Latinx parents in their children's education, a high school bilingual educator began training groups of Latinx students to interpret for their parents at annual Back to School Night events. By valorizing students' full range of language practices and linguistic abilities within school settings, this program demonstrated a "radical practice of belief" in young people of color (Decena 2015) that has been historically and chronically absent from US educational contexts (Lippi-Green 1997; Rosa & Flores 2017; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2018). In 2016, despite the program's immense popularity with both Latinx

students and parents, the local school district disbanded the student interpreters program in favor of a model that utilized professional interpreters. This dissertation draws upon the anti-racist, anti-colonial framework of "ultratranslation" (Antena Aire 2013a) to examine the life of the program, its meaning and impact for students and parents who participated in it, its cancellation and students' subsequent activism, and its role as a catalyst for recent changes in language access policy in the Santa Barbara Unified School District.

The data analyzed here were generated collaboratively, with and by Latinx student interpreters and their families, over a 15-month period spanning 2016-2017. Three youth participatory action research projects (Camarota & Fine 2008; Camarota 2011) were realized during this time: a collaborative radio show on a local university campus station, video-based activism through student-led interviews with peers and families, and a series of art workshops, studio visits, and interviews with contemporary artists. By analyzing the ways in which students challenged raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit (Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa & Flores 2017) about their work across these various research contexts, my dissertation etches a larger narrative about the history, impact, and significance of the youth interpreters program that has not been documented before. By contextualizing this narrative within scholarship from the fields of linguistic anthropology, critical applied linguistics, and cultural studies, this project opens new avenues for understanding and supporting the contributions Latinx youth language brokers make to broader efforts of sociolinguistic, educational, and racial justice. This research generates urgent new insights for educators, administrators, and scholar-activists interested in thinking and acting with youth language brokers as they skate on the cutting edge of now, wayfinding a collective path towards more just and inclusive realities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Chapter 1: <i>Latinx Youth Language Brokers and the Politics of Ultratranslation</i>	1
II. Chapter 2: <i>DRHS en español: A History of the Bilingual Student Interpreter Program</i>	34
III. Chapter 3: <i>Field as Flow: Engaged Ethnography and Emergent Strategy</i>	79
IV. Interlude: <i>Cruz Ortiz: Art of the Test</i>	131
V. Chapter 4: <i>Tuning In to Bilingual Frequencies: Jamming the Raciolinguistic Status Quo</i>	138
VI. Chapter 5: <i>Hear, Now: Challenging Institutional Listening</i>	184
VII. Chapter 6: <i>“If You’re Listening”: Sounding Out the Ultrapresent</i>	235
VIII. Chapter 7: <i>Latinx Youth Language Brokers and the Possibilities of Ultratranslation</i>	273
Appendix 1. Transcription Conventions	298
Appendix 2. Video for District	399
References	305

CHAPTER 1

Latinx Youth Language Brokers and the Politics of Ultratranslation

Ultratranslation is a kind of activism or (dys)organizing: the translations we work on are not primed for comfortable consumption.

We experience ultratranslation as a catalyst for changes in awareness, syntax, and our capacity to reimagine the world.

Ultratranslation as catalytic.

— From *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation*
by artist activist group Antena Aire, 2013a, p.4

1. Visionary Work, Invisible Work

Language brokering is an everyday activity for many youth, especially immigrant youth and the children and grandchildren of immigrants, who “use their knowledge of multiple languages to speak, read, write, listen and do things” for others (Orellana 2009:1). These language practices often serve as “funds of education” for entire communities (García 2009a:211), as youth help their families with daily activities of life, from in-person doctor visits to tax document preparation, to school communications and business transactions, to translating social media memes and brokering younger siblings’ homework through Facetime. Youth language brokers and the work they do form part of larger “livelihood strategies” (Shmulyar Gréen & Melander 2018:2) for families going through the political, economic, and social realities of migration (Orellana 2009; Bauer 2016; Inghilleri 2016; Shmulyar Gréen & Melander 2018). At stake is not only family survival (Orellana, Dorner, & Pulido 2003; Inghilleri 2016), or only ensuring one’s family makes it to the future, but also family vitality, or making sure the family can thrive there. As a result, youth’s cross-language

work helps “reimagine and rearticulate the worlds we inhabit” (Antena Aire 2013b:6).

Right now, as I write during the “slow time of COVID and the hot time of the streets” (Gray 2020), youth language brokers are in hospital waiting rooms and community clinics across the US, interpreting essential, updated public health information for family members across English, Spanish, Mixtec, and many other languages (Garcia 2020; Simon 2020; Smith 2020). Right now, hundreds of youth language brokers are online, collaboratively translating letters into more than 50 languages in order to initiate critical conversations about the Black Lives Matter movement with their parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, and community elders (@lettersforbl 2020). There are no precedents for these circumstances. There are no guidebooks for this moment, no pre-existing lists of bilingual terminology for the coronavirus and its impact or Trump’s fascist rhetoric and policies. No primers on how to translate our collective way out of the systemic racism that pervades the healthcare system and enables state-sanctioned police violence. Yet youth are here now, doing the work, leading the way.

Youth language brokers regularly make these types of strides towards justice in their own communities. Skating on the cutting edge of now, youth interpreters engage with troubled realities as they take visionary leaps into the unknown, launching futures and new ways forward in the midst of everyday moments. Through their “radical acts of listening, thinking, and speaking” (Antena Aire 2013b:3), youth language brokers enable new forms of subjectivities and possibilities for social relations that reconfigure existing systems and structures of power. The work they do is disruptive, revolutionary, and visionary; it is also everyday, pragmatic, and action-oriented. One present moment at a time, youth language brokers wayfind a collective path towards more just, inclusive, and sustaining realities.

Despite the important and everyday nature of youth language brokers' contributions to society, their work is often devalued, marginalized, or completely erased.¹ Many times, the forces that give rise to the need for youth to serve as language and cultural brokers – neoliberal global capitalism; white supremacy, settler colonialism, racism, and xenophobia; monoglossic, nationalist ideologies of language and language access – are the same forces that perpetuate the invisibility of youth interpreters and the erasure of their abilities and contributions. These complex, overlapping processes lead to a devaluing – conscious or not – of these youth and their language practices by the institutions which tend to benefit the most from their unpaid labor (Heller 2010; García-Sánchez 2018). Such discourses lead to the exclusion of youth and their language practices from the public sphere in ways that negatively impact these young people, their families, and communities, as well as obstruct sociolinguistic, educational, and racial justice.

In 2011, in spite of these widespread processes of erasure and exclusion (Irvine & Gal 2000; Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa 2016b; García Sánchez 2018), multilingual Latinx youth in Santa Barbara who interpret for their families began to gain institutional recognition for their linguistic abilities through a school-based Interpreters Program. The program started as a grassroots effort by students and educators at Dos Rios High School (a pseudonym) to

¹ A note on terminology: Throughout this dissertation, I use the terms youth interpreter and youth language broker interchangeably. Both refer to the multimodal work youth do in these roles, which includes but is not limited to translation, interpretation, brokering, mediation, writing, reading, and negotiation. In doing so, I move away from long-standing conceptions of written translation and oral or signed interpretation as binary, bounded, and mutually-exclusive practices within professional contexts, such as conference interpreting or literary translation. Instead, I understand translation as integral to the work of language brokers, especially youth language brokers, who are often reading and writing documents across multiple media for others as part of their work. While the term child language broker is common in the literature, the youth I worked with here were 16 to 20 years old, and, though many of them brokered as children, I did not feel it was the term that best represented them. I also use the term youth to forge explicit connections between youth language brokers and recent youth-led organizing, activism, and social justice movements. Finally, I avoid terminology such as emerging adult and emerging learner among others, that suggest youth are not yet complex, full humans in the present moment. I use the term professional interpreter to refer to anyone who has had any type of credentialed training in interpretation and/or translation.

address the persistent marginalization and low attendance of Latinx parents at Back to School Night events. Realizing that providing language access was key to engaging Spanish-speaking parents in their children's education, the group created a community service-based model which recruited and trained Latinx students to volunteer as interpreters for multilingual parents at these events. In this way, the interpreters program offered Latinx students an institutionally-sanctioned, highly visible opportunity to use their language skills to help parents – and the larger Latinx community – access the school in new and meaningful ways. The program was so successful in increasing Latinx family engagement that the model eventually spread to two other public high schools in the same school district.

By valorizing Latinx students' wide range of language practices within school settings, this program demonstrated a “radical practice of belief in young people” (Decena 2015) and “presumed competence” in the linguistic abilities of youth of color (Leonardo & Broderick 2011:2223; Martínez & Mejia 2019). Such affirming, culturally-sustaining approaches for Latinx youth and their languages are historically and chronically absent from US public educational contexts (Paris & Alim 2014; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2018; Passos deNicolo et al. 2017; Orellana & García-Sánchez 2019), where racializing discourses of deficit are much more common (Zentella 1997; Urciuoli 1996; Valdés 2003; Zentella 2007; Lippi-Green 2012; Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa & Flores 2017; Bucholtz, Casillas & Lee 2018; Rosa 2019). Indeed, as the school district gradually became aware of the need to provide language access services to non-English-speaking parents, questions arose regarding the appropriateness of the schools' student-based model of language access. In 2016, despite the program's immense popularity with both Latinx students and Spanish-speaking parents, the local school district disbanded the Student Interpreters Program in order to shift to a model

utilizing professional interpreters.

This dissertation explores the life of this program, its meaning and impact for Latinx students and parents who participated in it, its cancellation and students' subsequent response, and its role as a catalyst for recent changes in language access policy in the Santa Barbara Unified School District. Situated at the intersection of language ideologies about Latinx youth language brokering and institutional language access policy, this research is uniquely positioned to produce new insights about the ways in which youth challenge dominant views of their language practices and abilities as language brokers, as well as how scholars, educators, and activists can better think and act with youth in their visionary and everyday efforts to advance justice in their communities.

2. Literature Review

The simultaneous emergence and invisibility of youth brokers as a social phenomenon can be viewed as an outcome of several contemporary factors, including neoliberalism, monoglossic, racist educational and language access policies, and ideologies of interpretation. As Reynolds and Orellana (2009:215) argue, youth language brokering is a “creative response to the neoliberal order that holds the individual immigrant (and by extension, individual families) responsible for self-representation within civil and state social institutions.”

Under modern-day neoliberal regimes of racialized global capitalism (Harvey 2005; Melamed 2011, 2015), linguistic skills and corresponding affective labor are increasingly commodified and valued as important parts of final products and job performance, yet not readily recognized as forms of labor in their own right and therefore not compensated

(Hochschild 1983; Cameron 2000; Heller 2010; Urciuoli & LaDousa 2013; Shankar & Cavanaugh 2013). This dynamic is exacerbated for community interpretation and translation practices, which are often viewed as “natural” abilities of bilingual community members (Urciuoli & LaDousa 2013; Harris 1977). Such ideologies perpetuate the long-standing devaluation of labor and care work done both by and for immigrant communities and communities of color.

In contemporary US contexts, Latinx youth language brokers frequently interpret in school settings and events, playing key roles in helping their multilingual families negotiate US educational institutions, especially given English-only education policies in California (Proposition 227), Arizona (Proposition 203), and other states. Such policies are underpinned by monoglossic, white-supremacist ideologies that simultaneously mark and marginalize Spanish and other languages beyond English, and by extension, their speakers (García 2009; Urciuoli 1996; Lippi-Green 2012; Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa & Flores 2017). As a result, language diversity is often positioned as a “language barrier” that necessitates the need for outside interpretation and translation (Reynolds & Orellana 2009:215).

For Latinx youth who interpret at home, at school, and in their communities, this means they and their work occupy a triply invisible space, an outcome of multiple processes of erasure. First, practices involving these languages, such as interpretation and translation, are pushed to the social, spatial, temporal, and financial peripheries of public spaces, events, and activities (Lippi-Green 2012; Fuller 2013). Second, historically, Western, Eurocentric models and theories of translation and interpretation have rendered the agency of the interpreter invisible, idealizing the translator’s role as a “voiceless” or “neutral” conduit for others’ voices (Reddy 1979; Venuti 1995; Wadensjö 1998). These models have focused on

“loyalty” and “fidelity” to the original text or speech (Gal 2015), qualities that have been regarded as top priorities for interpreters and translators, along with a professional standard centered around the affective performance of impartiality and neutrality (Koskinen 2020). Finally, in US public schools, youth of color are not usually viewed as agents, experts, or leaders in the present (Bucholtz et al. 2017), roles which are often temporally deferred to an amorphous and intangible “future” (García Canclini 2008; De los Angeles Torres, Rizzini, & Del Río 2013). In particular, widely-circulating racialized discourses of deficit about the linguistic practices and abilities of Latinx youth position them as “languageless” – not fluent in either English or Spanish in the current moment (Rosa 2016a; Rosa 2019).

In the rare occurrences in which Latinx youth are recognized in their roles as language brokers – whether by scholars, the news media, or the general public – their work tends to be pathologized, viewed as non-normative, and seen as potentially harmful to their psychosocial well-being, identity development, and family relationships (Buriel et al. 2006; Morales & Hansen 2005; Tse 1996). News media frequently overreports the negative aspects of children’s experience as brokers (Franklin 2002; Orellana 2009; García-Sánchez 2018), depictions which can prompt adults to react with “a mixture of pity and concern” (García-Sánchez 2018:171) for youth who are seen as taking on “inappropriate” levels of responsibility and power (although see Smith 2020 for an excellent exception).² This concern develops from Western, typically white, conceptions of youth and childhood that view youth as vulnerable and as developmentally unable to exercise the agency, autonomy, maturity, and socioemotional expertise necessary to successfully navigate the complex

² In her article for a Santa Barbara newspaper about Latinx and Indigenous Mexican youth language brokers interpreting public health information during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Smith portrays these young people as “heroes” (Smith 2020).

interactions that language brokering encompasses (Orellana 2009; García Sánchez 2018).

Thus, Latinx youth language brokers and their linguistic practices are sidelined by a tangle of intersecting forces and ideologies. These complex, intertwined practices of erasure and exclusion restrict youth interpreters – and by extension, their families and communities – from full and equitable participation in their broader social, political, and cultural worlds.

Over the past 30 years, a growing body of scholarship in educational and linguistic anthropology has begun to recognize and explore youths' work as language brokers. A major objective of research on youth language brokering within these fields has been to shift the way this practice is viewed and understood within the academy and K-12 educational settings, as well as by the broader public (Tse 1995; Valdés 2003; Orellana 2009; Reynolds & Orellana 2009, 2015). This work utilizes ethnographic methods, interactional video data, and participant-observation to gain deep insight into the actual, as opposed to reported, practices of language brokering and to challenge the ways in which researchers, educators, administrators, and institutions understand and position the youth who do this work (Valdés 2003; Orellana 2009). This scholarship aims to counter processes of erasure and ideologies of deficit by highlighting the linguistic, cultural, and interactional expertise employed by Latinx and other youth language brokers as they work with their families across a variety of commercial, institutional, home, and educational settings (Valdés 2003; Orellana 2009; Alvarez 2014; Kwon 2015; Reynolds & Orellana 2014; Wheeler 2016; Alvarez 2017; Lopez 2017). Such work has led to conceptualizing child language brokering work as civic engagement (Orellana 2009), civic participation (Bauer 2010), and an interactional practice of care (García-Sánchez 2018).

One key contribution to this area of study is the groundbreaking book, *Expanding*

Definitions of Giftedness: The Case of Youth Interpreters from Immigrant Communities

(2003), in which Guadalupe Valdés shifts the academic conversation around language brokers. In contrast to earlier deficit-based views, Valdés explores youth interpreters' work through an asset-based lens, carefully analyzing interactions and interviews to highlight the skills of youth language brokers as similar to those of students who have been classified as exceptionally “gifted,” while critiquing the institutional label itself. Based on this work, Valdés collaborated with other scholars to produce guidelines for high school curricula for student language brokers interested in developing and understanding their skills more fully (Angelelli, Enright, & Valdés 2002).

Along similar lines, Marjorie Orellana’s extensive body of work (Orellana 2009, Eksner & Orellana 2012; Orellana & García 2014; Reynolds & Orellana 2015, Orellana 2017) is based on ethnographic research, participant-observation, and interviews with youth language brokers, as well as interactional data recorded by parents and students themselves. By highlighting collaborative efforts between parents and youth brokers, this work challenges discourses of “parentification ” and “role-reversal” common to views of youth brokering shaped by Western ideologies of a “normative,” “care-free” childhood. Orellana and Reynolds (2015) have also explored students’ understandings of their own and others’ roles in brokering through short skits in which they create and perform characters in a given interpreting interaction. This methodology encourages students to engage in creative meaning-making processes that reveal different dimensions of how they understand their experiences beyond interviews and interactions. In addition, Orellana’s methods extend into engaged ethnography, as she has collaborated with other scholars and her graduate students to develop teaching curricula and educational resources related to youth language brokering

(Orellana, Martínez, & D'warte 2010).

Drawing upon Valdés' and Orellana's foundational contributions, research has continued to explore and emphasize youth language brokers' linguistic, cultural, interactional, and affective expertise across a variety of additional contexts and settings. Such studies range from detailed analyses of youth translanguaging homework for younger siblings and parents (Alvarez 2014, 2017), to live interpretation at bilingual church services (Wheeler 2016), to the role of socioeconomic class in Korean-American youth's experiences of brokering (Kwon 2015), to research that provides opportunities for Latinx students to reflect on their affective experiences of brokering through classroom-based peer discussions (Lopez 2017). Most previous research on youth interpreters focuses on individuals' identity and development (Orellana 2017) and takes place outside of educational programs or organizations designed specifically for them (Seak Sandler 2016). Youth brokering has not generally been studied within contexts where youth have been able to "choose" whether they want to interpret or not. Instead, it is more common to discuss and research contexts in which youth "had to" translate (Reynolds & Orellana 2009:221). Yet despite three decades of research on language brokering, youth brokers themselves are still rarely heard as expert, agentive communicators. Their myriad contributions continue to go unrecognized, and the language practices they use remain marginalized, devalued and/or pathologized by various academic fields and educational institutions (Valdés 2003; Orellana 2009; Antonini 2016; Orellana 2017; García-Sánchez 2018).

3. Bridging The Gap

The majority of existing research has challenged discourses of deficit about youth language brokering by highlighting the complexity of youth's linguistic and cultural

practices. Yet these additive, asset-based approaches to youth's language skills fail to account for the ways in which neoliberal, colonial frameworks might affect institutional perceptions of youth's language practices and how these frameworks might constrain youth language brokers and their agency. In addition, youth language brokers have generally been treated as separate from, or somehow not operating in dialogue with, these larger ideologies about their work. Little research exists on how Latinx youth themselves understand, engage with, and challenge raciolinguistic ideologies and discourses of deficit connected to their work as language brokers.

Given the utmost importance of youth brokers' contributions to their families, communities, and larger society, in addition to the fact that many US public schools have growing majority populations of Latinx and first- and second-generation immigrant students who have experience as language brokers (Antonini 2016; Orellana 2017), there is a clear, urgent need to apply new frameworks and approaches in order to better challenge racialized deficit-based perceptions of youth language brokers' work and to learn how we can more fully accompany (Tomlinson & Lipsitz 2013; Bucholtz et al. 2016) youth through collaborative action towards anti-racist transformation. This dissertation addresses that gap by bringing an interdisciplinary framework to focus on youth language brokers in an ideologically-saturated institutional context. Specifically, my dissertation addresses the following broad research question(s):

- How do Latinx youth language brokers experience and respond to different models of language access policies at their school, as well as changes in these policies?
- How are Latinx youth language brokers' linguistic practices taken up and interpreted by various institutional listening subjects?

- How do Latinx youth understand and challenge raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit about their language practices and their work as interpreters?
- How can educators, administrators, scholars, and activists learn from, think with, care with, and act with young people and their skills towards more just, inclusive, and expansive realities?

In the following section, I describe the interdisciplinary theoretical framework I use to investigate these questions. By bringing together raciolinguistic perspectives from linguistic anthropology and critical applied linguistics (Rosa & Flores 2017), recent scholarship on race, power, and listening from cultural studies (Stoeber 2016), and an anti-racist, anti-assimilationist approach to translation from the realm of contemporary socially-engaged art (Antena Aire 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d), this dissertation generates new insights on these questions.

4. Theoretical Framework



Figure 1.6: *Antena Aire* (Jen Hofer & John Pluecker), *Sumasaiyo / 敬上 / Atentamente*, 2016. Installation view at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, March 14 – May 29, 2016. Photo: Brian Forrest.

—Spanish-speaking viewers walk by 10-foot-tall brightly-colored pop art panels designed by artist group Antena Aire on display at the University of California Los Angeles’ Hammer Museum. They chuckle as they read, “Esto no significa esto en otro idioma,” positioned below lines of Tagalog and Mandarin text that the viewers imagine might, or might not, hold a similar message. Monolingual English-speaking visitors are left without many clues to decipher the work, instead having to ponder the color, form, and typography of the pieces (Antena Aire, *Sumasaiyo / 敬上 / Atentamente*, 2016).



Figure 1.7: Cog•nate Collective, *Otro Mundo Nos Espera*, 2016. A recent iteration of *Dialogue in Transit*, 2014 – ongoing. Tijuana, MX and San Diego, CA. Photo: Cog•nate Collective.

–Artist group Cog•nate Collective uses a hyper-local pirated frequency to host and transmit a participatory radio show in Spanish and English from an old station wagon while waiting in line to cross the Tijuana-San Diego border. In this way, they activate a sonic space for bilingual ears to listen, share, and respond to everyday stories of border affect, tuning in to how and what people are feeling during the collective act of crossing (Cog•nate Collective, *Dialogue in Transit*, 2014 - ongoing).



Figures 1.8-1.9: Jens Haaning, *Turkish Jokes*, 1994. Loudspeaker installation, 41 meter waterproof outdoor loudspeaker cable and fittings. Photos: Jens Haaning via Mutual Art.

–Artist Jens Haaning broadcasts funny stories in Turkish by a Turkish comedian through a loudspeaker he installs in a Copenhagen public square (*Turkish Jones*, 1994). A community of immigrants temporarily forms in relation to the work itself, brought together in collective laughter that momentarily challenges their exile situation (Bourriaud 1998:17).

Each artistic intervention described here creates a collective, subversive listening public (Lacey 2013) that temporarily upsets the dominant aural order, sounding out what cultural studies scholar Jennifer Stoever (2016:1) has termed “the sonic color line,” a form of sonic segregation via sound that echoes through America’s (and Europe’s) white public spaces (Hill 1998). These spaces are typically structured by the preferences of what Stoever figures as “the listening ear” (2016:1) and what linguistic anthropologists Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores (2015) have theorized as “the white listening subject.” By engaging marginalized communities in acts of collective listening, these artists’ projects render whiteness audible while simultaneously “amplifying the sounds it has masked” (Stoever 2016:274). Crucially, though, these projects do not only aim to create awareness around such

inequities. By centering communities typically racialized and marginalized by white sonic space, each project momentarily transforms the existing social order, creating new speaking and listening subjectivities that upend existing power relations, albeit in fleeting, ephemeral ways. These transitory resonances of alternative, more inclusive futures play important roles in envisioning, inspiring, and informing longer-term processes of social action, activism, and change in the present (Muñoz 2009; Halberstam 2011; Gopinath 2018).

I share these vignettes as they illustrate the central role of the white listening subject in relation to the formation of language, race, and power, a central focus of this dissertation. Yet they also offer examples of “practices of resistant listening” (Stoever 2016:69) that challenge the white listening subject and the raciolinguistic status quo. In the following sections, I outline Flores and Rosa’s foundational work on raciolinguistic ideologies along with Stoever’s (2016) robust conceptualization of “the sonic color line” and racialized listening practices. I then discuss the concept of “ultratranslation,” a subversive take on interpretation and translation developed by contemporary artist activist group Antena Aire (2013a). By integrating these three perspectives, I create an innovative framework for analyzing how the Latinx youth brokers in this study made audible – and ultimately disrupted – the white listening subject’s “propensity for the misrecognition, mishearing, and silencing” (Stoever 2016:75) of their language practices.

Raciolinguistic Ideologies

Recent scholarship on raciolinguistic ideologies opens up new possibilities to investigate how racialized discourses of deficit are constructed and perpetuated, as well as how these ideologies and resulting practices of exclusion may be challenged. Specifically,

Jonathan Rosa's and Nelson Flores' generative work from a raciolinguistic perspective over the past decade (Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa 2016a, Rosa 2016b; Rosa & Flores 2017; Flores et al. 2018, Flores 2019; Rosa 2019; Rosa & Flores 2019; Flores 2020) has inspired a growing body of scholarship that examines and challenges the ways in which language and race are co-naturalized and co-constructed in the aftermath of European colonization, as well as the negative effects of this process for racialized communities and their languages (Hernández 2017; Subtirelu 2017; Subtirelu et al. 2019).

Rosa and Flores' work starts from the crucial observation that both additive and subtractive approaches to the language practices of racialized youth are premised on "modifying the behaviors of racialized populations in ways that obscure how white supremacy structures these populations' experiences and societal positionalities" (2017:639). Thus, the authors argue for a shift away from attempts to change or "fix" the language practices of racialized youth. Instead, they propose that any anti-racist transformation within schools must begin by dismantling the hierarchies and ideological processes behind how youth are heard by the white listening subject. This perspective lies in stark contrast to previous "appropriateness-based" approaches in linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, educational anthropology, and applied linguistics, which aimed to "affirm the language practices of racialized populations while providing them with access to dominant ways of using language" (Flores & Rosa 2015:19). In this dissertation, I take up two of the authors' concepts, the white institutional listening subject (Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa & Flores 2017; Flores 2018) and raciolinguistic chronotopes (Rosa 2016b; Flores et al. 2018; Flores & Rosa 2019) to help illuminate the processes by which ideologies of deficit racialize and exclude Latinx youth language brokers and their linguistic practices.

White Listening Subject & Racialized Speaking Subjects

Though often theorized in linguistics as “natural” processes of auditory perception, the acts of hearing and listening are always situated, socioculturally mediated practices. In her work on the role of the Japanese male listening subject in producing a potent modern language ideology of Japanese “women’s language,” Miyako Inoue notes, “The practice of hearing and seeing, and the subject positions of listener and observer, are as socially constructed and historically emergent as are other corporeal sites and practices of subject formation, such as the body, sex, gender, race, and nationality” (2003:157). Flores and Rosa build upon Inoue’s concept of the listening subject, investigating how racialized speakers’ practices are “taken up and interpreted by the white listening subject” in ways that produce “competent” and “incompetent” speakers and governable subjects (2015:167). For the white listening subject, a “competent” plurilingual speaker is one who conforms to idealized (and impossible) monoglossic standards in both languages, and one who also keeps those languages neatly sorted into separate boxes, to be employed only within the confines of spaces and times marked “appropriate” by hegemonic institutions. However, as the authors note, the white listening subject hears linguistic deficiency in the language of racialized speaking subjects “even when they engage in language practices that would be deemed normative were they produced by a white speaking subject” (Flores & Rosa 2015:157). In other words, the white listening subject continues to hear racialized communities and their languages as deficient, no matter the context. The linguistic practices of racialized speakers are “devalued not because they fail to meet a particular linguistic standard but because they are spoken by racialized bodies and thus heard as illegitimate by the white listening subject” (2017:161).

Flores and Rosa’s concept of the white listening subject has begun to gain circulation among educators and scholars interested in engaging critical heteroglossic views of language as part of anti-racist and decolonial pedagogical approaches. Below, I include screenshots of Twitter conversations and Tweets between educators, researchers, and scholars as they “sound out” (Stoever 2016:274) the listening practices of the white listening subject in order to provide a clear sense of how the white listening subject “hears” deficit.³ The raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit underlying the hearing practices of the white listening subject hide, lurk, and (re)surface under many labels, from discussions of which languages are “inappropriate/appropriate” for youth to use in educational contexts (Figure 1a), to the labels used to “authenticate” certain forms of language (Figure 1b), to what languages and speakers are heard as “civil” (Figure 1c), to hearing Spanish and/or incomprehensibility even when English is being spoken or sung (Figure 1d). Importantly, these hearing practices extend beyond English. From the position of the white listening subject, racialized speakers should conform to the “educated,” monoglossic, idealized, and mythical norms of “standard” language (Lippi-Green 2011), whether that is Standard English, Standard Spanish, or the “educated” standard of any other language (Figure 1e).

³ I found these publicly-available Tweets by doing a Twitter search for the terms and hashtags “white listening subject” and “raciolx,” an abbreviation of the term raciolinguistics used by scholar Nelson Flores on social media.

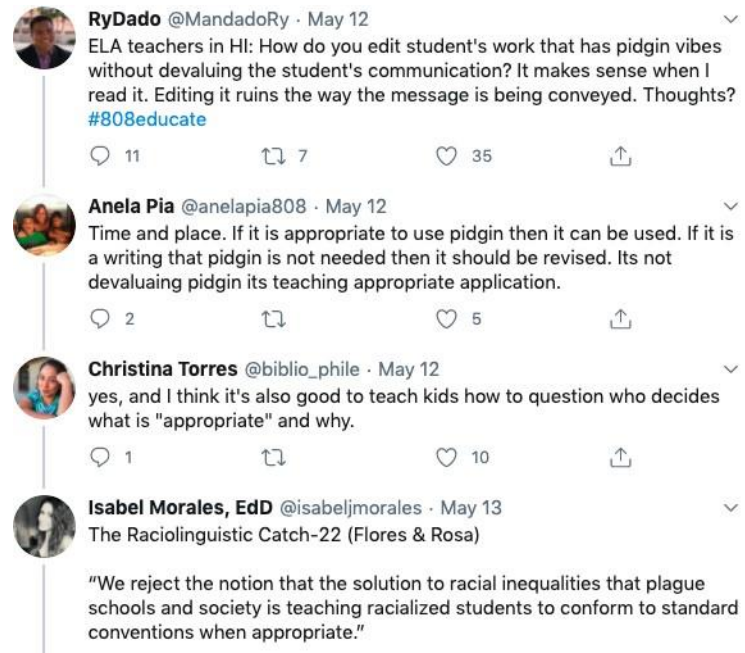


Figure 1a. A Twitter conversation between educators about “appropriateness-based” discourses.



Figure 1b. Educational scholar Christine Mallinson citing an idea presented by scholar Guadalupe Valdés at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.



Figure 1c. Scholar Nelson Flores calling out the white listening subject at work in a New York Times article about an opinion written by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.



Figure 1d. Scholar Nelson Flores identified ideologies of the white listening subject in Twitter responses to the 2020 Super Bowl Halftime show, featuring performances (mostly in English) by Jennifer Lopez and Shakira.



Figure 1e. Twitter user @FunkyMaestro identified ideologies of the white listening subject in negative commentary and discriminatory practices towards racialized and stigmatized varieties of Spanish.

Flores & Rosa (2015) underscore the ideological underpinnings of the white listening subject, defining it as a “historically-situated mode of perception, rather than connecting it to any one person or biographical individual” (151). As they point out, whiteness is often animated through “nonhuman entities such as technologies and institutions infused with raciolinguistic ideologies that endow them with the capacity to act as perceiving subjects” (Rosa & Flores 2017:630). Thus, the white listening subject and its racializing listening ear can take the form of institutions, assessments, and policies. Each of these can function as powerful perceiving subjects and gatekeepers, classifying language in ways that hold profound impacts and material effects for racialized populations. In this dissertation, I understand the public high school and school district where I carried out my research as white, institutional listening subjects.

Raciolinguistic Chronotopes & Institutional Time

If institutions have ears, they also have watches. Institutional listening happens on, in, and through institutional time. And time – ways of talking about time, ways of languaging time – is a critical dimension of how racialized speaking subjects are produced, represented, and excluded. Jonathan Rosa’s (2016b) raciolinguistic retake on the concepts of chronotope (Bakhtin 1981) and social tense (Povinelli 2011) help tease out how time and temporality organize raciolinguistic representations and practices. Chronotopes are ways in which space and time are discursively constructed in connection to models of personhood (Silverstein 2005; Agha 2007; Wortham et al. 2009). These space-time constructions in turn are structured by forms of “social tense” (Povinelli 2011), or ways of talking about time in relation to power. Social tenses are discourses that legitimize current inequalities, and

provide justification for disregard and/or harm to certain populations by linking them in relation to instances of past, present, or future inclusion (Povinelli 2011; Rosa 2016b). Somewhat unsurprisingly, raciolinguistic chronotopes work differently for racialized speakers than for white speakers. In his analysis of mainstream media representations of Spanish in the United States, Rosa demonstrates how Spanish is simultaneously portrayed as part of a successful, global future for white speakers, yet as a socially-limiting past that US Latinxs must, and can, overcome in order to achieve success as neoliberal, English-speaking American subjects. These competing raciolinguistic ideologies form a social tense of exclusion for US Latinx that justifies both their present-day and continued marginalization through their relegation to an ever-imagined, never-quite-arriving future. In this way, Latinx inclusion in a hypothetical future justifies their exclusion from equitable participation in the present moment – they can never fully stake a claim to the here and now.

Similarly, in his ethnography of Latinx students in a Chicago high school, Rosa found that even the label *bilingual* was sometimes used from a deficit perspective by educators and administrators in reference to students who were seen as not “fluent” or “proficient” in either Spanish or English. This stance creates a subjectivity of “languagelessness” for Latinx youth (Rosa 2019), whose linguistic abilities are heard as “out of time” by the institution – not competent in either English or Spanish in the present moment. Ultimately, Rosa understands this bi-directional exclusion as a raciolinguistic chronotope of white anxiety – ways of talking about time that help manage white anxieties by regimenting racialized bodies and languages in time and space within contemporary and future US landscapes.

Impacts on Latinx Students

Both of these ideologies – the raciolinguistic chronotope of anxiety and the social tense of exclusion – have material impacts for Latinx youth and their language practices. The chronotopic exclusion that Rosa describes is compounded for Latinx youth and other racialized students whose language abilities are often positioned as not yet proficient within the white, chrononormative time and space of US public schools (Hill 1998; Halberstam 2005; Rosa 2016a; Rosa 2019; Springgay & Truman 2019). The institutional time of schools is progress time, test time, capitalism time, neoliberal time, straight time: “Education and school systems are marked with chronological linear time, from bell systems marking distinct periods of time transitioning into the next class period, to developmental narratives that seamlessly arc from childhood to adulthood” (Springgay & Truman 2019:1). Among other dominant ideologies such as straightness, cisness, and ablebodiness, chrononormative time is structured by whiteness: “Whiteness and a particular notion of humanism becomes the standard marker of time [...] which functions to create a sense of belonging, relating, and evolving that are equated with narratives of progress and success” (Springgay & Truman 2019:10).

Students who don't neatly meet the white-middle class expectations of this model find themselves, and their languages, policed and excluded in a variety of ways (Zarate 2018). Labels such as English Language Learners (ELLs), English as a Second Language (ESL) students, and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students categorize youth and their parents/guardians as “less than fluent” in Standard English, without regard for their other language abilities. Such labels can structurally affect years of a student's school experience, requiring them to take additional English classes instead of electives such as music, art, or

theater, until they are “reclassified” into mainstream courses. Finally, even in liberal multicultural educational initiatives which seemingly embrace Spanish, such as dual language immersion programs and state seals of biliteracy, the linguistic abilities of Latinx students are valued less than those of their white peers, leading to measurably lower academic outcomes and achievement for Latinx students versus their white counterparts (Hernandez 2017; Subtirelu et al. 2019; Schwedhelm & King 2020). These hegemonic, monoglossic language ideologies and the racism that motivates them are often internalized by Latinx students, resulting in negative impacts such as linguistic insecurity and shame (Labov 1966, 1972; Zentella 1997, 2007), internalized racism (Ngũgĩ 1986), silencing (Aparicio 1998), and affective pain and embarrassment (Flores 2019). These affects and effects can lead to further language attrition and language loss, as students may not feel comfortable or supported in practicing, learning, or studying Spanish or other languages in educational settings, even as college and graduate students, as seen in Nelson Flores’ (2019) excellent, first-hand personal reflection on his own affective experiences with additive and subtractive approaches to bilingualism as a student, teacher, and scholar. Bilingual Latinx youth find themselves racialized and excluded as “matter out of place” and “out of time” with harmful material and affective consequences (Rosa & Flores 2017; Springgay & Truman 2019).

Subversive Speaking, Resistant Listening

Rosa and Flores identify several possibilities for challenging the white listening subject, from subversive social tenses of inclusion, such as consciously employing language practices that transgress the white supremacist status quo (Flores & Rosa 2015; Rosa 2016b), to the development of alternative listening subject positions from which educators normalize

and valorize racialized students' heteroglossic language practices (Flores et al. 2018; Flores 2020). They identify transgressive language practices in the writings of Chicana lesbian feminist Gloria Anzaldúa as she theorizes the concept of *la frontera*/the borderlands (1987). In this case, Anzaldúa, knowing that “she will be racialized by the white listening subject regardless of how she uses language,” agentively and consciously refuses to use language in ways that conform to the appropriateness-based, dominant standards (Flores & Rosa 2015:168). Rosa locates another strategy of resistance to the white listening subject through a Public Service Announcement's transgressive take on translation, which utilized Spanish subtitles to offer an in-group message that “emphasize[d] rather than erase[d] difference between English and Spanish use” among Latinxs and non-Latinx in order to “draw attention to inequalities in power and positionality” (Rosa 2016b:115).

Flores has focused his work on identifying and developing alternative listening/reading subject positions for institutions and educators that “recognize the complex knowledge students have developed through their lived experiences” (Flores 2020:24). Such alternative institutional listening subjects hear Spanish as an important part of US Latinx youth and communities' pasts, presents, and futures. This temporal expansion of Spanish directly counters the social tenses of exclusion found in raciolinguistic chronotopes of white anxiety. In this way, alternative listening subjects create a raciolinguistic chronotope of resistance (Flores et al. 2018; Flores & Rosa 2019) that hear the language practices of racialized youth in ways that challenge dominant white listening practices. In this dissertation, I utilize the concept of alternative institutional listening subject in my analysis of how the Latinx student interpreters program challenged the raciolinguistic status quo of their school. However, I also propose that we need to expand and theorize new forms of resistance

connected to listening. What kinds of interactional listening practices do alternative listening subjects engage in with Latinx students and their language practices? How might we find resistance to the white listening subject in Latinx students' own agentic practices of listening and hearing?

In her book, *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* (2016), cultural studies scholar Jennifer Stoever offers a historical perspective on how the white "listening ear" used sound to "inform racial ideologies, construct racial identities, and enact racial violence" during slavery, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow (Moriah 2017:354). Building from a wide-ranging, multimedia archive spanning a century (1845-1945) of Black literature, music, and radio drama, Stoever offers a powerful analysis that identifies and makes audible the violent consequences of the white listening ear's racialized listening practices on Black lives. However, Stoever also recognizes possibilities for agentic aural resistance among Black communities, even when under white surveillance. Through analyzing how Black communities, writers, performers, and literary figures engage in agentic "practices of resistant listening" (Stoever 2016:69) to challenge the white listening ear, she contends that listening can form "an important method to access freedom, agency, power, and selfhood" (20). In these ways, Stoever's work forms a complex critique of the structural forms of oppression racist listening practices uphold, while also offering possible ways forward through an ethics of agentic listening (Moriah 2017).

While recognizing that Stoever's analysis and arguments attend to a very different racial, temporal, and sociocultural context, I am interested in mobilizing some of her concepts to help us imagine and expand practices of challenging the white listening subject. In this dissertation, I work from Stoever's situated understanding of listening as a "resistant

and self-making practice” that is “dynamic, historical and cultural [...] an embodied critical sense shaping how and what we think, and an ethical act shaped by our thoughts, beliefs, experiences and ideologies, one both subject to discipline and offering agency” (2016:232). I find resonances with her work by keeping my ear out for ways in which the racialized speakers and communities in my research “decolonize their listening practices from the sonic color line’s hegemony over the airwaves and in everyday life” (2016:275) through practices of resistant listening as well as “community listening,” a way of “listening out to and for one another” (2016:280). In addition, Stover’s approach parallels the agentive, critical forms of listening present in artist and sound studies scholar Andrew Brooks’ (2015) theorization of a queer politics of listening. Brooks observes that a queer listening practice tunes into the sound of the relations [...] Such a listening practice uses the ear as a way of thinking through relations of power; it is a mode of listening attuned to the production, transmission and mutation of the affective tonalities of dominant neoliberal late-capitalist cultures (2015:40). In this dissertation, I draw upon both Stoever’s and Brook’s conceptualizations of critical, agentive forms of listening in my analysis of Latinx students’ resistance to the white listening subject.

In summary, Rosa and Flores underline that anti-racist transformation begins with dismantling the ideological hierarchies that form the white, institutional listening subject, while Stoever ends her book by calling for scholars to “challenge, multiply, and amplify our listening” through agentive, collective, and decolonial practices of resistant listening. By employing both perspectives, I propose we might find new ways of “hearing beyond the narrow lives racialized listening has wrought” (Stoever 2016:280). In the last section of this chapter, I provide an overview of “ultratranslation” and how I understand it in relationship to

this dissertation.

5. *Ultratranslation*

Ultratranslation is an approach to interpretation and translation developed by artist activist group Antena Aire (formerly Antena), led by artists Jen Hofer and John Pluecker. Describing themselves as “a language justice and language experimentation collaborative, focusing on writing, art- and book-making, translating, interpreting, and language justice,” Antena Aire’s hybrid practice integrates applied approaches to language justice with aesthetic explorations of interpretation and translation (Antena Aire 2020).

The applied side of their practice is rooted in the on-the-ground, challenging work of creating functional, multilingual spaces within arts organizations, conferences, and cultural spaces. Their work in this area has been inspired by and developed in dialogue with social justice-based approaches to community interpreting, which see language access as foundational to cultivating larger, anti-racist social justice movements (Johnson 2003; Tijerina 2009; Uliasz 2018). I first came across this applied side of Antena Aire’s work in 2016 as I was researching language access strategies for contemporary art spaces. Yet their innovative aesthetic practice was what made their approach stand out to me. Antena Aire also branches out into aesthetic, speculative, and experimental explorations of translation and interpretation. They create expanded aesthetic explorations of translation and interpretation through collective poetry workshops, participatory performances, sensorial imaginings, exhibitions, manifestos, socially-engaged interactive artworks, and collaborative, ephemeral happenings.

Throughout this dissertation, I employ the term *ultratranslation* as shorthand to encompass the comprehensive set of concepts and ideas outlined in a set of four short texts

written by Hofer and Pluecker as Antena Aire in the summer of 2013: *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation* (2013a), *Interpretation as Instigation* (2013b), *How to Build Language Justice* (2013c), and *A Manifesto for Discomfortable Writing* (2013d). I also draw from Hofer and Pluecker's discussions of these texts across various interviews and art exhibition descriptions. Below, I provide a synthesis of seven elements of ultratranslation that inform my theoretical approach to interpretation and translation in this dissertation.

Ultratranslation ...

- (1) is grounded in sociocultural, interactional, and critical understandings of language as a situated, interactive, embodied, dialogic, iterative, relational, and inherently political practice.
- (2) highlights translation and interpretation as agentic processes of “cross-language, cross-race work” that involve labor in contexts of unequal and shifting power dynamics, rather than neoliberal moments of “cross-cultural exchange” between two transparent codes (Antena Aire 2013b).
- (3) challenges the invisibility and supposed impartiality of interpreters and translators by recognizing them as embodied, agentic, and agendized humans in the world. It moves away from models of interpreters as service providers and towards the notion of interpreters as instigators.
- (4) assumes an activist orientation towards language justice through taking up an explicitly anti-racist, anti-assimilationist, anti-standard, anti-colonial and anti-imperial stance on interpretation and translation. This critical approach recognizes the ways in which these language practices are connected to speakers, bodies, and histories, and actively works against the domination of any one language within multilingual spaces.
- (5) takes a holistic approach toward language justice. It views language justice as fundamental to and co-generative with housing justice, food justice, labor justice, and racial justice, and thus as foundational to social justice efforts as a whole.
- (6) views failure as a generative space for further reflection, engagement, and action. It embraces the textures, fissures, seams, and “language-snags” inherent in translation and interpretation (Antena 2013a:3). This perspective critically questions orientations toward “knowing” and rejects perfectionism, thus moving away from both assimilationist and additive perspectives on language, which prioritize reproduction of hegemonic idealized standard linguistic norms.

(7) encourages aesthetic, speculative, experimental approaches that value expanded affective, sensory, and embodied experiences of interpretation and translation. This approach encourages astonishment, play, imagination, and joy, each of a form of learning and knowing typically marginalized within the academy.

Ultratranslation offers a useful lens for investigating and understanding ideologies at work in contexts of language justice and language access, and how those ideologies might affect institutional perceptions of youth language brokers' work. Antena Aire's hybrid approach recognizes the visionary, transformative and disruptive capacities of translation and interpretation while remaining firmly grounded in social justice-based praxis. This humanizing, creative, and explicitly political approach to interpretation and translation offers ways of resisting both raciolinguistic ideologies and the neoliberal commodification of language. In addition, I see this dissertation itself as a product of my own process of ultratranslation. As I discuss further in Chapters 2 and 3, throughout these pages, I interpret and translate between, through, and in my multiple roles as a researcher, educator, artist, curator, scholar, and activist. In doing so, I encounter and wrestle with my own unruly "language-snags" (Antena 2013a:3) as I bridge discourses, practices, and styles learned across – and useful to – each of these different roles and realms.

6. Overview of the Dissertation

I open **Chapter 2** with an ethnographic vignette of my participation in a workshop called "Interpreting for Social Justice, and offer a critical reflection on my positionality and how it shapes my approach to this research. I then provide an overview of the politics of language access in Santa Barbara County, discuss how I came to learn about the student interpreters program, and describe the

critical role the interpreters program played within the raciolinguistic status quo of the high school where I began this research.

In **Chapter 3**, I detail several of the complexities and challenges I faced within my research context. I discuss my use of emergent strategy (Brown 2017) as a critical navigational framework for responsive, ethical ethnographic fieldwork from a humanizing stance (Paris & Winn 2014), and set the stage for my analysis across Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

In **Chapter 4**, I analyze a student-led interview with the founder of the interpreters program, arguing that her practices of “community listening” (Stoeberl 2016) constituted an alternative listening subject position (Flores et al. 2018) that ultimately began to disrupt the school’s raciolinguistic status quo for Latinx youth language brokers.

Chapter 5 In this chapter, I begin from Rosa’s (2016b) raciolinguistic take on social tensions of exclusion (Povinelli 2011) to analyze how students articulated and challenged the district’s raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit. I focus on how students and parents affectively experienced the exclusion created by the district’s decision to cancel the interpreters program and its material consequences.

In **Chapter 6** I flip the analytical gaze or “ear” in order to reflect critically on my own practices of listening as a researcher throughout this project. I analyze interactional video data and students’ artistic work, and share ethnographic reflections on my research process as a whole, proposing that the interpreters program helped students create a transformative, but temporary, social tense of inclusion, which I call the *ultrapresent*. In the *ultrapresent*, students construct new speaking and listening subjectivities that allow them to transform

social relations between themselves and institutional listening subjects in ways that “render each other capable” (Haraway 2016:7).

In **Chapter 7** I return to a discussion of students’ language justice activism and framed by an analysis of Antena Aire’s *Manifiesto for Ultratranslation*. Following Restler (2017), I end by offering a series of proposals and “radical possibilities” (Anyon 2005) developed from the students’ contributions themselves, and relevant for educators, researchers, scholars and activists interested in implementing anti-racist and culturally-sustaining pedagogies in support of Latinx and other communities of marginalized youth.

Collectively, the chapters of this dissertation etch a larger narrative about the history, impact, and significance of the youth interpreters program that has not been documented before. By contextualizing this narrative within scholarship from the fields of linguistic anthropology, critical applied linguistics, and cultural studies, this project opens new avenues for understanding and supporting the contributions Latinx youth language brokers make to broader efforts of sociolinguistic, educational, and racial justice.

CHAPTER 2

“DRHS en español”: A History of the Bilingual Student Interpreters Program

The uncomfortable snag where we no longer know what to say, how to say, or even quite what saying is, but we continue in our saying. The language-snag is a sign that there is more thinking to be done.

— From *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation*
by artist activist group Antena Aire, 2013

1. Introduction

Language Access in Santa Barbara: Interpreting for Social Justice

As I sat cross-legged in a circle with twelve fellow workshop participants, I could feel my palms begin to get sweaty. It was the second day of a three-day workshop, Interpreting for Social Justice, and this would be my first attempt at practicing simultaneous interpretation from English to Spanish. Simultaneous interpretation involves listening to a speaker while “shadowing” them at the same time – translating what the speaker is saying, usually about five or six words behind them. Since the workshop was outfitted with microphones and audio headsets, each participant’s Spanish – mistakes and all – would be on sonic display for everyone to hear. I felt nervous; I was one of the only non-native Spanish speakers and one of two non-Latinx participants in attendance.

The workshop was led by Mayra Suarez (pseudonym), Language Justice Coordinator for United for Justice (organizational pseudonym), the only local non-profit social justice organization that advocates for language access for Spanish-speaking

Latinx communities across Santa Barbara County. With United for Justice, Mayra had trained and built a strong community of interpreters who staffed multiple types of events across our region, from Parent Teacher Association meetings at schools to City Council hearings on renters' rights. I had previously met Mayra when I asked her to consult on language access training for the museum project I was curating. At our first meeting over coffee, she shared her personal experiences interpreting for her family as well as her recent master's research with a group of high school language brokers in Santa Barbara. I talked with Mayra about my own positionality and background, as well as about my research with youth interpreters. Although it became clear that we held different stances on the "appropriateness" of youth language brokers' work in institutional settings, we both believed in the transformative power that interpreting and translation hold in creating linguistic justice. Conscious of my status as an outside researcher to the community she was so deeply invested in personally, professionally, and academically, I was eager to hear more about her perspectives and learn from her expertise. A few months later, when one of my dissertation committee members sent me information about a language justice workshop led by Mayra, I signed up on the spot.

Arriving on the first day of the workshop, I was excited to see so many other young adults present. Several fellow participants worked as educators or administrative staff in local public schools or non-profit organizations. Most participants identified as Latinx and had personal experience as language brokers when they were younger. All participants expressed a strong interest in learning more about how to create better language access services in their workplaces. The only other non-Latinx participant besides me was an older white woman who worked as an administrator for a nearby school district. She, like me, had learned

Spanish by studying and traveling abroad. We were two of only a handful of participants who had not had first-hand experience as language brokers.

To begin the simultaneous interpretation task, we moved the chairs and tables away from the center of the room and sat down in a circle with Mayra at the center. Handing out headsets to each of us, Mayra explained that we would use one ear to listen to her tell us a story while using the headphone in our other ear to listen to the ongoing interpretation of the story by each workshop participant. A central microphone would be passed around as we took turns simultaneously interpreting Mayra's story. She checked in to make sure we understood the logistics and then turned to sit facing the first interpreter. As the microphone exchanged hands and traveled around the circle, Mayra turned slightly to directly face the person whose turn it was to interpret. I was following along clearly enough – Mayra was speaking about when her family came to the US. She spoke about growing up in Santa Barbara, going to school, meeting new friends, meeting a teacher who was very nice to her. I watched and listened as one person interpreted a portion of Mayra's story, a second, and then a third. Finally, the microphone was handed to me.

I tried to focus on what Mayra was saying to ensure a smooth transition, tracking what she was saying in English, interpreting bit by bit into Spanish. Suddenly, I heard Mayra start to narrate something funny that had happened to her – an event which included a fast-paced play on words in English. I stumbled for a moment and realized I would not be able to interpret the joke as a joke in Spanish – my language skills did not include metaphorical humor and puns, at least not on the spot like this! My cheeks flushed as I made the split-second decision to interpret what she was saying literally, even though I knew I would miss

conveying the meaning of the joke. I felt a wave of relief when most participants “got” the joke and laughed, but I also knew it was only because they understood what Mayra was saying in English. If this had been a room full of monolingual Spanish speakers, no one would have been able to glean the larger gist of Mayra’s funny story from my interpretation. I had known intellectually interpreting was difficult, but the direct experience of choosing to interpret quickly at the expense of accuracy allowed me to understand the task in an interactional, embodied, and relational way that no book or discussion on interpreting could provide.

Part of me was aware that Mayra had probably chosen to share the joke in order to demonstrate the difficulty of interpreting humor, and also to highlight the limits of my academic Spanish in contrast to other participants’ broad linguistic repertoires and expertise across varying registers and contexts. It also flipped the dominant dynamics of language, race, and power so present in public spaces in California and the US in general. Yet as our world grows and changes, this situation will become more common for speakers of previously “dominant” languages such as English. I was glad I had this experience, as the group debriefing after the activity created an opportunity for me to openly reflect on how my racial and social positionality impacts my work with interpretation in Spanish and English within the context of Santa Barbara.

2. My Racial and Social Positionality

I am a light-haired, blue-eyed white and mixed-race cisgender woman of Filipino and Swiss background whose last name is Lopez, and I am a fluent but non-native speaker of Spanish. I constantly navigate the privileges and perplexities of my raciolinguistic positionality across relationships and interactions with students,

colleagues, bosses, parents, professors, friends, partners, strangers, and even myself. Rather than present my identity here as ossified, fixed in time and space, I instead share a history of conversations – language through time – that I have navigated in coming to my current, ongoing understanding of my positionality and how it affects what I notice, how I see, how I write, what I work for, and the relationships I build through research, teaching, art, and activism.

The first conversation I learned to navigate is no conversation. I come from a family where race was not really talked about, even though growing up in rural Maryland, far from any of our Filipino family, my siblings, parents, and I were the only Lopezes in our predominantly white neighborhood of Schultzes, Baileys, and Smiths. With one swipe, my white grandmother literally erased our Filipino heritage: *Your grandfather's skin wasn't brown. (Um, it was.) I don't know why your cousin painted his portrait like that.* This conversation taught me that if I don't talk about race, I (almost) don't have to think about how race might affect my own or others' lives. The conversation didn't teach me why my non-native Spanish learned “abroad” is often valued more than the native Spanish spoken by US Latinxs. This conversation encouraged me to pass for white, to float in the mythical sea of colorblindness, to stay silent. This conversation, no conversation, is part of the lived experience of my privilege. This conversation, silence and denial, is one of the main ways in which white supremacy operates to maintain the raciolinguistic status quo in families, schools, and institutions.

The second conversation I learned to navigate was “Let's talk about your body and your race.” Ever since a kid called me “pignose” on the school bus on the way home from

elementary school, I learned that my eyes, nose, face shape, and skin color are always available for commentary by white folks. In this often reiterated conversation, white friends, housemates, romantic partners, and strangely enough, friends' parents feel enough casual intimacy to ask me about my not-quite-white body. Usually involving an unsolicited comment or question about a specific facial feature or my skin tone, this conversation is how I learned that some parts of me are read and racialized as other, as non-white, as not "white enough":

Ohhh that's why your eyes are a little... that's why they're like that. –Friend's mom

Why are her nose and cheeks like that? –Friend's grandmother to friend

Yeah, I can see the ethnic in you. What an exotic mix! –First date/Last date

You have so much facial hair! Like Eva Mendes but sometimes I kind of think her face looks dirty. –Graduate school housemate

How do you get so "tan"? –College roommate

Your face shape is interesting; it's very ethnic, you know. –MFA student on a studio visit

Yeah, my best friend is Filipina, all I see when I look at you (motions toward my face) is the Filipina. –Anthropology professor

Like my dad, I learned to handle these mostly awkward, sometimes straight-up racist moments with humor; it once seemed like the smartest, quickest, and most creative way to deal. But as I grew older, the conversation changed and became one in which random people stop me on the street, in coffee shops, or after class to ask the question they can't quite keep to themselves: *Wait, what are you?* It also happens when people learn my last name and can't square their own ideologies with what they are seeing: *Where are you from? No, where are you really from? Okay, but where's your family from?* Through this conversation, I learned to keep my "identity narrative" with references to my family's origins ready to go in order to help others make sense of what doesn't easily fit into "the discrete leanings of racial categorization within the dominant racial imaginary" (Paragg 2015:284). These interrogations are themselves racializing processes that work to produce me as an

ambiguously mixed, questionably white subject (Haritaworn 2012; Paragg 2015), although ironically, sometimes my family history and identity narrative can be heard as not “Filipino enough” by the questioner.

The third conversation, which I am still learning to navigate, is the academic one.

When I moved away from Maryland and Washington, DC in my early twenties, I went through a process of re-understanding my identity and privilege within the very different raciolinguistic context of Southern California. This is the conversation where I learned – am still learning – to talk and write in academic terms about race, racism, colorism, privilege, intersectionality, settler colonialism, white supremacy, and systemic oppression. This conversation had me reading bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Gloria Anzaldúa, Paulo Freire, and Fred Moten. I learned about the structural, long-term, and everyday ways in which whiteness, cisness, and ablebodiedness benefit me. Where I learned my body and my languages will never face the systemic violence and policing that Black, Brown, and Indigenous folks face every day. I discovered new ways to support anti-racist social justice work as a scholar-activist. Where I learned my own white-passing, mixed identity narrative did not need to take up discourse space. I learned that learning in this way is also part of my privilege, that some of the most important learning is unlearning, and that I will always have much more to learn.

*The fourth conversation arrived in two books given to me by friends: *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Anzaldúa 1987) and *Part Asian, 100% Hapa* (Fulbeck 2006). In this conversation, I have art to thank for getting me through. Thank you to artists and curators I have had the luck of meeting and working with for teaching me about the history of Latinx and Filipinx solidarity in the farmworkers’ rights movement. In this conversation, I reclaimed the in-between, the me who is whole in all of my parts/-ish/both&/-ness suffix-heavy ambiguity.*

The one where I finally met my Tita Mamen, who pointed out that my nose was just like hers. This is the conversation where I learned it's okay to still be learning, to acknowledge and hold all of the complexities and contradictions of my identity. To be aware of, to be reflexive toward, and put to work the privileges and responsibilities that come with living in this body. Where I am growing to identify myself outside of, yet in conversation with, how others read me.

Elements of these conversations around identity, positionality, and personal and political commitments are among the first things I share with students, parents, collaborators, artists, organizations, or anyone involved in my research, projects, and community engagement work. In this way, I help others to place me, and I begin an ongoing dialogue around how I approach the relationships and goals of any project we work on together, conscious of the multiple power dynamics at play, whether in the academic, professional, or personal realm. These conversations also give shape to how my interests in translation, interpretation, and brokering developed over time. The work that youth language brokers do to negotiate the relational space between and in multiple cultures, languages, identities, and interlocutors resonates with me on many levels: finding comfort with, and creative power in, ambiguity, existing in the in-between, navigating languages, cultures, identities, and ideologies, being both and neither at the same time, being and refusing to be translated and interpellated. I am also conscious of the limits of these resonances and empathy – I have never been marginalized or policed in the ways that youth of color have experienced (Zarate 2018). I have never had to negotiate between the larger society and my family, never had to learn a new language to help my family or community survive, never had to face the choice of translating something racist or hurtful to someone I love, among many other aspects of

youth interpreters' lives that I won't experience or understand. For these reasons, I understand my research as an ongoing collaboration with youth interpreters, and I strive to practice it as such.

Background Working with Youth Interpreters

I first began working with youth language brokers in 2011, not on the Central Coast of California, but a continent away, on the Central Coast of Ghana. A childhood friend of mine from the US had founded a public health non-profit organization there, which was planning to host its first volunteers that summer. I accepted my friend's invitation to work as a linguistic consultant and spent three consecutive summers in Ghana in research-related and professional capacities. My Ghanaian collaborator, Mershack Andoh, and I worked closely with several groups of Ghanaian youth interpreters, many of them advanced high school students or early university students. The majority of these interpreters spoke between three and six languages, including English, Fante, and Twi, as well as Ga or Ewe, both commonly spoken in the nearby capital of Accra, and sometimes Arabic and French as well.

Through conversations, meetings, home visits, and clinic hours, we spoke about and reflected upon the intensive, multidimensional labor that interpreters performed as language and cultural brokers for the organization. I have written about the importance of female Ghanaian youth language brokers in mediating interactions among Ghanaian midwives and US medical students (Lopez 2012) as well as navigating interactions along relative structures of racial, gender, and class privilege between Ghanaian youth interpreters and US public health students of color co-facilitating a community health workshop (Lopez 2014). Despite the youth interpreters' extensive contributions, their labor was not always recognized or compensated by the organization itself. The interpreters eventually organized and went on

strike to successfully advocate for higher wages and a limit on daily hours worked. The organization suspended operations in Ghana during the 2014 outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, essentially dissolving the research site, and I was unable to continue collaborative work with youth interpreters there.⁴

Although that particular project ended abruptly, the experience provided me with many valuable insights about the challenges that youth interpreters face. While the Central Coast of Ghana is a very different context than Goleta, California, working with youth interpreters there enabled me to see the creative strategies used to negotiate interactions, the affective experiences and exhaustion, and the broader struggles for their expertise and labor to be recognized and legitimized. In these ways my previous work with youth interpreters and activists in Ghana is part of what I bring to my current research, writing, and teaching with Latinx youth interpreters in Southern California, work that I first began in 2014 through teaching with a unique dual-enrollment program in two high schools in Santa Barbara County. I discuss this work in the next section, which I begin with a short ethnographic excerpt from an interaction with students I had during my first few weeks of teaching.

3. The SKILLS Program at DRHS

A few weeks into my teaching at Dos Rios High School, several of my students got “lost” during a short two-minute walk from our classroom to the library. There was no way not to notice their absence in our group of twenty-one students, so I left my co-teacher in charge and retraced the path between the library and our classroom. I ran into the students turning the corner toward the library, laughing and smiling.

⁴ I am conscious of the irony of – and damage done by – an American public health NGO shutting down during the region’s most serious public health crisis to date.

–“Where have you all been?” I asked.

–“Oh, sorry! We were in Ms. Quiroga’s (pseudonym) office; she’s the best!” Amalia said.

–“Yeah, Ms. Q’s like our family here at school. We always stop by her office between classes,” Elizabeth added.

– Amalia continued, “Yeah! She runs the interpreters program so she knows all of our families. We should take you to meet her one day!” I smiled and listened as I walked with them to the library. During my time teaching at several high schools in Santa Barbara County, I had heard of the Student Interpreters Program, also known as Los Intérpretes, and I knew that many of my current students participated in it. Several of them were doing a final research project on Ms. Quiroga’s role with the interpreters program, but I had not had the chance to meet her yet.

The following week, Amalia and Elizabeth followed through on their promise to take me to meet Laura Quiroga, or “Ms. Q.” Although I had known the Interpreters Program was important to students, it wasn’t until I met Ms. Q that I began to understand with any depth the transformative impact that the program had had on students’ confidence in their language abilities and identities. As Ms. Q and I sat and talked about the program’s history and goals, her office remained abuzz with activity: student interpreters coming in and out to say hi, others adding photos to a wall dedicated to their senior pictures, and several students hanging out on the couch, eating popcorn made in the microwave Ms. Q kept there for them. The photos – which numbered over 1,000 – filled the walls with the material histories of several generations of students. A few students pointed out their pictures to me, as well as those of siblings, cousins, and even aunties and uncles who had attended DRHS. Spanish,

English, and laughter flowed freely throughout the space as students discussed which classes they had come from, which ones they were going to, what they were having for lunch, and the latest on what had happened in school that morning.

As yet another student walked into the office, Ms. Q smiled and greeted her. “Hi, Sofia! We missed you at the interpreters' meeting on Tuesday. Where were you?” “I know, Ms. Q, I’m sorry I missed it,” Sofia replied quietly. She took a brightly-colored striped blanket from the couch and put it over herself as she curled into a large rocking chair nearby. As she started to talk with Ms. Q, it became clear to me that Ms. Q’s office, along with the Student Interpreters Program, provided crucial forms of support for Latinx students and their languages and identities at school. With its warmth, care, laughter, and Latinx student-centered ethos, Ms. Q’s office seemed to somehow exist outside of the rest of campus. That afternoon, after returning home, I began to brainstorm ideas for a collaborative project with Ms. Q and the Interpreters Program that would explore how it was meeting the needs of Latinx students and their families in transformative ways.

During the weeks after our first meeting, Ms. Q’s office gradually became a frequent stop on my route through the school’s campus. In my role as a Graduate Teaching Fellow with University of California Santa Barbara’s (UCSB’s) School Kids Investigating Life and Language in Society (SKILLS) Program, I was at DRHS three times a week to teach a college-level sociocultural linguistics course. Led by interdisciplinary teams of graduate and undergraduate students, SKILLS classes engaged racially marginalized high school students as researchers and knowledge producers on issues of language, race, and power in their own lives. SKILLS classes are often realized in partnership with a school’s existing Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, a national non-profit

organization that provides bridge-to-college programs in order to increase college students traditionally underrepresented in higher education. (AVID 2020; Rosa 2019:22). The SKILLS classes explicitly aimed to engage and support these students in preparing to apply for and succeed in college by gaining experience with university-level linguistics curricula, project-based assignments, and informal mentoring from college undergraduate students. In addition, the class was dual-enrollment, which meant that students received college credit through the local community college for completing it (Bucholtz et al. 2014; Bucholtz et al. 2016; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2017; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2018; Ferrada, Bucholtz, & Corella 2019).

Although the SKILLS program had gone through many iterations at the time of this research, the curriculum always centered around a core “funds of knowledge” approach to the classroom (Moll et al. 1992; González et al. 2005; Yosso 2005). From this perspective, students were understood as agents, experts, and producers of knowledge and culture, who brought a large body of knowledge, experiences, and resources to the classroom, especially related to linguistic, cultural, and social practices in their own lives. Built from this central tenet, the program was anchored in emancipatory, participatory, decolonizing educational approaches (Freire 1970; hooks 1994; Smith 1999; Tuck 2009), such as culturally-relevant (Ladson-Billings 1995) and culturally-sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim 2017) that work toward sociolinguistic and racial justice (Bucholtz et al. 2014).

SKILLS’ critical decolonizing, participatory stance differentiated it from many other educational or after-school programs whose mission statement and larger aim of “empowering” “underserved” youth (Sperling 2020:5). Such frameworks of “empowerment” are problematic as they reproduce ideologies and power structures of settler colonialism by

positioning scholars as “giving voice” to youth (Bucholtz et al. 2016). In contrast, SKILLS was framed as “accompanying” youth (Lipsitz & Tomlinson 2013; Bucholtz et al. 2016) and thinking with youth (Gray 2020) on a shared journey to more inclusive and liberatory realities: “The goal of SKILLS is simply to provide resources—from texts to tools to information to a forum for discussion and exploration—in order to enable youth to take action for social change in a way that means the most to them personally” (Bucholtz et al. 2018:11). Towards these ends, many of the SKILLS graduate teaching teams took a materialist anti-racist approach (Flores 2013) to coursework and the classroom. This meant supporting teams of students as they developed projects that resulted in tangible efforts, such as social media campaigns, short videos, posters, and policy recommendations that actively challenge racialized structures of power made legible through students’ work and reflections throughout the course.

Working with UCSB’s SKILLS program helped me build the on-the-ground context and theoretical foundation necessary for this research, as I discuss throughout this chapter. It also strongly influenced how I approached the project’s methodology and goals, as well as how I developed relationships with students and their parents (as I discuss in Chapter 3). Over the course of three academic years with the SKILLS program, I taught at two different high schools in the Santa Barbara Unified School District: Mission City High School (MCHS) and Dos Rios High School (DRHS). Although my broader ethnographic insights draw from what I learned with youth language brokers across both schools, I began my dissertation research at DRHS, and all participants included in this study were students there. In the class I taught at DRHS, 95% of students identified as Latinx, and 13 of 21 students participated in the Student Interpreters Program: 9 women and 4 men.

The majority of our SKILLS class discussions and projects focused on the racial politics of Spanish and English in the US; topics ranged from Spanglish, to racial and linguistic profiling, to family histories connected to Indigenous languages of Mexico, to students' personal experiences of language use in interaction in everyday life. In these discussions, many students at both schools discussed their work as language brokers. Most had brokered for their parents and other family members throughout their lives, beginning from age five or six. Brokering activities included in-person doctor visits, trips to the hardware store, tax document preparation, and communications with parents' employers. With constant accessibility through their smartphones, many students continued this work for parents throughout the school day via emails, text messages, screen shots, and images.

In line with existing research (Orellana 2017; García Sánchez 2018), my students shared a wide range of emotions and affective stances about language brokering: some students dreaded it and the anxiety it brought, others found it mundane, boring, or annoying, and yet others reported finding it rewarding, enjoyable, and empowering, ultimately seeming to find a calling within this work (Lopez 2017). These students were excited to pursue structured training and additional practice through interpreters' clubs that had been organized at their schools.

In 2014, having recently read Marjorie Orellana Faulstich's book, *Translating Childhoods* (2009), I developed a curriculum unit around language brokering for my students at DRHS. Lessons included opportunities for students to share their feelings and experiences as language brokers through discussions, drawings, and projects featuring ethnographic interviews with their peers and parents (Lopez 2017). Across these mediums, students participated in processes of meaning-making that illuminated the profound affective,

political, and linguistic complexities and contributions of their work from their own perspectives. Some of these projects resulted in student-led multimedia presentations for a campus-wide audience at UCSB during a special SKILLS Day event, while others inspired students to advocate for change on their own high school campuses: one student interpreter from my SKILLS course was inspired to write and give a graduation speech in Spanish at her high school, the first time that had been done at any graduation in the district (Bucholtz et al. 2017), despite a historically large population of Latinx and Spanish speaking students and families throughout the school district. This is just one example of the comprehensive and historic lack of language access, created by (un)official language policies in Santa Barbara over time. In the next section, I discuss my own experience with unofficial language policies in Santa Barbara.

Interpreting in White Public Space

On a windy afternoon during my second year of graduate school in 2014, I volunteered with a local bilingual bike shop, Bici Centro, for an annual event called Light Up the Night. Focused on public safety, the program sought to increase cyclists' visibility to traffic by giving out free LED bike lights in public spaces. Cyclists in Santa Barbara were a diverse cross section ranging from weekend aficionados with \$10,000 road bikes and professional athletes who trained in the foothills, to students and service workers getting to and from class and work. I fell into the last two categories, as I often biked to campus, to go to the beach, and to get downtown for my shifts with a local catering business. Late at night on my way home, it was normal for me to share the road and a mutual nod with many fellow bikers dressed in black pants and dress shirts, material signs of our positions working the

service-industry jobs that made up a large part of Santa Barbara’s economy: catering, serving, bartending, bussing tables.

Starting as an off-shoot of the local non-profit organization Casa de la Raza, Bici Centro had always explicitly supported Santa Barbara’s Latinx and Spanish-speaking bike community as part of its mission. So, like the other bilingual material coming out of their shop (classes, brochures, emails), the Light Up the Night event was led by bilingual volunteers and featured posters in Spanish and English. When the organization sent out an email requesting volunteers, I was happy to sign up: it seemed like an easy way to make a lot of people’s lives safer.



Figure 2.1. Volunteering for Light Up the Night with Bici Centro.

Once I arrived at the designated meeting spot on State Street, downtown Santa Barbara’s main street, I picked up a sign that said, “Luces gratis” and held it facing the street while I alternated calling out in Spanish and English: “Free bike lights, luces gratis, luces para su bicicleta, get some free bike lights.” Some cyclists slowed down to check it out, and I ushered them over to volunteers handing out the lights. As I went back to my post and took up my sign again, an older white couple who were passing by approached me. I thought they

might be curious about what our event was about, but instead, they abruptly began to interrogate me: “Why is your sign in Spanish? Why are you speaking in Spanish? This is Santa Barbara, we speak English!”

Time slowed down as I took a moment to try to process what was happening. I could see we were standing under a street sign marking the intersection with Cañon Perdido Street, surrounded by the city-mandated Spanish colonial-style white walls and red roof tiles of the buildings on State Street. I could hear the bell of the Santa Barbara Mission ringing out across the city to let us know it was 6 pm, and just down the street, I could barely make out the lights of the million-dollar apartments at the Alma del Pueblo complex marking the transition to evening. A dislocating, out-of-touch-with-reality feeling came over me, and I felt too stunned and overwhelmed to respond. Finally, words came: “Because everyone uses bikes!” I blurted out. I turned away, my cheeks hot with anger and embarrassment, disbelief and disgust. I realized this was not an uncommon experience for Latinx folks speaking Spanish in the white public space (Hill 1998) of Santa Barbara. The privilege and related differential value afforded by my “global” (i.e., non-native) Spanish (Subtirelu 2017) usually shielded me from attacks like these. This incident illustrates a phenomenon that Stoeber (2016) describes in her book *The Sonic Color Line*: “Without ever consciously expressing the sentiment, white Americans often feel entitled to respect for their sensibilities, sensitivities, and tastes, and to their implicit, sometimes violent control over the soundscape of an ostensibly ‘free’, ‘open’ and ‘public’ space (2016:2).

I often share this story with my high school and university students as a clear instance of the racist, xenophobic ideologies that underlie nationalist, anti-immigrant discourses and (un)official language policies in Santa Barbara. The story also serves as a concrete example

of how the raciolinguistic political economy of language operates in Santa Barbara and the nearby cities of Goleta and Montecito: while Spanish may be symbolically valued within certain, limited neoliberal contexts that benefit whiteness and privilege (i.e., to create, commercialize, and capitalize on place-based nostalgia for a romanticized, white settler colonial past), its everyday use by and for Latinx communities is devalued and heavily policed. In addition, this story provides a tangible example of how my positionality and privilege impact my perspective and experiences as a scholar-activist on issues of race and language.

The undergraduate and high school students I have taught have frequently responded to this anecdote by sharing moments when their language or that of a friend or family member was policed in public. We have discussed how raciolinguistic marginalization cuts through the white public spaces and educational contexts of Santa Barbara and Goleta, and how students have experienced these exclusions (or not). Familiar double binds are revealed: Latinx communities are invisible and highly visible at the same time; Spanish is simultaneously inaudible and overly loud, its meanings both overdetermined and deemed incomprehensible. For students of color who live their lives in multiple languages, these are precarious positions, difficult to navigate.

4. Language Governmentality & Language Access in Santa Barbara Public Schools

The story of the bike lights can also be used as a point to dive into language policy and language access in Santa Barbara schools from a historical perspective. I find it helpful to utilize the concept of language governmentality in order to better understand language access and the raciolinguistic status quo across the school district and specifically at Dos Rios High School.

Coming from the field of critical applied linguistics, the concept of language governmentality encompasses the process of “how decisions about language and language forms across a diverse range of institutions (law, education, medicine, printing) and through a diverse range of instruments (books, regulations, exams, articles, corrections) regulate that language use, thought, and action of different people, groups, and organizations” (Pennycook 2006:65). As Flores (2014) has argued, “Language governmentality challenges the state-centric view of language policy and seeks to examine the multitude of social institutions and practices that intersect in the formation of governable ethnolinguistic subjects.” In doing so, it offers a rigorous historical perspective that allows for more nuanced discussions of the relations of power embedded within what Flores calls “language rationalities” in contemporary democratic societies (Flores 2014:2). This approach is in line with recent calls to move beyond “top-down, bottom-up, or even side-by-side divisions to a conceptualization of language policy as a far more dynamic, interactive, and real-life process” (Menken & García 2010:4).

Throughout its multilingual history, Santa Barbara has been an epicenter of conflict and contentious compromise over which language(s) to use for education in public schools (Toto 1952; Perissinotto & Velazquez 1998; MacDonald 2004; Prieto 2014; Barnes 2016a). From Santa Barbara's Spanish-only schools of the early 1800s, to segregated Spanish and English schools after California's statehood in 1855 and the subsequent ban on funding education in Spanish, to the controversial approval of Proposition 227 in 1998 which required English-only education, to the proposition's repeal through the passage of the Multilingual Education Act in 2016, Santa Barbara has been a microcosm of the broader struggles and shifts in educational language policy in California (Barnes 2016a).

Common throughout these struggles – at least until recently – has been a steady progression toward the repression of Spanish as a language of instruction in favor of English, as well as the systematic erasure of Indigenous and immigrant languages from public education contexts, such as Chumash and Mandarin (Prieto 2014). These language policies position Spanish and immigrant languages as a “barrier” to access, thus marginalizing and excluding the historically large and growing Latinx communities living in Santa Barbara. This exclusion is reinforced by a comprehensive lack of language access services across Santa Barbara public schools and institutions. This lack of language access has serious negative effects, such as de facto segregation across Santa Barbara public schools stretching from the 1970s, when Santa Barbara was singled out for censure in a report by the US Civil Rights Commission (United States Commission on Civil Rights 1977), to the early 2000s, when it was examined in-depth in an uncharacteristically hard-hitting, five-part series in the extremely conservative and controversial *Santa Barbara News-Press* (Cohee 2002).

Such overt segregation was not present at DRHS when I started working there in 2015 as a Graduate Student Teaching Fellow —its student population was relatively balanced with 45% of students identifying as Latinx, 43% as white, and 11% as “other” (California Educational Data Partnership 2020). Yet despite federal included federal, state-based, and local policies that guaranteed the right to and outlined strategies to create “meaningful language access,” Spanish and other languages continued to be marginalized and neglected by the school district in ways that created unequal access at DRHS for Spanish-speaking Latinx communities. During my time teaching at DRHS, I observed that a complex, unorganized constellation of institutions, administrators, organizations, staff, educators, students and language policies and practices, both official and unofficial, had developed to

address the need for more comprehensive language access services for Spanish-speaking Latinx parents and students than what the district had been providing. This pattern was common across Santa Barbara County, as many different grassroots and community organizations stepped up to address language access needs created by a lack of comprehensive institutional policies and resources to adequately provide those services.

Figure 2b is a visual mind map that I created during my fieldwork in 2016-2017 that provides a who’s who of language access work across Santa Barbara County at that time.

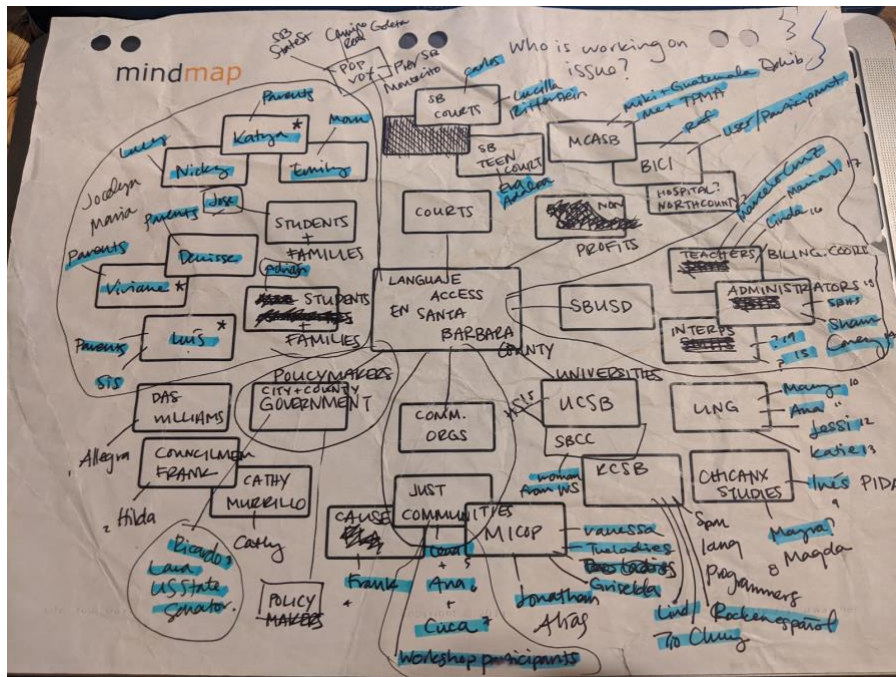


Figure 2.2: Mind map of individuals and institutions involved in language access in Santa Barbara County 2016-2017. Source: Lopez fieldnotes, 2016.

United for Justice, the organization that hosted the Interpreting for Social Justice Workshop in which I participated, was also hired in an official capacity by the school district to help provide language access and diversity, equity, and inclusion workshops for educators, administrators, students, and families with the hopes of fostering more equitable participation in all aspects of the district’s schools. This organization’s language justice branch developed

and implemented standards and strategies for language access services throughout Santa Barbara County. It provided training for administrators, educators, and bilingual staff that aimed to help people understand, navigate, and set ethical and just expectations for multilingual situations, especially those involving practices of translation and interpretation. The organization's Language Justice Program Director also developed a Community Interpreter Continuing Education Certificate Program, offered at a local private college. Both of these programs raised awareness of language access services in general throughout Santa Barbara, worked to validate bilingual adults' language practices and experiences, and played a crucial role in developing additional certified interpreters to provide language access services.

During this period, Spanish was becoming more valued within public education in California. The 2016 passage of Proposition 58 bolstered ongoing discussions of implementing dual language immersion programs. Furthermore, within the past decade, California has developed two statewide programs that support multilingualism. In 2011, it was the first state to pass legislation to issue seals and certificates of biliteracy, a way to incentivize and credentialize bilingualism and multilingualism in US K-12 education (Subtirelu et al. 2019:371). The seals, which recognize "proficiency in English and in one or more other languages," are increasingly common. Over 37 states and Washington, DC have now implemented similar policies, and California has awarded the highest number of seals of any state (Subtirelu et al. 2019). In 2018, California implemented the Global California 2030 Initiative, which aims for high school students to become proficient in two or more languages by the year 2030.

However, these initiatives tend to valorize Spanish and other languages beyond

English solely in neoliberal, capitalist terms that emphasize the economic advantages of learning “world languages” for use within the globalized labor market of the 21st century (Subtirelu et al. 2019; Schwedhelm & King 2020). As noted in Chapter 1, these future advantages tend to be unequally distributed among bilingual speakers, with Spanish positioned as part of a valuable, global future for white folks, but as a past for Latinx students to leave behind if they want to form part of the global economy (Rosa 2016a, 2016b; Hernández 2017; Subtirelu 2018). These programs simultaneously reproduce and render invisible social inequities between students by stressing individual and national competition as a centering principle (Subtirelu et al. 2019: 373).

In addition, such programs provide strategic benefits for states, districts, and schools, in that they can publicly pay lip service to linguistic diversity for all without the financial or administrative commitment to policies that would allow for more equitable multilingual education (Schwedhelm & King 2020). Thus, these programs tend to perpetuate monoglossic, English-centered norms, value, and rationales (Flores 2013; Flores 2017; Hernández 2017; Subtirelu 2017, Subtirelu et al. 2019), as well as deepen patterns of inequalities for Latinx students. This can even be the case for dual language programs generally thought to be more equitable through their additive approach to learning and teaching multiple languages. Through raciolinguistic ideologies which differentially value English and Spanish based on racial positioning of the speaker, they provide additional benefits for white speakers of dominant languages, while still labeling Latinx students as “language learners” (Hernández 2017). For these reasons, the pursuit of social justice in education requires intentional and deliberate, critical scrutiny of even apparently well-intended, “liberal multicultural” educational efforts (Flores 2017; Subtirelu et al. 2019).

Ms. Q was aware of the complex context in which Latinx students found themselves, as well as the lived experiences of such complexities. During one of our follow-up conversations about possible projects with Latinx student interpreters, Ms. Q remarked to me, “This is a story about the children of the people who clean homes in Montecito.” In invoking Montecito, a wealthy enclave of Santa Barbara, she deftly motioned to the layered ways in which race, class, and language intersect across the neighboring cities of Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Montecito. As my teaching at DRHS continued, I reflected on how these divisions and corresponding inequalities were etched into the school campus, student body, and were even referenced within the name of the institution: Dos Rios High School.⁵

5. Dos Rios High School: “A School of the Future”?

Dos Rios High School was one of four local sites in Southern California that participated in the SKILLS program in 2015-2016. Located in the small coastal city of Goleta, DRHS is a public high school serving around 2,000 students in grades 9 through 12. In 2016, DRHS was one of several schools featured on “Schools of the Future,” a two-hour documentary produced as part of the PBS series *Nova* (Hamm 2016; Nova 2016). The documentary showcased a series of vignettes on the ways in which schools across the country were developing new programs in order to help prepare students to meet “the challenges of tomorrow” and stay competitive in this “new age of information, rapid innovation, and globalization” (Nova 2016). During the episode showcasing DRHS, cameras follow a Latina

⁵ Research into the history of the toponym Dos Rios (a pseudonym, but similar to the school’s real name) excavates multiple layers of colonial erasure. Named Dos Rios by Franciscan missionary Juan Crespi, the land that DRHS stands on was originally occupied by two different Chumash communities that faced each other across a nearby creek. The Spanish name erased reference to the Indigenous connection to the land. Presently, the name cashes in on place-based nostalgia for an idealized Spanish colonial history of Santa Barbara, effectively camouflaging Mexican history, presence, and ownership of the land.

female student enrolled in the school's innovative Engineering Academy as she works alongside peers to conceptualize, fabricate, and troubleshoot their year-end project, an eventual award-winning entry in the Bay Area Maker Faire competition for do-it-yourself robotics (Hamm 2016).

Founded in 2001 by DRHS teacher, UCSB graduate, and MacArthur "genius" grant recipient Amir Abo-Shaer, the Engineering Academy aimed to make careers in science and technology more accessible to students of all backgrounds, and specifically to address the underrepresentation of women in technology. Indeed, over the history of the Engineering Academy, female participation in the program jumped from 5% to 50% (Nova 2016). The program thrived on partnerships with the local technology industry, educational and cultural institutions, and private fundraising efforts. This kind of forward thinking and educational leadership was echoed in several other programs at Dos Rios: it offered the district's only International Baccalaureate program and operated a culinary academy for its students, who ran the school's cafeteria. Dos Rios also made local news for implementing some of the school district's most progressive student and campus policies, such as opening the district's first gender-neutral multi-stall bathrooms (Barnes 2016b; Hamm 2016).

Despite these innovative, forward-thinking programs, partnerships, and policies, Dos Rios High School continued to suffer from longstanding, entrenched inequalities in student outcomes along racial lines common across the district and in many other US educational contexts. For example, in 2019, a local journalist reported that "only 12 percent of Latinx high school seniors in Santa Barbara Unified School District went on to a four-year college or university straight out of high school last year. Comparatively, their white counterparts attended four-year institutions at a 41 percent rate in 2017-18" (Garcia 2019). At Dos Rios,

this structural inequality included documented discrepancies across several student outcomes used to evaluate school success: comparative percentages of students of color versus their white peers who took prestigious college-preparatory courses, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and honors classes, as well as comparative percentages of students completing California’s A through G course requirements for college eligibility (Santa Barbara Unified School District 2016; Garcia 2019). Despite the fact that Latinx students made up the largest population of students at DRHS (45%), only 58% of these students completed A through G requirements, compared to 82% of their white peers in 2014-2015, the latest year this data was available (CA Educational Data Partnership 2020). Table 1 shows DRHS’s enrollment demographics in comparison with the two other traditional public high schools in the district for the year 2016-2017.

Table 1: 2016-2017 Santa Barbara Unified School District Traditional High School Enrollment Source: California Education Data Partnership, 2020

School	Total Student Enrollment	Latinx	White	Other “Minority”	English Language Learner Designated	Free or Reduced Lunch	Finished A-G Requirements Latinx Students (2014-2015)	Finished A-G Requirements White Students (2014-2015)
DRHS	2057	45% 931	43% 893	11% 233	8.5% 176	32% 662	58%	82%
MCHS	2112	58% 1226	36% 768	6% 128	11% 231	43.5% 918	42%	79%
DVHS	2192	55% 1196	38.5% 845	7% 151	13% 278	41% 896	38%	70%

Due to the efforts of a large coalition of parents, educators, scholars, and community activists, these disparities eventually came to light and the conversation around them gained traction and strong public support. In response, the school district finally began to address these issues: when I began this research in 2015-2016, Dos Rios was put on probation by the

district for documented failure to achieve even remotely equitable student outcomes across white students and students of color. In addition, due to the lack of a comprehensive implementation in language access policies, not all school and educational information was successfully or fully translated into Spanish, including the website at the time of my fieldwork. In 2020, it was finally updated with approximately 80% of the English-language version of the website available in Spanish. As a result, Spanish-speaking parents oftentimes did not receive the same information about the school and their child's education as English-speaking parents.

Latinx Student Engagement and Belonging at DRHS

These divides and exclusions were echoed in Latinx students' experiences at the school beyond traditional measures of student success. Many DRHS students who participated in this project were aware of or had experienced how such structures worked to marginalize both Latinx students and the Spanish language at their high school. Acutely attuned to the less visible ways in which exclusion is enacted, students shared how the raciolinguistic climate of the school impacted their feelings of belonging, their choices to participate in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and honors classes, clubs, and sports on campus, and their affective experiences of academic spaces and extracurricular activities.

Many students who participated in the Interpreters Program had been classified as "ELLs," or English Language Learners, earlier in their education. This label, which educational researchers and activists have identified as problematic due to its deficit-based stance, was almost automatically applied by the school to any child who lived in a home

where a language other than English was used, even though that alone is unlikely to predict English language ability. Students who were classified as ELLs were required to take additional English language and literacy classes until they were eligible to be “reclassified” out of ELL status. The reclassification process involved petitions, paperwork, and interactions with the school administration that parents had to know existed in order to even begin to navigate it. Once an ELL student was reclassified, they were able to take electives, such as art, music, dance, or carpentry, among other subjects, in place of the additional English language coursework.

Students in this project were aware of how the temporal, academic, and social exclusion entailed by the ELL (re)classification process affected their experiences: As one student interpreter, Dante, put it: “It just makes me think that, like, as Latino students, we have to work, like, extra extra to get where other people are at.” Another student, Marcos, adored soccer, having played for a very competitive team when he was growing up in México. He often told the story of how he joined the DRHS soccer team for a year, but ended up quitting because of racist remarks by coaches and players, which he felt carried through to decisions around which team members received playing time. At that point, Marcos said, Ms. Q had suggested he begin volunteering after school each week with a parent leadership workshop series she was running. It was at one such workshop that I met him. Other Latinx students voiced to me that even when they and other students of color did access Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes, many did not feel comfortable or included in the space of the classroom. Dante had insight on this affective marginalization as well: “I can assure you that a lot of students of color, in the honors classes and AP or IB, where their peers are all white, they don’t feel super comfortable being in those classes with

people they can't relate to.”

One student club, known simply as “Leadership,” was referenced constantly by the students in my project. Leadership was a club for juniors and seniors that organized events, dances, rallies, and fundraisers (DRHS 2020). In contrast to most school-based clubs, students had to go through a competitive application process to become members of Leadership. At the time this research began, Leadership was an overwhelmingly white student club, with only four Latinx members out of a total of 30 students, despite the school’s relatively balanced demographics. Through their role in choosing event themes, dress codes, activities and decorations for school dances, and even the music played at events and assemblies, Leadership created and weaved together the dominant sociocultural, visual, material, and sonic fabric of the school.

Events organized by Leadership were often held at the outdoor concrete sunken amphitheater at the center of the DRHS campus. The few events I attended while on campus usually featured Leadership students in the middle of the amphitheater’s stage, wearing matching clothing or body paint, performing and leading chants, songs, and/or cooperative athletic feats, frequently set to music. The scenes were reminiscent of what I have seen (as a non-member) of campus Greek life, especially fraternities, at public universities. Latinx and other white students, as well as mostly-white faculty formed an audience around the Leadership students, sitting on the low concrete bleachers surrounding the amphitheater stage. The usually rigid temporal regimentation of the school was often flexible for students who participated in Leadership; they could leave classes up to ten minutes early to set up events, participate in meetings, or prepare for rallies. Leadership students were also invited on special faculty-led field trips each year: one such outing was a day trip to a baseball game

at Angels Stadium in Los Angeles. Many Latinx students I worked with discussed the close relationships that developed between educators and students who participated in Leadership, relationships that they did not have access to. One of my study participants, Alejandra, who had previously been president of the Student Interpreters Program, succinctly summed up the status of Leadership students: “Son los favoritos de la escuela.”⁶



Figure 2.3: Student members of the DRHS Leadership Club hosting an on-campus rally. Source: Dos Rios High School, 2020.

While DRHS’ performance on these measures was extremely poor, the high school did have some outstanding past faculty and administrative leaders who took steps to identify, understand, and address these issues through training, workshops, and new initiatives. One effective principal eventually became Assistant Superintendent of the district in part because of her efforts – as well as the efforts of several talented, dedicated Latinx faculty members who were very engaged with and supportive of students of color and their families, both on and off campus through their involvement in community organizations. Through this

⁶ Throughout this dissertation, I have chosen to leave Spanish untranslated as a conscious transgression of the “appropriateness-based” white supremacist status quo.

leadership, DRHS began to explicitly address issues of race and racism among the school's student body through student participation in several series of workshops and trainings hosted by United for Justice. One such training, called "Talking in Class," was a series of three one-day workshops that aimed to foster dialogue and discussion between students of color and white students, as well as faculty members and staff. The workshops created strong affective responses from many students, and the workshops did not always go as smoothly as the administration might have expected or hoped. Several students I worked with from DRHS reported that a number of Latinx students as well as a white administrator cried during the meeting because of racist remarks made by a white male student.

Latinx students shared with me their experiences with educators and spaces on campus where they felt seen and included. One supportive educator that students talked about was Mr. Roberto Gil (pseudonym), a Latinx teacher at DRHS who taught the Spanish for Native Speakers class. Often addressing him just by his last name, students always described Mr. Gil's class as a space on campus where they felt comfortable speaking Spanish, and they proposed his name numerous times as someone they would like to interview for our collaborative project. Both Ms. Q and Mr. Gil were also recognized by United for Justice as two key educators at DRHS who were effective in engaging Latinx students and their families.

Many of the Latinx students I worked with were also involved in on-campus or off-campus local non-profit organizations concerned with fostering social and racial justice in Santa Barbara, as well as youth leadership. These students were very politically conscious, seamlessly navigating concepts of agency, racism, ageism, privilege – terms that the first-year undergraduate students I teach rarely use. Most of the students who worked with me on

this project had been involved in one or more organizations, including United for Justice, Ethnic Studies Now!, Future Leaders of America, Conservation of the American Pyramids, among others. One previous student interpreter who had already graduated high school had even been dismissed from a nearby Christian college because of their strong activist perspective and organizing activities on campus, moving to a CSU campus in Northern California instead. In this way, Latinx students built, engaged with, and accessed networks and resources outside of school that supported and sustained their languages, cultures, and identities, and served as sites for collective identity-building and processes of conscientização (Freire 1970).

Ms. Q

One of the most important sites of Latinx student and parent engagement was the DRHS Office of Bilingual Education, led by Ms. Q. As the Bilingual Community Coordinator and bilingual family liaison, Ms. Q made her office an outpost of care, comfort, connection, and support for Latinx students and families within the school and larger community. Ms. Q immigrated to the United States from Argentina when she was a child, and had brokered for her own parents throughout her childhood. As the mother of two sons who were born and raised in Goleta, Ms. Q was very familiar with and active in the local educational context and held multiple roles within the community beyond her position at DRHS. Along with her husband, Mr. Quiroga, she co-led Latino Parent Alliance (organizational pseudonym), a non-profit organization focused on achieving equitable education outcomes for Latinx students by engaging, informing, and supporting Latinx parents. In her role with Latino Parent Alliance, Ms. Q led a range of workshops for parents, including the Parent Project, a 12-week bilingual program designed to help parents build

skills and strategies to better understand and communicate with their teenagers. Ms. Q's continued work with, care for, and commitment with families outside of school contributed to her up-to-the-minute encyclopedic knowledge of students and their families. For every student she knew, she was aware of what was going on at school and at home, including their grades, their progress in specific classes, if they had an after-school job, and the details of their relationships with peers, siblings, romantic partners, and parents.

Ms. Q often introduced students to me by sharing a small anecdote about their life: *Daniela works at Natural Café, you know the one in Calle Real Shopping Center?* or *Yesenia's aunt also went to DRHS and now she's a teacher at San Marcos High!* These brief stories gave students a starting point for connecting with me or sharing more about themselves. But more importantly, these stories also worked to remind students that Ms. Q was listening to them and paying attention to their lives. When coupled with high academic expectations, this level of detailed information and involvement in students' lives has been shown to help students of color feel supported and empowered in attempting unfamiliar tasks, applying to new opportunities, and facing challenges that may come up along the way (Watson, Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson 2016). As one student shared with me over coffee at Starbucks, "One time when I was in trouble with my parents, Ms. Q called them and helped me get my phone ungrounded. But I had to, like, get good grades, too." Teachers and educators, especially those of color, often perform this kind of relational, situated, and "invisible care work" beyond their job descriptions and requirements (Restler 2017). Such carework extends beyond the spatiotemporal boundaries of the school campus and school day, often involving phone calls that can last late into the evening or time spent attending to the material arrangement or decoration of classrooms and other school spaces.

In the case of Ms. Q, with her comfy couch and extra chairs, bright blanket, and popcorn ready to go on a minute's notice, this carework was literally materialized through the space of her office. A respite for students between classes, during lunch, and after school, Ms. Q's office offered an interstitial realm that linked multiple dimensions of students' lives: languages, cultures, generations, social groups, and the spaces of home, work, and school. As part of a student-led interview that later took place through our collaborative project, one student asked Ms. Q if she felt that her office was a safe space for students:

Ms. Q: I think so, because they're always there. Somebody said, somebody posted in Facebook, not good. They put a picture of my, ((*laughs*)), office, and they said, "I love this place! I never went to class." That is so- ((*laughs*)). But they went to class. Because you know how I kick them out- you know I'm always kicking them out, right? But I felt like they felt like there was a- they were safe and there was a place where they belong, and you know lunchtime is packed with kids. So I think everybody needs something, you know, a place like that. Anywhere, you know, UCSB people have their place, right? And just a place where you can, you know, you can count on going and somebody's- say hi, and just feel like you belong, and your surroundings are important.

Alejandra: Can you tell us a little more about the décor in your office?

Ms. Q: I think I have over a thousand photos, I would say, maybe- I have taken some down in the last 15 years, not so much now because everything's digital, and, but the kids used to go to the mall and have pictures taken at the mall. So the more pictures that I had in my office, the more popular the kids were? So they would bring me photos. So I have tons – I have a wall *full* of pictures. And so those are pictures that I've had for 15 years. And people, I mean, people stop, and look: "Do you know everybody?" "Yes!" "How come she has 20 pictures on the wall?" And it's because in those days, you know, five years ago, you know the more pictures you have in Ms. Q's office- And then I'd come back sometimes, and there would be an "X" on somebody's face or, you know, ((*laughs*)), they ripped it off, ((*laughs*)), so, you know there was some issues. But I think what I like about the photos is again that they see them- that you see yourself there. Whatever you bring me, from Mexico, or Guatemala, it goes on the walls. So, it's like, it's you. It's a part of you. "This is a space where I can be and I can be comfortable." And it's what things- things that are a part of who we are.

Warm, caring educators like Ms. Q have long been recognized as critical to improved

educational experiences and outcomes for marginalized students, especially Latinx students (Valenzuela 1999; Ware 2006; Delpit 2012; Watson, Sealey-Ruiz & Jackson 2016). Such educators have also been specifically highlighted as agents of change in the creation and implementation of more equitable language policies in schools (Menken & García 2010), like the increased language access Ms. Q created through the Students Interpreters Program. One SKILLS student, Jaime, said:

Ms. Q is just amazing. She is just the most lovable person you can meet. She was our rock. She was our anchor. And why? Because she motivated us. She encouraged us, when we didn't want to do it anymore she would be like, "Come on, I really need your help. I need you for this, I need you for that." And it wasn't because she was just trying to get you to go. It was because she really did. And for those that really got to see that part of Ms. Q and for those that really got to connect with her, I think they have this long-lasting relationship with her.

Jaime went on to describe her central role in developing the interpreting program: "As for the program, she really put a lot of energy and effort into it, going to the district meetings, gathering students to go with her, advocating for this program so much. I don't know, I don't think it would be the same without her." Likewise, my own research would not be the same – would not even exist – without the care, time, and commitment of Ms. Q. She extended the same ethos of care to me in my role as researcher that she did to her students. A central force in this project, Ms. Q introduced me to students and their families and helped guide me during the multiple challenges I faced in working with students in a research context.

DRHS en Español: Initiating the Bilingual Student Interpreters Program

At the beginning of each academic year, Dos Rios High School hosts a Back to School Night event on campus for students and their parents, commonly known by the acronym "BTSN" among students, parents, and staff. Each public school in the Santa

Barbara Unified School District hosts a similar event within the first few weeks after classes start. On their website, the district describes Back to School Night as an important element in building “a strong school climate and promot[ing] close relationships between the families, and creating a school community that is fully informed, collaborative, and supportive” (SBUSD META 2020). The intention is to create a welcoming environment for parents and to communicate important information about their child’s school, classes, and campus. The event is typically held in the evening from 6pm to 8pm, during which time parents and guardians can walk through a shortened version of their child’s daily class schedule. Parents are able to get a feel for what their student’s day is like, visit classrooms, meet teachers, and get an overview of what material each class will cover during the year, as well as learn about different instructional programs, school policies, and extracurricular activities offered by DRHS. In general, the hope is that this information will enable and empower parents to be more engaged in their child’s education as well as the school itself, as extensive research demonstrates that parent engagement correlates strongly with student success (Andrade 2015; Cruz 2016).

However, in 2009 and 2010, Ms. Q noticed a large absence of Latinx and Spanish-speaking parents attending Back to School Night events. She identified the need to provide language access services for parents in order for them to feel welcome, included, and respected, and to be able to understand all of the information they receive during the event. In response to her observation, Ms. Q developed and launched the Dos Rios Bilingual Student Interpreter Program as a grassroots effort that directly addressed the marginalization and exclusion of Spanish-speaking parents from this event. Ms. Q’s program eventually became so successful that it was later implemented at two other high schools in the district.

Working initially with a small group of interested Latinx students, Ms. Q organized several trainings with professional interpreters employed by the Santa Barbara School District to provide students with basic background information and terminology for translation and interpretation in educational contexts. These trainings eventually grew to include hands-on practice for students in simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, both with and without audio equipment. AVID teachers encouraged their students, most of whom were bilingual Latinxs, to volunteer for the program, and the Dos Rios Career Center gave community service credit hours for students' time (Güereña 2011). Under this model, students who successfully completed one or two interpretation trainings were able to join the interpreting team to interpret for parents at Back to School Night. Each student would be paired with a parent or guardian in order to provide one-on-one simultaneous and/or consecutive interpretation during the parent's time at DRHS. In this role, students helped parents navigate the school, showed parents where their child's locker was located, described the clubs their child could participate in, and answered the parent's questions about teachers, sports, homework, and online access to grades and attendance.

In the fall of 2011, sixty student interpreters volunteered at Back to School Night at Dos Rios High School. Students, parents, teachers and administrators all raved about the success of the evening. The school principal described the program as "an innovative way to promote parent engagement while also demonstrating the benefits of schools working together to better serve their communities" (Güereña 2011). Ms. Q spoke about the positive impact on students: "They feel like they have something to give and that they have a skill. Latino students used to feel like they were no use and were sometimes embarrassed of speaking their language, but now they feel proud of it because they can provide a service"

(Craine 2012). In fact, so many Spanish-speaking parents came to Back to School Night that year that the group of sixty student interpreters could not fully meet the need. The following year, the program made an effort to train more students specifically for the event, and student participation more than doubled, growing to 130 students at Dos Rios High School in 2012 (Craine 2012).

6. Program Success and Expansion

The success of the program at Dos Rios High School in 2011 and 2012 highlighted the key role of students in providing language access to foster more equitable parental engagement, as well as increasing students' self-efficacy and sense of connectedness to peers and school. As word spread about the student-interpreter model, the program expanded along several dimensions, including the number of schools served and the types of events interpreted. Dos Rios High School student-interpreters were asked to provide their services to parents and families at local middle and elementary schools, which had experienced the same marginalization and exclusion of Latinx parents at their Back to School Night events. By 2012, DRHS students were not just interpreting at their own Back to School Night, but also volunteering as interpreters at these events at four other elementary and middle schools. Students were often paired with a particular teacher in one classroom and provided consecutive interpretation for several groups of parents as they cycled through the room. Many of the students I worked with reported on volunteering at these events as one of their first interpreting experiences with the program, and as some of the most rewarding experiences they had had as interpreters.

In 2013, the student-interpreter model began to grow and expand in new ways. First,

the model spread to other high schools in the district, including Del Valle High and Mission City High. Each school's Bilingual Family Liaison began to coordinate trainings for groups of students from these schools who later joined DRHS students in interpreting at Back to School Nights for local elementary and middle schools. Student enrollment in the interpreters programs grew to 246 across three high schools in 2013. As the Student Interpreter Program grew, it became a collaborative effort that relied on shared resources and coordinated efforts between the school district, schools, local non-profit organizations, educators, students, and parents.

In 2015, students from all three traditional high schools in the school district volunteered to interpret at the Santa Barbara Unified Academy Showcase, an annual event that provided students and families with information about the eight specialized academic programs available at different high schools, such as International Baccalaureate classes, the Visual Arts and Design Academy at Mission City High, and the Engineering Academy at Dos Rios High School. Held at a local conference center, the event was open to all families and was attended by over 700 people in 2015 (Magnoli 2015). In this context, language access was critical in order to provide information and opportunities to access these programs by students and parents of all backgrounds.

Another development of the interpreters program was the formation of a new group of bilingual Dos Rios High School student brokers, Los Techies. Much like their student-interpreter peers who helped parents with language access, these students helped translate and broker technology across languages by providing one-on-one assistance to Spanish-speaking parents who wanted to improve their computer skills. Beginning in January 2013, over twenty students volunteered to travel once a week to a local dual-immersion elementary

school to assist parents. A local newspaper described Los Techies as helping parents “bridge the digital divide while also making connections that extend beyond the keyboard.” As one of the students put it, “For me the class is going slow but my mom really loves this class. She is learning, she really is into it and now she is into the computer at home. She's even checking my grades on EDU!” (Güereña 2013).⁷

As the student-led model of outreach and brokering expanded, recognition of the program’s positive impacts for students, families, and schools also grew. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the school district recognized the outstanding efforts of student interpreters by hosting an award ceremony at the district office in downtown Santa Barbara. Each invited student received a Certificate of Recognition for their work and service for the school community. Alejandra, one of the student interpreters recognized at the ceremony, later interviewed her peer, Dante, who was also recognized at the event. She asked Dante how receiving that award made him feel. He responded, “It made me feel like I was heard. I felt like I was actually making a change in somebody’s life.” Indeed, news of DRHS’s innovative model of language access even spread to the nearby Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (IHC) at the University of California Santa Barbara, which learned about the program through a fellowship proposal I wrote, submitted, and was awarded for this research as part of the inaugural round of the IHC’s Humanities in the Community initiative. In 2016, the IHC began its own program, Interpreters in the Schools, based on the DRHS student-model, in which undergraduate students interpreted for parents at a local elementary school (IHC 2016; Drake 2018).

⁷ EDU was a web-based application that parents and guardians could use to stay updated on their students’ attendance and academic progress.

From Youth Interpreters to Professional Interpreters

While the Student Interpreters Program continued to grow, United for Justice was also expanding its work throughout the Santa Barbara Unified School District, eventually winning large contracts to develop a framework, best practices, and trainings to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in support of its larger goal of achieving more equitable educational outcomes for students and families across the district. One subset of this effort was the Language Justice Initiative, which aimed to educate and advise school and district-level administrators on best practices for providing interpretation and translation services. As part of this initiative, United for Justice also led a series of workshops for bilingual staff and educators to assist them in becoming trained and potentially certified for the language access and linguistic support services they provide. These trainings approached language access through a social justice lens by focusing on issues of race, racism, power dynamics, and the affective complexities of working as an interpreter.

As a consequence of these programs' focus on language justice and increased parental involvement and input, district administrators gradually became more aware of the need to provide comprehensive language access services for parents at all school events (Monreal 2016). As part of this increased awareness, the district developed a Language Access Plan which aimed to provide "quality language access" through professional interpretation services. In June 2016, some DRHS students and parents were already hearing rumors that the district was considering moving to a model in which parents would have access to professional interpretation – defined as paid and formally trained interpreters and trained bilingual staff over the age of 18 – at all school events, including Back to School Night. I had heard about this possibility from the school principal when we originally

discussed my research proposal in March 2016; it was cited as one reason why I would need to significantly revise my proposal. A Latinx student reporter from DRHS later interviewed the principal about the shift towards professional interpretation, quoting her as saying that professional language access services are “something we feel families are entitled to, and that we have an obligation to support and provide” (Monreal 2016).

While it remains unclear exactly when the district decided to transition away from the student-interpreter model, the decision was communicated to students on short notice at Back to School Night in Fall 2016. That year, DRHS estimated that 150 to 200 Spanish-speaking parents would attend the event, and accordingly, the school administration had requested 69 interpreters from the district. Normally, at least 70 to 80 student interpreters would be on site to serve that number of parents. Despite the large attendance estimate and the school’s formal request, the district instead hired 18 professional interpreters to staff the event that year, a much lower number than required. On the evening of Back to School Night, instead of allowing student-interpreters to assist in meeting the need as in previous years, a district administrator abruptly told Ms. Q and the student interpreters that the Student Interpreter Program had been cancelled, and that they would not be allowed to interpret for parents at all, despite the shortfall of professional interpreters. This decision led to an extensive lack of language access for over 150 Spanish-speaking parents who attended Back to School Night in 2016.

Students who had shown up at the event ready to interpret for parents, wearing their *DRHS en español* t-shirts, were abruptly told they could not do so at all during the event. Instead, they were given the option of working as “Bilingual Student Ambassadors.” In this new role, students were instructed that they would be able to guide parents around campus,

but were expressly forbidden from interpreting for parents and barred from entering classrooms. The professional interpreters hired by the district observed students to make sure these new restrictions were enforced. Students stood together on the school campus, trying to digest and process the news as the Back to School Night event began and parents started to arrive. As one student, Julio, would later tell me in an interview, some students were crying, others were angry, but all wanted the program back. Several students created a social media hashtag on the spot to begin speaking out about the cancellation of the program.

It is hard to overstate the effects that the school district's decision and its sudden implementation had on student interpreters and their families at Back to School Night that year – as one community member told me, it was a complete “cultural shock” for the school. Parents viewed the lack of adequate interpretation as a lack of respect for the school's Latinx community. Some parents who had taken time off work to attend were so angered by the lack of support that they left the event early, and several parents said they would not attend the event the following year. Likewise, teachers were frustrated that they did not have the necessary support to share information with all parents, and some teachers were in tears. When interviewed for the school's newspaper by a Latinx student reporter about the cancellation of the Interpreters Program, the principal voiced concern about the decision's effect on student interpreters: “I feel terrible about how the students feel. I feel worried, I feel pain, I feel regret. I have had some anxiety leading up to back-to-school night about this transition, and I certainly have a lot of anxiety about our transition now” (Monreal 2016). My dissertation research began in June 2016, three months before the program was officially cancelled by the district.

7. Conclusion

Given the stark inequalities of student outcomes along economic and racial divides as well as Latinx student experiences of belonging, programs like the Interpreters Program, along with SKILLS, are crucial supports for Latinx students in the setting of DRHS and the larger context of Goleta and Santa Barbara. The district's decision to end the Interpreters Program highlights the complex interplay of grassroots, non-profit, and district-based policies, practices, and ideologies in addressing language access at DRHS. Although United for Justice' advocacy eventually persuaded the district to move to a model of professional interpretation, it simultaneously marginalized the Latinx student interpreters, the exact type of organic community-centered, youth-led grassroots initiatives it generally supports and fosters through social justice organizing and training.

The district's decision also provides a unique inflection point from which to examine the impact of institutional validation on the work of youth language brokers. I discuss this issue extensively in Chapters 4 and 5, where I also examine students' and families' efforts to document and reinstate the program. In addition, this decision marked a dramatic turning point in my own research process, affecting the project in ways that eventually required me to entirely rework my goals, objectives, and methods. In the following chapter (Chapter 3), I detail how this development led me to create an engaged ethnographic project with members of the Bilingual Student Interpreters Program.

CHAPTER 3

Field As Flow: Engaged Ethnography and Emergent Strategy

The politics of translation make us ultraskeptical and ultracommitted.

— From *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation*
by artist activist group Antena Aire, 2013

1. “Our Ideas/Your Help”: Commitments & Complexities of Engaged Ethnography

When my research began in June 2016, I had already heard from the principal at DRHS that the student interpreters program might be ending sometime later that year. Some of the students working with the project had also heard this news through one of their peers whose parent was a member of the English Learners Advisory Committee at DRHS.⁸ As we began working together that summer, students and I decided to create and host a bilingual radio show about their experiences with interpreting, called “Found in Translation,” as a response to the news of the program's potential cancellation.

One evening early on in our program, the students came to the on-campus radio station for short one-on-one interviews with Perla Alvarez, my lead undergraduate research assistant. As Perla interviewed each student inside the studio, I was outside in the radio studio courtyard chatting with students about what kinds of topics they might want to discuss in their interviews with Perla. When I reviewed the footage from those interviews later that day, I admired Perla’s fast-paced, creative banter with each student as she supported them in

⁸ The English Learners Advisory Committee (ELAC) is a parent-led committee, elected by parents of English learners, that “advises, reviews and comments on the development of school programs for students learning English, including the expenditure of Title III funds and EIA” (DRHS 2020). Schools are legally required to have an ELAC committee anytime they have 21 or more students in the English learning program.

voicing their insights on language, identity, and interpreting. I started to pay closer attention as Alejandra, the president of the DRHS Interpreters Program, entered the studio and sat down in the guest chair. A committed student leader, Alejandra felt a deep investment in the Interpreters' Program. Later on in our research, I would come to learn that she understood the program as not only resistance to the raciolinguistic status quo within the context of DRHS, but also as her own and other Latinx students' "legacy" and lasting contribution to the school. Indeed, none of this research would have been possible without her constant leadership of and engagement with the larger group of student interpreters.

- Perla: And, can you introduce yourself please?
Alejandra: Alejandra.
Perla: Yaa:s yaa::s. So, she is one of our, um, actually she is one of the leaders in this project that we are doing with "Found in Translation," and we're just gonna ask a couple of questions. So, what do you do? How old are you?
Alejandra: I'm sixteen, and I'm an upcoming junior at Dos Rios High School, and yeah.
Perla: Nice. Why are you here right now?
Alejandra: Because, um, I love the project that, um, you all have created, and thought of, and um, yeah, I want to be a part of it.
Perla: What exactly about the project?
Alejandra: ((Pause)) Uh, the fact that you're using a lot of our ideas, um, and putting them into this project, and it means that, um, it's a little piece of, um, of our culture which is bilingual and Spanish and all of that.
Perla: So can you please explain to the crowd, our large listeners, what exactly are we doing right now, or what exactly do you want from this program and what we're doing exact- well I mean, with it, like what you mentioned.
Alejandra: ((Silence))
Perla: No? The leadership program you don't remember?
Alejandra: Oh. Um, that wasn't my idea, it was Lydia's but, um [((Laughter))]
Perla: [((Laughter))]
Alejandra: Um, something that I did mention was to, um, get help from you all to get back our interpreter program at our school?⁹ And um, I think that, with the help of you all it would be a lot better and we'd probably get it faster?
Perla: Nice.

⁹ Alejandra's "you all" refers to the UCSB research team, which consisted of myself and five undergraduate research assistants.

My heart dropped when I heard Alejandra say, “you’re using a lot of our ideas, um, and putting them into this project.” I interpreted that statement as frustration on her part around a lack of high school student ownership and agency in the project and potentially a fear of losing recognition for her work and leadership with the Interpreters Program. Alejandra’s words also brought one of my own fears into relief: that instead of supporting and amplifying youths’ voices around these issues, I was reproducing unequal power relations in my role as a white, mixed researcher with enough resources to shape the project in any direction. I also realized that those dynamics were most likely happening simultaneously.

In her interview, Alejandra demonstrates critical insight into the potentially problematic nature of institutional research with marginalized communities and researchers’ role within such work. Given the racist nature of anthropology’s beginnings and current underpinnings (L. Baker 2010), as well as its long curriculum vitae of extractivist ethnographies (Burman 2018), her skepticism is warranted. While I reflected on my research decisions, Perla didn’t miss a beat in ongoing interview time – she continued to engage Alejandra by asking about her own agenda for the program. In response, Alejandra outlined a clear, strategic objective for participating in the project: “to get help from you all to get back our interpreter program at our school.” She recognized and planned to utilize our power as university researchers in service of her ultimate goal, suggesting that it might even happen faster, more smoothly, with our help. After the above interview, I had to step back and reconsider my basic assumptions and hopes for the project. *How were students experiencing the project? Were we all on the same page with the goals? How could I hit restart with Alejandra so that she felt more ownership in the project? Could the project actually help*

students get the program back? What would that entail?

It was not unusual for me to leave an interaction with Alejandra with more questions than answers, and many of those questions pushed at my limits of comfort as an outside researcher-scholar-activist-ally. As we negotiated our relationship and roles over the course of the project, Alejandra constantly challenged me to consider and reconsider, examine and reexamine the goals and end benefits of this research, the privileges of my positionality, and how my stated ethical and political commitments to decolonizing, participatory, engaged, and self-reflexive research were translating (or not) to the research context. This short exchange between Perla and Alejandra highlights some of the ethical and methodological commitments underlying this research and the complexities of how they can play out in practice.

In this chapter, I offer a reflexive discussion of how I came to take up and develop my methodological framework – emergent strategy (brown 2017) – as I navigated shifting conditions in the research context and multiple commitments across my academic and professional roles. I describe the methods, motivations, and outcomes across each phase of slow, discontinuous ethnographic fieldwork (Carrington 2018) and the approaches I took towards data collection, transcription, analysis, and writing of this dissertation.

2. Humanizing Research

Critical self-reflexivity is key to humanizing, decolonizing, anti-racist, and critical feminist approaches to research on language (Ngũgĩ 1986; Anzaldúa 1987; Smith 1999; Paris & Winn 2014), especially within educational contexts (Tuck 2009; Tuck & Guishard 2013; Tuck & Yang 2014; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2018; Sperling 2020). Such approaches aim to refute and respond to the myth of positivism as neutral (Haraway 1991) and encourage

scholars to grapple with the fact that “the currents we ride (our agency, resistance, and complicity) are not in direct opposition to oppression and structures of power but are interwoven, messy, and web-like” (Collins 2000 cited in Saavedra & Pérez 2012:441), much like the issues I described in the excerpt above.

As a scholar-activist deeply committed to issues of social justice, racial justice, and youth agency, I drew upon engaged research methods for this project spanning collaborative and engaged ethnography (Lassiter 2005; Low & Merry 2010), activist ethnography (Urla & Helepololei 2014), and youth participatory action research (YPAR) (Camarota & Fine 2008; Camarota 2011; Irizarry 2011; Fine 2012). With deep roots in popular education and critical pedagogies (Freire 1970; Alim 2007), YPAR begins from the assumption that the everyday knowledge held by community members provides the foundation to develop action-based strategies for producing social change, especially within marginalized communities (Camarota 2011; Yosso 2005). It positions students as experts and knowledge-producers who engage as researchers and collaborators in the research process, which it recognizes as socioculturally and historically situated. However, as Sperling (2020) and others have noted, nothing inherent in YPAR prevents researchers from reproducing colonial relations of power. Avoiding this danger requires constant self-reflexivity, open dialogue, flexibility, making and repairing mistakes, and a willingness to hear refusal as part of the research process (Tuck & Yang 2014).

Recognizing these concerns, I strived to create a humanizing (Paris & Winn 2014) and desire-centered (Tuck 2009) stance towards research, rather than using instrumental or extractivist approaches. The students I worked with were complex humans, with their own ideas, experiences, perspectives, power, agendas, affects, and histories, but I also recognized

the power differential that existed between us. My goal was to ensure that students, their cultures, and their communities were “sustained, extended, and complicated outside of a dichotomy of reproduction and resistance, where human agency, complicity, and resistance live together in pedagogies toward liberation” (Tuck 2009:420). Thus, I developed four main principles that guided my research: to be reflexive, relational/reciprocal, responsive, and radiant. As these principles draw on participatory, emancipatory, and decolonial models, they are not new; however I have developed my own framework for understanding and implementing them. I loosely sketch each principle below and further explore how I both achieved and fell short of each one later in this chapter.

–**Reflexive:** committed to self-evaluation and self-critique; in a constant process of critical reflection on how the research context is affected by my positionality, privileges, power, access to space, time, financial and other resources; my ability to come and go; complicity in current power structures

–**Reciprocal, relational:** relationship-centered approach to research; relationship accountability; focus on building authentic relationships through dialogue; actively working to use my resources in ways that are useful to students and families

–**Responsive:** iteration, flow, emergence, “intentional adaptation” (brown 2017) to new situations, circumstances, and dynamics of collaboration; ethnography of “changing gears” (Farías 2017:41)

–**Radiant:** the importance of fun, pleasure, and joy as forms of resistance (Anzaldúa 1987; brown 2017; Wong & Peña 2017); play as a critical element of innovative work (Stewart & Kent 1991) and lasting social change (Sommer 2014); creativity as an intervention, resource, and resistance that lies outside the realm of the privileged (Smith

1999; Barry 2014).

This approach demands that I bring my whole, integrated self to the research process, which for me, meant negotiating my multiple overlapping roles as a researcher, scholar-activist, artist, and curator across academic, professional, and community contexts.

Throughout my dissertation research, I worked as a curator of public art and community engagement at a local contemporary art institution. The conversations and projects I took part in with socially-engaged artists through this role served as a kind of secondary, shadow graduate MFA program for me – one in which I found much overlap with the emancipatory, participatory foundations (Freire 1970, 1973; hooks 1994) of my engaged research and teaching practice, but greater freedom for aesthetic, speculative exploration and expression. I was enthusiastic about the political commitments of socially-engaged art and its capacity to momentarily transform society in ways that create visions of alternate, more liberatory realities and futures (Bourriaud 1998; Muñoz 2009; Helguera 2011; Gopinath 2019). However temporary or fleeting these visions may be within the context of performance, happenings, or interactive artworks, such visions of (re)making the world in more just ways are an important element in fostering long-term change.

As I started to learn more about these types of projects, I was energized by the many links and connections back to the academy, from public intellectuals championing this type of work, such as Doris Sommer in her excellent book *The Work of Art in the World* (2014), to professors launching innovative socially-engaged art projects with students, like Lorgía García Peña and her students' temporary collaborative art installations on Harvard's campus (García Peña 2018). Such examples inspired me to find links across and between my multiple roles and to embrace the unexpected possibilities they created, such as the opportunity for

students to interview artists, which I will discuss at a later point in this chapter.

Educational researcher, scholar, and artist Victoria Restler found artist and educator Patrick Slattery's words useful for negotiating her own multiple roles, as do I: "I believe that I am only effective and competent as an artist, researcher, and educator when I holistically integrate all three of these dimensions of my work. It is impossible to separate the three. Whenever anyone attempts to categorize my work, the results are disastrous. Suddenly, I no longer 'fit' anywhere" (Slattery 2003:195 quoted in Restler 2017:95). As a result of navigating these multiple roles, I was drawn to an interdisciplinary approach that allowed me to utilize relational, non-linear, lateral thinking to investigate and address "real-world" problems in collaboration with youth and community members in responsive ways (Russell et al. 2008; Stock & Burton 2011). I did so by drawing upon an eccentric archive of tools, strategies, and resources, found and forged through unexpected connections across these roles, disciplines, and practices.

In addition to my work at the museum, my approach to this project also grew from my past experience in producing multimedia projects, including a documentary film through UCSB's Blue Horizons environmental filmmaking program, and a radio show on UCSB's KJUC station, both of which provided me with foundational skills in software, hardware, and technology needed to lead youth multimedia projects. I looked to existing models of participatory youth-led filmmaking from the fields of education (Higgins et al. 2011) and film studies (Parker 2009), as well as examples of transformative, socially-engaged public arts initiatives (Helguera 2011; Sommer 2014) as important resources. These perspectives, along with unexpected developments in my research setting, pushed me to take up a framework of emergent strategy (brown 2017) in relationship to this project, which I discuss

in the following sections.

3. Retranslating The Research Site

Building on ethnographic insights gained during my time teaching and conducting preliminary research with SKILLS from 2014 to 2016, I collected data collaboratively with youth and their families in various educational and community contexts throughout Santa Barbara and Goleta from 2016 to 2018. Although I initially planned for a long-term, school-based collaborative ethnography working with a core group of students on-campus (Mendoza-Denton 2008; Bucholtz 2010; Rosa 2019), unexpected institutional challenges presented opportunities to do things in a different way as my research developed.

After I first approached Ms. Q with my research project idea, she invited me to start attending weekly meetings of the Parent Project, the bilingual parenting skills training she was facilitating that I described in Chapter 2. The Parent Project was a 12-week long program designed to help parents build new skills and strategies to understand and communicate in healthy ways with their teenagers. Held at La Patera Community Center (LPCC), a site which I will discuss further at a later point in this chapter, the meetings were two hours in length, and consisted of presentations along with both small- and large-group discussions.

During the Parent Project, I met parents, built relationships with families, and learned about parents' perspectives on their children, as well as their children's education. Attending on a weekly basis gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my commitment, consistency, and interest in students' families and lives outside of the school setting and helped me to build trust with parents. This opportunity prepared me for research with students in invaluable ways: I learned about how meetings were run and facilitated, discovered how important it

was to always have platters of hot food for evening meetings, and became aware of how important LPCC was for the Latinx community in Goleta. I also met Marcos, a student volunteer at the weekly Parent Project meetings, whom I ended up working with throughout multiple phases of the project. Toward the end of the course, after I had gotten to know and talk with most of the parents in small-group settings, Ms. Q invited me to introduce myself formally to the group, as well as pitch my research project, and invite interested parents and students to attend an information session the following week at the LPCC.

While attending the weekly Parent Project meetings, I had been preparing my research proposal and application for the Santa Barbara Unified School District; its approval was needed in order to carry out a participatory ethnographic project with student interpreters at DRHS. This process, similar to the University's human subjects institutional review board process for research with human subjects, requested scholars to demonstrate how their research would benefit the participating students, families and/or educators. The district's process also required researchers to develop working relationships with high-level administrators at each school where they wanted to conduct their research; applications were not considered without an endorsement from the school's principal.

Although I had built a strong relationship with Ms. Q, I was less familiar with the school's then-principal, Ms. Davis. I spoke with Ms. Q about the best way to approach my initial contact with Ms. Davis, and she gave me some tips for my email while also offering to do some legwork on my behalf. During our initial phone conversation following my email in March 2016, the principal voiced nothing but strong appreciation for the student interpreter club, stating that normally she would be supportive of such a research application. However, she told me that as an outcome of the district's recently stated commitment to provide quality

language access services to parents, it was likely that the district's schools would be moving to a model of professional interpreters for Back to School Night sometime that year, which meant that the future of the Student Interpreters Program was in doubt.

Although this news surprised me, I still wanted to proceed with a research project with the students, even if their program had a chance of ending soon. Based on this new information, I tried to rework my application within the district's deadline, but later that spring, my research proposal was rejected. I was both disappointed and frustrated: *How could I work with youth interpreters at school when I couldn't be "at school"? Would I be able to pivot and develop a different research structure working outside of the school, off-campus? How would we find a central location to meet? Would students even make the effort to travel to an off-campus location? Most importantly, what kind of project would we do? How would we structure it?* I knew that if the project was going to take place off-campus, it was going to require an entire universe of coordination (text messages, transportation, timing, equipment, locations), and probably a few research assistants to help with those tasks. Dismayed, I found myself back in Ms. Q's office, discussing possibilities for moving forward while still proceeding diplomatically with DRHS faculty and administrators.

While the district's decision was disappointing, Ms. Q pointed out the main advantage she saw in having to rework the project: since I would be unfettered by either the school or the district's institutional limitations, the project could fully develop in any way that the students and I chose. She also mentioned that the district had previously attempted to move to a model using professional interpreters, but that it had been unsuccessful as it had not provided an adequate number of professional interpreters to meet parents' needs. As a result, it was unclear if the Student Interpreters Program would really be ending or not. In

addition, the relationships I had begun to develop through the Parent Project would allow me a different way to connect with and recruit students to participate. So a few weeks later, with a handful of parents and students signed up to come to an introductory project meeting, I felt excited to regroup and continue in this new direction. The ethnographer and artist in me knew that unexpected challenges were also likely the part where things got interesting – what I didn't know was that this would be the first of many pivots required throughout the research project as circumstances and contexts continued to shift in surprising ways. These challenges came at different points in the research, and while some felt manageable in the moment and I had a general intuition of how to respond, others necessitated fundamental changes in the scope and direction of this project. To handle them, I turned to emergent strategy.

4. Emergent Strategy

Emergent strategy is a justice-oriented methodology-philosophy developed by adrienne maree brown (2017), a queer Black multiracial scholar, writer, facilitator, and pleasure activist from Detroit. Originally inspired by the “adaptive and relational leadership model found in the work of Black science fiction writer Octavia Butler (and others),” brown, along with multiple collaborators, has grown emergent strategy into “plans of action, personal practices, collective organizing tools, and strategies for justice and liberation” (2017:20).

Rather than deciding on one specific goal for a project ahead of time, emergent strategy aims to shape “the conditions through which a group can engage in relatively simple interactions to generate many possibilities (even contradictory ones), then explore and try out and adapt these possibilities into actions in support of moving toward a shared goal or goals” (Gold 2019). It advocates for collaborative, experiential forms of learning that center

inspiration, affect, interdependence, multiplicity, and openness to change and growth, rather than rigid and overly developed plans, perfectionism, and a single universally-agreed upon goal. In other words, collaborating through “intentional adaptation” means “less prep, more presence” and “less on point, more on purpose” (brown 2017). brown observes that “how we live and grow and stay purposeful in the face of constant change actually does determine both the quality of our lives, and the impact that we can have when we move into action together” (2017:69).

As I began to implement this nonlinear, adaptive, and iterative approach to working with students, I also saw connections with the concept of slow ethnography (Carrington 2018), a more ethical form of engaged ethnography that centers relationships with research participants and works discontinuously over longer periods of time. My slow, emergent strategy approach had some successes: the students and I were able to let the project grow organically into four distinct project phases carried out over fifteen months, and they came up with innovative directions and ideas for the project that I could not have imagined before. Yet at the same time, I feel the project’s multiple strands and the drawn-out research period actually hindered the possibility of accomplishing some students’ goal of reinstating the Interpreters Program. I detail how I applied my slow, emergent strategy approach in the next section.

5. Project Phases

In this section, I describe each of the four phases of my research in depth along with photographs and images that illustrate students’ work and our collaborative activities at each of these stages. Given the responsive, discontinuous nature of the project, each project phase

was its own capsule, emerging in relation to the particular situated nature of that context, the specific students participating at the time, and the goals we articulated at that moment. As a result, the project was in a constant process of translation, retranslation, assembly and disassembly, as some students left, new students entered, and other students returned at different points. Thus, the research process formed a continuous conversation and dialogue with students, as we negotiated our collaborative, sometimes conflicting understandings from our first days in the radio studio to the last meeting we had together.

In June 2016, I worked with Ms. Q to schedule an initial meeting with Latinx student interpreters and their families who had expressed interest in participating in the project. I chose to host the meeting at a local community center, La Patera Valley Community Center (LPCC), which was familiar to many of the families with whom I would likely be working. I chose this site for a variety of reasons. A visually unremarkable low one-story building located in the Old Town area of Goleta, the LPCC lay behind old oak trees, almost hidden from the main road that passed it. Yet despite its quiet exterior, the LPCC was a locus of community activity, events, and gatherings in Goleta, a parallel of sorts to the central role that Ms. Q's office played at DRHS. The LPCC had many meeting rooms centered around an open dance hall and cafeteria space with a large stage, and each area was alive with activity, workshops, community organizations, meetings, and events. After school, Ms. Q led the Parent Project there, a series of Mesoamerican history and yoga classes took place there (which I took along with Karla, one of the students who eventually participated in this project), and the LPCC was also the site of an immensely popular Zumba class attended by the mothers of many of the students I worked with. Parents trusted their children to be able to arrive and spend time at the community center safely. The LPCC offered low, reduced hourly

rates for nonprofit groups, and crucially, it was reachable by several bus lines, so that students could get there from school or home. Seeing the role that the LPCC played in the community, how familiar families were with it, and its logistic ease for students, I decided I would host the majority of our research and project meetings there.

Five students and three parents showed up the first day, along with a team of five undergraduate research assistants from UCSB. During the hour-long meeting, I introduced myself as well as the broader questions of my larger research project. I then led a collaborative brainstorming session about language to identify what issues the students and parents were most interested in focusing on; Figure 3a captures the results of our group discussion. The role of students as interpreters, language, race and the educational system, and language access in Santa Barbara Unified School District were the most widely discussed topics, and I began to develop a program structure based around collaborative exploration of these issues. I also shared some potential project ideas of my own, and the students were most enthusiastic about the possibility of hosting a collaborative radio show together on UCSB's AM/FM radio stations, KJUC AM/KCSB FM, especially as a response to the news that the student interpreters program might be ending.

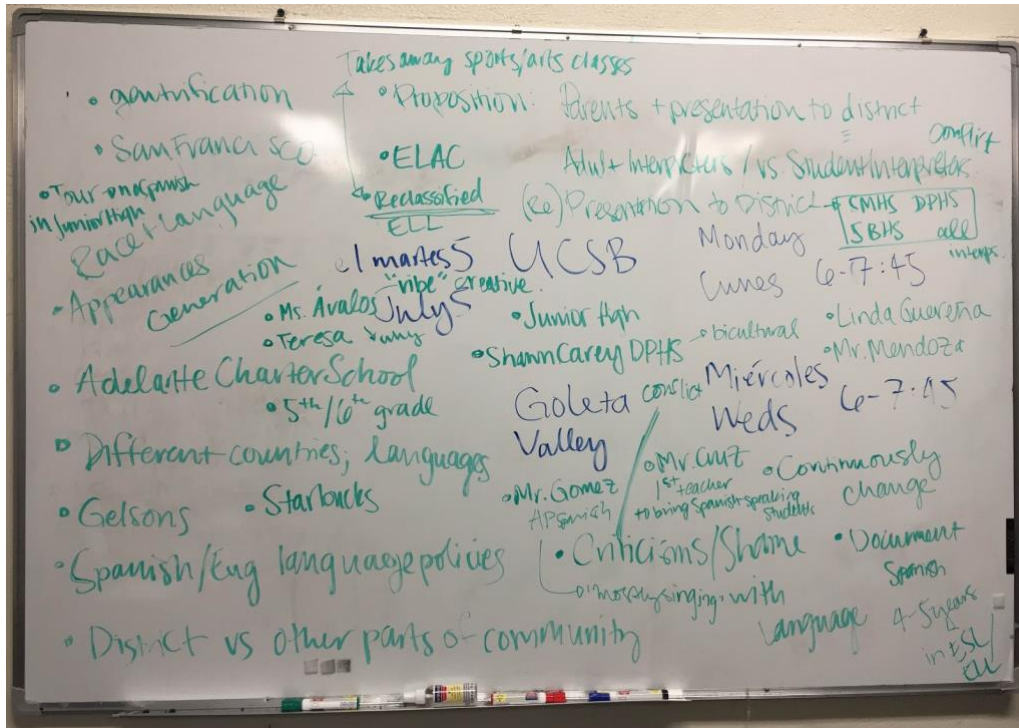


Figure 3a: Whiteboard at LPCC filled with ideas and concepts collaboratively generated during the first meeting in June 2016 with DRHS students and parents who were interested in participating in the project.

Phase 1: Found in Translation Campus Radio Show (June 2016 - September 2016)

A bilingual show broadcast on the campus radio station seemed like an ideal medium for multiple goals of the project: to amplify, support, and bring awareness to students' work as language brokers, to begin a community-wide conversation around youth interpreters, and to support students in gaining multimedia production and interviewing skills. As a non-commercial, community-based station broadcasting for the public interest, KCSB strived to host educational and alternative programming for a broad audience in Santa Barbara, Goleta, and Montecito. Funded by an annual Associated Students fee, KCSB offers free broadcasting training to students and other community members who are interested in becoming radio programmers. In addition, there is a long history of public advocacy and political activism over the airwaves of Spanish-language and bilingual radio stations within US Latinx

communities (Casillas 2014). As a result, the radio show would form a public platform through which students could share their views on language brokering and have them heard by a wide, community-based listening public. These qualities paired with the station's location on campus – accessible by bus for students – made it an excellent fit to host a public affairs show with students. Through the six-week training period on the AM station required to move to the FM station, students would be able to develop new media, research, and interview skills that would be helpful for both high school and college coursework.

I was connected to UCSB's campus radio station in several ways. I had previously hosted my own radio show on KJUC-770/880AM, *The Sonic In-Between*, through which I interviewed a wide range of artists and graduate students on topics connected to Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of *la frontera*/the borderlands. I had also volunteered to lead computer literacy workshops for Indigenous Mexican women radio broadcasters who hosted shows on a low-power FM station in nearby Oxnard. In addition, my housemate and her colleague hosted a KCSB radio show, *The Transatlantic Phenomenon*, which played music from the 1940s to 1960s from West Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Their show had a large following of teenage Latinx listeners, who showed up en masse to their booth at a KCSB public event I attended, so I thought the radio show had a good chance of connecting the students and their stories to a larger community of youth and adult listeners in Santa Barbara.

By the time the radio project finally got underway in early July 2016, I was working with a new group of students I had met through my connections with the Parent Project, but whom I had never taught in my SKILLS class at DRHS, which had finished a year earlier. This dynamic was interesting because I had to build trust with these students from square one – we had no pre-existing relationship. Yet as we went along, we discovered various links and

connections between us. One student, Marcos, was the younger brother of one of my SKILLS students. Another student, Karla, had attended the same series of Mesoamerican history workshops and yoga classes at LPCC that I had. I also found out that some of these students had taken other SKILLS courses taught by my graduate student colleagues. I introduce each one of my youth collaborators below.

Student Participants and Research Assistants



Figure 3b. Students and research assistants who participated in the Summer 2016 Found in Translation radio show.

One of my research assistants, Elaine Wong, held a workshop with students to develop short autobiographies for the project, which I have included below in their own words. Not all students I worked with were present on that particular workshop day, and some were not yet participating in the project at that point. In those cases, I have included only my own descriptions of them.

Alejandra

My name is Alejandra Hidalgo Magaña, I am sixteen and without a clue as to what my name means. I'm an only child and a proud Latina who is privileged enough to have a mother that taught me the importance of knowing two languages, English and Spanish. I'm an upcoming Junior at Dos Rios High School and on my way to Loyola Marymount University, my dream college. I have a passion for learning about art, history, and music. I love to learn not only about mi querido Mexico, but about all the different and unique cultures that are out there. Even though I'm a teen and would rather do anything else than hanging out with mom and dad, I will always appreciate some family time, especially when I can beat my dad at monopoly, since he calls himself el ganador for everything!

Marian

Lil' Mar here. I am currently sixteen and go to this institution called Dos Rios for nine months out of the year for four years trying to obtain a piece of paper and the great gift of more school. Fun. Besides that super fun activity of sitting at a desk for eight hours a day, I enjoy kayaking, being outdoors, lacrosse, photography, playing with dogs and babies (they're so cute), spending time with family, and watching Bones or How To Get Away with Murder. I enjoy stuffing my stomach with tacos, crepes, steak, french fries, and tornado potato.

Karla

Hello! My name is Karla Pradilla. I am currently an upcoming Junior at Dos Rios High School. I am Mexican American with Mexican parents. Despite my parents' immigration to a foreign country, I always like to keep in touch with my roots. I love dancing and listening to both my cultures' music. Without a doubt the most enjoyable, authentic and unique way to get in touch with my roots is visiting mi tierra mexicana. It's a true gift being Mexican American. It means I can love hamburgers and tacos; pop and banda; speak English and Spanish...well, you get the idea.

Jackie

Hello, my name is Jackie! I'm 16 and going into junior year at Dos Rios High. I really enjoy singing, and music in general. I'm an only child to parents who insisted on only speaking Spanish at home from a very early age. I wasn't so happy about it then, but now, I'm so thankful they did this because being bilingual is so helpful and has impacted my life in many ways. Thankfully I have two wonderful parents who love me and support me in everything I do, even if they've thrown la chancla an abundance of times. Thanks to this support I've been given the green light to study whatever I wish, but I've still got two years to decide. Quite frankly, I don't know what I'm doing with my life yet, but I guess that's okay and I'll figure it out. Eventually.

Marcos

Hi, my name is Marcos Gonzalez. I'm 17 and going into my senior year at Dos Rios High School. I am originally from Zacatecas, Mexico and I came to America to experience new things and learn English. Being bilingual is great because I can speak to so many types of people from all over the world. Speaking Spanish and English allows me to talk to so many more people. I love playing soccer and fixing up old cars.

Griselda

Hello! My name is Gris and I am 22 years old, I'm from San Luis Potosi Mexico, I work for a magazine called "Brick Lane MX," I am the creative director and I run the fashion section. I study graphic design at UASLP (Autonomy University of San Luis Potosi), and this is my last year of university. I am here because of my cousin Jackie, she invited me to join this project and it sounded very interesting so I decided to join. I am very excited to see where this goes. I am a model, I love art, photography and fashion.

Aina

Hi! My name is Aina and I am 15 years old, I'm from San Luis Potosi Mexico, I practice soccer. I think this project is cool because this is a very good way to help the person who live here and doesn't have the access for a better life. I'm going to High School, I'm about to start my first year. I love animals and I want to protect all the abused animals. I like the rain and I like kpop :b The reason I'm here is because my cousin Jackie invited me to spend my summer vacations with her and she invited me to join to this project and I thought it was a great idea. I love nature.

Eva

Eva lived a few blocks away from DRHS with her mom and older sister who taught yoga. Like her older sister, Eva loved yoga, health food, and art. When I met her, Eva preferred speaking in English and was actively practicing her Spanish with her peers and family, especially during annual trips to Mexico each winter. In the summer of 2016, she had recently begun interpreting with DRHS to help parents access online services for school. Eva participated in the radio show and art and language phases of the project (Phase 1 & 2) and eventually went on to study art at the nearby community college.

Julio

A rising senior at DRHS, Julio was involved in many on- and off-campus organizations from MECHA to Los Intérpretes to Future Leaders of America. He wore glasses, was outgoing, loved to interpret, and loved to discuss food. He mentioned he was excited about the possibility of hosting a cooking show on the radio, although he acknowledged the logistics might be difficult. Julio participated only in the summer radio show part of this research; once school began, his schedule became very busy again.

Dante

Dante was a senior honors student at DRHS and an active member of the student interpreters' club.

He was also deeply involved with local activist organizations and social justice coalitions around Goleta and Santa Barbara, often attending activist meetings and performing spoken word poetry at public events. Dante and his parents participated in the student and parent interviews for this project, and Dante later worked as a paid volunteer for an art workshop I organized through the museum.

Carolina

Carolina was a rising junior at DRHS, and close friends with Alejandra. Carolina enjoyed being involved in and helping out by volunteering within her larger Latinx community, and attended after school programs at La Casa del Raza, a local non-profit dedicated to empowering the Latinx community and sustaining Latinx cultural heritage in Santa Barbara. She often took her younger brother to events, programs and workshops, even within our project, where I was moved by how kind, caring, and loving she was towards him.

Jaime

Although Jaime had been part of another graduate instructor's SKILLS class, I got the chance to connect with him and several other students at the 2015 end-of-the-year AVID dinner. He had been part of the interpreters program for four years, and had a great relationship with Ms. Q. A talented public speaker, Jaime went on to become a very politically engaged college student activist, speaking out on campus and performing at spoken word poetry events on issues of social and racial justice. His activism was one of the reasons he left a local conservative Christian college after his first year and transferred to a larger state university. He participated only once in the program when we met on campus at UCSB during winter break in December 2016 to do a joint interview about the interpreters program with his friend Angela.

Angela

Angela had been one of my SKILLS students at DRHS, and after the course ended, we became and stayed contacts on Instagram. She had participated in the interpreters program throughout high

school, and was one of the only Latina members of the school's Leadership club. A master of dead-pan humor, Angela always had a quick take and sharp insights on whatever was going on around her at a given moment. She was in her first year of college at UC Riverside when she joined Jaime and me for our group interview on campus in December 2016.

Kicking Things Off: Students Interview Artist Cruz Ortiz

The students and I decided to meet once a week at UCSB to plan the radio show, and to hold a second weekly meeting to host and record the show. While not every student attended every meeting, ten students participated throughout the summer, and a core group of six participated in almost every meeting and show. We went through two six-week training rounds on the KJUC AM station, which broadcast locally to the campus residence halls. During that period, the KJUC program manager listened to and provided feedback on each week's show.

In preparing for our radio show, I wanted to provide students with support and practice as it began, so I suggested we do a collaborative interview for the first week we were on air. Cruz Ortiz, an artist whose art and activism work resonated strongly with issues that students had brought up in our initial meeting – bilingualism, translation, the politics of language and race and education – was in town for a museum visit I was coordinating. As Cruz had previously created and led his own bilingual radio show on a pirated station as an art project, I thought he would be a great resource for students to speak with as they developed ideas for the show. I asked Cruz if he would be willing to be interviewed collaboratively by students and me as part of our first radio interview, and he agreed.



Figure 3c. Cruz Ortiz. "Beto the Bear (Siege Tower)." Mobile sculpture and pirate radio station tower, 2010. Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, TX. Photo Credit: Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

The week prior to the interview, students and I met to do research on Cruz Ortiz so that they could become familiar with his work and in order for us to collaboratively develop a list of questions for the interview. Though I was expecting the interview to be a loosely structured conversation that emerged organically, I wanted students to feel prepared and to have some resources to draw upon in case they needed them, and to gain experience in preparing for leading their own interviews later in the summer. Throughout the interview, Cruz spoke with students about the subversive power of art, the importance of creating tangible pieces of art with one's own hands, European and Mexican art history, to his own experience creating a pirate radio station and show called "Beto the Bear Radio." He gave students advice for their radio show that ranged from making posters for it, to interviewing friends on it, to not thinking too hard or too long before taking action on an idea: "Don't think ever. Don't think. Not yet. Just do." While students were quiet at first, they grew more

comfortable with Cruz as the interview went on, asking him about his artwork, music, and his emotions connected to both. Towards the end of the interview, Cruz inquired about students' ideas for radio shows – Julio said he would like to host a cooking show, Carolina said she would like to play music and interview her friends about their favorite songs, while Alejandra shared that she wanted to interview Ms. Q about the interpreters program. I felt encouraged as it seemed students felt inspired and excited to begin the radio show the following week. Overall, the interview with Cruz Ortiz set the tone for our creative, open-ended approach to the radio show, and the conversation eventually influenced my decision to take an art-based approach to later phases of the project.

I approached planning the radio show in an open-ended and collaborative manner, and thus I focused on following students' leads, rather than imposing my own ideas for the project. There was some conflict at first with this approach, as students had different agendas for the radio show. One student in particular felt that we should focus the show on interpreter-related topics, while many others wanted to interview a wide variety of people not necessarily connected to the narrow theme of interpreting. "Friction" between different agendas is common in collaborative approaches to ethnography (Tsing 2004). However, emergent strategy thrives on abundance, on possibilities, and on opening toward multiple strands of action rather than on a "quick narrowing" of options to one agreed upon objective (brown 2017:156). My response was therefore to encourage each student to pursue what they wanted to do, building on their particular strengths, expertise, and interests. Some students worked specifically on interpreter-related items, like Alejandra, who interviewed Ms. Q, while others used the opportunity to explore language-related topics that were more meaningful to them, such as interviewing their parents or an educator who had had an impact

on them. This approach was effective and in line with my research ethics — I could see students thrive when pursuing topics that were important to them. Yet it was a logistical challenge to manage so many directions simultaneously, and my solution did not necessarily address the underlying “friction”—this divergence among students’ agendas persisted throughout all phases of the project. As a researcher, I did not consider this divergence a problem, as I felt it was more ethical to support students’ agency in pursuing topics that were meaningful to them. However, this emergent, multistrand approach and its lack of a united goal across students may have been frustrating for students like Alejandra, who had a clear and collective purpose of making sure the Interpreters Program continued.

In the first half of the summer-long show, students scheduled and conducted interviews, gaining hands-on audio and video experience in the process. Each student chose one person in their life to interview who was a role model or had impacted their understanding and use of language in some way. Some students chose to invite parents or other important people to the studio to interview on air, such as Eva, who invited her mother to the studio interview. Some students chose to interview people off-site and bring the recordings back to the studio, where we replayed them on air and asked students to reflect on their experience of the interview process. Marcos, who had extensive networking skills, was able to schedule an interview and tour with the Mexican Consulate in Oxnard (Figure 3c). Karla chose to interview the founder of a local Mesoamerican history nonprofit organization where she took classes. Alejandra chose to interview Ms. Q and her husband (Figure 3d), and also tried to schedule an interview with local congressman Salud Carbajal, as she knew his personal assistant, although the timing ended up not working.



Figures 3c and 3d. Marcos interviews the Consul of México in Oxnard; Alejandra interviews Ms. Q in Goleta.

The conversations that students had with their interviewees were one of the successes of this part of the project —topics ranged from bicultural identity, to politics between the US and Mexico, to the importance of growing up bilingual, to Indigenous cultures of Central America. One of the challenges with this stage of the project was the preparation and travel coordination between myself, students, research assistants, and the interviewees to conduct and record the interviews off-site. Although we were able to play some clips of these interviews on air during our show, we eventually made the decision only to interview guests in person in the radio studio, in order to simplify logistics.

After students completed their interviews with their role models, they were more comfortable with each other and with me, as well as with the radio show project as a whole. At this point, we began doing short interviews with each student on air. Students chose music to play from the KCSB library, developed questions for each other and for me and/or Perla, the lead UCSB research assistant. Each interview was about 20 to 25 minutes long and again focused on issues of language, culture, race, education, and language access in Santa

Barbara. Several additional research assistants (Andrés Montiel, Zach Cabading, Suna Gedik, Elaine Wong, and Molly O’Shea) met with us each week to film, record, and join in discussions. Similar to the SKILLS program, I met with this research team weekly to discuss how the week had gone, review footage, and discuss next steps in the project. Overall, the summer iteration of “Found in Translation” was a huge learning process for me and for the students. While initially I struggled to organize and coordinate all of the different dimensions of the project, once we decided to focus on in-studio radio interviews, it became more manageable for me and the students.



Figure 3e. Griselda and Aina in the radio studio for their interviews with Perla.

Phase 2: Video Interviews for the District (December 2016-January 2017)

This project shifted in the fall with the arrival of various unexpected challenges. On Back to School Night in September 2016, the district abruptly and officially cancelled the

Student Interpreters Program and replaced it with district-appointed professional interpreters. Yet, as described in Chapter 2, the district did not hire enough interpreters to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking parents who attended the event, leading to a comprehensive lack of language access services that evening. Although I had received an earlier warning about the program's potential cancellation from the school's principal, I learned about the district's official cancellation in early September 2016 through the project's last radio interview with Julio, who had been present on campus when students were notified of the district's decision.

The day after learning about the interpreters program cancellation, I travelled to the East Coast for two weeks for a pre-planned visit with family, and so I was not present to help students navigate this crucial moment. I tried to provide support via phone, holding several calls at the airport with Marcos, but was unable to be there in person, and thus, the support I was able to provide was very limited. This was frustrating and disappointing for both me and the students – at the moment when I might be most able to support and help students, I was absent. While Marcos and several other students understood why I was not able to be there, I heard from them that Alejandra felt like I was not able to provide the support I had stated I wanted to provide.

Through a later conversation with Alejandra, I came to understand that she felt frustrated that she could not count on me as a strong collaborator at such a crucial moment for the program. As I would also learn later in the fall, Alejandra and several other students were working at that point in time to organize a meeting with a district administrator to protest the cancellation of the program, even going to two nearby high schools to ask student interpreters at those schools to join DRHS students in meeting with the district.

As the school year was beginning to get busy for students and me and the radio show

had finished, students and I did not meet for several weeks, and soon afterward, in early November 2016, Donald Trump was elected president of the United States. The election of an openly racist, sexist, and xenophobic candidate was both devastating and dangerous. It felt simultaneously overwhelming, unbelievable, and in some cases, numbing to many of the student interpreters I was in touch with at that time, especially those with undocumented friends and family. It completely shifted the focus of students' and my attention away from our project and the interpreters program as a whole. While several of the students and I texted back and forth about the election during that month, we did not make any plans to meet.

In early December 2016, a month after Trump's election, Ms. Q reached out to me to inquire how the project was going. She invited me to join her and Mr. Q after work at a local pizza place where they would later be meeting with some parents from the school. Over our slices, they shared with me that Latino Parent Alliance had been able to schedule a meeting to advocate for continuing the Student Interpreters Program until the district could provide enough professional interpreters to meet parents' needs. In attendance at that meeting would be several parents, Ms. and Mr. Q, several district administrators, and the district superintendent. However, no students were invited or allowed to attend the meeting, and not all parents would be able to attend due to their work schedules.

Ms. and Mr. Q asked if I would be willing to create materials for the meeting that would speak to the work the students and I were doing about the Interpreters Program, as a way of including additional voices in the meeting. We discussed some possibilities and ultimately settled on inviting parents and students in for a series of interviews that I would edit and put together as a short video to be shown to the district at the meeting. This series of

interviews constituted an opportunity for students' and parents' voices to be heard by the district, and for them to share what material and affective consequences the decision had for parents who did not receive language access services that year.

While I was excited for this opportunity, I was also hesitant to reach out to students, since I had left things on hold with them earlier in the fall, with no clear communication around when we would meet again. I let Ms. Q know I had taken a step back after my last reflections and check-in with Alejandra, who had communicated that she wanted to lead her own project about the Interpreters Program. Ms. Q understood and appreciated students' desire to create something by themselves, but encouraged me to reach back out to Alejandra, saying, "These students have a lot of talent, and they need a mentor! They need someone who can help bring it all together." So I reached back out to Alejandra, inviting her to be a leader and collaborator on this next leg of the project. We texted back and forth to discuss and clear up what had happened earlier in the fall, and I hired her as lead research assistant for the series of video interviews for the district meeting.

In the mid-December 2016, Alejandra invited families and students to come to the LPCC for interviews, often leading the interview herself or co-leading the interview with me. A total of eleven parents and eleven students were interviewed during this phase. Each interview lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and often included conversations between Alejandra, myself, and the interviewee, as seen in Figure 3f with Dante.



Figure 3f: Alejandra, Dante, myself, and cameraman Michael in a joint interview for the district meeting.

Three research assistants worked to coordinate and film the interviews. Student interviewees articulated the impacts of the program’s cancellation, and often cited specific raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit that they felt were being used against their cause. Parents shared about the benefits of the Student Interpreters Program, as well as parents’ affective experiences of the district’s decision to cancel the program. After the interviews concluded and I reviewed the footage, I worked with Mr. Q back and forth through email over winter break to develop a structure for the short video that connected to the meeting agenda and list of talking points he, Ms. Q, the students, and the group of parent representatives had generated. I edited the interviews into a five-minute video that was shared at the meeting with the school district in early January 2017. The transcript and stills from this video can be found in Appendix 2.

Phase 3: Art & Language (January-August 2017)

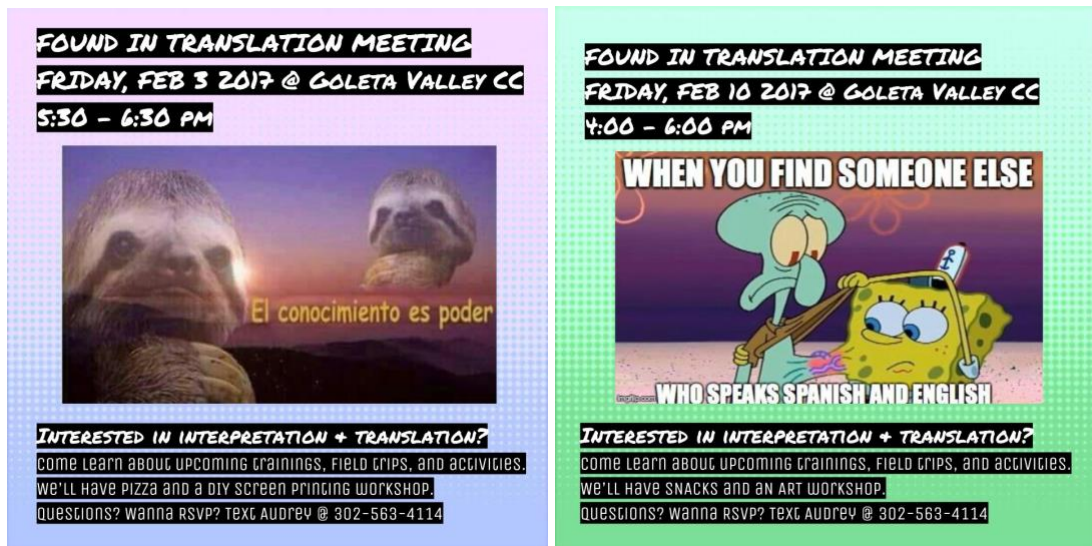
After the parents’ meeting with the district, it became clear that the Student

Interpreters Program would not be reinstated. There was no official announcement —instead, the long silence made clear that the district was not likely to reverse its decision and would use a professional interpreters model moving forward. Both students and I felt the heaviness of this ending, and these feelings showed up in complex and nuanced ways: combinations of energy, sadness, exhaustion, anger, disinterest, and cynicism affected students’ varying levels of engagement with our group at that time. As a researcher and educator, I was concerned about the loss of their program. I wanted to create a platform that could support projects and trainings around students’ interests in interpretation and language in general, as well as provide them with tools and resources to move forward in the directions they chose.

Reflecting back upon the success of the students’ interview with Cruz Ortiz and his focus on art-based activism, I remembered Cruz’ quote, “Don’t think. Not yet. Just do.” I thought it could be valuable to connect students with artists, especially artists who were working in multiple languages and whose practices centered on socially-engaged work and activism. I was also interested in creating opportunities for students to be able to express and explore their affective experience about the program’s cancellation through making art, to be able to create tangible pieces of art, as Cruz noted in his interview. In reflecting later on my field notes from this time, I realized that this shift towards materiality may have also been part of my own response to the jarring experience of the district’s decision and devaluation of students’ work as interpreters. When so much is shifting, being able to create tangible items with one’s hands provides some sense of agency as a maker. As Sommer observes in *The Work of Art in the World*: “Between frustrated fantasies and paralyzing despair, agency is a modest but relentless call to creative action, one small step at a time” (2014:4). For these reasons, I developed a 10-week curriculum centered around art-based activism workshops, a

studio visit with a local printmaker, and a day trip to Los Angeles to visit museums and an artist’s studio. I gave students small tripods for their smartphones in order to capture short videos of whatever they felt was important in their lives. We also started to use a Polaroid camera (in addition to a DSLR video camera) to document our meetings. Alejandra borrowed our DSLR video camera and large tripod to do some recording at her home and in Ms. Q’s office on the DRHS campus.

Students and I held eight bi-weekly meetings at the LPCC from January to March 2017. To invite students to these meetings, I created flyers based on memes that students had chosen and selected over the summer during Phase 1 of the project. Meetings, held on Friday afternoons, involved pizza, tacos, conversations, brainstorming for project activities, art-based activism activities, and planning for various field trips. Students began each meeting by responding to a short written prompt as we waited for other students to arrive. This helped to jumpstart conversation and spark ideas. Examples of the meeting flyers (*Figures 3g-3h*) and written response prompts (*Figures 3i-3l*) are below:



Figures 3g-3h: Examples of flyers based on student-selected memes.



Figures 3i-3l: Examples of students' handwritten response prompts.

This phase of the project centered on three major events: a studio visit to a local printmaker, an artist-guided letter-writing workshop, and a field trip to Los Angeles to visit several museums and an artist studio. I have described and provided images of each one of these activities below. During this phase of the project, student participation varied. Two to

three core students came to each meeting, but a larger number attended only the meetings and activities that were most interesting to them. This particular challenge is familiar for many educators running optional, after-school programs (e.g., Bax & Ferrada 2018; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2018).

Printshop Studio Visit & Logo Design

During the student interviews over winter break, it had become clear how much the group interpreting t-shirt had meant to students, so as part of this phase of the project, students and I decided to create a new logo and t-shirt for the group of students participating in the project. I asked a Goleta-based graphic designer and printshop, Foundation Press, to design a logo for the students, which were then printed onto t-shirts and button-up shirts that the students chose. I found out the owner and head artist of Foundation Press had grown up with and was good friends with Ms. Q's sons, so he knew Ms. and Mr. Q well, and was excited to help out with our project. He developed two logos for students to choose from, as seen in Figures 3m and 3n, and also agreed to host a studio visit for students after they had chosen a logo, and when the t-shirts were printed and ready to pick-up. I brought the logos to the meeting with students, and they eventually chose the logo in Figure 3m which featured a red conversation bubble symbol with the word "Found in Translation" in large text, against an aqua-colored sky background. Since the studio was only three blocks from LPCC, on the day the t-shirts were ready, we walked over, and students filmed as we went. The artist showed and demonstrated each step of his creative process: designing and drawing the logo, exposing and making silkscreens with which to print the image, selecting and loading inks in the silkscreen machine, and then printing the image onto t-shirts. He even waited to print the students' t-shirts until they were in the studio, so they could actually see their shirts being

printed, as seen in Figure 3o. Students had chosen grey t-shirts and maroon bowling-style short-sleeve button-up shirts that were literally being rolled off the presses as we watched. Students took photographs and recorded the visit, as well as posted it on social media. When the visit ended, the artist boxed up the shirts, and we took them back to LPCC for students to take to Ms. Q as well as friends who had ordered one. This studio visit was important as it created a sense of collective identity for participating students and increased the cohesiveness of our group at that time.



Figures 3m-3n: Possible logos designed by Foundation Press. Students chose the text-based logo to the left.



Figure 3o: Foundation Press Instagram post of students' visit as the shop manager demonstrated the press.

Letter-Writing Campaign to District

In one of our meetings that January, the students expressed wanting to take action to reach out to the district again about the interpreters program. During the interviews over winter break, I had learned about one student interpreter who had taken the initiative to write a letter to the district, in which he advocated for the program's return. Inspired by his actions, I invited a local artist, Sondra Weiss (a pseudonym), to host a political letter-writing workshop for students as a way of communicating their collective message to the district. Sondra's project, called "The Lost Art of Love Letters," brought together all of the materials needed to write, craft, and send a hand-written letter around a political or personal theme. She brought a mailbox to every workshop, and after folks finished and deposited their letters, she mailed them. It is a simple yet powerful premise, and her workshops have been featured multiple times at the United Nations Youth Summit for Climate Change, as well as other international youth summits. In Santa Barbara and Goleta, Sondra had facilitated letter-writing workshops in partnership with local non-profits on topics ranging from Letters to Mental Health, Letters for Climate Change, and Letters for Racial and Social Justice. The timing of our letter writing seemed promising, as the week of the workshop a local newspaper ran an article entitled, "Learning to Listen: Q & A with School Superintendent Cary Matsuoka" (Hamm 2017), as seen in Figure 3p.



Figure 3p. The week of the letter writing workshop with the students, the Santa Barbara Independent newspaper ran an article entitled, "Leading by Listening," which featured then-Superintendent Dr. Cary Matsuoka.

I shared this information with students, and yet when the workshop took place, students asked if they had to write to the district, or if they could write to anyone they chose. I left it up to them, and in the end, no students chose to write to the district. Marcos wrote a letter to his father, Carolina wrote a letter to Ms. Q, Carolina's younger brother wrote a letter to his parents. While I was slightly disappointed that no one besides Sondra and I had taken up the opportunity to write to the district, I was also happy that students felt comfortable in agentively deciding how to make the workshop meaningful to them. As Sondra and I debriefed for a few minutes after the workshop, I also learned that the students may have chosen letter recipients for whom their words might have been more impactful: Marcos had shared with Sondra that the letter he wrote to his dad was the first time he had told his dad he loved him. This gap between my expectations and students' needs challenged me again to reassess strategies, and pointed me back to the importance of creating space for students to guide the project in the directions they desired.



Figure 3q. Marcos, Carolina, and Carolina's younger brother working on their respective letters. Marcos cuts out the image of the car he eventually pasted into the letter he wrote to his father.

Los Angeles Field Trip

In the brainstorming session in January, students had expressed interest when I shared the possibility of taking a field trip to Los Angeles to visit some museums and consider how language was structured and used in those spaces. Building on the lesson of the letter-writing workshop, I engaged students in collaboratively planning our itinerary for the field trip to Los Angeles. The students and I visited the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Eva's choice), the Petersen Automotive Museum (Marcos' choice), and we also took a tour of Tanya Aguiñiga's studio in Los Angeles (my idea), an artist who I had previously worked with on a museum project.

There were several reasons I chose to reach out to Tanya for this project. Growing up in Tijuana and crossing the border daily to go to school in San Diego, Tanya's work explored the personal histories and emotional experiences connected to constant collective motion, stretching from bodily-based, repetitive gestures of craft and labor to larger-scale patterns of

human diaspora and migration. Engaging with art-making as an opportunity to create more equitable relationships between people, Tanya aimed to decolonize and re-indigenize contemporary art institutions by actively cultivating collective spaces for marginalized communities, especially women and femme-identified folks of color. Her commitment to community-based art and activism formed the foundation of her AMBOS Project (Art Made Between Opposite Sides) at the US/Mexico border. Founded by Tanya in 2016, AMBOS was an ongoing series of bilingual, binational artist interventions and commuter collaborations that seek to express and document border emotion. These projects – which ranged from participatory fiber-based installations and youth-made films to interactive sound performances – aimed to nurture a greater sense of interconnectedness across multiple border cities. For these reasons, as well as the relatively close location of her design studio in Los Angeles, I thought she and her all women/femme-identified studio team might be meaningful figures for students to connect with to discuss approaches to issues of language, bilingualism, identities, art, and activism.

As we toured the studio, Tanya showed students ongoing and completed projects, sharing the stories behind her thought process (Figures 3r and 3s). Marcos engaged Tanya in conversation about his own trips across the border with his family, and Eva, who loved making art, asked about how Tanya began as an artist, her decision-making process behind certain pieces, and shared about her own desire to learn embroidery and other sewing techniques. The studio tour lasted two hours, before we continued on to the museums, both of which Eva and Marcos would be visiting for the first time. Overall, the field trip felt like an important way for students and me to get to know each other outside of our regular research setting.



Figure 3r. Tanya shows Eva a rug woven by Porfirio Gutiérrez, a master Zapotec weaver and dyer from Teotitlan del Valle in Oaxaca, México. The rug was created for a collaborative project between Tanya and Porfirio. All of the colors seen in the rug are made from natural plant- and insect-based materials.



Figure 3s. Tanya shows Eva and Marcos large-scale prints of images from her project, AMBOS, which took place at the Tijuana-San Diego border. AMBOS participants were given bilingual postcards (shown in this image) to describe their emotions as they crossed the border.

While the all-day field trip ended up being an excellent way of building stronger relationships with students, only three students had signed up, and in the end, only two,

Marcos and Eva, plus one undergraduate research assistant, along with her friend who was not involved in the project, were able to attend the trip. Although the first activities and meetings had gone well in this phase of the project, I had to regroup and evaluate what was happening when students slowly started to not show up. Noticeably absent from this part of the project (at least to me) was Alejandra; I felt like somehow I had let her down or had not followed through on the project in ways she agreed with. While I understood fluctuations in attendance and participation as an expected part of any project with youth, I felt anxious that her absence signified disappointment, and I let the anxiety stop me from reaching out to Alejandra to inquire why.

Looking back, I realized that reaching out to Alejandra would have been an important way of continuing our conversation and dialogue at that point, even if it didn't result in her returning to the project. When I reviewed my fieldnotes from the first meeting that winter, I clearly wrote down a list of ideas for our meetings that students had suggested, which, among other some of the workshops we were currently pursuing, listed interpreter training and interpreting opportunities, which we had not yet planned. So I had heard students' ideas, but I was still operating on research time, thinking that I had a few months to help implement those ideas, I really hadn't engaged those ideas as action at that moment. But once people started not showing up, I realized that once again, I hadn't responded within a time frame that worked for students. In this way, students also challenged me to hear refusal (Tuck & Yang 2017).

As student participation ebbed and flowed, my own work as a curator outside the academy ramped up toward three public exhibitions. I was forced to confront the limitations of my own time, energy, engagement, and activism as a researcher and also as a human being

going through life, with all of the ups, downs, transitions, and multiple roles that that entails. For me at that moment, I had to slow down and shift my research agenda to being present with students in the ways I could. Being present with students meant offering the time, resources, and abilities I had available, while also recognizing my own boundaries and, crucially, *being okay with that*. It was difficult, but I made the decision to take a break from meeting with students as frequently as I had been. I did not transcribe or analyze the data. I didn't set up any more interviews. However, I did stay in touch with students and offer them any kind of activity or workshop I could through my position with the museum. Stepping back allowed me to share the resources I had during a very busy period of my life and still come through on commitments to projects that were important to me.

When I began to let go of what I had imagined or hoped the project to be, I felt my relationships with students start to strengthen. I felt like I could finally relate to them as the real, multidimensional person that I was in the world, without feeling some of the weirdness that the research situation could sometimes impose, especially for me as a non-Latinx researcher. I felt such relief at being able to connect with students on this level rather than in a research environment, no matter how “humanizing” (Paris & Winn 2014). It seemed to me that students felt like they could be more of their “real” selves, too. In June 2017, I was invited to Marcos' house for graduation dinner and celebration; that summer, Carolina reached out about advice in applying to college; Jackie and I texted back and forth about art, and she and Eva eventually participated in a workshop with Tanya Aguiñiga I organized for the museum (which I discuss in Chapter 6); Marcos and Dante worked as interns on another project with Cruz Ortiz at the museum; I attended many community events where I saw Dante in action as a leader among his peers, connecting and creating with other young adults

working towards social and racial justice; Eva also later reached out and asked if I could help her register for courses at the local community college, which we did together.

It was when I began being present with students in my roles beyond researcher that other possibilities opened for us to work and create together. Our connections outside of a purely research-related context strengthened my understanding of these youth as people fully living their lives. It also deeply impacted the writing of this dissertation. I have included images of some of these events and workshops in Chapter 6. These relationships also formed the basis and beginning of Project Phase 4, which started in December 2018.

Phase 4: Follow Up

Phase Four began in December 2018 and lasted through June 2019, although I kept in touch after that with Marcos and Eva, the students with whom I had built the strongest relationships. Most students I worked with were in their first or second year of college when I reached back out to follow up via email and text in order to share progress on the research and writing process. For me, this phase was by far the most difficult. Whether it was regret for not staying in better communication with students during some unexpected events in my own life, or for not having been able to better catalyze and guide them in some sort of project or campaign that assisted them in getting their program back, I experienced immense hesitancy, second-guessing, and fear in reaching back out to students to see how they were doing. Yet I also feel it was an essential part of continuing to carry out my ethical commitments and responsibilities as a researcher. I have incorporated reflections on this phase into Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation.

In this section, I have described the four distinct phases of this project. In the next

section, I describe the data collected, how I organized it, and how I chose to analyze it.

6. Data Collection, Transcription, and Analysis

Data Collection

Guided by the emergent strategy approach to my project, my student collaborators and I gathered a wide range of data from 2016 to 2018. The data comprised multiple types of interactions and interviews with youth in diverse locations and contexts across Southern California, from Goleta and Santa Barbara to Oxnard and Los Angeles. Meetings, interviews and events with students were held at places ranging from the LPCC, the Consulado de México in Oxnard, and they also included students' birthday and graduation parties in Goleta, visits to more than one museum and artist studio in Los Angeles, as well as project meetings and interviews at UCSB's library and radio station. Students collaborated in many ways: they co-created and co-planned the direction and content areas of the project phases, initiated several research strands, identified interviewees, developed interview questions, and led interviews and gathered interactional video data.

The data included audio and video radio interviews, conversations and interactions, some on iPhones and others on a DSLR camera, as well as ethnographic field notes that I took during this time. Several research assistants helped with data collection, often taking charge of one or two video cameras, an iPhone, a DSLR camera, or an audio recorder. At other points, students recorded video or audio interviews they conducted with their own phones or our shared project video camera. Through this process, we collected over 75 hours of video and audio files across ten different kinds of data as detailed in Table 2:

Table 2: Dissertation Data Collected

<i>PHASE</i>	<i>DATES</i>	<i>DATA</i>	<i>LOCATIONS</i>	<i>FORMAT</i>	<i>QUANTITY</i>
Pre-Project Research	Jan. 2014 – May 2016	classroom discussions	Goleta; Santa Barbara	video	10 hours
		student projects	Goleta; Santa Barbara	video	2 hours
		local newspaper articles	<i>Santa Barbara Noozhawk; Dos Rios High School Paper; The Santa Barbara Independent</i>	PDF; hard copy	
		educational policy documents	Santa Barbara Unified School District	PDF; hard copy	
Phase 1: Radio Show	June 2016 – Sept. 2016	student meetings	Goleta; UCSB	audio	8 hours
		on-campus radio interviews	UCSB	video; audio	7 hours
		off-site radio interviews	Goleta; Oxnard	video; audio	3 hours
		fieldnotes	Goleta; Oxnard; UCSB; Los Angeles	Microsoft word files; handwritten pages	
Phase 2: Video Interviews	Dec. 2016 – Jan. 2017	parent interviews	Goleta	video; audio	15 hours
		student interviews	Goleta	video; audio	12 hours
		personal correspondence with Latino Parent Alliance Organization	Goleta; Santa Barbara	emails; phone calls; in-person meetings	
Phase 3: Art & Language	Jan. 2017 – Aug. 2017	student meetings	Goleta; Santa Barbara	video; audio	10 hours
		field trips in Goleta, Los Angeles	Goleta; Santa Barbara; Los Angeles	Video; photographs	5 hours
		art workshops	Goleta; Santa Barbara	video; photographs	6 hours
Phase 4: Follow Up	Dec. 2018 – Present	personal correspondence with students	Goleta; Santa Barbara	emails; text messages; phone calls	ongoing

Data Transcription & Coding

One of the challenges of running an emergent-strategy project was its shape-shifting nature, from radio interviews, to documentary-style interviews, to hands-on art workshops. The students and I faced forces that were constantly pushing us to change directions and objectives. There were points at which I envied colleagues who carried out dissertation research at more stable, traditional ethnographic research sites. I often idealized these other research settings as simple (“They just have to show up and hit record!”), not requiring the additional, constant planning and coordinating work I was doing to gather the student group I was working with.

In order to organize these different types of data, I created an index of all sources in the form of an Excel sheet, with a summary of content included for each data file. I then worked from my field notes to compile a list of codes for topic areas that surfaced repeatedly, which can be found in Appendix 4. Many of the main topic areas identified in my field notes developed through discussions and brainstorming sessions with students and research assistants during the research process itself. In many cases, students’ and my collaborative observations and conversations became the starting point for identifying and further investigating the main themes that informed my processes of coding, transcription, and analysis. Working with a team of five undergraduate research assistants over the course of three quarters, I coded the different data sources and transcribed selected interviews and interactions that fell under one of the main topic areas. In line with the methodological and ethical research commitments of my dissertation, I have chosen to keep most transcript excerpts visually simple and focused on content rather than linguistic form or interactional details, as I feel it presents students in a humanizing way, rather than reducing them to lines

of text. For excerpts that I analyze in a more extensive manner, I provide line numbers and a more detailed level of transcription. Transcription conventions can be found in Appendix 1.

The process of choosing data was difficult, as there were more possible avenues of research than can fit in one dissertation. As part of my engaged, reciprocal ethnographic approach, one of my commitments was to prioritize and respond to students' goals for this research. I went back to my fieldnotes which highlighted that one of students' and my collaborative goals for the research had been to document the larger history, meaning, and impact of the student interpreters program, as well as its cancellation and students' activism. I was torn, because on one hand, I wanted to tell this story, and on the other, the data that we had collected through my emergent strategy approach had a much wider scope than just the interpreters program. While I reviewed the coded data, I started to recognize the crucial role that listening played, both in the formation of the interpreters' program through Ms. Q's listening practices, and also in the program's cancellation through the district's listening practices. As I began to engage with Flores and Rosa's concept of the white institutional listening subject, and with listening practices more broadly, I relistened to the data and found links across the data that I felt connected the story of the interpreters program to the broader project students and I had completed as a whole. Thus, listening became an organizing principle for my data, shaping both which data excerpts I chose, as well as how those excerpts are organized across chapters.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze these different sources of data, I took an ethnographically-informed sociocultural linguistic approach (Bucholtz & Hall 2008a, 2008bb) to discourse analysis. This approach helped me engage with participants' language "not as a chunk of text

removed from any broader context but as a dynamic interactional process embedded in and inseparable from the social and cultural world from which it emerges” (Bucholtz & Hall 2008a:153) by grounding my interactional analysis of data through information and observations from across my fieldwork, teaching, and role in the larger community. While this perspective offers a strong starting point for attempting to understand language in interaction from the point of view of students and their families, I also recognize the limitations of this approach in my positionality as a white and mixed race outside researcher. Thus, I paid careful attention to issues of representation and practiced critical self-reflexivity throughout my ethnographic analysis and writing (Mendoza-Denton 2008; Paris 2011; Reyes 2007; Wortham & Reyes 2015).

My analysis throughout this dissertation takes up the call for sociocultural linguists to “think big” (Bucholtz & Hall 2008a:158) in the sense that the majority of my analysis focuses on how students’ and other participants’ metadiscourses about interpretation, translation, and language are connected to practices of listening, raciolinguistic ideologies of language, their broader identities, and social structures, rather than focusing on smaller levels of linguistic structure, such as micro shifts in turn-taking, intonation, and grammatical organization. However, in some specific examples, especially in Chapter 5, I have drawn upon multimodal interactional analysis tools from sociocultural interactional linguistics that help with fine-grain analysis of embodied resources, such as eye gaze, facial expression, and gesture and their importance to the interaction at hand (Goodwin 2000; Goodwin 2017). In all examples, my analysis is informed by insights gained through my engagement with students, their families, as well as my involvement in the larger communities of Goleta and Santa Barbara across my multiple academic and professional roles.

Writing the Dissertation

Art-based approaches deeply informed the theory, structure, methods, and process that I developed to write this dissertation. Much of my writing-as-sense-making work begins through analog channels, writing and drawing with pens, markers, colored pencils, using my manual sky blue Olivetti Lettera 32 typewriter, printing physical sheets of paper, cutting them up, rearranging them, marking them up; translating theoretical ideas to material formats is a core way of understanding things for me. Conceptual work for this dissertation took place through hand-written postcards and Post-It notes (over 400 of them), freewriting with my typewriter, and drawing with sumi ink. The altered temporality of analog technologies – slower, but with no “delete” key – creates a kind of first draft freedom I rarely find through my laptop screen.

Most of the writing of the dissertation happened during two 90-day “Build-Your-Own” artist residencies, the Bluff’s Edge Residency and the No Time to Lose Residency. Inspired and informed by contemporary artist Cooley Windsor’s (2013) text, “Futurefarmers Build-Your-Own Residency Kit,” I developed and utilized both of these residencies as a way of creating and maintaining structure, a timeline, inspiration, and to connect with my creative peers as part of a (virtual) residency community. The residency structure also allowed me to view my work from a creative distance, while encouraging me to consider additional outcomes, applications, and aesthetic forms of knowledge. Conceptualizing the dissertation as essentially a large art project enabled me to creatively reshape the dissertation process beyond the confines of the academy, to bring joy to my work, and to challenge neoliberal structures of value within the academy.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodological frameworks that informed and shaped the dissertation design, described my development and application of brown's (2017) "emergent strategy" approach, narrated my research process, and discussed some of the ethnographic challenges that arose and refigured my research in fundamental ways. Through the use of collaborative and engaged ethnographic methods that draw upon emancipatory and critical pedagogies , youth participatory action research, and "funds of knowledge"-centered praxis (Moll et al. 1992), this project created opportunities for students to engage in meaning-making about their experiences on their own terms. In doing so, this dissertation research responds to the need for new methodologies and models in understanding the multidimensionality and larger social impact of Latinx youth's work as language and cultural brokers, as well as supporting them in challenging dominant narratives of deficit about their work. In the next chapter, I draw upon data from the first two phases of the project (the radio show and video interviews) to analyze how students challenged raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit in connection to the term *bilingual*.

INTERLUDE

Cruz Ortiz: Art of the Test

This interlude explores an excerpt from the students' and my collaborative interview with artist Cruz Ortiz for our radio show in July 2016. Engaging in my own process of ultratranslation from the vibrant, multisensorial research process to this two-dimensional page, I share this interlude for four main reasons. First, structurally, this interlude serves as a point of translation between the three introductory chapters and the three data analysis chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6). Secondly, this interlude provides an example of my methodology of engaged, emergent strategy in practice, as this interview was an unexpected outcome of the intersection of my multiple roles as a researcher, curator, and educator. In addition, the students' conversation with Cruz analyzed here was the first interview that students and I recorded for the radio program, and as a result, the interview set the tone for our approach to the rest of the show that summer, which I discuss in Chapter 4. Finally, I also use this interlude to broadly introduce the concept of *rasquachismo* (Ybarra-Frausto 1989) and some of its general elements, as it shows up throughout the Chapters 4 and 5 before I integrate it in my discussion of *the ultrapresent* in Chapter 6.

One afternoon in July 2016, as nine students and I sat around a picnic table on campus, next to Storke Tower which held the FM and AM antennae that would soon be broadcasting our radio show, the students were unusually quiet. Everyone seemed to be feeling slightly shy; for the first time, we had a guest with us to interview for our collaborative show: artist Cruz Ortiz. I put snacks out on the table and reminded students about Cruz's work which we had seen and talked about the week before: a series of

multilingual text-based paintings, prints and a mobile DIY radio station. I felt relieved when Alejandra, one of the student leaders, spoke up: “But, like, what does your work have to do with language?”

Alejandra’s question shot out into the air and hung there like a sonic litmus test – not of the value of Cruz’s work but of the relevance of this research project to students’ lives. My mind inserted the worn cassette tape of anxieties and pushed play: *Why did I set up an interview for students with this artist? Is this relevant? What if they don’t like this?* Looking back, I realize I shouldn’t have worried so much – before stepping into his full time practice as a contemporary painter and printmaker, Cruz taught high school for sixteen years. In response to Alejandra’s question, he takes the students on a lightning bolt journey across geographic, linguistic, temporal, and affective borders, ultimately putting forward a kind of stream-of-consciousness manifesto on the importance of following one’s own creative intuition:

Cruz Ortiz: If I think about it, like, as far as, like, when it made sense, I’m a huge music fan—That’s what’s also cool about this project, just the idea of music and stuff. I was raised—I am Mexican-American Chicano. So I was raised listening to, like, my mom and dad’s music which was, like, mariachi, or you know, conjunto, or stuff like that. But I *really loved* punk rock music. Like I was raised on Ian MacKaye, Minor Threat, and all these crazy guys. And then you know of course, you know, other stuff like The Smiths, The Cure, which is *totally 80s*, but all that stuff made sense for me. And then I noticed that Johnny Cash and Vicente Fernandez were essentially singing about the same damn thing. That they suck.

And “I’m in love with her but I still want her even though she doesn’t want me.” And then I notice, “Oh wait. The Smiths’ Morrissey, he’s talking about the same thing, too.” And then how it’s, it’s amazing how music, you know is a vehicle for the same emotions, you know? It’s just that they’re conveyed differently through language. Right. So it becomes, like, *easily translatable*. Like I can see—when I watch, like, funny videos on YouTube of Vicente Fernández, he looks like he’s in real pain. Like, he’s like, “Oh my god. Vo:lver y vo:lver.” Like, “Just, yeah, calm, calm down.” ((*Students laugh*)).

And then when Johnny Cash is, like, singing, “I drank...” ((*Students laugh*)).

Like, you feel, like, you know that he's talking for *real*. So that's the kind of stuff that I've always enjoyed. And so when I started to make artwork I wanted to reflect that. So a lot of times you can do that through you know *shape* and *form*, a lot of the elemental design practices. So, I was in college and I would always just—I would just write out the lyrics on my canvases. The teacher was like, “Well this isn't a— Cruz, this isn't a drawing.” “*But it is*. I drew it.” And they're like, “*Mh*, but you need to be able to draw.” And like I understood, like “Yeah, I understand what you're saying.” That they wanted me to convey it without using words. But I'm like, “Oh, why not?” I *love* the text, like, I love, like, the study of fonts and you know, typography. And I thought it was interesting that I didn't go to that angle. I wanted to make *drawings of words*. So that's exactly what I did. And so that's where it kind of started with the use of language in my work. It just seems like it's pretty as a picture. Anyway, I hope that makes sense.

Alejandra: It does; thank you.

Here, Cruz draws upon eclectic sources from across cultures and his own experiences as he crafts his response to Alejandra, bringing to life the signature “super rasquache punk rock” aesthetic (García 2019) typically found across his paintings, prints, and murals. As Cruz narrates his relational, nonlinear process of assemblage-like thinking, he finds affective equivalencies across the distinct generations, languages, cultures, and musical performances of American country, blues, and rock and roll singer-songwriter Johnny Cash, Mexican musical icon Vicente Fernandez (aka “El Rey de la Música Ranchera”), and Morrissey, the lead singer of The Smiths, a British rock band from the 1980s. He describes how he used his own creative intuition and affective experience as inspiration on his journey to find agency, develop his voice, and fully embrace art’s ability to constantly challenge authority and push established boundaries. Yet Cruz’s vivid, layered stream-of-consciousness narrative style is part of a carefully-told story that successfully captures and maintains students' attention. Immediately after Alejandra confirms that her question has been answered, Carolina asks Cruz a follow-up question about his interests in music and how it showed up in his art:

Carolina: Did you ever do, like, a certain phrase or something from lyrics and then put a picture to it? As in, what was it that you were thinking about when you saw that lyrics?

In his response to Carolina, Cruz again crisscrosses the world in his art history rocketship, seamlessly moving through time and space as he traces the concept of what he calls “multiple audiovisuals” as a part of screenprinting, cassette tapes, CDs, European ballads, street musicians, and penny sheets, from newspaper rivalries between the Irish and the English, to the work of Mexican printmaker José Guadalupe Posada, and finally, to the US zine scene of the 1980s and 90s, where he situates the beginnings of his own work:

Cruz Ortiz: So, but yeah, that's what I would do as well. I would put images along with text. And of course, you know like, during the 80s and 90s was a really huge zine thing. Where we would just put *stupid* images together and just make a zine. I made *so many* zines that were just *dumb*. Like I had one called *Flaco Zine*. And it was just a bunch of pictures of my friends skateboarding and falling down. And then putting stupid things like, “That was cool.” Just making copies of that and then giving them to my friends and they're like, “*This is cool.*” “I know. It's cool.” Just *cheesy*, know what I mean? But it was nice because it was you know, *tangible*. It was something you can hold in your hand. And that's always neat to do that. Like, it's communication, it's *language*. ((Cruz taps table twice with hand)). Come on, it's *language*. So it's really neat.

Yeah, I encourage everyone that— I taught high school for 16 years and I would have a project where they would just have to design a flyer. Like a band flyer but black and white. And I said, “Guys, I have *all the paper* on campus. Let's just make a *crap load* of stupid crap.” ((Students laugh)). And so we just make zines or just *anything*. And just, like, go *all over* and just plaster. Like, we would in Texas, where it's really—I don't know how it is here—but it's really big on testing. And so you make stupid testing flyers, like, “*Good luck on your test.*” And those are like, *dumb*, like Elmer Fudd, or like, Bart Simpson, “Good luck on your test.” Just making stupid crap and then putting them up all over the campus. Of course the principal's like, “Mr. Ortiz. Uh. *Are you making fun of this?*” I'm like, “No it's encouraging the kids to take the test.” ((Students laugh)). “But, like, well you need to come bring those down.” “But it's art.” “Alright.” ((Students laugh)). So it was pretty interesting to get that done.

In his narrative, Cruz takes up membership as part of “the undercommons” (Harney & Moten 2013:28) – in the institution, but not of it – by freely utilizing the school's resources towards his and students' creative ends in ways that eventually challenge the racialized

neoliberal ideologies and structures undergirding that same institution. The Bart Simpson-themed flyers Cruz makes with his students to put up around the school resist the emphasis placed on “test-prep pedagogies” (Rodriguez 2011) as part of high-stakes testing regimes in public schools in Texas and across the US. As Latinx students and other groups of marginalized students – youth of color, low-income youth, and students with special education needs – are the ones most harmed by high stakes testing (Leonardo 2007), Cruz and his students’ “stupid testing flyers” challenge the white supremacist status quo of the educational system itself. When the school’s principal tells Cruz to take the posters down, Cruz utilizes the label of “art” to successfully defend the flyers – if the flyers are art, and art is valuable and valid creative expression, how “dangerous” to authority could they possibly be? In this way, Cruz’s narrative highlights artistic-based activism as “difficult for regimes to classify as illegal,” one reason why so many artists are turning to it in this contemporary moment (Youngs 2019:136). Through this short narrative, Cruz demonstrates the subversive possibilities of creating art, of making art public, and of the term “art” itself.

Cruz’s narrative also introduces the idea of “stupid” art. In Cruz’s description, “stupid” art is art that doesn’t try too hard or think too much, art that’s not so fancy, art that is accessible to make with and for friends, art that draws from everyday activities and images. However, as his narrative of the testing flyers demonstrates, “stupid” art is also clever art – art that has something smart to say and important work to do. By utilizing the term “stupid” to refer to art, Cruz challenges elitist, neoliberal renderings of art and instead reminds students that creating – the innovative, everyday practice of making “tangible” art with one’s hands, collectively, with joy, and as resistance – is literally within their reach. Here, Cruz’s story resonates on some levels with the words of Indigenous feminist scholar Linda Tuhiwai

Smith: “Creating is not the exclusive domain of the rich nor of the technologically superior, but of the imaginative. Creating is about channeling collective creativity to produce solutions to indigenous problems,” (2012:158).

Collective resourcefulness, resilience, and creative forms of resistance in the face of power are some of the underlying tenets of *rasquachismo*, one of the foundational elements of Cruz Ortiz’s aesthetic practice and interactional style here. *Rasquachismo* is a concept that art historian and Chicana scholar Tomás Ybarra-Frausto has written about in his seminal article, *Rasquachismo: A Chicano Sensibility* (1989). Developing first as a “visceral response to a lived reality” (1989:85), and only later applied to the process, practice, and aesthetic of some Chicana artists, Ybarra-Frausto writes that *rasquachismo* “stems from a funky, irreverent stance that debunks convention and spoofs protocol [...] a spunky consciousness seeking to subvert and turn ruling paradigms upside down—a witty, irreverent, and impertinent posture that recodes and moves outside established boundaries” (1989:85). Both of Cruz’s narratives demonstrate this stance: as a young art student defying genre-based conventions and teachers’ recommendations, and as a teacher, working with his students to challenge the institutional emphasis on testing. In these ways, Cruz’s narrative as well as his larger, overall conversation with students served to vividly illustrate the power of what art and language can do in the world, just as long as neither takes itself too seriously.

The students present for the interview with Cruz seemed inspired and excited to take this kind of creative approach to their radio interviews as we began our summer project. Many of the radio interviews I analyze in Chapter 4 demonstrate characteristics of collective, creative resourcefulness, resilience, and resistance, as does Ms. Q’s narrative of origin story of the interpreters program itself. Ybarra-Frausto notes *rasquachismo* is “alive within

Chicano communities, but it is something of an insider private code. To name this sensibility, to draw its contours, and suggest its historical continuity, is risking its betrayal” (1989:85). As an outsider, I want to be careful in my use of this term and its application, and so in this dissertation, I am interested in understanding rasquachismo as an attitude of “resilience and resourcefulness, *hacer rendir las cosas*, making do with what’s at hand, tenacity and adaptability” (86, 88) that privileges “communion over purity” (86), inspires hope, and is employed in the service of enabling “the Chicano [community] to survive and persevere with a sense of dignity (Gutiérrez 2017:186).

I begin Chapter 4 by “tuning in” to the research context through an ethnographic vignette and short analysis of a KJUC AM radio interview between Karla, one of our student collaborators, and Perla, the project’s lead undergraduate research assistant.

CHAPTER 4

Tuning In To Bilingual Frequencies: Jamming The Raciolinguistic Status Quo

When we interpret, we become antennae, receiving and transmitting at the same time.

— From *A Manifesto for Interpretation as Instigation*
by artist activist group Antena Aire, 2013

Radio jamming is the deliberate use of jamming, blocking, or interference with authorized wireless communications. In the United States, radio jamming devices (known as ‘jammers’) are illegal and their use can result in large fines.

—Wikipedia entry for *Radio Jamming*, August 2020

1. Tuning In To KCSB 91.9 FM

Formed in 1961 and originally broadcast out of a founding member’s dorm room, KCSB was officially licensed by the FCC as a non-commercial, educational, low-power FM station in 1964. Not long after, KCSB’s headquarters became permanently established under Storke Tower, the campus bell tower, and next to Storke Plaza, the campus hub for student media and activism. KCSB has a history of speaking truth to power, including its notable coverage of the Isla Vista student protests in 1969-1970 that culminated in the burning of a Bank of America (Guilhem 2020). The station’s detailed, non-stop reportage of the protests led to the station being ordered off the air by the local sheriff’s department. At the time of writing in August 2020, KCSB remained the only licensed FM radio station to have ever been shut down by the police in this way, an illegal move which was soon rectified.

This rebellious, anti-authoritarian ethos remained tangibly present at KCSB, audible in the station’s programming lineup and visible through its funky, DIY, fresh-from-the-

pages-of-a-Cruz-Ortiz-zine aesthetics and studio decor. Featuring student-run shows like *The Transatlantic Phenomenon*, *Lonesome Town*, *CHIDO RUIDO*, *Faerie Ring*, and *Cat Beast Party*, KCSB provided alternative aural excitement through round-the-clock, community-based programming for a broad swath of Central Coast listeners within its 90-mile radius. Inside the labyrinthian studio, the shelves of its media vaults were stacked high with vinyl gems that local residents had dropped off when they thought new technology meant records would never be “a thing” again, not imagining that they would be echoing through the living rooms of Southern California hipsters almost fifty years later. I eyed the vinyl labels carefully, looking for any last-minute sonic goodies before I walked through a narrow hallway plastered with a petrified patchwork of band stickers, album covers, concert posters, drawings, and doodles amassed over generations of student programmers, and finally arrived to the maroon door that opened to the KJUC (“k-juice”) AM training studio. Peeking through the door’s glass window under the “SHH! On Air” sign, I could see Perla starting to interview Karla, one of our student collaborators, and so I knew our next interviewee would still have at least ten minutes to peruse the rest of the records and CDs before going on air.

As Perla started the new segment, I heard her introduce Karla: “You are listening to KJUC 770/880 AM broadcasting in the UCSB Residence Halls. And we have yet another DRHS student here with us, Karla.” A rising junior when she joined our summer radio project, Karla cared deeply about the Student Interpreters Program and her work within it. She viewed the Interpreters Program as a way for her to maintain strong connections with Spanish, with her parents, and with her own identity as Mexican and Mexican American.¹⁰ Despite living a 45-minute drive north of Goleta, Karla attended almost every event

¹⁰ Karla used both terms interchangeably to describe how she identified.

connected to our summer radio project, and her parents sometimes made additional weekend or evening trips to ensure she could participate fully. During Karla's in-studio interview with Perla, Perla inquired about Karla's motivations for joining this research project and what she hoped any potential listeners might take from the radio show. Like many students who participated in the project, Karla used her time on-air with an audience as an opportunity to challenge hegemonic racialized ideologies of deficit connected to Spanish, bilingualism, and Latinx youth:

"Not A Struggle"

Perla: Alright, so why did you involve yourself with this program?
Like, what was it about this program?

Karla: Well, basically, anything that has to do with my background, bilingual, Spanish. I'm willing to do that. I don't want to lose that touch that my parents also gave to me. I always like to get connected to it because it brings new opportunities.

Perla: Nice. What do you expect to gain or get out of this program?

Karla: Um, just learning about being bilingual, the benefits and the struggles. But, yeah just the more opportunities that it is going to bring to me and to other people.

Perla: Yeah. So you're doing this during the summer, you know. This is your vacation and you're involving yourself in something that's not too time consuming, but it does cut into your free time for the summer, and it's still pretty much academic. So that's pretty rad. And props to you because I would not have done that when I was in high school. But, since we are here. We do- we might have some listeners. We don't know how many listeners we have, but what is one thing you would want someone to, like, learn from just, like, listening to the radio station or cuing into our website? Which is soon to come out, y'all. What would be one thing you would like them to learn?

Karla: I would like them to learn that there is people who are bilingual, and they have opportunities. Some people see knowing two languages as a sign of a struggle. Maybe since I am Mexican, and I know Spanish, they think, "Oh, she's obviously had a struggle. Maybe Spanish isn't a benefit." But it is. It has brought so many opportunities to me.

Perla: Are you a, what do you call yourself? Not a translator, but an interpreter?

Karla: Oh yeah.

Perla: How long have you been in that for?

Karla: I started my freshman year. Um, I was a bit nervous at first, because just practicing Spanish, I don't get a huge opportunity, but I love to do it. So yeah.

Perla: Nice! That's awesome. How long are you planning to do it, until you graduate?

Karla: Yeah.

Perla: Or earn a degree from it?

Karla: Yeah. I plan on doing it until I graduate. If I could continue it that would be great because I like to get the practice in, and not lose my language.

In their interview, Karla and Perla work together to co-construct Spanish and bilingualism as a valuable part of Karla's life. Karla demonstrates critical awareness of the raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit that might be associated with her identity as a Mexican Spanish-speaker, and directly counters those ideologies by reframing Spanish and bilingualism as a benefit, as important parts of her identity and culture, and as a source of past, present, and future opportunities. During the time I knew her, Karla's Spanish skills enabled her to stay connected to her parents and grandparents, volunteer as an interpreter, participate in multilingual (Spanish, English, and Maya) Mesoamerican history, yoga, and cultural classes offered by a local non-profit organization, prepare for and attend a trip to Mexico through that organization, and interview its co-founder, Profesora Elisa, in Spanish and English as part of our larger research project. The "struggles" of bilingualism that students like Karla face are not being bilingual in and of itself, but rather the constant racism and devaluing of their linguistic and cultural expertise.

In turn, Perla works hard to create the possibility that Karla's words will find listeners – and thus resonance – out over the AM airwaves of the show's on-campus broadcasting radius ("We might have some listeners. We don't know how many listeners we have.") As

media scholar Kate Lacey observes in her book *Listening Publics: The Politics and Experience of Listening in the Media Age*, “Without a listener, speech is nothing but noise in the ether. More to the point, without a listener there would be no reason, no calling, to speak” (2013:166). Yet Perla herself is listening to Karla, and as a bilingual Latinx undergraduate student, she actively and acutely attunes to Karla’s lived experience. In positioning bilingualism as the norm, and interpreting and Spanish as natural and positive possibilities of Karla’s future, Perla constructs herself as an alternative listening subject, who, like Karla, hears beyond the racialized discourses of deficit transmitted by the white listening ear of the raciolinguistic status quo. By sharing this exchange over the airwaves, Karla and Perla join in an aural extension of radio’s history as an important site for Chicanx and US Latinx public advocacy, political activism, and resistance, and continue oral traditions of “testimonios, storytelling, songtelling and chisme” that help “circulate stories, archive experiences, and strengthen emotional ties for Latinx with allegiances to more than one culture, language, or nation” (Casillas 2017:181).

2. Overview

In this chapter, I argue that similar to Karla and Perla here, many Latinx student interpreters at DRHS were able to engage with and challenge racialized ideologies of deficit in part because of the influence of Ms. Q in her role as an alternative institutional listening subject. In this role, Ms. Q’s listening practices and subject position effectively “jammed” (to use a term from radio broadcasting) the hegemonic listening practices of the white supremacist status quo through which racialized youth and their language are typically heard as deficient.

In the first section of this chapter, I work from an interview with Ms. Q led by

Alejandra. I analyze Ms. Q's listening practices – specifically, the ways in which she hears Latinx students and parents – in her role as Bilingual Community Coordinator at DRHS. I argue that through her listening practices, Ms. Q took up an alternative institutional listening subject position (Flores et al. 2018) who heard and responded to Latinx exclusion at the school, normalized bilingualism, and recognized Latinx students as competent, capable bilingual speakers (Flores & Rosa 2015) in ways that held transformative effects.

In the second section of this chapter, I work from a range of radio and video interviews with student interpreters to discuss how students' participation in Los Intérpretes transformed their own and others' listening practices. I argue that the program created an opportunity for Latinx students to hear their own language practices and have them be heard by others in ways that challenged the spatial, temporal, aural, and affective boundaries of the raciolinguistic status quo of DRHS and the school district as a whole.

In the third section, I analyze data from a radio interview Perla led with Jackie, one of our student collaborators who was not a member of the student interpreters program. Like the excerpt above, Perla positions herself as an alternative listening subject who works with Jackie to co-construct resistance to raciolinguistic ideologies of deficit over the airwaves. In this way, I argue that Ms. Q, Perla, and the student interpreters effectively jammed the transmission and reception signals of the Santa Barbara-Goleta raciolinguistic status quo of the white listening subject across its full listening radius.

3. Challenging Frequencies of Exclusion: Ms. Q's Alternative Listening Subject Position and Counterideologies of Latinx Language

Over the past several decades, scholars have observed a progressive silencing of the word *bilingual* throughout educational language policy, as official titles of legislation, of

policies, and of related educational staff positions have shifted, eschewing the term *bilingual* in favor of deficit-oriented terminology like *English Language Learner* (Sommer 2004; García 2009; García & Torres-Guevara 2013). Although alternative, less negative labels have developed over time, such as *emergent multilingual* and *emergent bilingual*, even these terms position students' bilingualism as not fully developed in the present moment. Yet as Jonathan Rosa has noted in his discussion of ideologies of "languagelessness" connected to the label *bilingual*, nothing within the term itself prevents it from also taking on racialized discourses of deficit within specific contexts (2016a, 2019). Given this sociohistorical context, it is important to note that when this research began in 2016, the title of Ms. Q's position was "Bilingual Community Coordinator" and that a sign hanging from the covered walkway in front of her office read: "Office of Bilingual Education/Oficina de Educación Bilingüe." I was curious to know how this term was understood by Ms. Q and students within the context of DRHS. I could already see that by maintaining the terms *bilingual* and *bilingüe* in these official titles, Ms. Q's role was uniquely positioned to serve and connect with specific needs of Latinx, Spanish-speaking, and immigrant communities at DRHS, rather than "all families." As the project developed, I began to understand more deeply how Ms. Q herself understood the term *bilingual* in connection to her students, how these perspectives played a foundational role in the support Ms. Q was able to provide for their families, and how students understood their own language abilities.

Structurally, Ms. Q's position was also unique, as it was institutionally-ratified, yet had different types of flexibility and roles than a classroom teacher or administrator might have. As Bilingual Community Coordinator, she was responsible for community and family outreach, the organization and implementation of updated language access policies and

practices in school settings, and support services to families. In practice, these responsibilities meant that Ms. Q worked as a language and cultural broker herself, helping families connect with, establish links to, and navigate Dos Rios High School on social, cultural, linguistic, affective, and logistic levels. Although definitely an educator and mentor, Ms. Q's role did not have evaluative responsibilities with students, albeit she kept exhaustive track of students' grades and progress in school and at home. Students were able to develop close, family-like relationships with Ms. Q in part for this reason. Likewise, Latinx parents saw her as a trusted advocate and friend, and often identified her as the first person they would call if they had an important question about their child's education at DRHS. In these ways, Ms. Q's position was akin to Harney and Moten's concept of the subversive intellectual: in the institution, but not of it (2013).

Ms. Q's office was open to and attracted a wide range of students marginalized by the monoglossic, white-centered norms of the school. Indeed, one of the strengths of the Interpreters Program was that its membership was accessed by students from many different social, racialized, and linguistic groups. Student interpreters included Latinx students who preferred speaking English and who were actively learning Spanish, like Eva, students who felt comfortable speaking both and either languages, like Alejandra, Karla, and Dante, and students who had just immigrated or returned from Mexico and preferred speaking Spanish, like Marcos. Although the majority of students who participated were Latinx, speaking Spanish was not a prerequisite for participating in the Interpreters Program. The program also had a team of "techies" who managed the interpretation audio equipment and helped with technical logistics on the evening of Back to School Night; several of these students were children of immigrants who spoke Vietnamese and Arabic, among other languages. One of

these students, Marian, whose parents had immigrated from Vietnam, participated in the radio show for this project. Each of these students told frequent stories about how Ms. Q had impacted their lives in positive ways at school and at home.

Alejandra, the president of the interpreters program when this research began, recognized the importance of Ms. Q's crucial role in connection to the interpreters program and the DRHS student community. Alejandra identified Ms. Q as someone she would like to interview for the research project during our first brainstorming session together in June 2016. So in July 2016, just a few weeks after students and I had interviewed Cruz, Alejandra and I drove together to the community clubhouse in Mr. and Ms. Q's neighborhood, where they had agreed to hold the interview. As one of the first student-led interviews for our radio project, a team of undergraduate research assistants met us there to film the interview in order to play it back later on the radio show. Alejandra did separate interviews with Ms. and Mr. Q, and we were there a little over two hours including time for equipment set-up and break down.

In this data analysis section, I work from Alejandra's 45-minute long interview with Ms. Q. I analyze Ms. Q's listening practices and role as an institutional listening subject, paying close attention to how she positions' students' bilingualism and language abilities in time and space. During her interview and conversation with Ms. Q, Alejandra asked how the interpreters program began, why Ms. Q felt the program was so important, and how Ms. Q understood Latinx students' experiences in the public school system. Across her responses, Ms. Q described the origins of the interpreters program in ways that highlighted her role as an alternative listening subject as she shared her perspectives on Latinx parents, students, and students' language abilities at DRHS. In this excerpt, Ms. Q describes how the interpreters

program initiated from her observation of the persistent exclusion of Spanish-speaking parents from school events:

1.1 “You do it anyways!”

Ms. Q: And so, parents were- very few parents were coming to the parent programs, especially Back to School Night. I remember I would come and leave because there were no Spanish-speaking parents. So, I would come, you know I worked there, but I just realized: “Where are these parents? This is *so* important for them to be here.” So after a few years I realized, you know, –“Okay, let’s do something about it. Ey María, José, Rebeca, ¿sabes qué? We gonna do something here. We’re going to show up today, Back to School Night, and we’re going to interpret for the parents.” –“What?!” –“You do it anyways!” –“Yeah, that’s right!” Okay, so let’s, a handful of ten kids showed up, the first, I don’t know, six, seven years ago. And so there were six, seven parents that these kids followed, right? [...] And so the following year, we had 20 parents! And that’s how it got started.

Here, Ms. Q frames the creation of the interpreters program as an outcome of organic grassroots problem-solving in the face of a sustained lack of institutional support for Spanish-speaking parents, and by extension, for Latinx students, families, and the larger community at DRHS. The student interpreter program began in 2010-2011, almost 40 years after the passing of civil rights laws that, in theory, guaranteed that parents and guardians who speak languages beyond English would have “meaningful access” to information about their child’s education. Up until Ms. Q created the interpreters program, DRHS did not provide any type of structured or consistent in-person language access for parents at Back to School Night events, besides the presence of the Bilingual Community Coordinator. Understanding how important it was for Latinx parents to be involved at Back to School Night, Ms. Q resourcefully created a collective, student-based response that addressed the need for interpretation. She was the only educator who effectively “heard” Latinx Spanish-speaking parents’ need for interpretation or language access as a prerequisite for their participation – or at least the only educator who recognized and responded to parents’ needs.

In this way, Ms. Q demonstrated a practice of “community listening” – a way of “listening out to and for one another” (Stoeber 2016:280) – that created a viable opportunity for Latinx parents to participate and engage in the white public space of DRHS in new, more accessible and equitable ways.

If the idea for an interpreters program came to Ms. Q through the ways in which she heard Latinx parents and their systemic exclusion, the realization of the program was made possible through the ways in which she heard Latinx students and their linguistic abilities. In her telling, Ms. Q encouraged the students who helped her initiate the program by reminding them that “[they] do it anyways,” demonstrating knowledge of what students’ day-to-day lives encompass and what kind of linguistic and cultural practices students are engaged in outside of school. By characterizing interpreting as something students just “do,” rather than taking an evaluative stance on their brokering practices, Ms. Q contradicts commonly held deficit-based discourses of youth language brokering that tend to either evaluate youth’s language practices and/or take a moral stance on whether they “should” be brokering or not. Orellana recently captured this sentiment in her review of youth brokering research: “Whatever anyone may feel about whether or not children ‘should’ do this work, or how we might view their competencies, they *are* doing it, and in new immigrant communities, the practice is *normative* (2017:67; original emphasis).” In this way, Ms. Q asserts students’ competence in brokering and interpretation abilities based on youths’ actual linguistic practices and experiences – “They *can* interpret because they *do* interpret” – rather than evaluating youths’ capabilities based on any external, future, or standardized measures of competence (i.e., “They do interpret because they can interpret”). Her stance both normalizes students’ bilingualism and “presumes competence” as a starting point for listening to and

understanding Latinx students' language practices (Leonardo & Broderick 2011:2223; Martínez & Mejia 2019).

As the interview continues, Ms. Q mobilizes this perspective in response to Alejandra's follow-up question in English for more details around the program's beginnings, which Ms. Q answers in Spanish:

1.2 “*Señora, Acá Tengo Un Intérprete.*”

Alejandra: What were the first steps you took?

Ms. G: “Señora, acá tengo un intérprete.” ((*Laughs*)) Había un niño que hablaba español, había una mamá que no hablaba inglés, y *allí* los unimos. Entonces eso era para que ese padre y esa madre comprendieran lo que su hijo estaba haciendo y aprendiendo en la escuela y se sintieran que era *parte igual* a los padres que no hablan español y que ellos recibieran la misma información y sentían que fueran respetados y aceptados.

As Ms. Q narrates it, the interpreters program was not created through a long, drawn-out process involving detailed planning or multiple steps; rather, she acted without hesitation in response to an urgent need, and addressed it with resources available at hand. By using the term *intérprete* to refer to the bilingual student in her narrative, Ms. Q posits that the creation of the program, in fact, only took one step: hearing students as capable interpreters. Through her free and full use of the label *intérprete* for bilingual youth, the events of the narrative itself, as well as her choice to answer Alejandra's question in Spanish, Ms. Q continues to position Latinx youth at DRHS as “language-full” – competent speakers of Spanish and English who are capable of interpreting and brokering for Latinx parents in the present moment.

In her response, Ms. Q also makes explicit the dual purpose of the student interpreting program: to ensure that both parents received and understood the same information about

their children's education as English-speaking parents, and also to ensure that Latinx parents felt respected, accepted, and like an equal part of the school ("Entonces eso era para que [...] se sintieran que era parte igual [...] y sentían que fueran respetados y aceptados."). Ms. Q makes clear that she designed the interpreters program from the beginning as a way to address parents' exclusion from the school on both linguistic and affective levels. In doing so, Ms. Q again demonstrates her ability to hear frequencies of exclusion beyond the range of the white listening ear: she understands that creating "meaningful access" for Latinx parents in this context also includes addressing an affective desire to feel included, respected, and accepted within the white public space of the school, and that that may require different models of language access.

The affective experience of exclusion was not unique to Latinx parents at DRHS. As noted in Chapter 1, Latinx students face a wide range of raciolinguistic ideologies of deficiency in US public schools that are often linked to negative models of personhood, which can lead to harmful stereotypes and internalized racism. Alejandra connects to this idea as she continues the interview, asking Ms. Q what types of challenges students face at DRHS:

1.3 *"We Want To Break That Stereotype"*

Alejandra: Going to back to the question: what are some stereotypes or challenges you see that teenagers see or go through at Dos Rios?

Ms. Q: Should I just focus on? Well, I see teenagers of, you know, all cultures and ethnic backgrounds, but I work mostly with Latinos and English Learners. And, the challenges, you said?

Alejandra: Mmhm.

Ms. Q: Or stereotypes?

Alejandra: Either.

Ms. Q: I've- I've seen our students think that they're not good enough. "I'm not good enough to be like 'blank', I'm not good enough." You know what I mean? They don't think they are that they have what it takes. And I don't know why, especially girls. Maybe they have- you know the messages that they get around them is that they're not good enough. Being a teenager is very difficult.

But our Latina girls, they don't think they're good enough. And they, you know, they're not good enough to be in this class, or good enough to be in this group or in- And that's a- that's a stereotype because I guess that carries. "She's not good enough" you know, so, Latinas or Latinos, you know, "This is not the class for them." Or, "They'll bring the class down." Or you know, "I'm not good enough for the class." Or you know, "I don't have anything to give," or to, you know, "I'm not good enough, to give back."

And that's why I think the bilingual student interpreters has been so powerful, and so valuable for our kids because they *do* have something *very* important to give, which is their bilingualism and biculturalism. So, we want to break that stereotype of them not being good enough or that they don't have anything to give.

Here, Ms. Q illustrates in-depth "situated knowledge" (Haraway 1988) of the intersectional forms of marginalization that Latinx students face at DRHS, and demonstrates how she views the interpreters program as counteracting that exclusion. By identifying multiple axes of identity – age, race, and gender – along which students experience marginalization, Ms. Q displays an intersectional understanding of the complex, context-specific forms of marginalization that confront the students with whom she works. On a broad level, she observes that "being a teenager is very difficult," signaling challenges young people may face at this specific age. She notes racialized forms of exclusion for Latinx students, and provides a fine-grain analysis that shows how race intersects with other categories to produce compound exclusion. In differentiating between Latinx students and EL students, Ms. Q refuses to conflate these categories and thus gestures towards class,

nationality, immigration, and citizenship status as additionally marked categories. Ms. Q specifically highlights the layered, intersectional exclusion that Latinas face in connection to perceptions of inferiority (Rosa & Flores 2017) and how those ideologies may be internalized in harmful ways with material effects.

Ms. Q formulates her response as a series of hypothetical voicings that index the racialized ideologies of deficiency that Latinx youth face, as well as how they may be linked to models of personhood, enact marginalization, and may be negatively internalized. By switching between first-person singular pronouns to third-person plural pronouns in these voicings, Ms. Q alternately presents these ideologies as external discourses that circulate about Latinx students (“They’ll bring the class down; This is not the class for them”) and as discourses that many Latinx students have internalized and individualized into negative meaning about their self-worth and personhood (“I’m not good enough for that class; I don’t have anything to give”). These ideologies had material impacts for the Latinx students Ms. Q worked with: as discussed in Chapter 2, Dos Rios had large, long-standing racial disparities in the percentages of Latinx students participating in Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes, as well as elite school clubs like Leadership. In my and Alejandra’s later joint interview with Dante, a student interpreter and friend of Alejandra’s, he noted that even when Latinx students did access those classes, they didn’t always feel comfortable around their majority-white peers. Ms. Q’s discussion here highlights that in addition to existing structural and systemic barriers, students’ own internalizations of the racist discourses around them harm their self-image and may affect their likelihood of pursuing specific classes, clubs, or other opportunities.

Ms. Q goes on to link the power of the interpreters program directly to its ability to

challenge the impacts of those negative ideologies of deficiency and personhood. She positions Latinx and EL youth as dynamic students whose bilingualism and biculturalism are important resources that can make a contribution to the school community (“And that’s why I think the bilingual student interpreters has been so powerful, and so valuable for our kids because they *do* have something *very* important to give, which is their bilingualism and biculturalism”). Ms. Q’s lack of hesitancy to use the word *bilingualism* with no modifiers or hedges echoes how she used *intérprete* in the previous excerpt. As I show throughout the rest of the chapter, students also felt free to also use both of these terms in connection with their own language practices. This label did not mean that students were not still actively learning their languages, as many of them noted they wanted and desired more practice in Spanish and/or English. But the use of this label with no qualifiers or hesitancy, in essence, heard Latinx students as “language-full” speakers. This view directly counters dominant depictions of Latinx students as burdens or responsibilities of the educational system who “drag the class down” and whose language skills are in need of remediation. Furthermore, although the interpreters program began in an ‘ad hoc’ way, as the program developed, Ms. Q later included structured training opportunities for students to learn about and practice specific interpretation and translation skills from certified interpreters. Far from burdens, this stance positions students as resource-full young people whose abilities are worth supporting, promoting, as well as further developing over time.

In this excerpt, Ms. Q demonstrated a deep understanding of students’ intersectional marginalization at the school, the affective experiences and effects of that exclusion, and understood the Interpreters Program as uniquely challenging that structural exclusion. In the next part of the interview, Alejandra invites Ms. Q to expand on why she thought the

interpreting program was so important for Latinx students:

1.4 “I Want That T-Shirt”

Alejandra: So, um, what made you think- I don’t know if that’s the right way, um, why did you, um, I don’t know how to say- put this thought into a question, why did you think the interpreters group, or club, is so important for students to be in?

Ms. Q: It’s like the Leadership, you know the Leadership at DR: “I’m in Leadership, you know, wow.” You walk around like you- they can- you know it’s like they own the place! They do walk around like they own the place, you know. They have the shirt and, right? And they are, they’re this Leadership that’s going to move this- you know, this class of 2016, or whatever. And I think this was done to the bilingual student interpreters. You know, “I am a leader here and I have something to give. And I might have a darker skin or lighter skin, but I have this talent and this ability that not everyone has.” And I think they- the others see it that way, and it’s *become* this, you know, elite, or, you know, elitist type of group. That you know, “Wow, you know, I want that shirt. I want that t-shirt.” But it’s not just a shirt. So, we *have* to have, we have to continue that because it gives us pride, and it gives a sense of belonging and value.

Ms. Q describes the importance of the Bilingual Student Interpreters Program for Latinx students in terms of its ability to counteract the white, English-centered raciolinguistic status quo of the school, embodied by the schools’ mostly white Leadership club. She centers her response around the contrasting symbolic materiality of two t-shirts: the Leadership t-shirt that embodies white privilege, entitlement, and the English-centered raciolinguistic status quo of DRHS, and the interpreters program t-shirt which – with its gold logo “*DPHS en español*” – stands for a collective sense of Latinx belonging, identity, pride, and resistance to the raciolinguistic status quo.

She notes that the interpreters program eventually grew into an elite, school-sanctioned program that acted as a counterweight to Leadership. Ms. Q references the embodied privilege of student members of Leadership as they move through the space of the

school, making a comparison to the type of confidence and exclusivity developed by Latinx students through their participation in the student interpreters program. She notes that skin color potentially marginalizes Latinx students, and asserts that their ability to interpret is a valuable resource that challenges their marginalization, as their bilingual skills are an exclusive “talent” and “ability” that “not everyone has.”¹¹ Importantly, she positions the Interpreters Program as a response that counters Latinx students’ affective experience of exclusion – it provided Latinx and EL students with “a sense of pride” and “a sense of belonging and value.”¹² Contemporary educational research supports this, finding that student organizations and community-based extracurricular activities often provide minoritized youth with sites from which to build solidarity, resistance, political and social action, and educational critique (Ginwright, Noguera, & Cammarota 2006; Antrop-González, Vélez & Garrett 2008; Irizarry 2011; Passos deNicolo, Yu, Crowley, and Gabel 2017). As Passos deNicolo, Yu, Crowley, and Gabel observe: “It is through the formation of these grassroots student organizations that students from bi/multilingual, bi/multicultural, and immigrant communities are able to form bases for challenging Eurocentrism in public schooling,” (2017:514).

In addition to creating a sense of belonging for Latinx students, Ms., Q observes that the Interpreters Program has seemed to increase the sociocultural capital and status both of Spanish and of the Latinx student interpreters at DRHS (Bourdieu 1991; Yosso 2005). Ms. Q describes other students’ desire for the interpreters program t-shirt and by extension,

¹¹ However, Ms. Q’s treatment of skin tone as essentially of no consequence could be seen as an erasure of colorism and the privilege that accompanies light skin.

¹² While my research did not extend to groups of students not participating in or connected to the interpreters program in some way, it is important to note is that Latinx students who did not identify as bilingual or who did not participate in the program may have faced double marginalization as they found themselves outside of both the Leadership and the interpreters program.

membership in the group. However, as Ms. Q notes, membership cannot be reduced to “just a shirt.” Students’ linguistic and cultural brokering abilities, as well as their identities, as signified by the t-shirt cannot be bought nor appropriated. In this sense, membership in the Interpreters Program and the status it accords to members remain outside the reach of white, monolingual students at the school as well as neoliberal attempts to commodify language (Heller 2010). These excerpts have demonstrated how Ms. Q occupied an “alternative institutional listening subject position” (Flores et al. 2018) that heard and recognized Latinx parents’ exclusion on linguistic and affective levels from DRHS, as well as heard and recognized Latinx students as competent speakers, capable of interpreting for parents at Back to School Night. In these ways, Ms. Q hears beyond the rigid, narrow range of the white listening ear: where the white listening subject hears nothing out of the ordinary, Ms. Q hears absence, marginalization, and exclusion; where the white listening ear hears deficit and lack, Ms. Q hears competence, opportunity, possibility. In the next section, I explore the implications and impacts of Ms. Q’s alternative listening practices.

4. From Static to Signal: Transformation in Students’ Language Ideologies

Throughout my time teaching and working with students in the Interpreters Program, I was struck by the strength of the positive affective experiences they shared with me about the program. Students often described in transformative terms the impact the program had made on their confidence, their assessment of their bilingual abilities, and their sense of belonging and leadership at Dos Rios High School. Students’ narratives of transformation in how they viewed their own languages abilities was one of the main reasons I pursued this research project. In this research, students often made astute observations about how their

language practices might be heard or undermined by dominant ideologies, demonstrating critical language awareness (Alim 2007). Yet Ms. Q's "language-full" counterideology practically sang throughout students' interviews and interactions as they spoke about how their experiences with the Interpreters Program: student interpreters consistently valorized their bilingual skills, framed bilingualism as a resource and privilege that rendered them capable of helping others in their community, as well as positioned Spanish as an important part of their culture and identity in the past, present, and future. The following excerpts exemplify how participating in the Interpreters Program impacted students' own language ideologies and affective experiences, and began to shift the raciolinguistic status quo of the school and district as a whole.

Capable Speakers

In my video interview with Karla in December 2016, I asked Karla, the same student from the radio interview with Perla that opened this chapter, if the interpreters program had impacted her understanding of her language abilities. Karla evaluates her abilities positively, noting the impact her interpreting has had on parent engagement:

2.1 "That's Amazing That I Can Do That"

Audrey: A lot of students have said that interpreting has changed their perspectives of their Spanish and English. Participating in that program, how has that changed you?

Karla: I think it makes me value it a lot more, Spanish. Because before entering high school, I was like, "Oh that's good I know it. I mean it will help me get an A in my Spanish class." But besides that, seeing it has a lot more effect. It's so powerful. It can help people communicate. That's *crazy* because if we weren't there, the parents wouldn't be there. And that's amazing that I can do that. I can bring a parent and help them out to communicate with the teacher.

Audrey: Did it make you start thinking of Spanish like as an actual like

part of your career path or anything?

Karla: Yeah, I've actually been thinking about it. I feel like in the future to minor in Spanish. Just because I feel like it's an art. You know? Language is an art in which you can do so many things whether it's communicate or just speaking it and hearing it sounds nice.

In this excerpt, Karla illustrates how her participation in the interpreting program shifted her own language ideologies and impacted her on many dimensions. First, her positioning of language as an art places it squarely out of reach of neoliberal understandings of language. Like the Latinx students in Martínez's (2013) study, Karla's positive "aesthetic response" to the sound of speaking and hearing Spanish stands in opposition to dominant language ideologies of the white listening ear: "Through the simple act of finding value in the aesthetic qualities of this denigrated language practice, students were, in a sense, subverting its devaluation--indeed, perhaps even disrupting the very process of language subordination" (Martínez 2013:283). Karla also motions to the ways in which interpreting is opening up future possibilities for her: she states that her experience with the interpreters program has inspired her to consider minoring in Spanish in college. Many other students spoke about interests in language majors, minors, or other college-related skills they had developed through the interpreters program. Students' statements about how they hear Spanish as a valuable part of their futures counteract the ways in which the white listening subject normally hears Spanish only as part of a past for Latinx youth if they want to become "successful" Americans citizens (Rosa 2016a, 2016b).

For many Latinx students, the interpreters program was their first opportunity to participate and contribute on campus outside of a classroom setting. In one of our radio interviews, Julio shared how the interpreters program created a space of opportunity and

belonging for students who otherwise may not have involved themselves in extracurricular activities, as well as the further impacts of having that opportunity:

2.2 “We’re Actually Doing This”

- Julio:** I can definitely tell that, um, I guess for some people who didn’t do too much? It gave them a place to start, like, with extracurricular activities.
- Audrey:** Okay?
- Julio:** Because like one of the biggest issues with, like, life in general, is you don’t know where to start with certain things.
- Audrey:** Mmhm.
- Julio:** And so like, Ms. Q, she’s super nice, and, like, to be honest, Ms. Q, she kind of like goads you into doing stuff. But, like, later on you don’t really regret it. Because it doesn’t turn out to be a bad experience whatsoever.
- Audrey:** @@. So, and when you say it gives you a place to start, just like, can you talk a little bit more about that? Or share a little bit more about that?
- Julio:** I guess, like, um, yeah, for certain students, like, they kind of go through high school not really doing so much? But then like Ms. Q just kind of recruits them one day. Just almost out of random for some people. And then, um, yeah! Like, it gives them, like, the ability to, like, have a place where, like, “You know what? “I’m actually doing something. What else can I do?” It gives support like that for some people. And for others, “You know what? I really enjoy this. I want to commit to this.”
- Audrey:** Mmhm?
- Julio:** And not only that, but it also gives people, like, on-job experience, as an interpreter, because some might even choose to do so.
- Audrey:** Would you say that, um, being able to participate as an interpreter in the student group gave folks a sense of pride sometimes?
- Julio:** Oh yeah, definitely! Because, yeah, like, we are actually, like, to a certain extent, well-known. And we are used as a group for other schools, like I told you. Like for elementary schools and junior highs like La Golondrina, Solano Valley, and La Mesa, and so forth. And so we took pride in that, like, “You know what? We actually do that. We’re actually doing this for, like, the community.”

Julio describes the Interpreters Program as giving a foundation for those students who didn't “know where to start” with school activities. Other students echoed this sentiment, like

Jaime: “It made me feel involved at school, it made me feel like I was a part of something bigger than myself.” Many other students shared that they had developed their group of friends through the Interpreters Program by hanging out in Ms. Q’s office and participating in the program. Julio also observes that participating in the program opened up possibilities for students, including a feeling of empowerment, of self-actualization, of confidence to look for and pursue new opportunities both within and beyond the school itself, including a potential career as an interpreter. Julio’s expressed sense of pride here, combined with “actually” (“We actually do that. We’re actually doing this for, like, the community.”) indexes that these capabilities move beyond their own and others’ expectations of what Latinx youth are able to do.

As both Karla and Julio’s excerpts illustrate, their experiences with the interpreters program helped students to see Spanish and their language and cultural brokering abilities as valuable resources, and themselves as capable bilingual speakers and interpreters. Specifically, their abilities as capable speakers were utilized to help others within their school and larger community, as well as integral to their own future professional and academic experiences. Both Karla (“That’s crazy because without us... That’s amazing I can do it”) and Julio (“We’re actually doing this”) position these transformed understandings of their language and capabilities as running contrary to hegemonic, racialized ideologies of Latinx youth and their language.

Like Karla’s radio interview that opened this chapter, youth in this research often explicitly voiced dominant discourses of deficit they heard from peers or educators, and positioned the interpreters program as countering those ideologies. In this excerpt, Dante refutes ideologies of languagelessness as well as deficit ideologies of youth’s “home

languages:”

2.3 “*Privilege of Being Bilingual*”

Dante: I feel like a lot of the time, like, if someone’s speaking English at school, I mean Spanish at school, it’s like “Oh, they don’t know the language.” But like that’s just our native language, and like, then to have this, this program where we could put it to use, where, you know, where we grow up learning English, and we’re learning Spanish, so then we can use those skills that we’re that we’re being taught subconsciously, as we’re growing, to have a program where we used those skills.

Dante: You know I didn’t have to go to class to learn Spanish, I learned it at home. I went to all the years of my schooling to- I learned English, so, I understand it very well. So then I can help people that don’t have access to learning English, that don’t have the time to learn English, and I could help them understand what others are saying. That’s like the privilege of being bilingual, that I can understand two languages. And with that privilege I just wanted to help other people that don’t have the resources or the access to learn English and to understand it, so that’s kind of where I stand with the Intérpretes Program.

Dante: It’s like little things like that, that’s what we’re there for, in our community, that’s what we’re there for, being bilingual. You know, it’s like, I can help this person, I can help this person. And it’s vice versa, speaking in Spanish, I can definitely help them, you know, out with that.

Here, Dante voices hegemonic perspectives on Spanish that connect to deficit ideologies of US Latinx youth their language practices. His hypothetical situation echoes the inversion of bilingualism found in Rosa’s concept of “languagelessness:” if someone is speaking Spanish at school, then “they don’t know the language.” Dante illustrates how the Interpreters Program helped counter those ideologies by providing an opportunity to use Spanish and English on campus in visible ways to facilitate communication and understanding between people in interaction; in that context, those deficit-based claims were no longer viable and held no merit. He explicitly frames bilingualism as a privilege that

makes him and his Latinx peers uniquely capable of helping multiple people within the school and larger community: “That’s what we’re there for.” Dante’s use of collective *we* constructs Latinx youth as a group of people capable of making valuable contributions to their community, working against negative perceptions of them. In addition, Dante defines the terms of his own competence and how he learned both of his languages: “I didn’t have to go to class to learn Spanish, I learned it at home. I went to all the years of my schooling to- I learned English, so I understand it very well.”) In this way, Dante asserts, honors, and valorizes “alternative sonic modes of knowing, being, and creating community” (Stoever 2016:35) beyond the institution in ways that challenge the white listening subject.

Other students also centered education in their narratives of transformation of their language ideologies. Carolina’s interview was an example of this, as it focused on the history of her language education and highlighted how the nationalist, English-only ideologies of the white institutional listening subject negatively impacted her understanding of herself and her language abilities beginning in preschool:

2.4 “*This Language Is My Language*”

Audrey: Do you feel like with your linguistic abilities in Spanish and English, have you had a change in how you view your language abilities?

Carolina: Well, I went into preschool not knowing any English. I had to learn English by myself. And for a while I was kind of ashamed of speaking Spanish because I thought it wasn’t correct because I am in the United States. But being with this program I realized that this language is my language and it makes me who I am and it makes me part of this beautiful community that I am a part of. So now I’m just filled with joy and gratitude for being able to be Hispanic and speak Spanish because as people say, “Spanish is the language of loves.” @@.

Audrey: Other students have been talking about how they felt like Spanish was starting to become valued in a different way in the space of school. [...] How has this program engaged you to learn the way that it’s valued?

Carolina: It made our Latino community as a whole stronger. Because just

the language [barrier] itself would prevent parents from going to Back to School Night and meetings. And having that language be provided for them, it made them feel welcome and it made them feel like a part of the school? And it made our school way more diverse and way more enjoyable. And I felt like people are trying to learn Spanish for Spanish itself and not just because they want to go to Mexico or they want to just speak our language because it sounds cool or stuff like that.

In her response, Carolina tells the story of moving away from a stance of linguistic shame (Zentella 1997, 2007) brought on by nationalist, monoglossic discourses which position Spanish as “not correct because I am in the United States.” Participating in the interpreters program helped her move beyond deficit discourses to a stance of linguistic pride and an affective sense of “joy and gratitude” as she claims ownership of her language as part of who she is that connects her to her larger community. Her statement “This language is my language” resonates

strongly with Anzaldúa’s famous words “I am my language” (1987), as well as with many narratives that students shared with me throughout this research and my time teaching at DRHS. This affective stance challenges the felt sense of exclusion and underscores the importance of feeling joy, of enjoying interpreting, enjoying the experience of using her language to help others on the school campus. This joy itself is resistance (Anzaldúa 1987; Wong & Peña 2017).

In addition, Carolina moves beyond the impacts that the program held for her individually to discuss the impacts of the program on the school as a whole. Carolina describes the interpreters program as making DRHS “way more diverse and enjoyable.” While the interpreter program did not change the demographics of the school, it responded to students and parents of color in a way that fundamentally shifted their ability to meaningfully and visibly participate at the school, and hence eventually shifting the demographics of

parents who attended Back to School Night.

From Home to Classrooms to Everywhere

Other students observed the impacts the interpreters program had on the space of the school as well. One student, Angela echoed this in her joint interview with her friend Jaime and me, mentioning that the program “brought in a whole different community” and made the school feel “way more inclusive.” In their interviews, both Angela and Jaime observed that the interpreters program seemed to enhance the value of Spanish at DRHS. They described how the spatial, temporal, and affective boundaries of the raciolinguistic status quo were challenged by the interpreters program, as more students were speaking Spanish in the space of the school for reasons beyond the narrow confines of neoliberal education. In the following excerpt, both Jaime and Angela observe that the status, value, and use of Spanish shifted within their own ideologies as well as in the space of the school:

2.5 “*More Interconnected*”

Audrey: Did it, like, change your understanding of your own Spanish? Or even, like, self-confidence? Or was it transformational in any way?

Angela: Yeah, it definitely made, like, the two languages like more interconnected in a way? Because, like, before I would think of like Spanish and English, like, “Oh, Spanish is at home; English is at school,” you know? And like, it definitely, like, changed the way I looked at things because there’s really no need to, like, think of two languages as, like, different, when in reality they’re really interconnected.

Angela notes a shift in her own monoglossic and spatialized ideology of Spanish versus English as she participated in the program. Her characterization of the two languages as “interconnected” is in line with contemporary linguistic theories of dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging practices (García & Wei 2014). Angela’s newly identified “interconnectedness” between the two languages directly challenges hegemonic monoglossic

ideologies of linguistic “purity” so valued by the white listening ear, as does her new perspective on which spaces Spanish can be a part of. Through her participation in the school-based interpreters program, which allowed her to use the full range of her linguistic abilities within the space of DRHS in order to communicate with others, both the linguistic and spatialized borders between Spanish and English were revealed as false and unnecessary. Similarly, as we continued the interview, Jaime and Angela observed a shift in how Spanish was valued and why it was used at Dos Rios High School based on the presence of the interpreters program:

2.6 “*It’s Everywhere*”

Audrey: Do you think the interpreter program brought Spanish into DR in a way that was valued differently than it was before? Or that it came to be used differently than it was before?

Jaime: That’s a very good question. I- how I see it is I thought DR or like, Spanish at DR was mainly focused around, like, classrooms? So like you have Spanish 1, Spanish 2, or like Native Speakers or whatnot. The interpreters brought, like, a bigger, broader perspective, where it’s like *now*, you can volunteer and use your language for something, rather than just a grade. Kind of like Leadership, right? They have to use their words and convince people and whatnot. *We* had to use our Spanish to transfer information from one person to another. Yeah.

Angela: I agree that it made Spanish, kind of like- I mean I feel like it brought a different, like, denotation to speaking Spanish? Because before it was kind of seen, like, not negatively, but not like, the norm. You didn’t just speak Spanish in your English class, you know? Like Spanish was for your Spanish class. And now it’s like, “Oh! Spanish isn’t just in the classroom.” Like, it’s *everywhere*. You speak Spanish, you shouldn’t be ashamed of it. And I just feel like, it just brought, like, a special light to those who did speak Spanish. I mean I was part of Leadership, so I really do, like, feel that.

Both students observed that the interpreters program challenged and pushed the spatial, temporal, and affective boundaries of Spanish at DRHS, as well as established an alternative, elite leadership opportunity for Latinx students as a counterpoint to the school's

Leadership club. Jaime notes that prior to the establishment of the interpreters program, Spanish on campus was limited to classroom settings, and its value linked to standards of neoliberal individual educational achievement – namely, grades. The relegation of Spanish to “foreign or heritage language” classrooms echoes findings of research on English-dominant educational settings with monoglossic norms (García 2009; Flores et al 2018; Rosa 2019). In Jaime’s view, the interpreters program created a new communicative, collective opportunity to use Spanish on campus outside of classroom settings and beyond the neoliberal purposes established by the white institutional listening subject. Similarly, in Angela’s response, she observes how Spanish expanded beyond the aural boundaries of comfort laid out by the white listening subject as it spread from home to school, from Spanish class to English class, and then to “everywhere” at DRHS. As Spanish came to be valued in new ways on campus, this valorization also extended to its speakers, bringing, as Angela put it, a “special light” to Latinx Spanish-speaking students. In addition, Angela notes that she was one of the few Latinx members of the student Leadership club, thus bringing additional authority to her opinion and experience as a member of both clubs.

As I continued to research the history of the Interpreters Program, I came across several local newspaper articles on the program written by student reporters at DRHS. One of these articles echoed several points of Jamie and Angela’s interview, as it described the affective mood on the school campus at Back to School Night, during the second year of the Interpreters Program: “A sense of honor and pride was established Wednesday night at the Dos Rios Back to School Night when the student interpreters for Spanish-speaking parents became the talk of the night” (Craine 2012). The reporter later quoted a student interpreter who described the program by saying: “This is our leadership.” While the word *leadership*

was rendered in print with a lowercase “l” by the newspaper’s copy editor, I believe the student was referring specifically to the Leadership club at DRHS, which students often called just “Leadership.” Here, *our* refers to Latinx students, and highlights how the program created a collective platform for Latinx students to participate at school as agentive leaders by using their language skills to support parents, the school, and their community overall.

In addition, the article observes how the interpreters program established a sonic presence for Latinx students and families on campus, not only through the use of Spanish and interpretation practices, but also through metacommentary by event attendees (“[they] became the talk of the night”). In other words, the presence of both the Latinx community and Spanish was audible on DRHS campus through Latinx student interpreters’ (and parents’) voices, visible through their *DRHS en español* t-shirts, and linked to affective feelings of “honor and pride.” In this way, the interpreters program enabled Latinx youth and their language to be audible to the white listening ear, but crucially, to remain outside the range of its evaluation.

School & District

The next example draws upon a joint interview and conversation between Alejandra, Dante, and myself. Committed student activists, both Alejandra and Dante had participated in workshops and trainings held by social justice organizations outside of school. Throughout our collaborative interview, they demonstrated adeptness with vocabulary specific to social justice activism – *ageism, adultism, colonization* – to navigate complex sociocultural, racial and linguistic dimensions of the meaning, role, and impact of the interpreters program at DRHS. In this excerpt, Alejandra devotes a few minutes of time in our interview to trying to

find out if Dante had been classified as an EL student. When first reviewing this recording, I remembered that in the moment of the interview, I didn't fully grasp the relevance of her question to our broader theme of the interpreters program. However, upon re-reading the transcript in the full context of Alejandra and Dante's discussion, I understood her question as part of an insightful larger critique of the raciolinguistic status quo of the institution, a question that specifically highlights the temporal and social marginalization of Spanish at DRHS as well as the youth who speak it, especially those classified as English learners (Urciuoli 1996; Rosa 2016a, 2019):

2.7 "We Also Matter"

1. Alejandra: Um,
2. I don't know how to word this,
3. but, um,
4. ((to Dante)) you were an EL student, right?
5. Dante: ((whispers to Alejandra)) What's that?
6. Alejandra: English Learner,
7. classified?
8. Dante: Mm?
9. Alejandra: ((to Dante's mom off camera)) ¿No?
10. Dante's Mom: ¿Cómo?
11. Alejandra: ¿Él se tuvo que reclasificar?
12. Dante's Mom: Sí.
13. Alejandra: ((to Dante)) Okay so you were an EL student,
14. Dante: Oh okay I was!
15. [@@@]
16. Alejandra: [@@@]
17. ((to Dante's mom off camera)) ¿Sabe- sabe en qué año se reclasificó?
18. Dante's Mom: Mmmmm ...
19. Alejandra: ((to Dante's mom off camera)) ¿En la high school o en la junior high?
20. Dante's Mom: No, fue en la primeria.
21. Alejandra: Oh okay,
22. Okay so I don't know how you're- might take this,
23. so there are students who are EL students,
24. English Learners,
25. who would take two English classes during school.
26. Um and, I just wanted to note that fact that, um,
27. how does it feel to,
28. to, not be like,

29. okay, I'm going to use my dad's words.
30. To be del montón?
31. of being the fact that we're in America, and we have to learn English?
32. And it's our primary language,
33. And that it *has* to be. But um, how does it feel,
34. to kind of, like, um,
35. to like, to cross that stereotype?
36. that you were born here?
37. I mean,
38. you weren't born here,
39. but, like, I don't know how to word this!
40. Like when –
41. being an interpreter,
42. it kind of shows the rest of the, um,
43. white people,
44. that, you know, we also matter at school.
45. That even though we're not using English?
46. that our actual, native, you know,
47. um, language,
48. that we're using it for something really good.
49. I feel like-
50. I just don't know your perspective, I just want to know,
51. How does that feel to show that you don't only know English
52. and that um,
53. at school, and you- you also use that, um, language,
54. to help, at school?
55. Like, I don't know how to put that.

In this excerpt, Alejandra struggles with the unspeakability of asking Dante about his feelings towards being classified as an EL student (“I don’t know how to word this! I don’t know how to put this”). Throughout the exchange, Alejandra’s use of hedges (*just, kind of like*) re-starts, and fillers marks her treatment of the question and this topic as very delicate, but her willingness to wade through the unspeakability marks the question as an important one, relevant to the conversation at hand. In Alejandra’s progression towards her eventual question, she sketches out the layered terms and overlapping effects of practices of racialized exclusion enacted upon Latinx youth, using her dad’s words “to be del montón” to anchor her narrative as she moves along. In drawing upon her father’s language as a strategy to help

build her question and argument, Alejandra enacts a powerful strategy of resistance, drawing strength from her family's collective creativity and language. Alejandra arrives at the crux of her question when she strikingly and explicitly names whiteness in line 43, asking Dante how he feels about "being an interpreter" and if that role elevated the status of Latinx students in school by demonstrating to "white people that, you know, we also matter at school."

Alejandra's use of *actual* in line 46 ("that our actual, native, you know, um, language, that we're using it for something really good") resonates with Julio's statement "We're *actually* doing this" from earlier in this chapter. Once again, the word indexes that the student interpreters program has created a circumstance contrary to hegemonic norms and expectations of Spanish and Latinx students. Being able to speak Spanish at school for meaningful reasons not only demonstrated the value of Spanish to Latinx students themselves, but crucially, to other, non-Latinx students and educators. This public valorization wasn't recognition for "leadership" as defined by white, middle-class norms or the raciolinguistic status quo; rather, this program provided opportunities for racialized youth to contribute with and to be recognized for something which was more often a source of marginalization on both institutional and peer-based levels: their language, culture, and identities. In doing so, the interpreters program challenged pervasive, racialized ideologies of Latinx youth, languages, and communities as "matter out of place" in the white public space of the school (Rosa & Flores 2017a:10). It is in these terms that Los Intérpretes acted as a counterweight to the school's majority-white student Leadership club, and a viable challenge to the raciolinguistic status quo of the entire school.

It is interesting to note Dante's self-positioning as "not knowing" that he was classified as an EL student, as well as the laughter this unknowing causes, as he may be seen

to have resisted interpellation as an EL student for the entirety of his school career. Yet this unknowing does not mean that Dante is not aware of the effects of these evaluation and tracking systems or the root causes of the systems themselves. In his response to Alejandra's question, Dante describes how Latinx EL students have to work "extra extra" hard when they take two English classes instead of only one, as is typical. He then identifies the EL classification as a product of the "system" and an effect of colonization:

"That just goes to show how this system is taking away our culture, taking away our language, and it's been like that *forever*, you know? These are these are the effects of colonization, where, you know, we're being stripped of our culture, and we're being stripped of our language, and we come here and we're forced to learn a new language, but other people are not forced to learn a new language."

Here, Dante identifies the root problem as colonization and its systemic stripping away of Latinx and immigrant youth's languages and cultures. Dante hears and makes audible the violent, racist effects of "histories deliberately squelched by the white listening ear" (Stoever 2016:56). In this way, Alejandra and Dante's discussion help identify the ways in which the interpreters program challenged the systemic and historic exclusion of Latinx students, their languages and cultures at the school, as well as within the racist, colonial, neoliberal framework of the US educational system as a whole.

As our joint interview continued (which I will return to in Chapter 5), Alejandra led the conversation, offered insightful feedback, responses, and asked critical questions I would have never been able to create in my role as an outside researcher. Dante stayed for 90 minutes to complete the interview with her. Towards the end of the interview, Alejandra remembered an awards ceremony held by the district to recognize the work student interpreters the previous year (2015). As noted in Chapter 2, as the presence and impact of

the student interpreters program grew at DRHS, the model also spread to two other traditional high schools in the same district. At one point, there were over 200 Latinx student interpreters between these three schools. During this time, the district was very supportive of students' work at Back to School Night, and created the awards ceremony in 2015 to honor student interpreters' work. Both Alejandra and Dante had been invited to attend as award recipients, where they received certificates of appreciation along with two other students, one of whom also participated in this research (Jaime). Here, Alejandra invites Dante to reflect on what receiving the award from the school district meant to him:

2.8 "Awards Ceremony"

Audrey: So do you feel like you have a question, like I got to get this one out?

Alejandra: So:,

Audrey: So I'm going to ask one question.
Do *you* have a question to ask?

Alejandra: A little bit yeah.

Audrey: Go for it.

Alejandra: Kinda a memory.
Do you remember when we got, um, those awards,

Dante: Mmhm.

Alejandra: it was an award from the district, like, when you were in sophomore year?

Dante: Yeah.

Audrey: How did that make you feel?

Dante: That, receiving that award from the district made me feels like so important to the school, and like made me feel, um, like, like I was, I was heard, you know? like, it made me feel that, that I was actually making a change in somebody- in somebody's life? um, and just, I mean the uh:, the award itself, was like, like, just to receive it from, like, people at the district it was, like, super cool. Like I have never seen people at the district or even, like, met anyone, And, my first- like,

my first encounter with the school
district was, um, receiving that award.
Um, so I
just felt,
like, I felt
proud of
myself,
it's one the moments where I felt, like, truly proud of myself.
And, and, yeah it was so cool to receive that award.
I was the only one that wasn't wearing the intérpretes shirt @@.
So it was like okay,
"I hope they remember me, I mean, like, uh that's cool."

Here, Dante recounts the affective experience of “feeling heard” by the district for his role as a bilingual student interpreter. Dante’s first encounter with the school district – who up until this point, has been a faceless, nameless entity of administrators – is one in which he is being recognized and awarded recognition for his labor, work, service as an interpreter. This is radical! As he notes, receiving the award from the district created feelings of importance, worth, efficacy, agency, and pride – for Dante, it was one of the moments in which he felt “truly proud of himself.” This example illustrates the intensity with which the student interpreters program – made possible by Ms. Q’s alternative listening practices – counteracted both the formal and informal discourses and practices that marginalize Latinx students and their families within the white public space of DRHS and the district as a whole. For a fleeting moment in time, Ms. Q and the Latinx bilingual student interpreters program not only challenged but completely upended the raciolinguistic status quo of the Santa Barbara Unified School District.

5. *Bilingualism Across the Airwaves*

Echoes of Ms. Q’s listening practices and “language-full” ideologies continued to flood the airwaves and block the signal of the white listening subject beyond the walls of

DRHS and the school district. In our radio project, students regularly used the show as a platform to challenge dominant racialized ideologies of deficit and practices of exclusion connected to Spanish, bilingualism, and Latinx and immigrant youth and families across Goleta and Santa Barbara. Some students like Karla, directly countered these discourses by sharing how Spanish and bilingualism had played positive roles in their lives. Marian used the radio as a place to highlight the fact that even though the DRHS student interpreters program existed, parents who spoke languages other than English and Spanish – like her own parents who spoke Vietnamese – were still facing exclusion from the school due to lack of language access. Eva invited her mother to interview on the show, and they both spoke out about a racist incident at a high-end grocery store in Santa Barbara where Eva’s mother worked, in which her manager told her she could not speak Spanish to customers within the store. Marcos, whose radio interview I discuss in Chapter 6, used the show as a platform to call out the violent, racist, and xenophobic rhetoric of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump. Throughout their interviews, students positioned themselves as agentive speaking and listening subjects, capable of doing both beyond the limited range of the white listening subject. In sharing their experiences and creating resistance over the airwaves, students joined the US Latinx tradition of using radio’s capacity as an aural archive for what Chicana Studies and sound studies scholar D. Inés Casillas has described as “sound evidence of past and continued injustices” (Casillas 2017:181).

In my final analysis of this chapter, I discuss an excerpt from a radio interview Perla led with Jackie, a Latinx student at DRHS who participated in this project, but who was not a member of the interpreters program. In the analysis, I highlight Perla’s role as an alternative institutional listening subject in co-creating resistance with Jackie to the raciolinguistic status

quo.

Jackie was going into her junior year of high school when she joined our summer radio project along with two of her cousins who were visiting from Mexico. Even though she identified as bilingual, Jackie had turned down Ms. Q's invitation to participate in the Interpreters Program because of her other academic commitments, which left her feeling overwhelmed during her first year of high school. She still stayed close with Ms. Q, and had been on the sign-up list of students interested in this project. A K-pop fan and an artist, Jackie was slightly shy but always ready to talk, argue, and gush about the latest pop culture references, and always got along well with Perla. This excerpt is from one of Jackie's first interviews on air:

3.1 "Bilingualism Is Out There"

- Perla: Yeah like, yeah like, for the interview, like, why did you take your time, like out of your sch[edule,]₁
- Jackie: [Oh::]₁
- Perla: to be, like, here with, like, the program?
- Jackie: [Oh: for fun]₂
- Perla: [And me, well]₂ not only me but, like, the program,
- Jackie: @@ ((smiles))
- Perla: And be a part of this kind of, ((almost laughs)) um, endeavor.
- Jackie: U::m. For fun, and also because I think knowing about being bilingual, and being bilingual in general is kind of important, and there's not a lot of radio shows that are bilingual? So, it's lit.
- Perla: It's lit?
- Jackie: It's really lit.
- Perla: Fuego. Lumbre. Se quema la casa. But yes, it's fun. So, since we are here, because you think this is fun, @@ you could laugh @.
- Jackie: I don't kno:w. [@@]₃
- Perla: [@@]₃
What exactly do you get-- What do you hope to get out of this program?

Jackie: ((smiles))
 Perla: [Did I ask you that already? I don't remember.]₄
 Jackie: [((smiles))]₄ No.
 Perla: No, ok.
 Jackie: U:m,
 Perla: Sa:ve me!
 Jackie: @@ I guess just like,
 a dee:per understanding of how two- having two languages
 affects you, and how other people in the community view it.
 ((nods))
 Perla: Okay, what do you mean by people in the community?
 Jackie: Like family membe:rs, educato:rs, like,
 the system in gener[al.]₅
 Perla: [Ooh]₅ the system that's a powerful one.
 Jackie: Oh: ((nods))
 Perla: @@ That's awesome.
 That is something ve:ry powerful, actually,
 because you may have one ideology about language or like
 one thought, but your parents #might be like,
 "¿Y qué? No sabes? ¿Ya se te está olvidando el español?" when
 you, like, speak in Spanglish or you know when you I- I don't
 know, you use,
 both Spanish and
 English and then, they
 scold you and you're
 like,
 "I'm sorry but I only speak English
 in school!" But they will never
 understand that.
 Which is really interesting and then you talk
 Spanish at school, and then you- there you have
 peers, your teachers saying,
 "Oh my gosh this is America,
 speak English," So, it's
 interesting. Sorry to rant.
 But, since we are here and you're actually live
 on the radio, What would you- well, what do
 you hope, like,
 that someone would get out
 of just, like, listening in to
 the program?
 Jackie: What I hope someone would get just out of listening to
 the program, would be, like,
 ((half-joking tone, squints)) bilingualism is
 out there, and it's important and it's part of
 a lot of people's lives, so it's something that
 we should be aware of,
 and maybe even take part in, like,

learn another language, doesn't it make you live longer or something?
Perla: @. It does help your brain out every now and then, or I should say, for life.

Perla works hard to advance the conversation with Jackie, who seems slightly nervous and hesitant throughout this beginning portion of the interview. Through asking follow-up questions that invite Jackie to expand on the stances she's taking, Perla helps Jackie center their conversation on bilingualism, and they eventually work together to co-construct resistance against racialized language ideologies about Latinx bilingualism. Perla is an adept, attentive listener who, as a Latinx bilingual undergraduate student, is attuned to how racialized discourses of deficit play out in complex ways in students' lives. She evaluates Jackie's mention of "the system" as "very powerful," working to reaffirm Jackie's position as an interlocutor and align with her stance. Perla shares an example of how the "system's" monoglossic ideologies of bilingualism constrict students' language use in virtually all areas of their lives: from parents' idealized Standard Spanish at home to peers' and teachers' nationalist, xenophobic, and racist discourses towards Spanish at school.¹³

Through her use of Spanish and English in her response to Jackie, Perla actively constructs herself as an alternative listening subject, one who not only speaks in contrast to the language ideologies of students' parents, peers, teachers, and school, but also as an alternative listening subject who understands the affective experience of being policed by the white listening ear of standardized norms. In these ways, Perla listens between the lines to Jackie's "system" comment, and advances Jackie's stance by engaging in a practice of resistant listening that "sounds out whiteness while amplifying the sounds it has masked"

¹³ Although she and Perla note that they are aware of the systemic marginalization of Spanish and bilingualism in all aspects of society, Jackie cites the cognitive benefits of bilingualism (e.g. Bialystok & Viswanathan 2009) as a reason why people should learn a second language, rather than, for example, arguing for maintaining connection to their heritage language and culture. Perla takes this idea up, reaffirming that being bilingual does indeed provide cognitive benefits "for life."

(Stoeber 2016:274). Perla then opens the floor back up to Jackie, inviting her to share what she hopes listeners might learn from the radio show.

In her response to Perla's invitation, Jackie positions bilingualism as almost spectral, lurking "out there" in the atmosphere, ready to surprise monolingual folks at any moment ("Bilingualism is out there"). Yet her words also center bilingualism as a valued, important norm for many people (herself included, though she doesn't mention it), as she engages in a kind of "low-key activism" (Conner 2020:63) to encourage listeners' awareness and willingness to "take part in" bilingualism. Jackie's low-key activism works together with Perla's attentive, attuned, and alternative listening ear and creative, conscious bilingual language practice to resist dominant raciolinguistic ideologies. In this way, Jackie and Perla ensure that bilingualism is not only "out there" but also already "in" listeners' ears, resonating out through headphones, dorm rooms, and dashboards across campus.

6. Discussion

As an alternative listening subject, Ms. Q heard beyond the narrow range of the white institutional listening subject in two important ways. First, she heard practices of exclusion that impact the DRHS Latinx community on frequencies not audible to the white listening ear. Ms. Q demonstrated a deep understanding of the historic and intersectional marginalization and exclusion of Latinx and EL students and their parents. As an alternative listening subject, Ms. Q saw and heard the absence of Spanish-speaking parents at Back to School Night, and recognized the need for a context-specific solution to address this structural exclusion on both linguistic and affective levels. Secondly, in contrast to the deficit-primed ears of the institutional listening subject, Ms. Q heard Latinx students as

competent bilingual speakers, capable of interpreting for parents at Back to School Night and other events. In hearing Latinx students as capable, language-full speakers, and their language brokering practices as valuable resources, she created a unique, grassroots language access program that successfully challenged parents' and students' structural exclusion from the school. In these ways, Ms. Q's listening practices were a form of "decolonizing listening" in which she heard, affirmed, and consciously created space for Latinx lives, sounds, and familial, community-based relationships in the white public space of DRHS (Stoeberl 2016:69).

It is important to note that this alternative listening subject position is not just a product of Ms. Q's caring approach toward students and families, problem-solving savvy, and "language-full" ideologies, but also made possible through the structural nature of her position (Flores et al. 2018). Ms. Q had the access, authority, and role flexibility within the school setting to recognize and address the problem in a way that was accepted and appreciated by the DRHS administration and the larger school district. Positions such as Ms. Q's Bilingual Community Coordinator were created through a long history of activism for and by Latinx communities to have their language recognized and supported in schools. In addition, Ms. Q's role, along with her husband, as community leaders within Latinx parent advocacy organizations outside DRHS, provided education, support, and encouragement to Latinx parents to participate in the school on multiple levels. Such organizations grew out of and continue to thrive on the legacy of powerful grassroots sociolinguistic, educational, and racial justice activism within Latinx communities. This situation suggests the need for structural support in the form of staff positions and policies that can better hear the needs of Latinx and immigrant communities and communities of color within schools, as well as the

importance of educators who can effectively respond to needs through creating strong school and community partnerships.

In hearing students as capable speakers, the Bilingual Student Interpreters program formed a type of interference that had transformative effects for the DRHS: students' participation in it impacted how students heard their own linguistic abilities, and affected how these abilities were heard on campus by peers and educators, as well as by district administrators. By supporting youth in using the full range of their bilingual and bicultural expertise to help others in visible ways on campus, the interpreters program stood in direct opposition to long standing policies and ideologies of deficit that treat Latinx youth's home languages as inessential to "real" education (Santa Ana 2002:204-206). By prioritizing communication between Latinx parents and students, the interpreting program decoupled students' language skills from classroom settings and from the white listening subject, and thus, from colonial, neoliberal modes of institutional evaluation and surveillance. Similar to Ms. Q, student interpreters positioned Spanish as important parts of their past, presents, and futures, collectively constructing a raciolinguistic chronotope of resistance (Flores et al. 2018). Crucially, it is not just any skill, but precisely Latinx students' language and culture – the same knowledge that was previously marginalized or associated with a sense of shame – that is now viewed as valuable. Thus, students are able to participate in agentive, meaningful ways at school by using Spanish throughout the space.

Moreover, the Interpreters Program established a collective identity and community of practice for a wide range of multilingual Latinx and immigrant youth, fostering a sense of expertise and belonging, rather than marginalization, DRHS. The school-sanctioned status of the program, the collective identity it created, the visual materiality of belonging through

matching t-shirts, and the public nature of interpreting at on-campus events rendered students' expertise both visible and audible, as well as positioned Latinx students as leaders at every level of the school community, from their peers, parents, educators, to district administrators. In these ways, the program created the affective experience of belonging, and of feeling recognized, seen, and heard as leaders by others. To quote Alejandra, the program created a feeling that Latinx students "also matter" at school. Educational scholars Wong & Peña ask, "How can we provide spaces for students to be critical of society, yet also imagine and enact a world of joy beyond the intersecting oppressions that attempt to circumscribe their lives?" (Wong & Peña 2017:131). The student interpreters program offered one such space.

Crucially, these changes in students' ideologies weren't restricted to the space of the school itself. Students took their decolonized ways of hearing and listening with them to our radio show, where they engaged in aural resistance of raciolinguistic ideologies over the airwaves. Through conversations with their interview guests and our research team, students rendered audible – and challenged – processes of racialization and practices of exclusion enacted by the white listening subject in the larger contexts of Goleta and Santa Barbara.

Together, the excerpts in this chapter provide an argument for the importance of listening to youth – of creating alternative listening subjects and alternative listening publics for Latinx students, their language practices, and lived experiences. As Lacey notes in her book chapter *The Public Sphere as Auditorium*: "We normally think about agency in the public sphere as speaking up, or finding a voice; in other words, to be listened to, rather than to listen. And it goes 'without saying' that one of the central tenets of modern democratic theory is the freedom of speech; and yet what really goes unsaid is that speech requires a

listener. What is actually at stake here is the freedom of shared speech, or, to put it another way, the freedom to be heard” (Lacey 2013:165).

7. Conclusion

The grassroots nature of the student interpreters program enabled Latinx students to use the full range of their linguistic and cultural expertise in a real-world, problem-solving, communicative context at DRHS for the benefit of their own community. Importantly, the program decoupled evaluations of students’ language practices and competence from white, neoliberal, hegemonic middle-class norms and white “listening ear” of the institution (Stoever 2016). In this way, students were able to hear themselves as competent, capable, and empowered on their own terms, challenging dominant deficit-based models of personhood. In addition, the interpreters program created new forms of belonging, participation, and leadership outside of white, neoliberal hegemonic terms, definitions, and structures, but ensured that these elite positionalities were still visible and audible to “white people” at DRHS. Students also engaged in practices of sonic resistance over the airwaves through their radio interviews. These processes of revaluation of students’ bilingualism and biculturalism, made possible by Ms. Q’s alternative listening subject position, successfully began to challenge the raciolinguistic status quo of the institution itself, as both Spanish and the youth who spoke it began to acquire new sociocultural capital as leaders within the school context.

In this chapter, I have provided an overview of some of the reasons why the interpreters program became so important for Latinx students at DRHS. In the next chapter, I analyze students’ and parents’ collective activism efforts to maintain their grassroots model of language access in the wake of the district’s cancellation of the Interpreters Program.

Focusing on instances of students' affective agency, I analyze how students challenge the ways in which they were misheard by a different institutional listening subject, the school district. I begin the next chapter with an ethnographic vignette in mid-December 2016, as Alejandra and I worked together to set up a series of interviews with parents and students.

CHAPTER 5

Hear, Now: Challenging Institutional Listening

Ultratranslation lures translators out of invisibility and onto the streets, into the margins, into the footnotes, into annotation, into activism, into failure and irrationality, the intuitive, a channeling.

— From *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation*
by artist activist group Antena Aire, 2013a

The temple bell stops
but the sound keeps coming
out of the flowers.

—Matsuo Bashō, translated by Robert Bly

Youth is a time of knowing.
—Tracy Skelton

1. Making Time to Listen

It was mid-December 2016, and the holiday lights outside La Patera Valley Community Center were glistening in the reflection of the rain puddles in the parking lot as I lugged the last bag of camera gear inside the building. I began setting up the equipment for the third day of interviews with parents and students about the school district’s cancellation of the interpreters program, while Alejandra, the lead research assistant for this phase of the project, waited outside, greeting parents as they walked up and entered the building.

Alejandra had been instrumental in reaching out and encouraging parents and students to participate in this series of interviews, creating a spreadsheet in order to organize who would be coming in to interview and at which times. She had successfully mobilized multiple families in less than five days during the week right before Christmas – this is the kind of urgency with which she was working. With Alejandra’s drive and networking expertise, we quickly booked up three full evening sessions for interviews with eleven parents and eleven

students. There was an air of excitement and purpose circulating through the interviews, as students and their families had had no real venue thus far to voice their opinions and concerns in the two and a half months since the school district shut down the interpreters program.

Over the course of our interviews, students and parents collectively mounted a complex, multilayered case in favor of reinstating the student interpreters' program, as they shared details of how the district's decision had been communicated to students, what actions students had taken during the fall to challenge the decision, and how families and students were making sense of the decision. One piece of information I learned was that Santa Barbara Unified School District's then-Director of English Learner and Parent Engagement, Dr. Raya (a pseudonym), a Latina administrator, had been present at DRHS at Back to School Night 2016 to communicate and implement the decision to end the student interpreters program. Although it remained unclear if Dr. Raya herself made the decision to end the program or if it was made by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, or a team of administrators, Dr. Raya was in the role of representing the district at the school the evening when the decision was communicated to the students.

In addition, I learned that students had not willingly accepted the district's decision. They had agentively sought multiple channels and opportunities for dialogue with the school district about its decision to cancel the interpreters program that fall, citing the need to understand it better, as well as to lodge complaints, and potentially contest it. As one example, Alejandra had requested a second meeting with Dr. Raya, and had organized a group of students to attend, even going to other local high schools to ask her student interpreter colleagues there to join her for the meeting.

While the district's stated priority was to ensure "quality language access" services for Spanish-speaking parents (Monreal 2016), I learned that the district had not provided student interpreters with official on-the-record written or verbal reasoning beyond "the needing of licenses" for its decision to cancel the program. As a result, students and their families were left to make sense of the decision on their own, based on personal anecdotal moments of encounter with district administrators after the decision, which they often discussed with me and Alejandra before, during, and after our collaborative interviews. Common throughout the various conjectures that circulated was that the district's definition of "quality language access" meant only professional interpreting, and therefore was an implicit judgment of students' linguistic practices as "not good enough" or "inappropriate" for Back to School Night. Several student and parent participants reported that the district had stated that students were not allowed to interpret because they were not yet "qualified" to do so; only after they turned eighteen and were recognized as legal adults, could they receive professional certified training. Thus, the district had excluded youth interpreters along two axes: their age and lack of professional training, knowledge, and skills. In this way, students' and parents' discussions of the decision also provided an inflection point from which to examine how youth language brokers experienced and challenged the exclusion enacted by the institution as a white listening subject.

2. *Overview*

This chapter begins from an understanding of Dos Rios High School and the Santa Barbara Unified School district, as well as specific district representatives, such as Dr. Raya and members of the school board, as occupying the role of the white institutional listening subject in its decision to cancel the student interpreters program. I follow Flores and Rosa in

conceptualizing this role as a historically-situated “ideological position and mode of perception” rather than assigning it to any one person, administrator, or individual, as whiteness is often enacted through institutions structured by raciolinguistic ideologies that accord them the ability to act as perceiving subjects (2015:151).

In this chapter, I analyze excerpts from the series of collaborative interviews led by Alejandra and me and recorded in December 2016. I analyze students’ retellings of affective encounters with the school district after the cancellation of the interpreters’ program, paying specific attention to chronotopic constructions, or space-time discourses (Bakhtin 1981; Rosa 2016b). Through their interviews and actions in response to the district’s decision, students demonstrated critical awareness of the chronotopic dimensions of institutional listening that hear Latinx youth interpreters and their language practices only as future potential. These time-based evaluations of their language skills (i.e., “not qualified yet”) displace and defer students’ agency, abilities, and leadership to a yet-to-come promised future, while simultaneously working to justify the exclusion of student interpreters in the institution decision to shift to a professional interpreter model.

Specifically, I explore the following questions: How do students feel misheard by the institution? More importantly, what do they do about feeling misheard? How do they affectively experience racialized practice of exclusion through the district’s decision, and how do they mobilize that affect to contest the white listening subject? I utilize Ferrada, Bucholtz and Corella’s (2019) tripartite framework of affective agency (cf. McManus 2011, 2013; Bucholtz, Casillas, and Lee 2018) along with Sweetapple’s (2012) application of social tensions in order to investigate how students experience, articulate, and challenge how they are misheard by the white institutional listening subject.

As Flores and Rosa (2015) and a wide range of scholars focused on raciolinguistic ideologies have noted, anti-racist transformation must actively work to dismantle the hierarchies that produce the white listening subject. Scholars have begun this work by proposing subversive social tenses (Rosa 2016) and raciolinguistic chronotopes of resistance (Flores 2018), as well as investigating how affective experiences of social tense and affective agency might be mobilized to contest racialized inequalities. For example, cultural anthropologist Christopher Sweetapple has analyzed how social tense is used among queer immigrant activists in Berlin in order to narrate “how racist exclusions are accomplished and reproduced” and how counterpublics affectively “experience, explain, and contest activists’ predicament” (2012:3). Specifically, discourses of social tense are a resource for speakers and “a normative structure for subjects to locate, stage, and experience their felt understandings of the world while reproducing/upending distributions of social goods and social harms” (Sweetapple 2012:5). Sweetapple found that in local debates among queer immigrant communities, social tense was utilized to “cast problems – like Islamophobia, gentrification, lack of non-white participants in an anti-racist presentation – into a graspable-thus-actionable relation for actually living subjects” (Sweetapple 2012:6). I employ this idea within my analysis to investigate how students use social tense and time in narrating their exclusion, articulating the ideologies behind it, and working to recenter themselves and their language practices in the discursive here and now.

In a similar vein, recent research in educational and linguistic anthropology has investigated how youth mobilize affective agency to “challenge racializing processes and advance social justice for themselves, their peers, their families, and their communities” (Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2018:5; Ferrada, Bucholtz, & Corella 2019). Specifically, Ferrada,

Bucholtz, and Corella have proposed three elements that work together to create instances of affective agency in educational settings: “(a) the initial emotional encounter as a site of affective action, (b) the further mobilization of affect as agency through reflexivity and critique, and (c) the persistence of affect across time and space” (2019:81). Understanding affective agency as socioculturally mediated action that is also embodied, I draw upon these three elements to support my analysis of how students used their affective experience of exclusion as motivation and a basis for continued social action.

In my analysis, I argue that as a response to their initial affective experience of the district’s exclusion, students reflected upon and mobilized their affect to create social action to contest the cancellation of the program. Throughout their interviews, students construct, assert, and recenter their own temporal framings of their language abilities that radically revalorize their present-day ways of speaking and listening in the here and now. Populating students’ alternative temporalities are alternative listening subjects and speaking subjects, which form a subversive social tense of inclusion (Povinelli 2011; Rosa 2016b), which I call *the ultrapresent*.

In the first section, I analyze excerpts of students’ narratives of the interpreters program cancellation at Back to School Night 2016. I explore students’ reflections on their own affective experiences of the district’s decision as well as how these affects served as motivation for further action by students. In the second section, I analyze five excerpts from students’ interviews in which they identify and challenge the district’s futurizing discourses, and utilize social tense as a way to re-center themselves and their language practices in the here and now. In the third section, I analyze how the students reclaimed the role of listening subject by “listening back” to the district in their narratives of the district’s lack of response

to their activism efforts. I close with a discussion with how I came to understand the students' perspectives on their own language practices as formulating a subversive social tense of inclusion, the ultrapresent.

3. *“Feeling Invisible:” Students’ Affective Experiences of Exclusion*

In this section, I analyze three excerpts of students' narratives of the interpreters program cancellation at Back to School Night 2016. The first excerpt is from a radio interview with Julio in September 2016, the day after the program's cancellation, and the other two are from Carolina and Karla's interviews with Alejandra and me in December 2016. Here I explore students' critical reflections on the cancellation and their own affective experiences of that exclusion, as well as how these affects served as motivation for further action by students. To start things off, I want to travel back in time, before the student and parent interviews (December 2016), before Trump was elected (November 2016), back to the very moment in which the student interpreters program was cancelled in early September 2016. Or at least as close as I got to that moment as a researcher:

“Estamos live on air, coming at you live from KJUC 770/880 AM, broadcasting in the UCSB residence halls. This is ‘Found in Translation,’ bringing you the sounds and stories of multilingual Santa Barbara.” I looked to my right and introduced my student collaborator, Julio, who had come into the studio for the last interview of our summer radio project. Earlier that afternoon, while waiting for Julio at the UCSB bus stop, I had gone through a mental checklist of topics I planned to ask him about: his extracurricular activities, his love of food, his concept for a radio cooking show, what had inspired him to pursue and stick with interpreting. What I didn't know yet was that the night before our interview, the district had

officially cancelled the student interpreters program at the DRHS annual Back to School Night. As we walked towards the radio station, Julio shared what had happened at the event. I immediately decided we would scrap any planned questions in order to focus on the program's cancellation. As we sat down for the interview, Julio began recounting his own and other students' reactions to the district's decision and how they grappled with the feelings generated by that loss:

1.1 "Dang, this hit people hard"

Audrey: As we were walking over to the station you were- you dropped a bomb on me! You were saying, "I think I should tell you this up front" and you actually shared with me that the student interpreting is either cancelled or is no more or is on hiatus? Can you tell us, and sort of the audience, a little more about what happened?

Julio: As far as I have been told, essentially we're not going to interpret this year for, like, any of the schools because, oh, I guess, needing of licenses? Okay?
Something related to that? And so, yeah, we're just kind of like, shut down. And then, so many of my colleagues got so pissed. It was-

Audrey: Groan.

Julio: Honestly, I wasn't even sure what to do. I was like, "Alright, I gotta be-keep calm because everyone's pissed here."

Audrey: Wow. Was that like, was it today that you heard that news? Or when did you hear that news?

Julio: It was yesterday!

Audrey: Wow, yesterday, and so, was it in a big meeting or like, how was that information conveyed?

Julio: Actually it was Back to School Night, yesterday for, uh, Dos Rios. And so normally students would interpret for like, parents who needed help. And so like, a bunch of people showed up. Like there were so many people with like "DRHS en español" shirts that were, it was just like, "Yo, we have a surplus of these people just chilling."

Audrey: Wow, so you guys represented. You were just like, showed up in the "DRHS en español" which I've seen picture of those- photos in the newspapers! I've seen students, like, in those t-shirts, from DRHS. So- wow, so people showed up to interpret, and then, there ended up being a meeting about the interpreter club or interpreter student group.

Julio: Yeah, in which, uh, we were told that we're not gonna be- our

services will not be needed? And so one person even said, “Essentially, we’re nothing now.” And I’m just like, “Dang, that breaks my heart.” Just like, hearing somebody say that.

Audrey: Wow, one of your students- a student said that?

Julio: Yeah, yeah.

Audrey: Wow. Wow. That’s– wow. Okay.

Julio: And so I’m just like, “Dang, this hit people hard.”

Audrey: Yeah, it sounds like it took away, like some, identity and sense of pride, like you were saying, and like a sense of belonging, and like, um, I don’t know, also in a sense like agency, and the power to be change makers on some level.

Julio: Yeah.

Audrey: Yeah.

Julio: Not only that, but also I guess it took away the ability for certain parents- Yeah! For like parents to fully understand what’s going on. Because like I said, like, not all parents know English. I have been in the situation where I don’t know the language, and, it’s one of those things where I just get frustrated and I’m not sure what to do. And I feel like completely, like, ignorant, and like- It’s like, I feel put down if I ask for help. And my mom has even told this to me too, how that- she’s felt like, that way.

Audrey: Wow.

Julio: And so it’s kind of like in a way, make- creating, like, I guess, inequality again?

Audrey: Mhmm?

Julio: Because it takes away the parents’ ability to un- to fully understand.

Audrey: Yeah, that’s pretty heavy duty stuff there.

When I first listened back to the interview with Julio, it struck me as a conversation textured by time – distinct layers of time are felt, narrated, and affectively experienced in the past and present interwoven throughout our exchange. First, in Julio’s narration of the event, the ways in which students affectively experienced the exclusion of the district’s decision was not separate from the timing of how the decision was communicated to them. Second, the district’s justification for the exclusion of youth interpreters – which Julio describes as “the needing of licenses” – was framed in temporal terms. Third, my timing as a researcher was obviously off: the program’s abrupt cancellation had taken me by surprise.

Throughout our conversation, I struggled to process and comprehend this turn of events, as evidenced by my repeated *wows* (seven of them). Even though I had been warned

earlier that year by the principal of DRHS that the program might be ending, and students and parents had previously shared similar rumors with me, up until that point, there had been no official announcement that the decision had been made and no warning that it would be communicated on the very evening of Back to School Night. The news was truly surprising to me as a scholar, an educator, and an activist and advocate for youth and families of color; I felt and still feel angry both about the decision and about how and when the decision was communicated.

As Julio's and my conversation continues, I reflect out loud on the abstract impacts the decision may hold for students (loss of identity, pride, belonging, agency), while Julio brings into focus the real, material impacts it had for Latinx parents attending Back to School Night the previous evening: not all parents were able to fully understand everything at the event. In a later meeting with school district administrators, a local parent advocacy group would describe the situation as "a comprehensive lack of language access" when it became clear that only eighteen professional interpreters had been hired to provide language access services for an event that would normally be covered by 100 to 120 student interpreters. Thus, while the district may have understood the decision to switch to professional interpreters as an attempt to improve language access services and inclusion, the roll-out of the decision in fact enacted exclusion that very evening. By barring student interpreters from continuing to provide these services to parents, despite inadequate numbers of replacement interpreters, the district effectively prevented meaningful access and equitable participation for many Latinx parents who attended Back to School Night that year.

Julio notes that this decision, as well as how and when it was communicated, re-established the raciolinguistic status quo – inequality – for DRHS students and families of

color who speak Spanish and languages other than English: “So it’s kind of like in a way, make- creating, like, I guess, inequality again?” Crucially, Julio’s temporal adverb *again* frames this event not as a single instance of unequal access, but rather as a return to ongoing systemic inequality at the school, which the student interpreter model had, in some small way, begun to redress. This is reminiscent of Omi and Winant’s (1994) challenging catch-22: “Any attempt to institutionalize policies to ameliorate racial inequalities will inevitably reinforce the white supremacy that lies at the root of institutions responsible for ensuring their implementation” (Omi and Winant 1994, cited in Flores 2017:567).

As Julio details the justification that the district administrator gave for their cancellation of the program, his narrative indexes the possible hegemonic ideologies underlying the school district’s decision. Julio quotes the district as citing “the needing of licenses” in justifying their move from student interpreters to professional interpreters. Such a requirement entails being 18 years old (a legal adult), as well as having the time, navigational capital, and funds to pursue training towards a certificate or professional interpreting license. In this way, the district invokes a futurizing social tense to justify the exclusion of Latinx youth in the present moment (i.e., youth could potentially one day get this certification, but are not currently qualified to interpret).

Having this context better helps understand students’ strong affective experiences of the cancellation, as Julio describes: students felt angry, heartbroken, unsure. He quotes a peer as saying “Essentially, we’re nothing now,” effectively demonstrating that some students experienced this exclusion as a direct hit to their identity and self-esteem. The last-minute timing of how the decision was communicated seemed almost to deliberately set students up for a fall: when all the student-interpreters were on campus, wearing their t-shirts, ready and

excited to interpret. This timing meant that students had to receive news of the decision along with the added pressure of having to process the strong, complex emotions it produced in that moment, in a public setting, in visible ways, in front of peers, parents, and educators.

Julio's account is a powerful reflection on his own and others' affective experiences of the district's decision, aired on radio the day after the district's decision to cancel the program. As Ferrada, Bucholtz, and Corella, note: "the affective reaction produced within an emotional encounter is itself a form of affective action, but [...] it may not extend beyond the initial encounter to participate in larger processes of social formation and transformation" (2019:86). As noted in the introduction of this chapter, throughout the fall, students continued to reflect on their feelings and take action in connection to those emotions in order to protest the district's decision. The interviews with students and parents that Alejandra worked to schedule at the LPCC in December 2016 were one of the ways in which students mobilized to take action.

The next two examples are taken from two joint interviews Alejandra and I led with student interpreters, Karla and Carolina, during that time. In their examples, Karla and Carolina recount and offer critical reflections on the moment of the program's cancellation on Back to School Night, the same moment Julio described in his radio interview.

In this excerpt, Karla describes the shift in roles that students were permitted to inhabit at Back to School Night in 2016 and how the district communicated this change. She highlights that students felt sidelined by the district:

1.2 *"They Made It Sound That That Was Not Our Job"*

1. Audrey: So:, what was the other option this year?
2. Like, if you went to Back to School Night?
3. Like, did the district, still allow a role for the students?

4. Karla: From my- From *my* understanding, ((*Raises eyebrows and looks right*))
5. it was that the students, *could*,
6. *in ways*, help out,
7. but it wasn't, their job.
8. Um, they made it sound that,
9. that was not our job,
10. "Yes, you can *look around*, maybe if a parent's lost,
11. you just guide them to the right classroom."
12. But otherwise, stay out of our business@,"
13. kind of thing.
14. Yeah.
15. Audrey: And, how do you, like, in talking with other students after that moment,
16. like, how did other students feel, like-
17. Karla; Yeah, I think they felt like it was kind of rude?,
18. the way they were,
19. just forced out all at once.

From Karla's narrative, I learned that instead of allowing students to interpret for parents, the district told the students they could take on the role of "Bilingual Student Ambassadors." In this role, students were permitted to greet parents and guide them to classrooms around campus, but they could not, under any circumstances, provide interpretation for parents. The district's switch to the term *ambassador* contrasts with Ms. Q's free use of the term *intérprete* and *interpreters* in reference to bilingual Latinx students as discussed in Chapter 4. While the new role's title maintained the term *bilingual*, the general, non-linguistic nature of the term *ambassador* as compared to the specific linguistic expertise indexed by the term *interpreter* suggests that perhaps any student (i.e., including white monolingual students) might be able to perform this role, even if their language skills were not on par with those of their Latinx peers. In addition, the new title makes it unclear if these students are serving Latinx Spanish-speaking parents or all parents in their role as ambassadors. Such a role is quite different from the expert leadership role that Latinx students had already been occupying as interpreters not only at Back to School Night but in the larger context of their families' lives for years.

Through Karla's voicing of the district's communication of its decision, she paints the district administrators as distant and uncaring: they made and implemented their decision without regard for students' likely affective response connected to the loss of their program that evening. This felt sense of indifference echoed across interviews with other students. As Karla puts it, she and other students felt it was "rude that they had been "forced out all at once," (line 19) again underlining the condensed, sudden, and surprising temporality of the district's decision. From Karla's narrative, Spanish is allowed to operate within school-sanctioned events and spaces, but only on the district's terms, from which Latinx youth are abruptly (line 19), rudely (line 17) and clearly (line 12) excluded.

Students were understandably frustrated at this new limited role. Carolina, one of Alejandra's close friends, had also been present the night that the interpreters program was cancelled. Here, in response to one of my first questions, she identifies and describes her affective experience of the district's decision as one of the main reasons that motivated her to participate in this interview:

1.3 "We Did Feel, Like, Invisible"

Audrey: What brought you here today?

Carolina: Uh, being my last year as a senior I was thinking that Back to School Night was going to be great because I was going to help out the last set of parents and I was going to do my thing with my group. And I got to where our group meets and they were talking about how we weren't supposed to help our parents. So that frustrated me, because I started when I was a freshman. And they were always like, "Whoa, you guys are so good, you guys are awesome, you guys are helping the parents, and you guys are helping us. And we love you guys." And they just put us way up here (*elevates hand with palm facing up*). And then my last year they just kinda dropped me (*drops hand*). So I was like, "What?" I was, like, confused and angry— because I mean it's my people. And I have been helping my people for so long and it felt annoying and stressful not to be able to do it my last year.

Audrey: And what were the reactions of other students? How was everyone else handling it?

Carolina: Uh, well, a lot of them were scared because they didn't know what they were going to do if a parent did ask them for help. Um, we were all really mad. And kind of boiling our blood and angry and stuff, but I mean we had to, we had to calm down and just guide the parents to where they had to go and it was just, ugh, *((looks away and then back at camera, takes a slow, deep breath))*. We felt like we didn't matter, like we couldn't do much. And at one point, we did feel, like, invisible, as a group.

Here, Carolina describes and embodies the affective rollercoaster she experienced connected to the district's decision. First, she indexes a personal and collective sense of ownership and pride connected to the interpreters program through her use of first-person singular and plural possessive pronouns: "my thing with my group; our group; our parents; my people." She then narrates how this sense of positive affect was initially shared by the district. She elevates her hand with the palm facing up when narrating how the district previously valued the students' language skills ("they just put us way up here"), giving voice to a long list of positive evaluations from the district: "You guys are so good, you guys are awesome, you guys are helping the parents, and you guys are helping us. And we love you guys." She then drops her hand with the palm facing down, as she says, "and then last year, they just kind of dropped me." Her narrative illustrates a kind of affective whiplash created by the district's contrasting evaluations of the students' volunteer work as interpreters.

Carolina also describes the range of affects that she and other students felt at Back to School Night 2016: her own confusion at the district's abrupt change of policy, other students' fear and stress from being put in an unexpected situation at the last minute in which their new roles were unclear, as well as frustration, anger, and rage ("boiling our blood"). She connects this confusion and anger to the erasure of her long history of and expertise in volunteering with Latinx community ("I have been helping my people for so long"), both through the student interpreters program as well as local non-profit programs I knew she participated in.

Similar to Julio's radio interview, Carolina constructs herself and other student interpreters as having to maintain emotional composure and "calm down" despite their strong feelings in order to be able to perform a service for Latinx parents by guiding them to the classrooms. Again, Carolina does not only narrate but also enacts her embodied response in the interview; she stops her utterance "*we had to calm down and just guide the parents to where they had to go and it was just, ugh,*" in order to take a deep, slow breath, regain her composure, and continue the interview. Carolina observes that when the students' agency was constrained ("we couldn't do much"), they felt like they "didn't matter" to such an extent that they collectively felt "invisible." This is a 180-degree shift in self-perception from Alejandra's interview in the previous chapter, in which she describes how the interpreter program enabled Latinx students to feel and demonstrate that they "also matter at the school." Thus, the district's decision reinstated inequality for Latinx parents as well as invisibility for student interpreters.

Through these excerpts, I have explored how students affectively experienced and reflected on the exclusion enacted by the district's decision to cancel the interpreters program. In the next section, I analyze how students engaged in critical reflection and critique of the ideologies behind the district's decision, and how they challenged the ways in which they were misheard by the district.

4. "Right Now You Have Us Here:" Challenging Institutional Listening

In this section, I analyze five examples in which students acknowledge and refute the district's futurizing discourses and re-center themselves and their language practices in the here and now.

As part of the interview series, Alejandra had set up an interview with Dante, a senior

honors student and active member of the program. Her admiration for Dante was clear when he stepped into the room. He was not only active with several clubs at DRHS, but he was also deeply involved with local activist organizations and social justice coalitions around Goleta and Santa Barbara. While it was my first time meeting Dante, our camera person, Michael, waved and greeted him with a warm hug and a fist pound; they both already knew each other from their shared community activism work.

In a testament to Dante's activism, Alejandra had described him to me as "fluent in '-isms'" (racism, adultism, ageism, ableism, etc.) when she told me who would be coming in to interview that evening. From additional conversations with Alejandra, I learned that Dante was one of the first students to take action when he felt students were not adequately compensated for their time as volunteers or as speakers in non-profit organizations. She spoke highly of him and his achievements and also aspired to become a similar leader for her peers. While I had led many of the parent interviews up to this point, during this conversation I invited Alejandra to co-lead the interview. She pulled up a chair next to me and we began the interview.

I recognized during the first few minutes that Alejandra's knowledge of the interpreters program and her relationship with Dante enabled the interview to go far deeper than anything I would have been able to do from my position as an outside researcher. At a certain point, I let the interview open up into a less structured conversation between Alejandra, Dante, and me, which Michael noticed and began to capture by reorienting the camera from its original focus on Dante to include Alejandra and me as we spoke, responded, and asked additional questions. Dante's parents, recently finished with their interview, were still present in the back of the room, listening intently and engaging in the interview at some

points when Alejandra asked clarifying questions. The interview lasted for over 90 minutes and covered topics from the cancellation of the interpreters program, to specific classes and educators within their high school, to issues of the (de)colonization of language.

Throughout the conversation, Dante and Alejandra moved beyond recounting the district's decision and their affective responses to it, and engaged in critical reflection on and "withering" critique of the possible ideologies behind the decision. They offered clear insights into the hegemonic discourses underlying the decision, as well as the root causes and systemic nature of Latinx youth exclusion throughout the school district and educational system. These insights enabled Dante and Alejandra to counter these discourses in powerful ways, as well as propose thoughtful, innovative possibilities for addressing the school district's systemic exclusion of Latinx youth. I begin by analyzing one excerpt from Dante in depth, followed by two examples from other students, Carolina and Karla, that further illustrate some of his points. I then end this section by providing another in-depth analysis of an excerpt from Alejandra from this same interview.

In this first example from Alejandra's and my joint interview with Dante, I struggle to form the next question in our interview, while Alejandra asks Dante to draw a connection between the cancellation of the interpreters program and the systemic social marginalization of youth. She invites him to elaborate on two "-isms" that use age as a point of exclusion, and in his answer, Dante voices and challenges adult-centric, futurizing perspectives on youth, specifically Latinx youth and their language skills:

2.1 *Oh, Like Youth*"

1. **Audrey:** [Um],
2. **Alejandra:** [I know] you're super big with "-isms"?
3. And, I think, like, two of them just popped into my mind,

4. And maybe you could elaborate on that?
5. Um, I feel all of this goes back to ageism and adultism.
6. **Dante:** Yeah, like I mentioned,
7. Like um,
8. Like, there-
9. These adults that on the school board that think that,
10. "Oh," like, "Youth,
11. they don't know what they're doing,
12. let's just make decisions for them."
13. And um,
14. "Let's just," um, you know,
15. "They don't matter,
16. they haven't experienced what we've experienced,"
17. and like,
18. "they don't know anything."
19. Um,
20. And again, we were replaced by professional *adults*;
21. that were supposedly professionals, ((*scare quotes on*
professionals))
22. like, okay, there-
23. I feel like there are various different levels of expertise,
24. they're experts because they've gone through all these training
25. and all these classes or whatever
26. to become these professionals.
27. but we *grow up* speaking this language.
28. Um, we-
29. It's lit-
30. As we're born, we're-
31. our first language is, Spanish,
32. That- that like,
33. automatically, us growing up,
34. that makes us experts,
35. we know the language,
36. um,
37. from culture,
38. from- from our parents teaching us,
39. um, just by listening to it,
40. it's like-
41. it comes to us naturally,
42. we don't have to take any classes,
43. and we don't have to do *anything*,
44. to- to become *masters* at our- at our language.
45. Um, and I feel like, you know,
46. um, when- I feel like when professionals are doing it,
47. they sound like robotic,
48. and use all these like fancy Spanish words,
49. but if we talk to our parents,

50. you know,
 51. we'll throw in a little of our Spanish slang, and you know like,
 52. we'll make 'em feel comfortable.
 53. And if it's like, um like,
 54. professionals, everything's,
 55. it's very, formal, very structured,
 56. and sometimes the words don't even like match up to what-
 57. to what they're saying in English.
 58. And like, that's not- I mean,
 59. You know,
 60. we all make mistakes and everything,
 61. but, um, you know,
 62. they're supposed to be professionals. ((*scare quotes on*
professionals))
 63. So um,
 64. Yeah we-,
 65. That's the whole thing with adultism, like,
 66. it totally shut us down,
 67. it shut our voice down as- as students,
 68. as youth, um, and,
 69. you know, um,
 70. this, we're part of this like, system,
 71. where it's like run by adults,
 72. and um,
 73. you know,
 74. where youth are just seen as, um,
 75. people that will make it there eventually,
 76. through experience, um,
 77. but I feel like we know a lot,
 78. and we know what's going on,
 79. and we're capable of doing the things that they think we can't do.

In his response, Dante identifies and then critiques two axes along which youth interpreters were marginalized by the district – age and lack of “professional” status. First, Dante provides a detailed analysis of the raciolinguistic chronotopes and social tenses used by adult administrators to justify the current exclusion of bilingual Latinx youth from decision-making processes. He voices adult school board members’ deficit-based perspectives on youth, specifically youth’s supposed lack of experience and lack of knowledge (*they don’t know what they’re doing; they haven’t experienced what we’ve experienced; they don’t know anything*) and lack of worth (*they don’t matter*). Dante then

identifies these discourses as reasons that school board members use to justify making decisions on behalf of youth (*let's just make decisions for them*).

Dante makes explicit how these discourses effectively displace young people's agency – and worth – into some unknown, amorphous point in the future, when youth will have had “enough” experience to reach decision-making status (“youth are seen as people that will make it there eventually, through experience”). These discourses indirectly frame youth as people who are “not here yet,” but eventually will get “there” through experience. Thus, inclusion in this future is cited as justification for adults to disregard and exclude youth, their expertise, and their agency in the present. Crucially, Dante identifies this particular situation, decision, and ideologies behind it not as a singular, disconnected act, but as linked to the larger systemic marginalization of students, especially Latinx students, by adults and their decision-making processes.

Dante then rejects this framing by reconfiguring youth's expertise as based on lived experience, not knowledge gained through institutional means. For Dante, linguistic expertise with Spanish is acquired “automatically” and “naturally” through the lived experience of “growing up” speaking Spanish at home. He explicitly rejects having to “take classes” or “do anything” to become “masters of our language” (lines 42-45), displaying astute insights into the processes of language acquisition that linguists have documented. Dante thus counters the district's narrative by affirming and centering youth's knowledge and awareness in the present moment (*We know a lot, we know what's going on*), rendering students as experts “capable of doing the things that they think we can't do.”

Dante's reconfiguration of expertise also plays into his critical analysis of the district's definition of “professional interpreters.” His repeated use of embodied scare quotes

around the word *professionals* (line 21) mark that category as potentially problematic, and thus open to examination and critique. Dante then challenges the discourses of deficit behind adults' ideological constructions of "professional interpreter," and offers his own definitions of those categories. In describing the *robotic* voices (line 47) of professional interpreters, their use of *fancy Spanish words* (line 48), and their language as *very formal, very structured* (line 55), Dante invokes a sonic experience of distance and disconnection, portraying "professional" interpreters as lacking warmth toward and being out of touch with students and their families in ways that impact their ability to adequately meet the communicative responsibilities of this role.

Dante then contrasts this with students' ability to *throw in a little of our Spanish slang* (line 51), a linguistic practice linked to building intimacy, which he directly connects to making parents feel *comfortable* (line 52). Thus, he constructs concern and care for parents' affective experience during Back to School Night as a main responsibility of a successful interpreter in this context – one that student interpreters actively fulfill as speakers by creating a feeling of comfort through their linguistic practices. By centering students' linguistic practices, reconfiguring notions of experience and expertise, critiquing the category of "professional interpreters" and supposed standards of the "idealized speaker," Dante positions student interpreters as expert communicators who are uniquely qualified to interpret for parents in the present moment.

Similar reconfigurations of expertise and "professionalism" happened across other students' interviews as well. In the following excerpt, Carolina firmly rejects that process of displacement, and instead constructs herself and her fellow interpreters as professionals in the present, possessing their own types of degrees that make them uniquely qualified to do

the work of interpreting for parents at Back to School Night:

2.2 “That’s Our Degree”

1. **Audrey:** Do you think they might bring a different type of expertise to that situation,
2. or a different type of knowledge?
3. **Carolina:** Um,
4. well,
5. professionals have their *degree*,
6. of course.
7. But I feel like,
8. what we’re professionals in is our *school*,
9. the way we *function*,
10. and we’re professionals,
11. in the way our parents feel,
12. in the way we feel,
13. and in the service we give to our parents,
14. because we’re not doing it for money,
15. like my dad said earlier.
16. Uh, we’re doing it because we want to help our community,
17. And want to have everyone feel like they’re a part of the school.
18. And we’re not getting anything out of it.
19. And I feel like that’s way more professional than *any* degree,
20. because it’s just, human @nature, @@.
21. I feel like interpreters just,
22. kinda go, and say what they have to say,
23. and they don’t really care about what the parents need, or want.
24. And us as interpreters, we’re able to sit there,
25. We’re able to ask,
26. “Do you have any questions?”
27. “Can I help you on anything else?”
28. “Do you know where your next class is?”
29. We have more interaction with our parents,
30. so I feel like that’s, *our* degree.

Here, Carolina concedes that professional interpreters may have an official “degree,” yet she challenges the relevance of those institutional credentials by reworking the concepts of “professionals” and “degree” on her own terms. Specifically, she redefines and claims the label “professional” for herself and her fellow student interpreters based on their level of affective expertise *in the way our parents feel, in the way we feel* (lines 11-12), localized knowledge of *our school, the way we function* (lines 8-9), as well as their intentions and

motivations for providing services to the parents: *we're not doing it for money [...] we're doing it because we want to help*. She continues on to label those motivations as “way more professional than any degree” (line 19). Carolina’s repeated mention of ‘parents’ in lines 11, 13, 23, 29, and their experience, as well as her interactional strategy of building on what “her dad said earlier” (line 15), follows Dante in recentering parents and their specific needs as a key part of providing meaningful language access in this context. In this way, Carolina recenters Latinx student interpreters as professionals in the present moment.

The importance of students’ affective expertise and localized knowledge was also highlighted in Karla’s interview, during which she shared that she had reflected extensively about what student interpreters had been able to provide for parents compared to professional interpreters. In this excerpt, Karla highlights the personal connection created between student interpreters and parents as a defining feature of student interpreters program that held impacts for what kinds of information parents were able to access:

2.3 “*That’s Lived That Life*”

Audrey: How do you think it might be different now that there are professional interpreters at the school events? How do you think that might be different?

Karla: I actually thought about this a lot. If- with the professional interpreters, yes, they might explain certain words better, but there is not the same *connection* with the parents. I doubt that a parent will come up to an interpreter afterwards and ask them, “*Oh* what is *this* event or what is this?” That’s just not the same *connection* with the professional interpreter than with the student interpreter that has their own experience at that school per say that’s lived that life. It’s kind of like dropping all those facts, but there is no further emotional experience, like “What do you think of this? Can you tell me your own personal experience about it?”

Here, Karla weighs the potential linguistic expertise of professional interpreters (might explain certain words better) against students’ ability to create a personal connection with parents. In Karla’s rendering, the ability to create an affective connection with parents is

paramount: their connection is what enables parents to feel comfortable enough to access additional information about the school through follow up questions and conversations. For Karla, a lack of connection between parents and a professional interpreter leads to reduced access: even though the “facts” are being shared, parents may not feel comfortable approaching a professional interpreter to ask those questions. As we continued our interview, Karla provided a few examples of when she had been able to help parents access additional information beyond the scope of what the teacher was sharing:

Karla: Because afterwards, I remember this one time, uh, a mother of a student there asked me about a certain event that the teacher had mentioned which was, um, Beautify DR, where the student goes out and helps campus grow and become cleaner and nicer. And she asked me, like, “What is that? Explain more. I didn’t really understand what she was saying.” And even though the teacher didn’t elaborate on that, I knew I could help her out and get to know that better.

Audrey: Were there any more times when you added information?

Karla: Yeah. I think various ones, elementary school ones as well. I remember for the teachers I was interpreting for, I had actually had them previously in my grades. “Oh, and I remember this teacher is really good at this and she is probably going to teach her student in a certain kind of way.” And I could communicate that to the parent even if the teacher didn’t mention it. Because I felt that they needed to know that. That is why they came to these meetings. Even though they might not understand, there is always someone there to help them out.

In this example, Karla clearly states her own agency in identifying, choosing, and sharing additional information from her own experience that she feels parents “need to know.” demonstrating that once this connection is made, students are the ones with the lived experience to be able to answer parents questions. This information would likely not be available through a professional interpreter without this lived experience. In these ways, Karla valorizes and recenters students’ agency, ways of speaking, and expertise as compared with professionals, who are rendered as not being able to provide those types of expertise.

This sentiment was shared by many student interpreters, who contrasted their own capabilities in the present with the district’s failure to meet language access needs. In a later part of her interview, Karla shared the following analysis of the district’s decision, turning the tables by highlighting adults’ unreadiness:

2.4 “If They’re Not Ready Yet”

1. **Karla:** I mean,
2. It’s understandable if they’re,
3. trying to get other, like, other staff to interpret,
4. more professional people, but,
5. if they’re not ready yet-
6. We just want to offer help,
7. you know, we’re not trying to do anything bad,
8. *((Widens eyes; shakes head slightly on ‘trying to’))*
9. we just want to help them out.
10. A:nd, for them to just shut it- shut us out like that,
11. I mean,
12. we have experience.
13. It might not be the best,
14. but we have some,
15. and that, means a lot.

Here, Karla carefully empathizes with the district, offering awareness and understanding that it may in fact be necessary to switch to a model that uses staff or professional interpreters. Yet she also manages to challenge the spatiotemporal displacement of students’ expertise and abilities to the future in a few quick utterances. First, she flips the script by making the delicate observation that it may in fact be the district administrators and/or professional interpreters, not the students, who are “not yet ready” to meet parents’ needs in the present moment. The unspecified referent of the pronoun *them* in *We just want to help them out* could refer to the district, professional interpreters, or parents, but in any case positions the students as capable of helping adults in general.

She then locates the district’s ability to provide adequate services at some future point

when they might be prepared to hire enough professional interpreters; thus, she suggests, the district may still be in need of “help” or assistance in the current moment. Next, she recenters students as the ones who are present, willing, and able to fulfill the district’s need with their valuable skills. In reclarifying students’ intentions (“We’re not trying to do anything bad”), Karla reframes her own and her peers’ language brokering as well-intentioned, and thus, inappropriate to shut down.

Through my analysis of excerpts from interviews with Dante, Carolina, and Karla, I have demonstrated how students identified and challenged the district’s spatiotemporal displacement of youth’s agency and expertise to the future. I also highlighted the ways in which students reconfigured notions of expertise and professionalism on their own terms that position them as expert interpreters in the present moment.

In the next example, I analyze an excerpt from Alejandra’s interview with Dante and me, in which Alejandra narrates a moment of encounter with the district in the meeting she organized with Dr. Raya and other student interpreters in the weeks after the program’s cancellation. Although Dr. Raya granted Alejandra’s request to meet, students were given less than one day’s notice for the meeting, being told to meet the following day early in the morning, before their school day started (during the time period when teachers normally hold their planning meetings). Given such short notice and the early scheduled start time, only five student interpreters were able to attend, out of more than two hundred student interpreters across three local high schools. In her narrative, Alejandra describes a challenging moment the students faced during their meeting and exchange with Dr. Raya:

2.5 “I was just done.”

1. Alejandra: Yeah, and actually one of the students at that meeting,
2. she asked, “What would happen to the interpreters now?
3. The a *hundred* interpreters that we have,
4. that won’t be able to interpret anymore?”
5. Um, she:, an–,
6. and she answered that,
7. um,
8. that we could actually *graduate* high school?
9. and that if we *wanted to*,
10. we could come back and take—
11. and participate as “*professional*” ((*sarcastic emphasis*)) interpreters,
12. But for me it’s like,
13. Who-
14. I mean,
15. right now,
16. you have us *here*.
17. Like this is–
18. This is where we are, right now.
19. Like,
20. we’re not–
21. we’re not going to go off to college,
22. and then come back when you need us for Back to School Night,
23. because that’s when *our* school starts in the *college*.
24. So my thought is like,
25. this is just for *pity*, like she has–
((*Quickly drops hands to thighs; turns palms up on “pity.”*))
26. she didn’t–
27. she just made it up at the spot.
28. It’s like,
29. you haven’t even thought of that,
30. you haven’t thought of the damage that,
31. you have,
32. left?
33. behind?
34. And for me,
35. like after that meeting,
36. I was just done@.

Although many students mentioned feeling “hurt” by the district's decision, Alejandra was the first student to characterize the decision as creating “damage.” In doing so, she calls attention to the systemic impact and material effects of such the district’s decision and highlights the impacts of discourses of harm and disregard by institutions towards

marginalized populations (Povinelli 2011). Alejandra details this disregard, the administrators' ignorance of the present and future consequences ("the damage") of their decision, and her own affective response to it.

In her meeting, students asked Dr. Raya to account for her decision and its impacts on students. Alejandra voices a question that one of her peers posed to Dr. Raya at the meeting: "What will happen to us? The a *hundred* interpreters that we have that won't be able to interpret anymore?" As Alejandra stresses how many interpreters are affected by the decision – a *hundred* – she simultaneously shifts her gaze from me towards Dante, creating momentary resonance with a point Dante had made earlier in the interview: "I really want to stress that we were a *hundred* interpreters, that they tried to replace with twelve professional interpreters that didn't work out either way." Dante's reference to the size of interpreters group was utilized to highlight the inadequacy of the district's response to parents at Back to School Night. In Alejandra's example, her emphatic stress of "a hundred" positions the student group as too big and too important to go unaddressed by the district. Their repeated, emphatic stress on 'a *hundred*' demonstrates the strength of collective investment, presence, and commitment of Latinx youth in this program.

In Alejandra's narrative, as the interaction continues between Dr. Raya and the students, it becomes clear that in fact, the district has not come up with any alternative program or way for students to continue as interpreters. The only possibility Dr. Raya offers for what students can do takes the form of a hypothetical future situation in which, at a later point, after having graduated high school and begun college, students would be welcome to return to DRHS to interpret. This situation resonates with Rosa's (2016b) insight that time-based discourses of future inclusion are often mobilized as justification for racialized

exclusions and inequalities in the present.

Alejandra counters this futurizing discourse in a powerful way by simply reaffirming students' presence in contemporary space and time: “Right now, you have us here. This is where we are, right now.” With raised volume and emphatic stress, her voice signals urgency and potentially exasperation. I heard this utterance as a call to action, to awareness, alerting the district to the risk of sidelining these students: her assertion that students are “here now” is also a call for the district to “hear now” and recognize the students as capable interpreters in the present moment. Alejandra also refuses Dr. Raya’s hypothetical future and instead illuminates the deep disconnection between the district’s understanding of temporality and the trajectories of students’ lives: in reality, students will likely be unable or unwilling to return from college on a specific date in early fall to interpret at Back to School Night. In this refusal, Alejandra positions the district as an out-of-touch institutional listening subject, one that lacks understanding and awareness of how the constraints of time, space, and material resources work in students’ lives and therefore what might or might not be realistic possibilities for their schedules.

Alejandra observes what she perceives as the district’s lack of authenticity with students (“this is just for pity”) and thus, the lack of true consideration of the impact or effects this decision might entail for students. The district did not do the work of keeping “kids in mind,” which Lynch (2007) has identified as a core practice of affective labor: the mental work of “holding the persons (care recipients) and their interests in mind, keeping them ‘present’ in mental planning, and anticipating and prioritizing their needs and interests” (Lynch 2007:260, cited in Restler 2017:219). For Alejandra, the level of disconnection and disregard for students’ realities suggests that Dr. Raya did not prepare at all for the meeting –

the solution she offered was “just made up at the spot” and was for “pity.” Indeed, other research has highlighted “pity” as a specific affective sign of college administrators’ inauthentic engagement with college student activists, and thus for students, it is one of the hallmarks of feeling unheard and marginalized (Rosati et al. 2019:120).

Feeling unheard by institutions can be tiring. The extra, unpaid labor that minoritized activists perform can lead to exhaustion and fatigue. Both Lauren Berlant and Sara Ahmed have noted that exhaustion is one of the primary effects of neoliberalism (Gopinath 2019:80). Specifically, Ahmed (2018) notes that the work of complaint includes multiple kinds of active and affective labor over time: lodging the complaint, reliving the situation that led to the complaint, dealing with responses to the complaint, and following up on the complaint to ensure it is processed through institutional systems. This labor is in addition to “regular” work: “Mostly when you are involved in a complaint you are still doing your other work, as a student, as a teacher, an administrator. You are doing the work of complaint alongside doing your work” (Ahmed 2018). Such intense, durational affect can end in a type of realization that Ahmed calls “snap”: “the moment you realize what you cannot do, that something has broken, a bond to an institution, or a belief that you can make an institution more accommodating. If snap can be experienced as a moment, the moment you do not take it anymore, that moment has a history.” In lines 45-48, Alejandra’s assertion that she’s just “done” indexes her moment of “snap” – the moment in which she faces affective exhaustion from the work of confronting the institution, of registering a complaint, and experiencing its multidimensional practices of exclusion on both structural and discursive levels.

In the above three examples, students stake claims to the present by creating and referencing their own temporalities to recenter themselves and their language practices as

capable speakers in the here and now. In the next section, I examine how students actively occupied the roles of speaking subject and listening subject as they recounted stories of how their affective experiences spurred them not only to talk back to the district (as in the above examples) but to listen back to the district, offering their own careful analyses and evaluations of its (in)competence as a white institutional listening and speaking subject.

5. Who's Listening To Whom? Students Reclaim the Role of Listening Subject

Throughout the fall, students' affect had persisted and had served as the basis for taking further social action. Yet the district failed to recognize, engage with, or respond to students' affects and action. By recounting the interactions that included a lack of response from the district in these interviews, students were able to flip the script, position themselves as capable communicators, and in turn, evaluate the district as a questionable communicator, with unreliable listening and speaking practices. For me, this is where things got most exciting: students pushed back on the very structures of school district governance as they were currently set up. Students began to challenge who had the right to evaluate their linguistic practices, and they asserted their own right to be part of the school district's decision-making processes.

The first excerpt is taken from Alejandra's and my joint interview with her friend Carolina. In it, Alejandra asks if Carolina remembers the student meeting that Alejandra called for with Dr. Raya, held a month after the decision to cancel the interpreters program. Carolina shares her impression of Dr. Raya:

3.1 “Sat There Blank Faced”

1. **Alejandra:** But um, do you remember the meeting that we had with Jazmín Raya?
2. How did you feel with it?
3. **Carolina:** Yeah@, I do.
4. (1.2)
5. I felt like she wasn’t taking us seriously.?
6. I felt like she *heard*, what we were saying,
7. but she wasn’t *processing* it,
8. and really interpreting it, ((Closes hands))
9. as *us* being human beings and us being,
((Brings hands inward toward her chest))
10. really hurt,
11. by her actions and her words.
12. I saw Alejandra cry,
13. that day,
14. and,
15. Dr. Raya,
16. sat there blank faced,
17. and didn’t really care.
18. So that, ((Looks up))
19. hurt me? ((Looks up))
20. Um,
21. @and that thought, it-
22. kind of gets me upset.
23. But we’re going to keep fighting like I said. ((Smiles and nods head))

As she reflects on the meeting, Carolina uses complex linguistic and embodied strategies to powerfully communicate her affective stance on the district’s actions and (lack of) response to students. When Alejandra asks her question, Carolina gives a short chuckle as she states that she does remember the meeting. The short burst of laughter works to mark Alejandra’s question as almost laughable in the sense that the meeting was so significant that Carolina would be unlikely to have forgotten about it. As she reflects on the meeting, her unusually short intonational units, most followed by noticeably long pauses (lines 10–17), as well as slow breaths, work to convey the emotional weight and impact of the district’s representatives lack of affect and affectively appropriate response. Carolina does not restart, repeat, or repair any of these utterances or the discourse markers or fillers (such as like, um, and uh), common throughout her own and other students’ interviews. These strategies work

in a powerful way, signaling an affective response so strong that it requires mental, linguistic, and embodied effort to stay calm and maintain composure on the surface, even though the very memory of the meeting upsets her (line 21). In this way, Carolina engages with – is present with – her emotions as she experiences them.

In contrast to her own embodied, empathetic, and affect-full response, Carolina constructs the district as an affectless subject, devoid of empathy. She describes Dr. Raya as “hearing” but not “processing” (line 6) or “interpreting” (line 7) the students’ message and their affective experience of harm, thus constructing the district’s representative as not capable of truly listening to students. She positions Dr. Raya as someone who can sit in front of a crying student who is crying with a “blank face” (line 15) and without “really caring” (line 16) – a complete lack of embodied, affective, and authentic response, which for Carolina constitutes a secondary act of harm (line 17): Dr. Raya is physically present without being emotionally present with and for students. Here, Carolina affectively navigates the marginalization that she and her peers experienced at this meeting. As she revisits and reflects upon the emotions she felt during this meeting with Dr. Raya, new affect is produced in the moment of the interview (“that thought kind of gets me upset;” lines 20-21), which she uses as a basis to propel collective action forward into the future: “But we’re going to keep fighting like I said.”

I did not interview district administrators for this research, and so I have not heard Dr. Raya’s side of the story, nor do I know how she felt about the district’s decision or this particular meeting with students. However, she was put in a challenging, impossible position by the district as a Latina administrator who was asked to speak with Latinx students about the cancellation of an educational program that was meaningful and important to them.

The motivating relationship between affect and action was seen in other interviews as well. In the following example, Jaime describes how his affective response to the cancellation of the interpreters program served as a basis for taking action. Jaime's commitment to supporting the interpreters program reaches across time: although at the time of the interview he was a first-year college student, and thus could not engage in our collaborative project beyond this interview, his eagerness to contribute to the project as much as he could underlines the importance of helping his peers to create change even across school-year generations:

3.2 "I'm Still Waiting On That Response"

1. **Audrey:** Um,
2. and how did you feel when you-
3. when you heard that the interpreting program was being stopped?
4. **Jaime:** Oh man I, *((Places and holds both hands over center of chest))*
5. I died inside.
6. So um,
7. I- I don't know, *((Drops hands))*
8. I fell in love with this program and I fell in love,
9. with, with what their goal was,
10. and just learning about the district doing away with
the program really hurt me.
11. I sent a letter to the district,
12. um, explaining my feelings,
13. explaining why I thought it was wrong,
14. what they did,
15. I didn't get a response.
16. *((Shifts gaze from Audrey to camera))*
17. *((Points and shakes index finger at camera))*
18. I'm still waiting on that response, um.

In this excerpt, Jaime draws upon both linguistic and embodied resources to construct and convey his strong positive affective engagement with the interpreters program. First, he puts both his hands on his chest, near his heart, as he says, "I died inside," metaphorically conveying the impact of the program's cancellation. He then drops his hand from his chest, a

gesture that echoes his expressed feelings of hopelessness in line 7 (“so, *I don’t know*”) Moreover, Jaime’s use of “fell in love” twice in lines 8 and 9 marks his positive stance toward both the program and its goal. He makes it clear that the district’s decision was not without consequence – it is an action that has hurt him (line 10) and on which he takes a moral stance (line 13).

Jaime positions himself as a savvy, capable communicator in multiple ways. First, although he does not attend DRHS anymore, and instead, attends college in Northern California, he has still “learned about the district doing away with the program” (line 10). When I asked him how he found out about the program’s cancellation, he told me that he stayed in touch with many current students as well as Ms. Q and a few other teachers. I was not surprised by this because of our own communication as Instagram contacts to set up the interview. Keeping up multiple social networks while building a new one at a new college takes considerable time and energy, as well as open and intentional communication. Earlier in the interview, Jaime also shared that he continues to broker for his family on an almost daily basis, FaceTiming in with them from college several nights a week to help his little sister with her homework while their mom is present. Each of these anecdotes points to Jaime’s role as an excellent communicator and highlights the effort and care he puts in to maintain relationships with peers, educators, and family across time and space. Importantly, Jaime’s affective experience of joy with the interpreting program, as well as the loss and hurt from its cancellation, has persisted through time, propelling him to write a letter to the district to “explain [his] feelings,” as well as to participate in the interview with me.

Through Jaime’s action and his narration of it, we again see youth constructing alternative speaking and listening subjects for themselves and the district. Not only did he

have strong feelings about its decision, but he was able to identify these feelings and articulate them in writing, using mail as a direct line of communication to district personnel. While mentioning that he is, in fact, still waiting for a response to his letter, Jaime motions to the camera, shaking an index finger – a playfully scolding gesture. While this gesture can be seen as part of his spirited personality, Jaime was also aware of my role and objectives as a researcher, including my intent to share this information and some of the video interviews with the district. Thus, he continues to act in an agentic way, making use of the medium of our interview as an additional venue to communicate his feelings to the district, hold its representatives accountable for their original decision, and call out their lack of response. Resonating with other students' interviews, Jaime positions the district as an affectless, deficient institutional listening subject who does not hear, listen, or acknowledge that it has heard from students, let alone respond to them.

Such a lack of institutional response is not rare. The timing of institutional response can be used as a tool, a fun-house mirror that works in every way except for the complainant, as Ahmed notes: “If organizations can disqualify complaints because they take too long to make, organizations can also take too long to respond to complaints” (2018). Research on college student activism has found that student actions through official, formalized, or institutionally-sanctioned channels are often met with inaction from those institutions (Hoffman & Mitchell 2016; Rosati et al. 2019). Getting heard can be especially difficult for marginalized students, as Hoffman and Mitchell (2016) observe: “Many minoritized people understand that, in order to be heard, they have to speak loudly and create different channels for communication.

Often, administratively sanctioned or ‘proper’ avenues for change are not accessible

or prove ineffective” (34). Paradoxically, if student activists choose to organize and protest outside of official platforms, they can be drawn into an exhausting M.C. Escher-like endless loop: “When students demand substantive conversation or change on the part of administration through protest, they are met with administrative suggestions to utilize formalized channels; and when students attempt to utilize these formal channels, they are still met with inaction” (Rosati et al. 2019:123).

Some DRHS students were aware of the potential vortex of “proper” avenues for conveying their message. Despite the institution's lack of response and students’ overall feelings of frustration, loss, and anger, they stayed hopeful, encouraging each other to keep fighting as well as suggesting alternative channels of communication with the district in order to get their message heard. One of those students was Dante, who had two clear suggestions for next steps that students could take to lobby: put students on the school board, and then have a meeting in person between the district and students.

3.3 “*They’re supposed to work for us*”

1. **Audrey:** Yeah, um, I don’t know.
2. What kind of feelings does this bring up for you?
3. Where are you at now?
4. What do you think is the next step?
5. **Dante:** I feel like, the um,
6. we definitely need to work things out with the district again,
7. make our voice heard?
8. Because I feel like, um,
9. they do a lot of things that they think will help us?
10. Without actually *asking* us if it's going to help us.
11. So I mean, if you just look at the the- at the school board, like they're-
12. they’re supposed to like, to work to,
13. you know, manage everything for us,
14. but where does our voice, like, actually come in?
15. During that- during that decision-making?
16. So to me, it’s like they're supposed to work for us,
17. but they don't have any of *us* on the school board,

18. giving our opinion, giving our voice.
19. Like for me, a good idea would be-
20. For me, it would be a very good idea-
21. and like, things that we do afterwards,
22. but if they could find, like,
23. students that are willing to put in the time,
24. to make, uh, to be our voice for us,
25. it would be, like, super incredible.
26. That way the district just doesn't make decisions like
27. canceling our interpreting program for us.
28. So um, yeah, I feel like,
29. there's a lot of things we need to work out with- with the district.
30. And it can't just be like during those public meetings,
31. where we just go to public comment and just talk.
32. We need to meet with a school board member,
33. a couple school board members,
34. not even like a, like a meeting,
35. but just a conversation with us,
36. just like a conversation with them,
37. just to be like a hundred percent,
38. they don't even need to wear their fancy stuff,
39. they should just come have conversations with us,
40. because I feel like,
41. they're missing, like,
42. our heart is in our helping,
43. helping our parents and helping the students,
44. helping anyone,
45. and they're not seeing that.
46. They're not seeing our passion for these things.
47. And that's what they're missing.
48. They're not seeing our passion,
49. they're not seeing our heart, where we're at.
50. So we definitely need to just talk. Just talk.

Dante brings the specifics of this situation back to a larger systemic issue through thoughtful critique: the cancellation of the student interpreter program is just one consequence of the district's broader denial of student voice and participation in the school board's decision-making process. He highlights the paternalistic stance and corresponding structures of the institution toward students and their lives: "They do a lot of things that they think will help us, without actually *asking* us if it's going to help us ... They're supposed to

work for us, but they don't have any of *us* on the school board, giving our opinion, giving our voice.” Dante positions the district’s representatives as communicators who are not only incapable of hearing young people, but also unable or unwilling even to pose a question to students in the first place. In doing so, he illuminates the hypocrisy of a school board that aims to serve students without engaging them as valuable interlocutors and participants in that process. Dante steps into the role of alternative speaking subject himself by proposing two solutions: one for addressing the cancellation of the interpreters program and another for addressing students’ persistent exclusion from broader decision-making processes in general.

Observing that students’ care, intention, passion, and commitment to helping their community are going unseen by the district, he suggests having a conversation between students and the district representatives to “just talk.” By suggesting a meeting with school board members and explicitly rejecting traditional, “proper” channels of response like public comment in school board meetings, Dante demonstrates keen insight into how the inequalities of institutional time operate and instead proposes a direct line to power. He was aware of the structural limitations of the public comment format at school board meetings: the commentary does not require response, engagement, or discussion from the school board members, and any person’s commentary was restricted to two minutes, including any interpretation from Spanish or another language to English that may be needed within that time. In this way, Dante also draws attention to hypocritical listening practices of the listening subject by exposing the racialized nature of “modernity’s differential listening practices” within the public comment format (Stoeber 2016:6).

In contrast, a direct meeting with students in person, or even “just a conversation,” as

Dante puts it, would provide opportunities for authentic dialogue between the district representative and students, as well as potentially higher levels of interactional accountability. Nevertheless, this outcome isn't guaranteed. In Alejandra's and Carolina's narratives of their small group meeting with the district (Examples 2.5 and 3.1), they did not receive meaningful engagement or even direct answers from district personnel. In suggesting this avenue to "work things out" and "to be a like hundred percent"(i.e., to fully discuss the issue), Dante begins to create the possibility for students to be heard and seen differently.

Dante's second proposal is more structural and thus potentially more impactful. While being mindful of the lived experiences and realities of students' temporalities, (i.e., that they have very busy schedules and many extracurricular activities), Dante proposes the idea of incorporating student representatives on the local school board. His suggestion echoes increasing calls for student representation on school boards, in step with growing youth organizing, leadership, and activism movements (Fletcher & King 2014; Urist 2014; Sawchuck 2019a).

Many school boards already have student representatives and/or student advisory positions, although few of these positions have full voting rights (Sawchuck 2019b). Research on interactions between student activists and administrative personnel has shown "how transparency in decision-making processes while engaging with students can support more collaboration between student affairs professionals and activists" (Rosati et al. 2019:122). Dante's proposal also reminded me of what Alejandra frequently cited as a common refrain at United for Justice workshops and in other youth organizing circles, "Nothing about us without us," which is in turn borrowed from the disability rights

movement (Charlton 1998). Both of Dante's suggestions create opportunities for the district to inhabit the role of listening subject, as well as for students to occupy speaking and listening subject positions in decisions that are being made about them.

In all of the examples analyzed here, students also reclaimed the role of listening subject for themselves, as they heard, positioned, and evaluated the district and its representatives as communicators. Through their interviews, students narrated the ways in which they felt the district was incapable of hearing students, of engaging in authentic, empathetic ways, or of even responding when addressed. By voicing and mobilizing their own persistent affect as action – sharing stories in these interviews, writing letters, suggesting viable solutions and ways forward – students constructed themselves as capable communicators and tenacious activists, tirelessly advocating for a program that was important to them, their families, and community.

6. Discussion

After this series of interviews wrapped up in December 2016, Mr. Q and I emailed back and forth over winter break to develop a structure for the short video of interview excerpts to be shown at the school district meeting to advocate for the return of the program. He shared an outline of the main points he and DRHS parent representatives would be making to the district, with facts and statistics gathered from various years of the interpreting program. I pulled together clips from students and parents that I felt would be effective at supporting and adding information to those bullet points. A transcript and images from the video are available in Appendix 2.

However, the students ultimately did not achieve their goal of getting the program

back. This outcome shows the complex forces at work in language access and interpreting, in this case including United for Justice, the local social justice non-profit organization which provided workshops and trainings for these students and thereby played a large role in developing their identities as activists. This organization empowered youth as activists, yet it also worked with the school district to push for a professional interpreter model, effectively marginalizing the student interpreters.

While the district may have had the luxury of deferring “quality language access” to the future, for the families that these students interpreted for, such a deferral had immediate and critical material impacts on their lives – both present and future. One impact was the lack of language access and information provided for parents at the Back to School Night event. Many parents had taken time off from work in order to attend, resulting in a loss of income without compensatory benefits. For parents whose students were rising juniors and seniors, the lack of interpreters also meant missing out on information about required courses, college preparation, applications, and extracurricular activities. Many parents described feeling the lack of language access as “una falta de respeto” by the district, further jeopardizing an already historically-tenuous relationship. It is these very relationships that the district claimed to want to strengthen through parental engagement programs and events like Back to School Night.

A second impact was the direct effect on students’ future trajectories. Again, the district’s discourses and decision devalued youth’s present actions and abilities, and reframed them as mere “potential.” Ironically, given the district’s emphasis on youth’s ability to interpret in the future, based on student interviews, it seems that the cancellation of the student interpreters program – one of the only spaces for students to continue practicing

their Spanish skills in a meaningful context – may have discouraged students from pursuing additional training and education in Spanish, either during high school or in college. How students and their languages are valued in the present affects their future possibilities and trajectories – those things are not separate. The student interpreters program impacted students’ career choices, college major choices, understandings of self, confidence, professional opportunities, and the fabric of their community; the decision to cancel the program affects those aspects of students’ lives as well.

Dr. Raya, the administrator in charge of the decision to cancel the Interpreters Program, eventually moved on to a new position in Los Angeles Unified School district. The cancellation of the program shows the ways in which administrator and student trajectories can intersect for a short span of time but leave lasting effects, including exclusionary harm. However, it is important to note that “the district” is not a simple monolithic entity. Many administrators and educators made up the institution, and not all of them shared similar feelings about the interpreters program or were constructed by students as affectless listening subjects. For example, in an article in the local newspaper authored by a DRHS student, the then-principal of DRHS is quoted as saying, “I feel terrible about how the students feel. I feel worried, I feel pain, I feel regret. I have had some anxiety leading up to back-to-school night about this transition, and I certainly have a lot of anxiety about our transition now” (Monreal 2016). She went on to say, “[The student interpreters program] is something I’ve only ever had positive experiences with and positive associations around. It’s something that only ever served as a point of pride for the students themselves and for our families, and for me.” Although these expressed feelings acknowledge the problematic nature of the cancellation for some administrators, in the principal’s focus on her own

feelings, the affect of the institutional listening subject is privileged over students' and parents' affect. Moreover, in contrast to the students throughout this chapter, the principal's expressed affect did not translate into any further action.

The interviews and the short video created from them are, in fact, only one of many resources and strategies youth mobilized in this moment. Jaime (and later I) sent letters to the district superintendent, Jackie wrote articles on the issue for a local newspaper, Alejandra organized an additional student-only meeting with the district, and Dante proposed for one with school board members, rather than a public comment session. Throughout their interviews, the students suggested clear compromises and pursued specific action-based strategies to express their feelings and take action in ways that the district would hear and potentially respond. Far from the unrealistic idealism sometimes seen in media portrayals of youth activism, the student interpreters in this research were radically pragmatic in their activism, echoing recent findings from research with youth activists across the Americas and the United States (de los Angeles Torres, et al. 2013; Conner & Rosen 2016; Conner 2020).

As I reflected on students' pragmatic approach to their activism to challenge how the district heard their language practices, I also began to consider the perspectives on how students had heard their own language abilities and brokering skills. While students had adamantly defended their right, ability, and expertise to interpret for their parents, they had not based their arguments on being "perfect" language users or measuring themselves by the district's standard of an idealized speaker. Excerpts from Karla's interview seemed to reflect this: "We have experience, it might not be the best, but we have some, and that means a lot." The word *best* resonated with what another student, Cleo, had said at the end of her

interview: “I do my best, I’m not the best at Spanish, but I try to help as much as I can.” The word *best* had popped up throughout students’ conversations – surfacing both as a descriptive term indexing ideal standardized language practices as well as in the phrase “trying my/our best,” or putting in authentic effort with good intentions.

Part of me worried when students so openly spoke about the mistakes or challenges they faced when interpreting; I didn’t want that part of their experience to be left open to critique from the district or professional interpreters when I eventually shared this research with them. What if students were, in fact, not able to provide the “quality” language access services so prized by the district? When I further reflected on this tension, I realized I was in fact confronting the nature and limitations of my own language ideologies regarding additive approaches to youth’s language practices. In these comments, youth are centering and valuing their linguistic practices just as they are, as heteroglossic speakers involved in the process of learning and expanding their language abilities. This positioning is what I mean by *the ultrapresent*. Another excerpt from Jaime’s interview helps further articulate this *ultrapresent* perspective of language. In his interview, he spoke about what was lost when the interpreters program was cancelled:

Audrey: Alright. So, yeah. How did you feel when you heard—so you wrote a letter to the district. You’re still waiting on your response, and how else are you feeling, what do you, what do you think the next steps are for students or, I don’t know, what are you, what are you thinking right now?

Jaime: What am I thinking right now, I’m thinking that—Ok my time at DR *passed*, so I can’t really get involved *with* the students but I can *help* the students. And *that’s* what I want to do. I agreed to the documentary and I agreed to participate in this because I’m *very* passionate about change, I’m very passionate about accepting others and understanding others’ points of views. And I feel the district isn’t doing that right now?

They’re lacking that understanding from *our* ((*brings hands toward chest*)) perspective? Like the perspective of those that *actually* need the help. Yes, professional interpreting would be great, *yes* it would be awesome if you

could get everybody to have the little- that- the mic thingies (*puts imaginary earpiece in ear two times while smiling*) and the headsets and everything, but you take away from that experience from the kids, you take away their *learning*, because they, they learn and if the school's an environment of learning, *let them learn*, let them learn from their own mistakes and let the parents learn from the students.

Similar to many other students' interviews here, Jaime expresses the importance of empathy as a personal value; a strong capacity for empathy has also been found across youth language brokers (García-Sánchez 2018). In contrast, he constructs the district as lacking empathy and understanding about the community they are supposed to serve. By abandoning the student-based model of interpreting in favor of pursuing their version of a utopic future with idealized speakers (i.e., professional interpreters), the district misses the material consequences of this change on families and students in the present, as well as the harm done by cancelling the program without an adequate replacement.

Jaime agrees that professional interpreting with adequate equipment such as headphone and microphone sets for parents and interpreters would be “awesome” in principle, but he notes that in reality, the cancellation of the program takes away a valuable learning opportunity for students and their parents. Jaime turns towards mistakes, rather than minimizing or omitting them, embracing mistakes as a normal part of the learning process for both students and parents. By widening the frame of our conversation to place the interpreters program in the larger context of the school as an educational institution, he highlights additional functions of the program beyond mere language access services.

The words of Jaime, Karla, and Cleo, all demonstrate a strong heteroglossic understanding of language as a process, not a final product (García 2009; García & Wei 2014), thus challenging the district's idealized notion of translation or interpretation.

Recognizing that they were involved in an active process of learning, they accepted the present as it was, not perfect, and still were able to move forward and act in hope for a better future. Instead of idealizing their language skills, as asset-based or additive approaches might, the students I interviewed accepted, engaged with, and worked with what the resources they had. Crucially, the students I worked with delinked “dominant affective modes associated with failure” (i.e., uncertainty, unhappiness, shame) (Brooks 2015:39) and instead reconfigured “making mistakes” as a normal, expected part of interpreting and translating work. Artist activist group Antena Aire puts it this way: “We live and work in the clutter of untranslatability. The uncomfortable snag where we no longer know what to say, how to say, or even quite what saying is – but we continue in our saying. The language-snag is the sign that there is more thinking to be done. We can’t get free from the grip of non-knowing, nor would we wish to detach ourselves even if we could. Rather, let’s stay in this space. The instigatory space of difficulty and not understanding. Untranslate this space. Retranslate from this space” (2013a:4). Students “continued with their saying” while addressing the “language-snags” of interpretation, and also as they challenged and confronted the broader racialized discourses of deficit informing the district’s decision to cancel the interpreter program. The “ultra” in *ultrapresent* draws upon this characteristic of Antena Aire’s concept of ultratranslation (2013a), as well as its explicitly anti-racist, anti-colonial framework and the other elements I outlined in Chapter 1.

It is precisely student interpreters’ – and their parents’ – insistent valorizations of themselves and their linguistic abilities *as they are* – expert learners in process, doing their best – that so radically unsettles the raciolinguistic status quo. Their demand that the school district hear them as capable, competent, uniquely qualified speakers in the present moment

decenters white supremacist monoglossic ideologies of an “idealized speaker” – voiced and embodied in this context by Standard Spanish spoken by the “licensed adult professional interpreter” – who operates neatly within the ordered boundaries of standardized language and the current educational system. By choosing to value their language *as-is* in the here and now, youths’ *ultrapresent* perspective on their language practices rejects perfectionism and denaturalizes linguistic categories of “good and bad,” thus challenging the standard binary of asset- vs. deficit-based approaches.

Instead, these youth assert their own expertise, acknowledge that they have room to grow, and courageously ask the district to expand their definitions, rethink their ideologies, transform their systems, and modify their practices to better accommodate parents’ realities and students’ priorities in the present. This demand reconfigures the system in a transformative way by suggesting that “equitable and meaningful participation and access” for Latinx Spanish-speaking parents, families, and students cannot and should not be defined by the district alone, and may, in fact, mean fostering participation in ways that challenge the foundations of the institution itself. It also suggests the importance of linguistic mentorship models (Zarate 2018) that value youth in the *ultrapresent* by hearing them as agentive actors capable of leadership in the present moment, and by placing positive value on – and resources toward – supporting their growth.

7. Conclusion

By paying attention to students’ affective experiences as “micropolitical quotidian bodily encounters” (McManus 2013:137), we are able to see and hear youth engaging in socially transformative action and activism in everyday moments. These moments might

normally go unnoticed in comparison with more traditionally legible types of youth activism such as protests, marches, walk-out, and sit-ins. In expanding our understanding of how students confront institutional discourses of raciolinguistic deficit and social tenses of exclusion, this research adds to the work of scholars, educators, and activists committed to accompanying (Tomlinson & Lipsitz 2013; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2016) youth toward more just and inclusive realities.

The students' narratives of the decision to cancel the interpreters program that I have discussed in this chapter highlight the dislocating nature of the district's listening practices. Judged by the district, students' ability to fulfill the role of interpreter was dependent on a deferred, future status of being a college student or receiving more training, certification, or experience. In these examples, students mobilize their affective agency and metadiscursive strategies from both their community activist and educational spheres to contest how they are heard and located in space and time by the institution.

Student interpreters mobilized their affective agency to decenter, problematize and call into question the authority of the district as an unreliable, affectless, out-of-touch listening and speaking subject, with a dilated, disconnected sense of time. Students delegitimized the contemporary circumstances of their exclusion by narrating counterstories of past, present, and future circumstances that exposed the district's hypocritical and contradictory decisions, statements, and actions. Through their use of language and embodied, affective agency, as well as their metadiscursive strategies of recording these interviews, students worked together to challenge racializing processes and deficit ideologies, instead recentering their own ways of speaking, listening, and keeping time in the here and now.

While the particularities of the student interpreters program may be unique, practices of exclusion take place every day for racialized youth within educational institutions. When instances of institutionalized racism occur, they tend to do so off-the-record and on institutional time, which means students and families do not always have access to the resources to document, investigate, or challenge them. In this case, by showing up and taking action, the students and their families enabled their experiences to be collected, recorded, and potentially archived.

Students' assertion of affective agency lays the foundation for a type of collective resistance that I discuss in the following chapter. There, I build from the artistic, activist, anti-racist framework of ultratranslation (Antena Aire 2013a) discussed in Chapter 1 to theorize the ultrapresent and provide examples of some of the alternative speaking and listening subject positions it generates, and to discuss the possibilities of an archive of the ultrapresent.

CHAPTER 6

“If You’re Listening:” Sounding Out the Ultrapresent

Ultra: spatially beyond, on the other side, indicating elsewhere.

Ultra: going beyond, surpassing, transcending the limits.

Ultra: an excessive or extreme degree.

— From *A Manifesto for Ultratranslation*
by artist activist group Antena Aire, 2013a

1. Overview

In her book *The Sonic Color Line*, Jennifer Stoever notes the importance of critiquing one’s own practices of listening: “Examining one’s listening practices and challenging their predisposed affects, reactions, and interpretations are fundamental for the development of new ways of being in the world and for forging cross-racial solidarities capable of dismantling the sonic color line and the racialized listening practices enabling and enabled by it” (Stoever 2016:20). In this chapter, I offer a critical reflection on my own practices of listening to the students I worked with throughout our time together, my mishearings and glitchy listening, and my process of learning to hear students in the ultrapresent. The ultrapresent, as a subversive social tense of inclusion, is co-constructed, and much of it depends not only on our practices of listening to students, but crucially, on what comes after that listening (Dreher 2009a, 2009b).

How can we become more capable of responding with students, of listening, of hearing and seeing youth fully in the present, but also more capable of taking collaborative action along with them? Donna Haraway recently discussed the importance of expanding our “response-ability” as part of her book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016:2). She advocates for reconfiguring our relations with one another, and

explores how we might live and act collectively in “response-ability” on a damaged earth and in times of trouble. She writes:

In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such a relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings (2016:2).

Instead of being paralyzed by despair or waiting on an idealized vision of hope, our task, she continues on to say, is to live from the “thick, ongoing present” and to “become capable, with each other in all our bumptious kinds, of response” (Haraway 2016:2). When I read Haraway’s book, I was struck by how this quote and the general concept behind it resonated on multiple levels with the student interpreters group. Rather than waiting around for the institution to finally allocate resources towards language access to address what she recognized as an urgent problem, Ms. Q took quick, collective action in ways that rendered others around her capable, both students and parents. This ability to “stay with the trouble,” to live and take action from the present, to work from what “is” toward what can be envisioned, was also enacted by the students with whom I worked with on this project. In this chapter, I look at moments in which students “stayed with the trouble” and with each other, and moments in which they challenged me to stay critically-reflexive and present as we worked together. As part of this, I examine students' practices of resistant listening, and how they agentively took action toward “the right to listen freely to themselves and *as* themselves” (Stoeber 2016:280; emphasis original).

In the first section, I briefly analyze and identify elements of the ultrapresent in several excerpts from Marcos, Alejandra, and Eva at different points across the research project where I began to see and hear students as taking action in the ultrapresent. In the second section, I provide a reflexive discussion of how I came to hear students speaking and listening in the ultrapresent. I end this chapter by theorizing the ultrapresent as an operating principle for youth action as well as its relevance for scholars, activists, and educators working alongside youth towards more just realities.

2. Listening Back in Time

It was only the third meeting with students for the radio project in July 2016, and Marcos, one of the students who had demonstrated the most enthusiasm for it, hadn't shown up. I was a little disappointed, but focused on working with the four students who were present as they developed their ideas for the project. Halfway through dinner that night, my phone buzzed from a text. It was Marcos, apologizing for not being able to make the meeting. "Pero no te preocupes," he wrote. "Fui a una fiesta con mi familia y conocí al Consulado de México. Conseguí su contacto y dice que le podemos entrevistar." Then he sent a selfie of himself with the Consul at the party. This was great news! Not only was Marcos still interested in participating, he was already using his networking skills to set up an interview. I felt a sense of calm and a sensation that things would work out, even if they looked different than I had imagined. I quickly sketched out a plan for the following week's meetings, and then checked back into my pad thai.

The next week, I picked up two members of the undergraduate film crew (Andrés and Suna) as well as Marcos, who was dressed in a button up shirt, navy khakis, a belt, and a

sport vest for the interview, and we drove down to Oxnard, where the Mexican Consulate Office was located. The Consul gave us a tour of the space before sitting down with Marcos for the interview, which lasted for over an hour. The interview was done mostly in Spanish, and Marcos and the Consul covered topics ranging from local, national, and international politics, what the Consul thought of then-presidential candidate Donald Trump, corruption, educational policy in the US and Mexico, Indigenous communities and languages of Mexico, to what it was like for each of them when they moved to the US. For me, it was the first time I had really seen Marcos' interest in politics up close – prior to this, I had known he loved soccer and old cars, but had not yet seen him engage any of his peers on political topics.

As we drove back to Goleta, all of us were elated the interview had gone so well. Marcos discussed his thoughts and reflected upon which topic areas he wanted to play back on the radio show the following week. So at the station then next week, Marcos came in for the second half of the show to have an in-depth conversation with Perla about his interview with the Consul. While the plan was to playback audio clips from that interview over the radio and discuss them, the CD player stopped working and Perla was unable to navigate between clips. Instead, she made a quick live-on-air decision to pivot away from the planned show, inviting Marcos to speak on the spot about whatever he wanted as she tried to fix the CD player. The film crew – Andrés, Zach, and Suna – were in the background and shifted the camera from Perla to Marcos as he leaned up to the mic:

1.1 “¿Yo?”

1. **Perla:** There's going to be no easy way to skim down to this.
2. *((Raises eyebrows; grimaces toward camera))*
3. **Zach:** *((Laughs))* Okay.
4. **Perla:** *((To Marcos))* No más empieza a hablar de lo que sea. ¿Listo?
5. **Marcos:** [¿Yo?]

6. **Perla:** [Tú], vas a hablar, ¿okay? Para que lo pueda mover aquí.
7. ¿Okay? ¿Listo? No más habla de *deportes*, o de lo que sea.
8. *((Points to Marcos to cue him to start speaking))*
9. **Marcos:** Hola mis amigos, estamos aquí esta tarde,
10. para presentar mi entrevista que hice en la embajada de México?
11. El día jueves, entonces estoy aquí para, para hablar un poco de eso,
12. y que fue muy importante para mí.
13. Además, es importante saber lo que piensan las personas diplomáticas,
14. sobre las, los comentarios de Donald Trump.
15. Entonces eso es algo muy racista que,
16. no solamente afecta a los latinos,
17. sino a todas las personas de color.
18. Porque yo no sé, no estoy de acuerdo que una persona,
19. con esos sentimientos y con esas palabras que habla,
20. sea el presidente de Estados Unidos.
21. Se supone que esto es una nación unida.
22. Entonces si es unida,
23. tiene que ser más liberal porque la verdad Estados Unidos sin los latinos,
24. no sería la- lo poderoso que es ahorita.
25. Porqué: la verdad?
26. Los latinos-
27. Bueno, nosotros los latinos somos los que hacemos el trabajo duro
28. más que, um,
29. que las personas,
30. de color como él.
31. Y no es por ser racista,
32. sólo digo lo que siento y,
33. me gusta decir lo que es.
34. **Film Crew:***((Silence))*
35. **Marcos:** *((To film crew))* Y ustedes, ¿qué? ¿Cómo va?
36. What do you think about that?
37. **Film Crew:***((Silence))*
38. **Andrés:** Wh- how was your experience?
39. **Marcos:** My experience? Uh, it was-
40. Oh, fue una buena experiencia. *((Facial expression drops))*
41. Más que nada porque me tocó conocer a una gran personaje,
42. a una persona importante de México?
43. Y alguien tan humilde como él,
44. porque a pesar de que es un diplomático,
45. es alguien que tiene muy buenos sentimientos,
46. y es muy humilde, la gente.
47. **Film Crew:***((Silence))*
48. **Perla:** *((In the background))* Fuck it, I tried to do it. I'm sorry.
49. **Suna:** K, I'm cutting.
50. *((Camera stops filming))*

After Perla put him on the spot, Marcos didn't miss a beat. He was there in the ultrapresent, ready to host a radio show, asking his college-aged near-peers to engage with him seriously on a political topic. Out of all of us –students, me, the film crew, the research assistants, even Perla – Marcos had the most expert, authentic radio host style. It is clear from his “radiogenic” (Lacey 2013:93) monologue in the above excerpt that he is familiar with the genre: Marcos greets listeners, orients them in time, outlines the topic of conversation for the afternoon, and makes a claim for the relevance of the topic to his audience. Going way beyond ‘talking about sports’ as Perla suggested, Marcos crafts a complex argument for why Trump shouldn't be elected president, constructing the radio show as a platform to host a critical political dialogue.

This kind of political conversation between radio hosts is very common on both Spanish-language and bilingual Latinx radio within the United States. In her 2014 book *Sounds of Belonging: U.S. Spanish-language Radio and Public Advocacy*, as well as later work (2017) Chicana Studies scholar D. Inés Casillas writes about the historic importance of Spanish-speaking radio hosts as well as the political support they continue provide for US Latinx communities in the contemporary moment: “Decades later, immigrants continue to seek radio as their transnational ally, an audible medium for learning about shifts in immigration legislation and labor politics, rumored sightings of immigration and Customs Enforcement officials raids, and/or the campaign goals of both US and Latin American political candidates” (2017:182). Marcos engages with that tradition as he renders Trump's racist rhetoric and hypocrisy audible over the airwaves for a Spanish-speaking listening public. When I asked Marcos about his expert radio style later, he told me that he and his family, especially he and his father, listened to Spanish-language radio stations at the local

welding company they both worked for, and they also listened to it while on long, traffic-heavy drives between Santa Barbara, Oxnard, and Los Angeles for work commutes or family visits.

As the conversation continued in the studio that afternoon, Marcos, out of all the folks present, shared the sharpest insights into the dangers of a potential Trump presidency.

Throughout the broadcast, he circled back to this theme, challenging the racist and nativist ideologies underlying Trump's statements in English and Spanish, making observations and predictions that resonate eerily with the realities of our current moment as I write four years later in August 2020. At other points, specifically when the conversation was in English, the UCSB students were able to engage with Marcos in a dialogue about race and politics. Yet in the particular moment from the excerpt, students were not able to fully take part in the conversation Marcos was proposing.

During the above interaction, Perla, who was normally fully engaged with students in the on-air interviews, was busy trying to fix the CD playback. Zach, Andrés, and Suna, accustomed to being in the background as the film crew, were unprepared to be full participants on the radio broadcast. Much like Marcos, they may also have been surprised by the sudden shift in participation framework, or by Marcos's choice of topic. In addition, none of them felt comfortable speaking Spanish, and it may be that they either couldn't understand what Marcos said or were unable to formulate a response. For a few seconds after Marcos speaks, no one responds until Andrés, in English, asks what turns out to be a redundant question, given the content of what Marcos has just shared in Spanish; he appears not to have understood Marcos' lengthy monologue. Marcos' facial expression noticeably falls, as he realizes no one understood or was going to take up his line of thought. Yet he shifts quickly

to respond in a way that prioritizes his Spanish-speaking listening public, orienting to a crucial rule of radio: “no dead air.” When Perla gives up trying to fix the CD player, Suna responds by announcing she’s going to stop filming. This statement indirectly positions Marcos’ monologue as potentially not worth filming without Perla’s dialogue or in the absence of the original show plan for that afternoon.

As I watched this footage later, I cringed a bit – what a missed opportunity to engage with Marcos on this topic! But I also recognized the situation, and had, in fact, experienced many similar moments myself throughout this research. In a way, the interview seemed to be a metaphor for my own practices of listening to students throughout our project as a whole: sometimes I was right there with students in the ultrapresent, and at other times I completely missed the mark, mishearing by listening with my “institutional research ear” and through my own aural filters and sonic “dead spots.”

As the film crew became more comfortable with the shift in the participation framework of the show that day, they started to engage Marcos in conversation around politics. In this short excerpt, Suna has just discussed Marcos’ interview with the Consul, and asks Marcos if he plans on doing any additional interviews and who he might want to interview:

1.2 “If You’re Listening”

1. Suna: Do you have any other ideas about who you want to interview?
2. Marcos: Uh, maybe I want to interview, I don’t know if it’s possible,
3. I don’t know if I can find an opportunity to talk to the Mexican president?
4. Maybe?
5. Suna: Did you hear that? He’s coming!¹⁴

1. ¹⁴ Suna’s “Did you hear that? He’s coming!” refers to the (at that time) recent news that the then-President Enrique Peña Nieto of México would be making a visit to the US to meet with then-presidential candidate Donald Trump in August 2016.

6. Zach: If you're listening,
7. Mr. President,
8. come stop by UC Santa Barbara in California.
9. We'd like to interview you.
10. Suna: What kind of things would you ask him?
11. Did you have all of those questions written out?
12. Or you just went with the flow?
13. Marcos: Yeah, I just went with the talk.

At the point of this interview in July 2016, it had recently been announced that then-President of Mexico Enrique Peña Nieto had scheduled a visit to the US for August 2016 in order to meet with then-presidential candidate Donald Trump, which President Nieto later did (this is what Suna's "Did you hear that? He's coming!" refers to in line 5). Here, Marcos demonstrates up-to-the-minute knowledge of current events and political relations between Mexico and the US, which Suna takes up and reaffirms. So it was unlikely, but not completely out of the question, that President Nieto could be a possible interviewee for Marcos. Indeed, Marcos brings it up as a serious proposal, while still hedging his idea with "I don't know if" and "Maybe?," to acknowledge that the possibility is a long shot. Zach playfully engages with Marcos's idea, sending it out over the airwaves in the form of an invitation to President Nieto.

Suna engages him in a more serious manner, asking what Marcos would speak to him about. What I noticed when listening back to this excerpt, and what is most relevant to the concept of the ultrapresent, is that Marcos hears possibility. He hears himself as capable of engaging in serious dialogue with President Nieto. Possibility engenders action; hearing and/or seeing possibility in one's self, as well as the outside world, and verbalizing the idea to others are two important elements of taking action in the present moment. Marcos himself demonstrated through his unexpected encounter with the Consul at his family's party, which he was able to turn into a conversation and later, into an hour-long tour and his interview.

Again, Marcos saw possibility there and acted upon it.

The last excerpt in this section is another example of Marcos taking agentic action in the present moment. One rainy Friday afternoon in February 2017, the students and I were at the LPCC. As discussed in Chapter 3, I had arranged for a local artist, Sondra, to come and host a letter-writing workshop for students so that we could write letters to the school district protesting the cancellation of the student interpreters program. Although twelve students attended the meeting the previous Friday, only three had shown up this afternoon: Marcos, Carolina, and Carolina's younger brother, Ricardo, who was 11 years old. I introduced Sondra, the artist, and we ate pizza together, and then talked about the letters. She had brought markers, paints, stickers, postcards, old magazines for collage, envelopes, stamps, and even a mailbox to put the letters in when we finished, so that she could mail them for us. The premise of her project was to make it as easy as possible for people to write and send letters about themes of political and/or personal importance to them.

As she explained the idea, students' eyes lit up: "Can we write to anyone? Not just the district?" –"Of course," I said, continuing to embrace emergent strategy. Carolina and Ricardo worked on their letters: Carolina chose to write to Ms. Q and Ricardo wrote to their parents. Marcos wrote a letter to his dad, cutting out and pasting an image of a classic car that he and Sondra had found together in one of the magazines. She loved old cars, just like Marcos, and they had formed a strong connection within the first half hour of the workshop. After he finished his letter, Marcos got up and asked Ana, the research assistant who was filming that day's meeting, if he could use the camera. Ana passed off the camera, and Marcos started to walk around the room, filming what everyone was working on, and then sat down next to me with the camera still rolling. Suddenly, I found myself on the other end of

the camera's gaze, as Marcos started to interview me. As he began asking questions that reflected on the entirety of our project to that point, I felt like I was completing a "final reflection" assignment of the kind I commonly gave to students during my time teaching with

SKILLS:

1.3 "¡Soy yo!"

- Marcos:** ¿[Cuáles son] tus mejores experiencias que has tenido de los programas que has tenido hasta ahorita? De estos o de los anteriores.
- Audrey:** Okay, like in the summer. One of my favorite experiences so far was cuando fuimos a Oxnard a entrevistar al Consulado de México en Oxnard?
- Marcos:** Y llegamos late? @@@.
- Audrey:** Llegamos late sí., porque había mucho tráfico. Pero el consulado se quedó hasta, like, las seis, cuando llegamos? Y habíamos tenido el appointment a las cinco. Entonces, llegamos una hora tarde pero él se quedó y nos dio un tour de su edificio, de su oficina durante un año – un año, no.
- Marcos:** [Una hora.]
- Audrey:** [Una hora.] Luego Marcos lo entrevistó.
- Marcos:** ((Turns camera toward his face)) ¡So:yo yo:!
- All:** ((Laughter)).
- Audrey:** I'm, I'm scared that we gave you a selfie stick now? I don't know how we are going to get back from that.
((Laughs; looks visibly uncomfortable; covers face with hands briefly)).
- Pero um, the conversation was amazing because we talked about politics, Mexico, U.S., las elecciones. And that was really wonderful. So we all traveled down to Oxnard. Um, another good moment fue cuando Eva vino al estudio de radio con su mamá. Entonces ella y su mamá se entrevistaron en radio. En el programa. Y eso fue como un momento super wow. Like really, awesome because I don't think that they had talked about those issues together before about language and why it was important to keep Spanish in their lives. But that was really beautiful.
- That was a really cool moment. So. That was in the fall and the interview with that consulado was in the summer. And then last week, the meeting last week was kind of cool because we had more students than we ever had before but now we ha:ve-
- Ana:** Two to three.
- Marcos:** ((Points camera to students on the left side of the

room)) Hola! ((Laughs)).
 Di hola.
Sondra: Hola!
Carolina: Hola, qué ondas?
Ana: ((Looks at the camera screen from behind Marcos)) ((Laughs))
 Definitely super up close!
Marcos: ((Turns camera back to Audrey))
Audrey: Yeah. What's been your favorite part of the project so far?
 ((Lifts hands to take camera from Marcos))
 No? You want to stay behind the camera? I see, I see, okay.
 ((Laughs)). Do you want to learn how to set up the tripod?
Marcos: ¿Puede? Maybe? ¿Y cuál ha sido tu peor experiencia de eso?
Audrey: Oh! I also forgot another favorite experience in December the
 week before Christmas there were eleven parents and eleven
 students who came to interview in favor of the Interpreters
 Program. Y juntamos las respuestas en el, like, a short film
 and we sent it to the district for a meeting. So that was a cool,
 little experience, too. Um, worst experience has been not
 being organized, not really having a purpose, but now I feel
 like we're much more on track? And so I feel like
 participation has gone up and down with that? Um, so I think
 in the fall that was my worst experience because I didn't
 communicate really well with students. And I feel bad about
 that. But now I feel like we're on the- on the right track.
Marcos: Yeah.
Audrey: Yeah.
Marcos: ¡Y nos vamos a Los Angeles! ((Turns camera toward his face))
 Woohoo! ((Laughs))
 ((Camera stops filming))

By literally taking the research into his own hands via the camera, Marcos actively rejects the position of a research subject being gazed upon and listened to by my institutional listening ear. Instead, he positions himself as an agentive listener and director in his own right, asking for and engaging with my own reflections on our project so far, as well as input from other students present. On camera, I'm visibly uncomfortable, but I do my best to answer Marcos's questions with sincerity and levity by reflecting on what I view as positive moments of our research together. When I finish my answer, I make two unsuccessful attempts to end this flipped dynamic and escape the camera's eye and ear. First, I ask Marcos the same question he asked me while I gesture to take the camera from him. When that

strategy fails, I offer Marcos the option to learn how to set up the camera tripod. But Marcos demurs (“Puede? Maybe?”) and refuses that proposal by following up with another question. He remains committed to his position as a listening subject and continues to agentively shape the interaction and what is seen and heard on camera.

In asking about my worst experience with the research, Marcos challenges me to engage in a more critical level of self-reflection than my earlier answers. I respond first with a memory of another positive moment, a move which I now interpret as my way of buying time in order to reflect and figure out how to answer the more difficult part of his question. Eventually, towards the end of my response, I engage in a moment of self-critique on camera, identifying my struggles to create a unified goal for the project and the challenges I had communicating with students in the fall after the cancellation of the interpreters program. Yet I buffer the potential impact of these more negative points by inserting two positive evaluations focused on the progress made since those challenges. I employ a collective *we* as I look toward the future, potentially shying away from taking full accountability for those difficult moments: “Now I feel like we're much more on track” and “Now I feel like we're on the- on the right track.” Marcos agrees with my self-evaluation (“Yeah.”) but does not offer any further judgment or evaluation. After I echo his “Yeah,” Marcos uses a loud, almost sportscaster-like voice to announce our upcoming trip to Los Angeles, which he was greatly looking forward to.

Finally, Marcos himself makes the decision to stop filming, a counterpoint to the previous excerpt in the radio studio, where others around him were making choices about what, who, and when to film. By actively taking up the researcher’s gaze and researcher’s ear, Marcos engages in an agentive practice of “resistant listening” (Stoever 2016:69), and

insists upon listening to power, making it audible, and holding those in power – namely me as a researcher – accountable for my choices. By seizing the opportunity to create, to record, to be the one asking questions, Marcos is existing in the ultrapresent, and challenges me to come along honestly and openly with him.

2. *Collective Memory, Collective Agency*

Students in this project, like Marcos, often took agentic action by themselves. Yet students also worked with their peers and parents to take collective action. The following example with Alejandra is taken from interactional footage recorded on my iPhone after an interview with Alejandra’s father, Elías, at the LPCC in December 2016; both Alejandra and Elías are present in the footage. Early on in our interview, Elías told me about an award ceremony that the school district had held in 2014 to recognize the service of DRHS student interpreters. As Alejandra had been one of the student interpreters recognized and honored at the ceremony, Elías had attended and told me that he had taken photographs of the moment, and, in fact, still had the photos on his phone. After our interview ended, I asked if he would be willing to show us the photos, and Alejandra and I crowded around the screen of his iPhone as Elías pulled up the pictures.

I took out my own iPhone and began to record as he swiped through the images, telling the story of the ceremony in which Alejandra, along with several other DRHS students (including Dante and Jaime, two students who participated in this project), had been recognized for their service as interpreters in 2014 (as I discussed in the interview with Dante in Chapter 4). That year, DRHS student interpreters had provided language access services at the Back to School Night events across all of the district’s elementary and junior high schools, and the award was meant to recognize that achievement. As Elías scrolls through

pictures of the event, Alejandra and Elías co-construct their memory of the district award ceremony, and in doing so, engage in their own practice of brokering the details and meaning of the event for me:

2.1 “Sus diplomas”

1. Alejandra: Así que pues,
2. muchos de los estudiantes de ahorita
3. que son intérpretes no recibieron ese- ese,
4. Conocimiento.
5. Audrey: Mmm.
6. Alejandra: Reconocimiento más que yo y otro estudiante, Dante.
7. Audrey: The training.
8. Alejandra: Ye- no.
9. Es un reconocimiento,
10. [Es certif-]
11. Audrey: *(((Sigh)))*
12. Alejandra: It was like an award?
13. Audrey: Mmhmm?
14. Alejandra: For participating in the Back to School Nights.
15. Solamente era:
16. Dos Rios,
17. porque ese año?
18. Freshman year!
19. Elías: Freshman year.
20. Alejandra: Um,
21. Dos Rios hizo todas las escuelas del elementary y junior high.
22. U:m,
23. así que nos dieron reconocimiento,
24. y um,
25. oh my god.
26. Elías: Aquí están,
27. perdón. *(((Smiles)))*
28. Y son las fotos.
29. Y son unos cuantos jóvenes que están aquí. *(((Scrolls through images on iPhone)))*
30. Audrey: Wo:w,
31. Y cuén[tame esto?]
32. Elías: [Aquí está,]
33. Alejandra.
34. Alejandra: Um, los únicos que quedan aquí en escuela también en Dos Rios?
35. soy yo y Dante.
36. Audrey: Oh:kay.
37. Alejandra: Um, Dante es un senior este año,

39. Elías: Sí.
40. Alejandra: Um, y luego yo, junior.
41. Pero los demás
42. se graduaron [en el-],
43. Elías: [Se graduaron],
44. Mmhm.
45. Alejandra: hace dos años,
46. o el año anterior,
47. pero yo se- a mí me olvidó de eso completamente!
48. Elías: Aquí.
49. Alejandra: #Es que #está,
50. Alejandra: ni siquiera [sé donde está.]
51. Audrey: [Awww!]
52. Elías: Sí, uh,
53. aquí está,
54. Sí.
55. Nada más son como tres-
56. Ya.
57. Alejandra: Pero [yo no me recuerdo de nada!]
58. Elías: [Sí, son las fotos] que tenía yo de e-,
59. de ella.
60. Audrey: Y usted se fue a, a,
61. Elías: [Yo fui,]₁
62. Audrey: [a la]₁ ceremony-? A,
63. Elías: [Sí]₂
64. Audrey: [O:kay].₂
65. Alejandra: [Usualmente él trabaja, pero:,]₃
66. Elías: [Y estuve sacando fotos.]₃
67. [Pero cuando ella]₄ tiene,
68. Alejandra: [Pero cuando están-]₄ ((Nodding and scrolling through iPhone))
69. Elías: algo importante,
70. Alejandra: Siempre está [allí].₅
71. Elías: [Siempre]₅ estoy allí.
72. Igual cuando se iban,
73. yo se estuve llevándolos para las escuelas aquí,
74. y luego los regresaba a recoger.
75. Audrey: Wo:ow, muy bien.
76. Elías: Sí, sí.
77. Audrey: Yo quiero ver,
78. a little bit more,
79. So it was-
80. where was it downtown?
81. Alejandra: Al distrito escolar.
82. Audrey: Ah okay.
83. Alejandra: In the room where they usually have the conferences,
84. where they're gonna decide stuff?
85. Audrey: Y eso fue hace *do:s* años?
86. Alejandra: Si, freshman year.

87. Audrey: Oh okay, wow.

Here, Elías and Alejandra engage in a collaborative process of storytelling about the district award ceremony. The photographs shared by Elías here “jog” Alejandra’s memory and she remembers different parts of the event that she had forgotten: “a mí me olvidó de eso completamente!” (line 47). Both Elías and Alejandra offer up specific details either forgotten or omitted by the other as they co-construct this moment and their memories of it, and each takes the lead in telling certain parts or details of the story. When Alejandra reports certain facts or events (“Dante es un senior” en line 38; “se graduaron” in line 42), Elías’s confirmation (sí) in line 39 and backchanneling (mmhm) in line 44 not only provide support and confirmation for Alejandra’s memory of the event, but also for her Spanish language and storytelling abilities. The detailed nature of the knowledge Elías shares throughout this excerpt – for example, which students are in which year and which have already graduated – demonstrates a deep level of engagement and familiarity with his daughter, her peers, and their roles as interpreters in their school. This is an outcome of Elías’s commitment, care, and the personal sacrifice he makes in order to be present with Alejandra for important events as he notes later on in the excerpt.

There are a few moments of strong dialogic resonance (Du Bois 2014) and choral co-production (Lerner 2002) between Elías and Alejandra as they collaboratively construct important points about this event. For example, in lines 18 and 19, they agree on the timing of the event in a way that is both relative and relevant to their lives (“freshman year”). In lines 42 and 43, Elías and Alejandra work to establish important milestones that have happened to some of the students in the images and present at the awards ceremony (“se graduaron”). In lines 70, 71, they both communicate Elías’s commitment and practice of

being present with Alejandra during important moments and events in her life (“siempre está allí/siempre estoy allí”).

Their repeated resonance throughout the excerpt demonstrates shared knowledge not only of the specific event, but also familiarity with each other’s ways of telling stories. Alejandra’s familiarity with her dad’s words also showed up in Chapter 4, when she drew upon his phrase “bajo del montón” to ask Dante an interview question. Other students built off of their parents’ words, too. In Chapter 5, Carolina used “like my dad said earlier” to build off of a point her dad had made in his interview with me. These moments suggest that careful, attentive listening is going on between students and their parents, as would be expected from years of interpreting and language brokering alongside them. Yet more is being passed along than “just words”: Alejandra was also citing and utilizing larger life perspectives learned from her father. This resonance might be an important area of future research, both within the data from this study as well as other research contexts in which youth broker.

The collective, collaborative nature of this interaction is what I want to highlight as part of the ultrapresent. Elías and Alejandra collaboratively co-construct a mediatized past moment in which students felt included, empowered, and recognized by the school district for their abilities as interpreters. In doing so, Alejandra and her dad create a distributed archive of part of the history of the interpreters program, recording the past as a testament to the possibility that things might indeed be otherwise. As cultural and literary theorist Clare Colebrook (2009) observes, “Each text, word, fragment, an image of the past [...] acts as an always present resistance (or insistence) to a simple moving forward” (Colebrook 2009:13). Through sharing this story out loud to me and to each other, Alejandra and Elías also grow

and strengthen this distributed archive, as this interaction later prompts Alejandra to ask Dante about his memory of the ceremony in our interview (Dante, Chapter 4). And by recording this moment with my phone, I was also positioned as a co-archivist of this community history, as my memory and devices (phone, computer, video camera, this document) now also hold these stories. Parents' and students' collective presence for the interviews that Alejandra organized in December 2016 enabled the story of the interpreters program to be told, heard, and distributively archived across people and devices as well. As Ahearn (2001) asks: "Must agency be individual, or can agency also be supra-individual – the property, perhaps, of families, faculties, institutions, or labor unions? [...] Agency is frequently a property of groups, and involves 'mediational means' such as language and tools (2001:29). In this case, students' and parents' collaborative, agentic action in that moment after the program's cancellation enabled the collective memory of the interpreters program to be assembled and archived, a small but potentially potent form of resistance. To be ultrapresent is also to be collectively present.

4. *"De cada error, se aprende."*

Much like the collaborative support and action between parents and students, students in this research were also ultrapresent through the support they provided to each other. In the following excerpt, Marcos, Eva, and Carolina were at a group meeting in February 2017 at the LPCC. During the meeting, the three students were working on creating a collaborative manifesto of what they thought was important about interpreting, which they then drew on to poster board and later, shared back and explained on video camera. While they were drawing out the points for their manifesto and illustrating the poster board, students and I were

engaged in informal conversation as they shared stories about different contexts in which they had interpreted. Marcos had shared about a difficult time interpreting for his dad on a work site in Montecito, and when he finished his story, Carolina and Eva began sharing about more difficult moments they had experienced, too, both connected to interpreting as well as speaking Spanish. In this excerpt, Eva describes the moments she finds most challenging when speaking Spanish:

3.1 “When you know you kind of suck”

1. **Eva:** Probably like,
2. when you see people, like,
3. kind of giggling in the background at you?
4. Or, like, when you know you kind of, like, suck?
5. But, like, you keep doing it anyways?
6. That's-,
7. that's,
8. kind of,
9. hard.
10. But like, you get better at it,
11. you like, keep trying, you know?
12. **Audrey:** Are there any times you remember that happening?
13. **Eva:** Yeah I do, actually.
14. In Mexico, like, pretty recently.
15. Um, one of my mom's aunts,
16. she's like this really old, old, old tiny lady,
17. in, like, this little house that didn't even have a roof,
18. it had half a roof.
19. This tiny lady, she asked me, like,
20. this simple question and, um,
21. I answered her, and,
22. I got like a tongue twister,
23. and then I was like, uh,
24. I forgot what I said.
25. It was like, “*esh* que”
26. or I said something, like, funny,
27. and my sister was like “Hahaha.” And-
28. **Audrey:** But you kept going?
29. **Eva:** But, yeah, I kept going.

Here, Eva recounts moments when she continued speaking Spanish and “kept trying,”

in circumstances in which others, including her older sister, laughed at her language abilities, and even in circumstances in which she herself felt self-conscious about her abilities (“when you know you kind of, like, suck”). She experiences these moments as “kind of hard,” and her pauses between words in that statement potentially index the affectively difficult nature of those moments. Yet Eva wades through these challenges, recognizing that if she “keeps doing it,” she will eventually get better at it.

She illustrates her point by telling the story of when she “got a tongue twister” while trying to respond to a relative’s question in Mexico. In framing the moment as “get[ting] a tongue twister,” Eva positions “mistakes” as happening *to* language speakers, and a natural part of learning language, not as something that stopped her from speaking. As she continued on to discuss this moment with us, Eva cited the importance of having courage to try and to make mistakes in front of others. A few minutes after listening intently to Eva’s story and her reflections on it, Marcos looked over to Eva and then to all of us and said, “De cada error, se aprende.” This small statement of support, made in a public way, highlights students’ collective support of each other and in their ultrapresent perspective on their own language abilities and also on their lives more broadly. Again, students reconfigure mistakes as something to learn from, to grow from, and mistakes as something worth maintaining the courage to “keep trying,” even when it feels “kind of hard.”

For Eva, courage was a personal value, one she brought it up multiple times throughout our research. A particularly vivid moment was on our radio program, when Eva mentioned courage as part of why she brought her mother to interview for our radio show:

- Audrey:** Primero, yo- yo quería preguntar a Eva ¿por qué te ocurrió la idea de invitar a su mamá aquí, a hablar con nosotros, a hablar con ella?
- Eva:** Yo traí a mi mama para entrevistarla porque yo siento que

tiene mucha, mucha- she has a lot of courage to be here
and speak here, as well as I do.

Courage to continue speaking, even when one is learning a language, was something Eva saw in her mother as well as herself, and cited it as a value that helped them make it through difficult times as she was growing up. Throughout their interview, as Eva and her mother discussed the differences between their childhoods, what it is like to speak English and Spanish in front of each other, and various experiences interacting in Spanish in Santa Barbara, Eva's mother identified Eva as an important source of courage and inspiration in her own life to keep trying.

Eva also participated in several additional parts of the project beyond the radio show, including the visit to Tanya Aguiñiga's studio in Los Angeles, and later, Eva participated in a 5-day arts-based workshop with Tanya in Santa Barbara. Eva, who was already an artist with an art-focused instagram account featuring her own drawings, was completely engaged during the studio visit, walking around and asking about every project that was hanging from the walls, or in process on a worktable. She heard about Tanya's work at the San Diego-Tijuana border, asked about sewing and embroidery, how Tanya built her studio team, and what kind of upcoming projects were in the works. While I don't analyze the following excerpt, I wanted to share it to provide context for the type of mentorship-related conversation Eva engaged in with Tanya while at her studio.



Figure 6a: Eva asking Tanya about her work in Tanya's studio in Los Angeles.

3.2 "Hells No, I'm This"

- Eva:** What did you, like- what did you start off with?
Like, what did you start making?
- Tanya:** Um, furniture. Yeah, so I started doing furniture. And then, um, the stuff was really inspired by, like, other people's work.
You know, and I think it's like, something that, like a lot of people go through when you're young? And you're, like, trying to figure out what to do?
Like you kind of learn by imitation, for a little [while?]
- Eva:** [Yeah.]
- Tanya:** And then it takes a while to develop your own voice and stuff, and then, you know, the more mature you get, and the more, you like, make stuff?
Then you start figuring it out, you know?
- Eva:** Yeah.
- Tanya:** I mean the same thing, even, like, your personality, like,
- Eva:** Yeah!
- Tanya:** You know?
- Eva:** [Mhmm.]
- Tanya:** [We're so] affected by our surroundings that it takes a while to, like, to feel comfortable in your own skin and be like "Hells no," like, "I'm this." You know, so.

Six months later, Tanya came to Santa Barbara to do a 5-day workshop and pop-up exhibition with youth called *Woke Warriors*, developed specifically for young women and women- and/or femme-identified folks in Santa Barbara and Goleta. I reached out to students about it, and Eva, along with Jackie, joined for the workshop, along with four other young women (aged 11-15) not part of this research. As Tanya is a fiber artist who is committed to activism and creating community through her work (as I discussed in Chapter 3), she had developed a workshop through which participants could create their own wearable “armatures” based on a topic of personal and political importance to them.¹⁵ Through the workshop, Tanya taught students new techniques, including sewing, embroidery, painting with stencils, and building light-weight wire frames to create certain forms with the clothing. She brought a mobile collection of design and textile books for students to reference as they created their looks. By modeling the making of her own armature around the message of “MÁS ESPAÑOL ESPAÑOL ESPAÑOL ESPAÑOL” (Figure 6g), Tanya engaged in collaborative mentorship with students, helping oversee each student’s process, working with them one-on-one to develop their message, making suggestions around the direction of the armature, but ultimately allowing each student’s vision and voice to be realized in a unique way.

Eva chose to create an armature around a message of “let your body be” – loving one’s body and choosing to let body hair grow and do whatever it wants (Figures 6d-6e). She spent the week sewing and printing a t-shirt, stitching rainbow-colored body hair to the armpits of the t-shirt, embroidering, and threading up long, hairy boots to wear as part of her message. Jackie decided her message would speak to the complexities of her own identity as

¹⁵ Armatures refers to a lightweight frame made out of metal, shaped into a particular form.

a light-skinned Latina; she chose to make an armature connected to her message “mexican vanilla Y CHINGONA.” (Figure 6f).

At the end of the week, Tanya’s studio assistants brought make-up and helped each workshop participant develop and put on a “look” they wanted to go along with their armatures. Each student was photographed outdoors by a professional photographer, wearing their armature, and then chose one of those images to frame and hang as part of the pop-up exhibition, which also displayed their wearable armatures and the outtakes of the images. On Saturday, students and Tanya hung the show – their armatures as well as the photography – in a community space downtown, and invited friends and family to attend. Eva’s mom joined, along with Jackie’s parents and aunt and uncle. This process-based approach to the artwork resonates with the ultrapresent: what is important and meaningful is not necessarily a perfect, final product, but the process and its iterations along the way. In addition, Tanya’s style of working with students over a short period of time on a project with a clearly articulated focus towards a clear, concrete end product for each student seems to propose one viable possibility for working with students in the ultrapresent.



*Figures 6d-6e. Eva working on the various parts of her wearable armature.
Her hand-printed t-shirt read "let your body be."*



Figures 6f-6g. Jackie's armature and t-shirt that read "mexican vanilla Y CHINGONA."
Tanya's armature that read "MÁS ESPAÑOL ESPAÑOL ESPAÑOL ESPAÑOL."



Figure 6f. Eva and Jackie (in the far back right) choosing which photo from their photoshoots will be framed and hung as part of the pop-up exhibition. The rest of the outtakes were also on display for the exhibition.

5. *Sounding Out the Ultrapresent*

As the project phase came to a close in August 2017, students and I went different ways. Alejandra, Karla, Eva, and Jackie began their senior year of high school, Dante graduated and went to college (University of California Berkeley), and Marcos who was torn between entering the army, starting college, or working as a welder, ended up doing a combination of the last two. In my own life, I finished my job at the museum, started teaching at UCSB, and moved to Oakland to be with my partner, which meant commuting long distance to Santa Barbara each week. It was on those twice weekly nine hour-train rides, nearly six months after my last meeting with students, that I began to re-engage with the data from our research project.

That disconnect was difficult, and it frustrated me for many reasons: Why had I not reviewed the data earlier? Why hadn't I done so with students? It was challenging to begin reviewing the data again, because I saw so many places where I could have done things differently. I was struck by the fact that in reviewing the footage, I was just an audience of one, listening long after the project had ended. Haraway writes: "Alone, in our separated kinds of expertise and experience, we know both too much and too little" (2016:4). What might have happened if I had let our entire group listen collectively from the beginning? How might that have changed the trajectory or dynamics of the project? adrienne maree brown notes the importance of group reflection for successful continued collaboration: "The clearer you are as a group about where you're going, the more you can relax into collaborative innovation around how to get there. You can relax into decentralization, and you want to" (2017:70). I realized that during the radio phase of the project, I had been collaborating mostly with research assistants, not directly with the high school students. Once

I moved into the second phase of the project with Alejandra as a direct research collaborator, the project had moved swiftly and in generative directions. It might have been better to build out a team of high school students as research assistants, rather than have a team entirely made up of undergraduate assistants.

In addition, I felt dismayed by the fragmented, discontinuous nature of the data itself.

When I reviewed what students and I co-created together, I tried to reconcile the disjointed pieces of this project: radio interviews, video interviews, art workshops, studio visits, group conversations, written documents, and my field notes. Students and I had shared so much time and energy working together across several months, but there had been no final product or material outcome. I struggled with the fact that “results” were far from the original ideas, objectives, and outcomes that students and I had discussed, such as a participatory documentary film or a student-led photovoice exhibition. I was frustrated with myself that I had not been able to catalyze more effective political action or creative output on students’ timescales when they had needed it. It had all come about as part of emergent strategy, but there, by myself, I struggled to find a throughline that linked the research together.

As I started to theoretically engage with the concepts of temporality, affect, and translation, especially in Rosa & Flores’ writings but in contemporary art as well, I started to develop the concept of the ultrapresent. After I presented the idea of the ultrapresent in a talk at UCSB, a colleague asked me about examples of students engaging in the ultrapresent, not just as a theoretical construct to analyze the particular set of interviews I had featured in the talk, but across my data. Where else had I noticed students engaging in practices of alternative temporalities and resistant listening? This question pushed me to reconsider whether there were links across the project that I hadn’t been hearing.

As I went back and relistened to the data, I started to see and hear new connections across the seemingly disparate slices of research from the project. I kept returning to compelling moments, “auditory palimpsests” (Daughtry 2013) where I felt like something important happened or a crucial detail about the nature of the interpreters program was captured. Almost every moment that stood out to me was one in which the students had been able to lead as true collaborators on the project, shaping its guiding ideas, activities, and direction of the project. Whether it was Alejandra setting up and leading the parent and student interviews, or Marcos using his interpersonal skills to network with the Mexican Consul in Oxnard, Carolina asking Cruz questions about music in students’ interview with him, Eva’s participation in Tanya’s Woke Warriors workshop, Alejandra filming the inside of Ms. Q’s office while students ate lunch, laughed and talked – every time when students led, good things happened. The moments that felt the most difficult were when I did not engage students as full collaborators in the project.

Indeed, those moments of student leadership, agency, and engagement is where I first started to see temporalities of the ultrapresent emerge in data from various phases of the project. For me, something about the footage Alejandra had filmed in Ms. Q’s office resonated with the dimensionality of the students’ group interview with Cruz Ortiz: the expansiveness, the speed, the topics covered, the materiality referenced. I noticed the temporalities at work in both places: the speed at which students effortlessly moved through the space of Ms. Q’s office and from conversation to conversation seemed similar to the speed at which Cruz jumped from topic to era to genre to character, from Europe to Mexico to Johnny Cash to Vicente Fernandez to Bart Simpson to standardized testing, all in one stretch. Likewise, the super-materiality of Ms. Q’s office, its couches, chairs, blanket, photo

bulletin board, food, backpacks, clothing, brightly-colored paper decorations, resonated with the dense materiality referenced in Cruz' interview as he discussed Jorge Posada's prints, old ballads, broadsheets, vinyl records, cassette tapes, painting canvases, YouTube music videos, skate decks, and song lyrics. And finally, I noticed the attention given to and primary role played by affect in both places. In both of these spaces, students were living in the ultrapresent, and Ms. Q and Cruz were able to meet them there.

Throughout my work alongside the students in this project, I witnessed people many folks meet with and listen to students in ways that co-created the ultrapresent: Ms. Q, Tanya, Perla, Cruz, the Consul of México in Oxnard. Each of these people shared a moment during this journey when they met students and recognized them for who they were, as well as the many skills, talents and wisdom they already held and were developing. These figures were not inconsequential for students, even when their interactions were fleeting. They co-created opportunities with students to live, speak, listen and act fully in the present moment. By hearing, seeing, and acting with youth where and when they are, in the here and now, as well as where they are coming from, and where they are headed, such figures are present with young people and see and hear them fully with their abilities as they take visionary leaps into the future. These moments helped me both to theorize the ultrapresent and to anchor it in the material, lived experiences of students, as I will describe in the next section.

6. Theorizing the Ultrapresent

Below I offer some elements of the ultrapresent as they took shape in my project, and especially how the ultrapresent offered a resistant alternative to the district's decision to cancel the student interpreters' program. Yet the ultrapresent also moves beyond this specific

situation to work as an operating principle for youth action, as seen in the previous examples in this chapter. It also generates insights for how educators, activists, and scholars can better accompany students and respond to youth in ways that “render each other capable” of agentic social action on the path towards more inclusive realities (Haraway 2016:7).

Spatiotemporally Present: Students challenged the district’s raciolinguistic deferral of students’ interpreting abilities by repositioning themselves as “here right now” (Alejandra, Chapter 5) conceptually as well as physically and materially. By showing up for the interviews in the aftermath of the program’s cancellation, youth in this study, and their parents, chose to be radically and collectively present in the here and now for each other and their community despite unequal access to time and space, official narratives, schedules, and deadlines, and the affective exhaustion that this inequity can cause (Ahmed 2018). In other parts of the project, students made time in their busy schedules and lives to be present with each other and me, engaging in activities and meetings to support the interpreting program. From spending their normally free summer evenings inside the small studio of the radio station, to catching bus rides across town to the LPCC during winter break, students exercised agency and resourcefulness to show up at every opportunity they deemed to be a viable way of supporting each other and the program.

Present Through Critical Consciousness: In the interviews and throughout the project, students constructed themselves as “ultraskeptical and ultracommitted” (Antena Aire 2013), possessing a critical awareness of how the institution presently works, while still holding space for, and acting with a view towards alternative realities, including alternative futures. Students demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the relative, taffy-like nature of

institutional time, its connections to power (Ahmed 2018; Sharma 2014), and the ways in which dominant raciolinguistic chronotopes can affect their lives (Rosa 2016b). They also challenged the district's spatiotemporal deferral by centering their own temporalities and mobilizing strategies and resources, such as sending letters and requesting meetings, drawing strength from their collective time, energy, and affect to confront the district. Across the project, students demonstrated that they heard power, how power listens, and how power operates. This critical stance can also be seen in the ways that students engaged with this research project, from Alejandra's skepticism and questions that challenged how I navigated my role and the research process, to Marcos' flipping of the analytical gaze to scrutinize my feelings and motives, as well as his challenge of Trump's racist ideologies and rhetoric in his radio interview.

Present with and through Affect: Through each phase of this project, students constructed themselves as affective experts who were able not only to identify, "stay with," and communicate their own sometimes difficult emotions, but also to empathize with peers, parents, other families, and even the district. They were present in the sense of being willing to take up linguistic and affective space for their feelings; they expressed a wide range of emotions from joy and pride to exhaustion, frustration, outrage, and everything in between. In doing so, they processed and grappled with the affective complexities of the program's cancellation in ways that the district seemed incapable of doing, or even hearing. Students also took space and time to agentively and collectively "not cope" (Ahmed 2018). Their refusal to neatly set aside their emotions "in a timely fashion" forms a type of collective response to institutional disregard: "We are supposed to cope, and if we don't cope, we are not supposed to admit to not coping, because that would be a sign of weakness; being

unprofessional [...] but maybe not coping is an action. And maybe not coping is how we create a collective. That collective might be fragile but it is also feminist and furious” (Ahmed 2016). Students’ ability to observe and be present with affect showed up in the moments Alejandra used the video camera to capture the joy, laughter, and collective care of Ms. Q’s office, from Eva’s willingness to continue speaking Spanish even through “hard” feelings, and importantly, most, if not all, of the students interpreters who recognized the importance of attending to parents affect within the space of DRHS, and the importance of making parents “feel comfortable” (Dante, Chapter 5).

Present through Persistent Action and Possibility: The ultrapresent is action-based. Students “continued in their saying” (Antena 2013:3) throughout their work, both as brokers and in the larger community. By agentively mobilizing a variety of metadiscursive strategies within their reach – writing letters, penning newspaper articles, creating hashtags, requesting multiple meetings with the district, showing up for research – students positioned themselves as action-oriented youth who made the most of the resources and knowledge they had in that moment to engage in civic activism on issues that mattered to them. The ultrapresent draws upon elements of *rasquachismo* (Ybarra-Fausto 1989), recognizing the transcendent possibilities of what is available in the present and using it, acting with it, elevating it, to create new and unexpected meanings and outcomes outside of white supremacist, neoliberal systems of value. Students’ ability to see generative possibilities in – and take agentive action with – present opportunities and resources demonstrates a type of “resilience and resourcefulness, *hacer rendir las cosas*, making do with what’s at hand, of tenacity and adaptability” (Ybarra-Frausto 1989:86, 88). Importantly, these options often allow them to hear possibility and “retain hope” (Ybarra-Frausto 1989:88). When Marcos unexpectedly met

the Mexican consul at a family party, and Alejandra mobilized families so quickly before winter break, these are larger examples of what youth brokers already do on a daily basis.

Present as Presente: A central tenet of the ultrapresent is its situatedness in the present. Yet this present is expansive - the presente is a type of explicitly political, critical, historically-situated, and collective Latinx and Chicanx presence. This kind of presence creates the possibility of archiving the past for future action. In the interviews, youth and parents collectively chose to be present to discuss the district's decision and to record what happened, how it affected them, and to suggest changes they would like to see. These counterstories are a form of community-based resistant capital (Yosso 2005) in which people render themselves visibly and audibly present by keeping accurate records of what has happened, collectively remembering pasts and histories which are usually erased from or not included in official records. This remembrance creates possibilities for alternative circumstances either now or in the future. Across the project, youth's actions, in collaboration with their parents, peers, and Ms. Q, created an alternative, distributed, participatory archive of the interpreters program, as well as an archive of their agentive action in the ultrapresent. In addition, youth's willingness to go on record, on the radio and in our conversations to challenge historical injustices, from Dante's observation of colonization as the root cause of inequity and injustice in the educational system, to Marcos' sharp insights into the history of racism and immigration in the US, showcases their critical historical perspectives.

Present with Non-knowing: Throughout their accounts of their experiences of interpreting, the students made clear that they were willing to engage with unknowing, with "the language snags" inherent in the processes and practices of interpretation and translation (Antena Aire

2013:4). Students did not shy away from the fact that sometimes they made mistakes, nor did they pretend that they always knew what was going on in an interaction or try to construct themselves as idealized speakers. From Eva's retelling of continuing to speak even when feeling self-conscious or "getting tongue twisters" to Dante's observation that even "professional" interpreters make mistakes, students reconfigured the implications of making mistakes and rejected "perfectionism-based" views of language and life. Derrida suggests "aporia" as a place of unknowing and uncertainty that we should each visit often and be open to traversing (1995). These youth were not afraid or ashamed to travel to unknown places with their languages, speaking to their unique ability to engage with the complex "unsettled realities of everyday bilingualism" (Sommer 2014) in visionary ways that institutions and systems have yet to embrace.

7. Conclusion

Students' ultrapresent perspective on their language abilities, as well as their lived experience more generally, challenges the existing binary of deficit- and asset-based approaches to language practices of racialized youth. Not complacent with representations of their language and identities as either static representations or ever-emerging, the students I worked with agentively embraced a mindset of growth while recognizing and living from the value of their language in the present. (If this seems like a paradox, it is complex; there are months-long yoga and meditation retreats for people to figure out how to get here.) This approach draws parallels to the concept of vitality in queer theory and its "lateral possibilities for thinking and action" beyond binary triumphalist or defeatist accounts of radical political movements (Bradway & McCallum 2019).

Ultrapresent speaking and listening subjects accomplish what Flores has proposed as

one goal of education with Latinx students: “to expose the constructed nature and ideological assumptions of all language practices and provide opportunities for students to reappropriate plurilingualism in ways that resist neoliberalism’s corporatist agenda” (Flores 2013:517). As students create new speaking and listening subjects in the ultrapresent, they redefine the terms and boundaries of what counts as a capable, competent communicator, or social actor. Here, competence does not mean not making mistakes. It means showing up, being present affectively, and listening, hearing, communicating feelings, repairing mistakes. It means continuing to engage in dialogue and understanding learning as an ongoing process.

As a subversive social tense of inclusion, the ultrapresent creates alternative speaking and listening subjects, subjects that actively demonstrate what Chicax queer theory scholar Carlos Decena has called the “radical practice of belief in young people” (2015). This is an alternative listening subject position which validates and supports racialized students and their languages, recognizes the systemic inequalities these students face, and trusts community-based and student-centered approaches to address them in a just and inclusive way. An institutional listening subject who practices radical belief in young people listens carefully to youth, hears them in their fullest capacities, and meets them where and “when” they are. Our responsibilities as educators, activists, and administrators is to better learn how to accompany youth in the ultrapresent, not only to witness, but to take action alongside youth as we expand our collective “capacities to respond, and cultivate ways to render each other capable” (Haraway 2016:8).

Both by accident and design, I took an experimental, emergent approach to this project, and things did not turn out at all as expected. There were glitches, moments of failure, and missed opportunities, most of which, if not all, came about from my own

mishearings of students and my “research listening ear.” But in continuing with my listening, as faulty as it was sometimes, by staying engaged with students, I was able to learn how to better hear and meet students in the ultrapresent. In the final chapter, I draw upon my reflections from this chapter to revisit the main points of my analysis. I then propose a series of models and possibilities that scholars, educators, and activists might employ to more fully meet and support Latinx youth brokers in the ultrapresent.

CHAPTER 7

Latinx Youth Language Brokers and the Possibilities of the Ultrapresent

In the trick of politics we are insufficient, scarce, waiting in
pockets of resistance, in stairwells, in alleys, in vain.
The false image and its critique threaten the common with democracy,
which is only ever to come, so that one day, which is only never to
come, we will be more than what we are.
But we already are.
We're already here, moving.
We've been around.

— Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, 2013, p.19

1. Overview

In this chapter, I revisit the main points of my analysis and provide an overview of the contributions of this dissertation. I discuss the significance of the student interpreters program at DRHS and its implications for models of social justice-based approaches to interpreting, Latinx parental engagement, and mentorship of Latinx student interpreters. I then examine recent changes in language education and language access policy in Santa Barbara Unified School District that illuminate some of the raciolinguistic ideologies behind language access policies. I end by addressing directions for future research and activism, ultimately proposing a series of models for how educators, administrators, scholars, and activists can better meet and support Latinx youth language brokers in the ultrapresent.

2. Significance and Contributions

Through the use of collaborative and engaged ethnographic methods that draw upon emancipatory and critical pedagogies, youth participatory action research (YPAR), and “funds of knowledge”-centered praxis (Moll et al. 1992), this research responded to the need

for new methodologies and models in understanding the multidimensionality and larger social impact of young people's work as language and cultural brokers. In doing so, this project created a variety of opportunities and platforms for Latinx students to challenge dominant narratives of racialized deficit about their work and engage in meaning-making about their language practices on their own terms.

The grassroots nature of the student interpreters program enabled Latinx students to use the full range of their linguistic and cultural expertise in a real-world, problem-solving communicative context at DRHS for the benefit of their own community. Importantly, the program decoupled evaluations of students' language practices and competence from white, neoliberal, hegemonic middle-class norms and the white "listening ear" of the institution (Stoeber 2016). In this way, students were able to decolonize their listening practices and hear themselves as competent, capable, and empowered speakers on their own terms, challenging dominant deficit-based models of personhood. In addition, the interpreters program created new forms of belonging, participation, and leadership outside of white, neoliberal, hegemonic terms, definitions, and structures, while ensuring that these new elite positionalities were visible at DRHS.

Students then used this understanding of their own language abilities and practices to challenge the listening practices of the school district as a white institutional listening subject, both over the airwaves of the radio show and also in their collective interviews, through a subversive social tense of inclusion, the ultrapresent. Students' ultrapresent perspective on their language abilities, as well as their lived experience more generally, challenged the existing binary of deficit- and asset-based approaches to language practices of racialized youth. Not complacent with representations of their language and identities as

either static or endlessly emergent, the students I worked with agentively embraced a mindset of growth while recognizing, valorizing, and using their language in the present.

The students' work as language brokers at DRHS reconfigured their educational context in a transformative way by demonstrating that equitable, meaningful participation and access for Latinx Spanish-speaking parents, families, and students could not and should not be defined by the school district alone, and might, in fact, require fostering participation in ways that challenge the foundations of the institution itself, such as attending to Latinx parents' affective exclusion and moving beyond current models of social justice interpreting (Taibi 2018).

The student interpreters program at DRHS valued students' language abilities in the present moment, not merely as future potential. This culturally-sustaining program offers one response to Paris and Alim's question of what pedagogical innovations are possible if "the goal of teaching and learning with youth of color was not ultimately to see how closely students could perform White middle-class norms but to explore, honor, extend, and problematize their heritage and community practices" (2014:86). In addition, this program was not created as an intervention by outside researchers or a non-profit organization. Although this is not a new finding, this study of the interpreters program continues to underline the need for scholars, researchers, educators, activists, and advocates for youth to find ways of supporting, looking toward, and building on already existing initiatives and models created by and led from within the communities with whom we work. While some research has modeled the different steps that institutions must take to develop culturally-competent language access services (Schuster 2013), this dissertation expands on that scholarship by exploring and demonstrating the material and felt impacts that such steps hold

for marginalized communities, and how each step can impact the everyday lived experiences of those in need of language access services.

Latinx youth language brokers' work and activism is in step with and in dialogue with the recent activist turn within the field and practice of translation and interpreting (M. Baker 2010a, 2013). Throughout the time I spent with them, students advocated tirelessly for sociolinguistic justice for their parents and community, as well as their own right and desire to access meaningful institutionally-sanctioned opportunities to use their language abilities, to grow their skills as interpreters, and to hear and be heard as valuable language users on their own terms. Thus, youth language brokers' work needs to be seen as a form of civic engagement and community activism, a finding that is in direct conversation with studies of larger youth-led organizing, activism, and social justice movements. These movements recognize young people as the “fresh, searing force for equality, racial justice and dignity” (Braxton 2016:82) who challenge “systems not attuned to their needs, or the needs of their community, as they devise methods and means to upend [them]” (Dohrn & Ayers 2016:82) – exactly the day-to-day work done by the young people in this study. In expanding our understanding of how students confront institutional discourses of raciolinguistic deficit and practices of exclusion, this research adds to the work of scholars, educators, and activists committed to accompanying youth (Tomlinson & Lipsitz 2013; Bucholtz, Casillas, & Lee 2016) in presence and action toward more just and inclusive realities.

Time of Response

As a response, research can move too slowly for youth. Research time runs on academic calendar time, grant time, institutional time, revise and resubmit time, preliminary fieldwork time, all of which can be incompatible with the TikTok time of youth. In my role

as an ethnographer, and a “slow” one at that (Carrington 2018), I listened and responded to students at a pace that ultimately did not work for some youth who participated in this project. I thought of our timeline in terms of months or even a year; I imagined working with students in small groups on one larger project. However, students had other ideas of what viable timelines and projects looked like for them: these timescales were about what youth could make, share, and do today, tomorrow, the next day.

In some ways, the extended temporality of the project helped me to more fully understand the implications of this research and the significance of youth’s own temporalities and approaches to time. Yet having that time was a privilege, one not afforded to the student interpreters I worked with, whose urgency in taking action and creating change developed from the direct, material negative impacts of the district’s decision on their and their families’ lives. My experience points to the need for scholars, and particularly scholar-activists, to create new, shorter-term models and modules for working alongside youth that privilege and prioritize youth’s temporalities. It also questions the adequacy and effectiveness of linguistic research itself as an intervention or response to racialized injustice – it may have been more effective to realize an activism-oriented workshop over a weekend or series of weeks in the wake of the interpreters program cancellation, rather than continuing with this project as a “research project.” At the very least, a compromise would suggest the need for linguists to forge collaborations with folks who work along very different temporalities than the neoliberal academy – namely, artists, activists, and youth themselves.

3. Language Access Update

In the four years since the cancellation of the student interpreters program, several

changes in language education and language access policy have been implemented across the school district. There has also been turnover in several major administrative positions, including the district superintendent and the Director of English Learner and Parent Engagement. These policy changes, as well as the new personnel, have the potential to greatly impact the educational experiences of Latinx students and their families. Below, I discuss the implications of two notable shifts, the naming of the district as a California Exemplary District and the district’s Multilingual Excellence Transforming Achievement (META) plan.

California Exemplary District

In 2018, Santa Barbara Unified School District was recognized as a California Exemplary District, a statewide honor awarded to school districts that have “implemented model practices that have had a positive impact on student and family engagement and student outcomes” (SBUSD 2018). According to the district’s website, the award was given in recognition of achievements including its “commitment to language access, family engagement and restorative approaches” (SBUSD 2018). The award thus specifically highlights the district’s approach to language access as described on their webpage (SBUSD 2018):

- Strengthening student outcomes by employing a Framework for Family Engagement coupled with parent programming, and linguistic access for families who are limited or non-English proficient through translation and interpretation services.
- Santa Barbara Unified’s Language Access Unit interpreter/translator training of approximately 100 bilingual staff to strengthen the communication between school and home.

Here, the district highlights the achievements it has made in strengthening language

access and parent engagement, but it fails to acknowledge in any way the years of work that Latinx students, families, and educators put into getting the district to recognize and begin to comprehensively meet the need for language access services. Faced with persistent, systemic marginalization of Latinx parents and families from Back to School Night and other school and district events, Ms. Q and Latinx students created an innovative, grassroots, culturally-relevant solution to address language access and parent engagement. However, those efforts have been completely erased from the district's official record – at the time of writing in August 2020, there was no mention of the student interpreters program on Dos Rios High School's or the district's website, despite the fundamental role that this group played in the district's growing awareness of language access needs and its eventual development of a structure, funding, and professional interpreters to address those needs.

This outcome may be frustrating, but it is also unsurprising. This challenge is familiar to student activists and communities of color, whose activism efforts and labor are often capitalized upon by institutions for positive publicity without making the systemic changes they initially called for (Ahmed 2012; Hoffman and Mitchell 2016; Linder et al. 2019). In the case of Santa Barbara Unified School District, it seems that although the institution did indeed gain recognition for making some changes towards increasing Latinx family engagement through language access, it erased any trace of those who labored for that change to be enacted.

In a related irony, United for Justice's website features language about why students should be included in decision-making processes connected to their education: "Students have valuable insight about how to make schools work for them; how to increase engagement and motivation, teach challenging material, and create successful and inclusive classroom

and school environments that encourage all students to succeed. We simply need to create safe spaces for them to talk and then listen to what they tell us” (United for Justice 2019). Yet when a popular and successful student-led, family-centered initiative did arise in the form of the student interpreters program, it was discontinued in part due to United for Justice’s consulting with the school district on issues of language access. Despite students’ activism efforts, this decision remained in place without any further inclusion of students’ input on this topic by the school, the district, or United for Justice.

United for Justice was unquestionably important in creating awareness, developing resources and training, and preparing interpreters to increase just and equitable language access throughout Santa Barbara County. Indeed, without United for Justice’ input, Santa Barbara Unified School District may never have paid such close attention to the need to provide comprehensive language access services. In addition, United for Justice played a foundational role in helping many of the students I worked with develop critical consciousness and form their identities as activists, both of which they drew upon throughout our research to advocate for the return of the interpreters program. However, although United for Justice empowered youth as activists in some ways, the organization’s focus on the professionalization of community interpreting throughout the district effectively marginalized the student interpreter program and the agency of Latinx youth. This outcome underscores the complexities of the interacting ideologies of and approaches towards language access in Santa Barbara County.

The only remaining official record of the student interpreters program exists in local newspaper archives, through six *Santa Barbara Noozhawk* articles written by DRHS students, *Noozhawk* staff, and local community members (Güereña 2011, 2013, 2014;

Magnoli 2013, 2015; Monreal 2016), and two Dos Rios student newspaper articles written by students (Craine 2012; Monreal 2016). An online language blog, *Language Insight*, also picked up the story (Language Insight 2013). Outside of those sources, no other “on-the-record” accounts exist of the program or its impact on students and families. Thus, the local newspaper articles and this dissertation serve as an alternative archive of the bilingual student interpreters program and the many contributions of the students, parents, and educators who had a hand in creating it. By recognizing and acknowledging the crucial role that Latinx students, families, and educators played in the district’s development and policy changes in language access over time, this dissertation provides an alternative account that adds an important dimension to the history of language access and language justice in Santa Barbara and Goleta.

Multilingual Excellence Transforming Achievement (META) Plan

In April 2020, the Santa Barbara Unified School District published the Multilingual Excellence Transforming Achievement (META) Plan, a recently adopted comprehensive approach to implementing equitable multilingual education across the school district. The plan responded to the need and desire to implement culturally and linguistically sustaining models of learning, as well as California's Proposition 58, which repealed English-only education legislation in November 2016. Developed through a ten-month-long collaboration between district teachers, administrators, support staff, students, parents, and community member experts, the META plan introduced an asset-based approach towards “Emergent Multilingual Learners,” or students who speak at least one language other than English at home (SBUSD META 2020:10). Many of the plan’s goals and objectives center on creating supportive, equitable, and enriched school environments for all students and families, while

also proposing specific strategies and resources it will employ to meet the needs of Emergent Multilingual students.

With its focus on multilingual youth, the META plan has interesting implications for this research and the broader picture of language access across Santa Barbara Unified School District. Toward the end of the 190-page document, there is a section entitled “Language Access - Interpretation/Translation,” shown in Figure 7.1. This section outlines the district’s general approach to providing language access services, along with a code of ethics for interpretation and translation. A close examination of the code of ethics reveals hegemonic monoglossic language ideologies and indexes the district’s institutional-centric ideologies of translation and interpretation (Unamuno & Bonnin 2018). Some of the elements include:

- idealized bilingualism and perfectionism: “one must interpret everything, accurately and completely, without filtering”
- purity of boundaries: “true interpretation”; “must not act outside their role”
- impartial exchange of information through a neutral code: “interpreter is a conduit of communication, transferring messages”
- hidden listening subject: “highly skilled and qualified professionals”; yet it provides no definition of these terms
- universalistic: “all families” to be able to access information and services; “treat all parties with dignity”

In addition, the extreme, all-or-nothing nature of the terminology used here indexes an underlying sense of anxiety around the role of the interpreter for the institutional listening subject: “one *must* interpret *everything* [...] *completely*”; “no interpreter *ever* gives *anyone* a voice; “interpreters *must not* act outside their role”; “the *entire* educational system.” These standards ignore unequal power relations inherent in the practices of interpretation and translation within the white public space of an educational institution, as well as the interactional nuances of the practices themselves. In summary, this code of ethics shines a

light on how the Santa Barbara Unified School District's institutional ideologies of language access might conflict with the grassroots ideologies of access (Unamuno & Bonnin 2018) present in the student interpreter program, as well as students' ultrapresent view of their linguistic abilities. This recently released code of ethics points to an area of important future research on language access in Santa Barbara County.

One bright spot within the code of ethics is the proposal that "all educators, administrators, Special Educators, staff, and families who will be part of the interpretation process" receive "professional learning" in the ethics of interpretation (SBUSD META 2020:108). I applaud the district's goal of developing knowledge of and familiarity with ethical interpretation and translation practices across the educational system. Yet students are again explicitly left out of the equation, even though they are likely to be the group most impacted by such language access policies and practices.



Language Access - Interpretation/Translation

In 2014, Santa Barbara Unified's Language Access Unit (LAU) and has since grown to a team of five highly skilled professional translator/interpreters who provide services for events throughout the district, including interpretation at IEPs, Back to School Nights, and any District Office event and translation serves for any requests from the District Office. When the need is high, LAU contracts with external interpreter/translators partners to support the demand.

Ethics of Interpretation

In multilingual settings, language access facilitates family engagement, because it provides the tools and the structure for all families to be able to not only access information and services, but then to be able to participate, as well. As part of that structure, we must have highly skilled and qualified professionals to do the work. These professional interpreters or trained bilingual staff who are assigned to be in that role in addition to their primary job are bound by important ethical principles that inform all work done around interpretation and translation:

- **Accuracy:** One must interpret everything, accurately and completely, without filtering.
- **Confidentiality:** If a family happens to know the interpreter from another role in their life, it can be difficult for families to trust the interpreter in this position. The fear of a lack of confidentiality with a certain interpreter can be a barrier, therefore, to true interpretation in which both parties are able to honestly express their thoughts and concerns.
- **Respect:** Treating all parties with dignity. This means that no interpreter ever 'gives' anyone a voice, but is instead a conduit of communication, transferring messages from one party to another.
- **Role boundaries:** An interpreter can only do one assignment at a time. Interpreters cannot therefore take notes, offer their own opinions, or facilitate a meeting while interpreting. Additionally, Interpreters must not act outside their role and advocate or offer advice, etc.
- **Professionalism:** Many interpreters get pulled into doing interpretation work by employers and therefore do not feel free to say that they are not prepared (e.g. lacking the necessary vocabulary, etc.). Additionally, in these situations, employees have often already worked an 8 hour day in their other job (i.e. office manager, assistant, etc.) and are then asked to interpret for a 3-hour meeting. Professionalism, then, is declining jobs when ethics would be compromised.
- **Impartiality:** In schools, we often ask those who work in the office, parent engagement roles, etc. to do the work of interpretation, and consequently, impartiality is almost never observed in educational interpreting. When there is no impartiality, the information stops with the bilingual person and they become the point of communication instead of the bridge or conduit. Lack of impartiality can lead to the adding, deleting or changing of parts of the messages as a result of the interpreters' own filter.
- **Professional Learning:** The entire educational system needs to receive professional learning in the ethics of interpretation, such that others can support the interpreter in their ethical professional decisions. This includes all educators, administrators, Special Educators, staff, etc., as well as families who will be part of the interpretation process.

Figure 7.1: Language Access Policy and Ethics of Interpretation, p. 108 of Santa Barbara Unified School District Multilingual Excellence Transforming Achievement (META) Plan, published in June 2020.

Over the past decade, as seen through the history of the Student Interpreters Program I have recounted in this dissertation, hundreds of Latinx, bilingual, and emergent multilingual students across the district expressed strong interest and desire to learn more about the interpretation and translation practices that they already engage in on a daily basis. What will it take for these students to be heard, listened to, and addressed? The district's "Professional Learning" on interpretation and translation would seem to present a viable opportunity and forum for students to be included and to participate. With the district's more detailed Language Access Handbook scheduled to be adopted in the summer of 2020 (SBUSD META 2020:109), it remains to be seen how, if at all, students will be addressed in such plans.

While it is important to work toward having professional interpreters provide language access in school spaces, this does not mean that youth language brokers are no longer doing this work or should not do it. Students need and desire a space and structure within their educational contexts to critically reflect upon, further develop, and practice their skills as language brokers, as well as to exert agency in this area of their lives. In the next section, I outline students' proposals and present two proposals of my own, both of which are informed by students' perspectives and ethnographic insights from our research together.

4. Moving Forward

The students I worked with in this project had clear and innovative ideas about what kind of programs and structures would benefit them as they continued to develop their skills as interpreters; I have included and described four student proposals below. Each of these

student-sourced proposals creates innovative structural possibilities for institutional listening

subjects to hear, listen to, acknowledge, and respond to Latinx student voices. Thus, these proposals reframe the problem not as one of an absent individual or collective student voice, or students lacking ideas about what would work for them, but rather as a problem of available institutional listening subject positions:

Student Proposals

- **Student Seat on School Board:** Dante proposed that students be given a position on the school board in order to have their voices heard (Chapter 5). Many school districts have already implemented such proposals, and some school boards have even created student positions with voting power (Fletcher & King 2014; Urist 2014; Sawchuck 2019a, b).
- **District-Student Office Hours:** Dante also advocated for the creation of more opportunities for dialogue between Latinx students and district administrators, conversations in which they can “just talk” (Chapter 5), beyond the confines of one-way public comment sessions during school board meetings. One possible way to implement this would be to set up regularly occurring district “office hours” through which Latinx students can speak directly with district administrators about issues that matter to them. These types of conversations would be possible to do virtually as well, and may even be easier for students to access online, such as through Zoom.
- **Back to School Night Mentorship Program:** Alejandra proposed the possibility of a mentorship program with professional interpreters. In this

case, students would be paired with a professional interpreter for Back to School Night events, and they would interpret together as a team for parents throughout the night. Rather than pitting student interpreters against professional interpreters, this proposal would create a team-like atmosphere, through which each could learn from the other: the student could share their local expertise about the classrooms, campus, and teachers, while the professional interpreter would be able to mentor and discuss interpreting strategies, ethics, and professional possibilities with students.

- **DRHS Interpreter Academy:** Throughout my conversations with Alejandra, she often suggested the idea of creating an Interpreter Academy at DRHS, similar to the school's prestigious Engineering Academy. In this model, students could apply to the academy in order to continue learning and practicing their skills through an integrated project-based curriculum. Such a curriculum would include a mentorship program, classroom speakers, field trips, internships, and exploration of postsecondary and career options connected to interpretation and translation. Under this model, Back to School Night events could remain student-led, as a showcase or capstone event for youth interpreters who had participated in the Academy for a certain length of time.

In developing proposals to include in this section, I struggled with the idea of the Interpreting Academy. At first, I felt it was the answer to the problem at hand, as it would create an institutionally-sanctioned opportunity for Latinx bilingual students to

continue developing their interpretation skills as part of an already-established model that holds prestige and value at the school. However, as I read into the small print behind the district's Academy model, I became aware of the neoliberal ideologies underlying its approach to individual student achievement, competition, and exclusivity within a model of racialized global capital. One of the most subversive and transformational elements of the student interpreters program was that it valued students' language practices "as-is" and decoupled their evaluation from the white-supremacist, neoliberal standards and surveillance of the institutional listening ear. Thus, linking students' practices of interpretation and translation to grades and official measures of neoliberal education could hinder the program's capacity to decolonize students' understanding of their language practices and its ability to challenge the raciolinguistic status quo of DRHS.

Therefore, I developed two of my own proposals that take these issues into account: an alternative institutionally-sanctioned curriculum and a participatory archive project, informed by the ideas and desires that students expressed for their own educational and future possibilities. Both proposals develop from a materialist anti-racist approach to critical applied linguistics and educational language policy (Flores & Chaparro 2018) that recognizes that any solutions must not only incorporate new understandings of language that resist deficit perspectives but also that systematically address the structural barriers confronting Latinx communities.

1. DRHS Summer Academy

The first proposal builds upon students' ideas for an interpreting academy to create a summer-based interpreting mentorship and internship program through which students would be paid for their participation. The program would integrate critical perspectives on language alongside training, mentoring, and creative workshops connected to translation and interpretation. It would source mentors, guest speakers, and workshop leaders from a variety of groups and organizations working on language access, from United for Justice, UCSB, artist groups like Antena Aire, to other non-profit organizations. It would include field trips to observe language access in process in other spaces beyond schools, and include mentorship days with professional interpreters, through which students could shadow them during their work. In this proposal, Back to School Night events would remain student-led, as a capstone project for youth in the program. The creative elements would depend on students' interests, with each cohort of student interpreters working to create a tangible project to add to that year's Back to School Night event, from bilingual invitations to an alternative family-centered "Code of Ethics." While the program would begin with grant-based funding, it would eventually need structural, long-term funding from the district in order to address underlying systemic inequalities facing Latinx youth and their families.

2. Participatory Archive of the Ultrapresent

The second proposal builds upon the work and collaborative research that DRHS student interpreters have already done. Using this research project as a starting point, the goal would be to create a youth-led participatory archive project of youth language brokering to be housed in the UCSB's California Multiethnic Archives as part of Special Research

Collections.

While the students and I didn't explicitly set out to compile the data from the different phases of our project into a community archive, I realized afterwards that the materials formed a communal record of what had happened with the interpreter program during a very specific point in time. As they were generated collectively over time by student interpreters and their families, these data can potentially be viewed as the beginnings of a participatory archive of youth language brokering. In this particular context, archiving happened across modalities and media, through digital, analog, and embodied technologies and repositories. Archiving took place across generations (parents, students, and myself), in various community contexts (UCSB, Goleta, DRHS, the community center, Santa Barbara, Oxnard, and Los Angeles). As such, the geographical span of this archive is wide, reflecting the lived mobilities of this group of Latinx students. By recording their experiences and by making those recordings available to others through an archive, youth language brokers are doing the larger work of making other futures and realities possible – ones that do not include the current exclusions. This collective, distributed archiving is an act of care and a technology of survival and resistance (Palladini & Pustianaz 2017).

Community-based participatory archive projects have recently been growing through new research from engaged archival studies and library sciences. They have largely been carried out by scholars and archivists working from a racial and social justice perspective. One such scholar is archivist Michelle Caswell, Director of the Community Archives Lab at the University of California, Los Angeles, who writes in collaboration with Sumip Mallick that community-based participatory archives can help “generate new records that represent perspectives not commonly found in archives, groups whose histories are under-represented

or misrepresented in archives” (Caswell & Mallick 2014:79). In addition, the authors note that participatory archives tend to capture affective histories not accessible through official records: “Participatory history projects reveal the importance of affect in ways that administrative records do not [...] Their [participants’] narratives are animated by sorrow, joy, pride, excitement, and confusion [...] and connect people to the past in a way that administrative records cannot” (2014:81-82). These qualities make participatory archiving particularly useful as a platform to bring together the data and stories collected through this research project.

One important consideration would be to “retrofit” this memory (Blackwell 2011) in a participatory manner with students themselves leading the way. Chicana Studies scholar María Cotera characterizes Blackwell’s concept of “retrofitted memory” as “a social practice of countermemory that involves simultaneously excavating and critiquing both the dominant historical record and counterhegemonic (but nevertheless deeply masculinist) articulations of history to illuminate the suppressed knowledges of multiply oppressed subjects” (Cotera 2018:305). As a part of retrofitting this research, youth language brokers would be hired and paid as co-curators to visualize, create, and develop a digital and material archive of youth language brokering. Working with the Special Collections Library team at UCSB, as well as through a series of artist workshops, youth would be able to choose, curate, and annotate the existing data, as well as sharing other artifacts and important perspectives not captured here. This program would provide mentorships, college credit, and a stipend for participation. In the next section, I outline some possibilities that a participatory archive of youth language brokering might create.

Possibilities of an Archive of the Ultrapresent

—*How might this archive multiply and collectivize our listenings?* An archive would open up the possibility for multiple listeners to listen to material in the archive. Importantly, it would create the possibility for students or other participants to listen back to the researcher, to ask questions, to access and remember pieces of the project they may have forgotten: Why did you make this certain decision? What happened with that piece of the project? It would also create additional listeners throughout time.

—*What kind of new stories might be drawn out of such an archive?* For example, with this project in particular, we could return to the archive with a lens on language and gender: What can we learn by looking back at fathers' versus mothers' feelings about and experiences with youth language brokering? How many young men participated in the project? How did their experiences compare with those of young women?

—*What type of pedagogical possibilities could the archive create around language brokering?* It would be possible for K-16 classes to take a tour of the archive, either digitally or in person, or use it as material for their own writing or storytelling projects.

—*How might the archive open up possibilities for connections across space and time?* As a researcher, I tend to be aware of the importance of youths' voices and stories in the present moment, and I do not always think of the ultrapresent in its expanded simultaneity as a contemporary moment. Through time, youth language brokers' work in the now may resonate differently. How does the interpreters program and the youth I worked with connect to their larger, expanded contemporary moment? For example, would the Ghanaian youth brokers whom I worked with (see Chapter 2) might also be willing to share

their stories as a part of this archive, or the youth who are interpreting during COVID-19 (see Chapter 1), or the youth who are collaboratively translating for the social media group Letters for Black Lives Matter? In this way, the archive might allow for a more detailed, comprehensive picture of youth language brokers as activists for social and racial justice in their communities. It would also contextualize youth and their work as part of contemporary youth activism movements, alongside more traditionally recognizable forms of social action, such as protests, rallies, sit-ins, and boycotts.

—*What kinds of futures could such a participatory archive launch?* Many archives become generative points of reinterpretation for both artistic and research projects. This project could inspire further work of many kinds.

—*What harm or damage could be done?* There are some limitations to this idea, as archiving research data and making it accessible could be sensitive, especially with marginalized and vulnerable communities. This approach would not be possible or appropriate for all projects, which ideally would need to incorporate the concept of archive from the beginning as part of an initial institutional and ongoing practice of research consent.

Frameworks for a Participatory Archive of the Ultrapresent

Again, artists can help us think about how we might go about working on such a project with youth. Below, I have drawn upon projects from contemporary artists to develop illustrative elements of the framework and methods for a youth-led participatory archive project.

Archive Framework: Guadalupe Rosales, @veteranas_and_rucas

Distributed, collective memory thrives and circulates across two participatory online platforms created by Boyle Heights-born artist Guadalupe Rosales. Rosales developed and currently hosts the Instagram accounts @veteranas_and_rucas and @map_pointz through which users collectively document and archive experiences of Chicana women who participated in the Los Angeles party crew culture of the 1990s (Rosales 2016). These posts crowdsource and recontextualize musical performances from that era using a combination of sound clips, DJ sets, CD mixes, visual images, scanned concert posters, user photographs, and user comments. Rosales notes the importance of the participatory aspect of this digital archive: “Veteranas and Rucas creates an opportunity to reframe and represent ourselves the way we want to be represented, and it creates a voice many of us can relate to” (Rosales quoted by Estevez 2016). Through building and sharing a distributed collective social memory, participants recuperate and rewrite the historical narrative through a process of what Chicana scholar María Cotera has called a “praxis of memory” inspired by Anzaldúa’s idea of “autohistoria-teoría” (Cotera 2018:301).

By incorporating artifacts of various modalities submitted by users, Rosales creates opportunities for community members to participate and contribute to the creation and maintenance of this distributed collective memory. Even if a user doesn’t know the particular people in a given photograph, the user might be able to connect with, recognize, or comment on the materiality present in the photograph, the site of a certain event, and/or the generality of the musical genre indexed by the song presented as part of the post. In this way, Rosales opens up possibilities for users to (re)connect and collectively generate new meanings from material artifacts shared by the community. Working from Chicana epistemologies of the

archive and collective memory, grounded in the example of Guadalupe Rosales' digital archives, would be a valuable starting point for a student-led archiving effort.

Archive Methods: Cruz Ortiz, *HECHO FARM*

As a part of artist Cruz Ortiz's 2012 exhibition, *HECHO FARM*, curated by Kate Green at the Visual Arts Center at the University Texas at Austin, Ortiz hosted participatory "Work Parties/Print Parties." As free events focused around a lyrical or song-based theme, Work Parties aimed to "prompt participants to collaborate on multimedia projects that involve graphic arts, sculpture, performance, and sound. The results of each party bec[a]me a part of *HECHO FARM*, which constantly gr[ew] throughout the course of the exhibition" (University of Texas at Austin Visual Arts Center 2012). In this way, Ortiz utilized play and joy as a way of catalyzing visitors to work together, socialize, and "make tools to change the world around them" (University of Texas at Austin Visual Arts Center 2012). The interpreters archive could take a similar approach to retrofitting and growing its archive by hosting short, collaborative events like "work parties" that lead up to an exhibition opening for the archive through which participants could see, share, and celebrate the results of their collaborative work together. Importantly, this approach creates a shorter timeline for such a project, and opens different kinds of opportunities for participation. Youth language brokers would be paid as a team of co-curators to develop and host the series of events and curate the exhibition opening.

Archive Methods: Renee Rizeman, *The Safer LA 2020 Story Hotline*

Renee Rizeman is a Los Angeles-based curator, artist and writer working at the intersection of social practice and creative placemaking. As the 2019-2021 Artist in

Residence with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, she recently began a new project called “The Safer LA 2020 Story Hotline” (Figure 7.2). Created in response to the unprecedented conditions of COVID-19, Rizeman organized a free phone line as a way to collect narratives and stories of Los Angeles residents’ experiences during the pandemic. Such a model could easily be used to generate a participatory archive of memories and stories shared by youth language brokers and their families, while also preserving anonymity if needed. In addition, it might be possible to set up the archive so that participants could also call the phone number and select the option to listen to a randomized playback of the archived stories.



The Safer LA 2020 Story Hotline
Your Commute from Pandemic to Protests

As part of my residency for LADOT, I've launched the Safer LA 2020 Story Hotline. We want to know what your commute has been like during Safer at Home Orders, whether you've been out getting supplies during the pandemic, fighting for racial justice and police abolition at Black Lives Matter protests, working the front lines as an essential worker, or even exploring your own backyard in a new way during this uncertain time.

Figure 7.2: A call to participate in the “Safer LA 2020 Story Hotline,” from the website of artist Renee Rizeman.

3. *Moving Beyond*

Though the DRHS interpreters program was rare in that it provided institutionally-sanctioned recognition and support for youth interpreters, the work that youth were doing through the program is not unique. All over the globe, in settings of migration, conflict, and collaboration, young people work as community interpreters and translators. From multilingual Ghanaian youth who mediate for their neighbors and non-profit volunteers (Lopez 2012, 2014), to young people who interpret in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other military situations (M. Baker 2010b; Anderson 2014), to Hausa-speaking medical interpreters in the Bronx (Robbins 2015) and Chinese-Spanish interpreters on construction sites in Nicaragua (Daley 2016), young adults' roles as language and cultural brokers make critical contributions to the communities in which they work and live.

Youth language brokers have a lot to offer our world at this time: the lateral, relational, expanded possibilities of their thinking, the speed at which they collectively put things into action, their commitment to both maintaining and bridging difference, the depth of their empathy and affect, and the resoluteness with which they engage with and reconfigure non-knowing. Youth language brokers, who create new relations of listening and speaking with others on a moment-to-moment basis through their everyday work, are powerful collaborators, thinking partners, visionaries, instigators, and disruptors working to advance linguistic, social, and racial justice. Our job, as scholars, educators, and activists is to listen, to hear, and to respond through collective action in support of the work youth are already doing. As the youth interpreters currently working on the front lines of social and racial justice remind us – those collaboratively translating letters for the Black Lives Matter movement and public health information connected to COVID-19 – youth are already here now, doing the work, leading the way.

APPENDIX 1

Transcription Conventions

The transcription symbols and conventions used in this dissertation are a modified version of the system known as “Discourse Transcription” (Du Bois 2006), based on updated versions of the system found at:

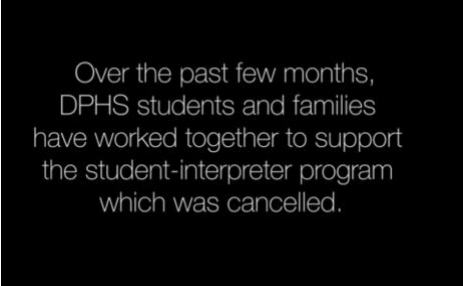
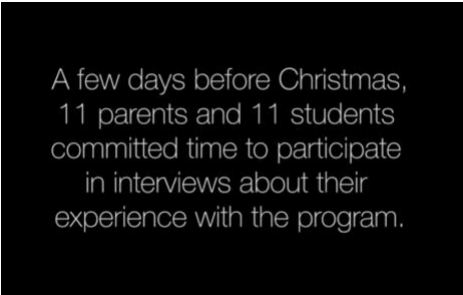

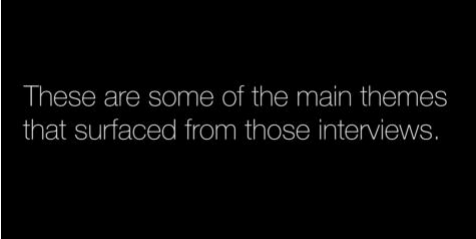
<http://transcription.projects.linguistics.ucsb.edu/representing>.


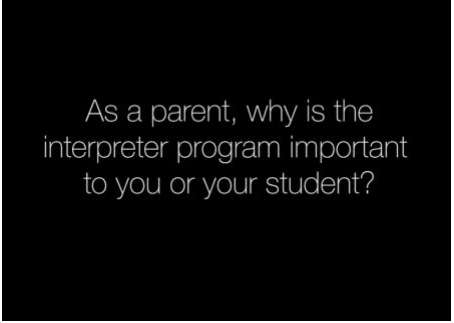


I have listed the most important symbols below.


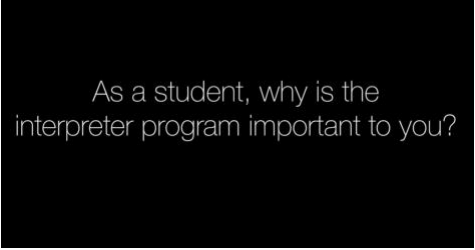


Symbol	Meaning	Comments
?	appeal intonation	canonically: high plateau plus final rise
wor–	truncated/cut-off word	aborting projected word (en dash)
<i>italicized</i>	speaker emphasis	emphasis as marked by speaker
@	laugh	one symbol for each pulse of laughter
@word	laughing words	laugh symbol marks laughter during word
#okay	uncertain hearing	transcribed words are uncertain
<VOX>	voicing begins	voice of another
<VOX/>	voicing ends	voice of another
[]	simultaneous speech	brackets show overlap start and end of overlap
[] ₂	simultaneous speech	disambiguates from other nearby overlaps
(1.2)	pause length	length of pause or silence over one second
(())	gesture	denotes gestures, eye gaze, facial expression



APPENDIX 2

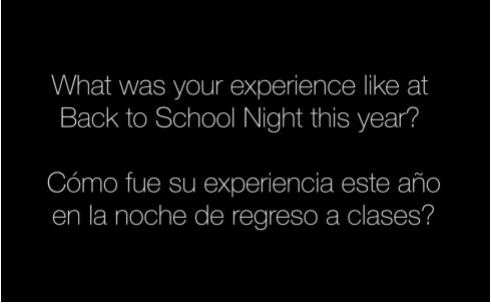


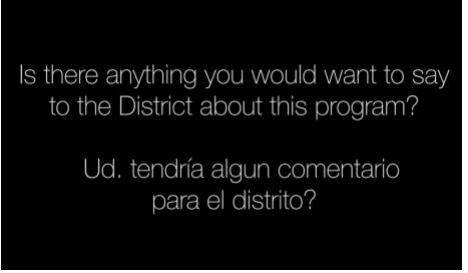
Video for District Meeting


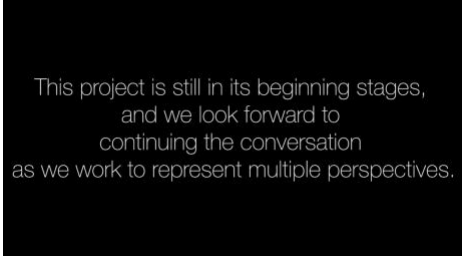
Type of Footage	Text/Spoken Language	Image on Screen
Title Card 1	Over the past few months, DRHS students and families have worked together to support the student interpreter program which was cancelled.	
Title Card 2	A few days before Christmas, 11 parents and 11 students committed time to participate in interviews about their experience with the program.	
B-roll Footage	[B-roll footage begins playing. Alejandra's Dad walks to an empty chair, waits for the interview to begin.]	
Title Card 3	These are some of the main themes that surfaced from those interviews.	

<p>B-roll Footage</p>	<p>[B-roll footage continues. Alejandra’s Dad sits on chair, waiting for Audrey, Michael, and Alejandra to finish setting up equipment.]</p> <p>Alejandra: Getting all professional here.</p> <p>Audrey: @@@. I like that. Did you hit- Can you hit record?</p>	
<p>Title Card 4</p>	<p>As a parent, why is the interpreter program important to you or your student?</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Alejandra’s Dad: Me siento más cómodo, me siento más seguro. Más seguro de mi mismo. Porque estoy escuchando lo que me están diciendo, y estoy sabiendo lo que me están diciendo. En el momento que me hagan alguna pregunta, yo sé que contestar.</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Carolina’s Dad: Para nosotros como padres, es una parte muy fundamental para la ayuda de la comunidad hispana. Ya que por medio de ellos, nos hacen hacer llegar los mensajes de las escuelas, para saber asimismo que es lo que está pasando.</p>	

<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Dante's Dad: Me gusta convivir con ellos también, hacerlos sentir bien, y hacerlos sentir importantes porque pienso que es lo principal, que ellos se sientan, sientan que su trabajo, lo que están haciendo, es importante. Y en realidad sí es <i>muy</i> importante porque nos ayudan demasiado a nosotros.</p>	
<p>Title Card 5</p>	<p>As a student, why is the interpreter program important to you?</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Dante: My favorite part about the program was that it gave us a voice, it gave students a voice, it gave youth a voice, it gave, um, Latino- <i>Latino</i> students a voice at our school.</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Carolina: It made our Latino community as a whole stronger. Because just the language [barrier] itself would prevent parents from going to Back to School Night and meetings. And having that language be provided for them, it made them feel welcome and it made them feel like a part of the school? And it made our school way more diverse and way more enjoyable.</p>	

<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Karla: It's not just about interpreting, it's also a conversation, a special connection with the parent you interpret for. Because afterwards, I remember this one time, a mother of a student there asked me about a certain event that the teacher had mentioned which was, um, Beautify DR, which is where the student goes out and helps campus grow and become cleaner and nicer. And she asked me, like, "What is that? Can you explain more? I didn't really understand what she was saying." And even though the teacher didn't elaborate on that, I knew I could help her out to get to know that better.</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Jaime: Interpreting was, first and foremost, you get the information out, right? But there was also this relationship <i>bond</i> that you would build with the parents. I know for me um, one of <i>my</i> friend's moms, actually I met her during my first Back to School Night. I was paired up with her, and we had this huge conversation about my friend. Like she told me a story, and like, and like, embarrassing stories and stuff like that. And whenever I see her in the street she always says hi, and we always say "what's up" to each other. And I think that's- that's where like the value of the interpreting program comes, that it's more than just the information towards the parents. It makes the parents really feel included. It makes the parents feel appreciated in the school because people are giving up <i>their</i> time, to make them feel welcome.</p>	

<p>Title Card 6</p>	<p>What was your experience like at Back to School Night this year? Cómo fue su experiencia este año en la noche de regreso a clases?</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Maite’s Mom: Esta última vez fue algo <i>tan</i> triste, porque ellos no pudieron interpretar a los padres. Y padres estaban sentados en el salón, y miraban a un lado y miraban al otro, pidiendo ayuda con los ojos. “Quién va a venir a traducirme?” Es una información tan importante y que no estuviera alguien para decirles lo que tenía- Una madre me dijo, “Tengo que regresar en dos horas al trabajo, y no entiendo nada.” Para ella fue básicamente como tiempo perdido.</p>	
<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Carolina’s Dad: Yo corría para un salón de clases, y resulta de que no era el que me tocaba estar, y entonces volví a correr para otro salón, y allí sí era, pero ya se estaba terminando. En todos los ramos, nosotros- <i>yo</i>, personalmente como papá, ese día, yo me perdí de los mensajes que tenía que escuchar, de todas las cosas que tenía que saber, porque no pude obtener la ayuda que necesitaba.</p>	
<p>Title Card 7</p>	<p>Is there anything you would want to say to the District about this program? Ud. tendría algún comentario para el distrito?</p>	

<p>Interview Excerpt</p>	<p>Alejandra's Dad: Si los jóvenes están dispuestos a trabajar, a ir a de intérpretes, a hablar, a ayudar a su comunidad, que les den la oportunidad. Sí? Qué no les corten las alas.</p>	
<p>Title Card 8</p>	<p>This project is still in its beginning stages, and we look forward to continuing the conversation as we work to represent multiple perspectives.</p>	

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