Gendered Identities and Immigrant Language Learning

Julia Menard-Warwick

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my aunt
Bernice Brucker
1927–2002
who introduced me to ESL family literacy at 'Kingston Adult School',
and who helped me find the program and the people at
'Community English Center', and also to my
Whatcom Community College student,
volunteer teaching assistant and friend,
María Guadalupe Hernández,
who first made me aware of the interconnections between power, gender,
identity and language learning that I explore in these pages.

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Any remaining errors are my own.

Preface

The question 'From what grounds do you proceed?' necessarily calls one to identify the spaces from which one anticipates and forecasts revisionings. On the face of things, this might seem like a somewhat banal question, querying a laying bare of theoretical assumptions, mapping out the fences we struggle against and the resistances we are a part of. And given ever-shifting power relations, such questions about the politics of locations often receive simple, binaristic responses. Movements of and around temporalities and human lives defy categorical positionings in most spheres of our lives. In the case of the present volume, issues about feminism, education and political struggles do not proceed simply from stable, common turfs, but are all about crossovers between locales, stepping over and across sometimes frozen academic debates, recognizing contexts of actual discrimination and willful transgressions of local boundaries. While issues of gender and literacy have informed the humanities and social sciences for decades now, and while Applied Linguistics has made that a crucial aspect of its endeavor (Langman, 2004; cf. Norton, 2000; Norton & Pavlenko, 2004; Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko *et al.*, 2004), recognizing the profound diversity that exists within groups of women even as they stand united in solidarity is quite recent, and it is this that Menard-Warwick's volume achieves with sensitivity and quiet reflection.

Bringing together various disciplinary strands, diverse modes of analyses, and different theoretical perspectives, this volume offers a rich and complex canvas of Latin American immigrants in the Californian context. The starting premise for Menard-Warwick is the recognition that women and men's experiences about English language learning as they migrate to cities in California are different, that these differences hinge on several interconnected contexts of inequality (local articulations of patriarchy, sexual harassments and child-care concerns) and that

their active engagements in the communities in which they seek connections (partially through English) permit glimpses into boundaries and constraints. Among other things, such acknowledgments prompt a host of questions: Under what conditions are boundaries visible or not? For what purposes might women create boundaries of their own? Do boundaries create alternate spaces and for whom is this space created? Socially constructed as both concept and reality, boundaries remain volatile and dynamic. They encourage us to address how spaces – classrooms, community centers – become venues in which differences and commonalities between individuals and groups may be maintained, crossed, resisted and reconfigured. For Menard-Warwick, these intersections show up in relation to 'gendering' – dynamic processes by which concepts of 'masculinity' or 'femininity' emerge in relation to a host of local factors made manifest in a variety of accounts, such as working at a car wash, joining the Mexican Coast Guard and overcoming amputations and difficulties with pregnancies (see Butler, 1999; Pennycook, 2004, for performative aspects of language use). As she points out, gender in immigrant communities shows 'tremendous fluidity and dynamism in both practices and ideologies rather than static adherence to or rebellious departure from traditional norms'.

In terms of its positioning, Menard-Warwick finds a space that directly addresses the silencing metaphors of feminist scholarship. As Lazreg (1994) points out, the perceived silence in women is not synonymous with absence of talk and action. Sometimes circumstantial, sometimes a result of social and/or personal conditions and at other times structural or dictated by colonial requirements that speech be expressed in the ruler's tongue, women's negotiations around speech and voicings have needed to be read in terms that reveal their intersubjectivities in all their starkness: their daily activities, rituals they perform, spousal approval they seek and contexts of maintaining small dignities. Negative images of women, especially those struggling to succeed, are so widespread and powerful that they deprive their victims of subjectivity and agency; shifting attention to what women can do and do – in the present case with seeking contexts to learn – allows us to view them differently, with multiple identities (as learners, mothers and spouses; cf. Norton, 2000) and as active agents. It sensitizes researchers and readers to the signifying import of mundane activities being the warehouse that restores individuality to women in the face of threat from overwhelming and homogenizing academic feminist discourses.

Such a move toward valorizing the ordinary and the mundane is crucial. It calls attention to the seriality of women's positionings. As Iris Young points out, a series is

> a collective whose members are unified passively by the relation their actions have to material objects and practico-inert histories … To be said to be part of the same series it is not necessary to identify a set of common attributes that every member has, because their membership is defined not by something they are, but rather by the fact that in their diverse existences and actions they are oriented around the same practico-inter structures. (Young, 1994: 720)

Such a recognition of difference and multiplicity – both across women and within a woman – helps guard against sweeping strokes of academic discourses that have tended to lump feminist work into 'a category' without denying the solidarity among women in general. Furthermore, acknowledging difference (in this case among women) all the way down allows us to deracialize feminist work (Mohanty, 2003), a point that is simultaneously latent and yet thickly salient in Menard-Warwick's volume, and moves it away from old debates about west-based feminism, or post-colonial, non-western feminisms, to everyday struggles of all women as they work to improve their lives and chart more positive horizons for themselves. This countering of the one-sidedness of feminist thought allows 'third world women' and 'women of color' (linguistic turns of phrase ostensibly meant to supplant 'colored women;' racist connotations that need no elaboration) to move feminist discussions to new planes. Most importantly, it allows us to open up serious questions about 'color' being the basis of difference. (Why not eyes or nails or hair? Who comes under the umbrella 'women of color'? And since when was 'white' not a color?)

By bringing in the voices of Latin American women, Menard-Warwick brings to the forefront of the discipline these important concerns. The trajectories in the lives of the women that she focuses on move us all to becoming aware of the quandaries we women find ourselves in; her ushering in of their concerns about literacy in light of issues regarding children, schooling, motherhood, poverty and unstable migrant status makes her own work a transgression of sorts, breaking down a boundary in applied sociolinguistics that has tended to marginalize such voices in research. In this sense, her volume is both timely and important.

Vaidehi Ramanathan, Bonny Norton and Alastair Pennycook

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Chapter 1

The Social Context of Immigrant Language Learning[1]

People learn languages in social, cultural, and political contexts that constrain the linguistic forms they hear and use and also mark the social significance of linguistic and cultural forms in various ways
Watson-Gegeo, 2004: 340

In May 2002, I began an ethnographic study at an English as a Second Language (ESL) family literacy program in a multi-ethnic working-class city in the San Francisco Bay area of California. This program, which I will refer to as the Community English Center (CEC),[2] was the institutional context where I met and got to know the Latin American immigrants who participated in my study, seven women and one man. As Hondagneu-Sotelo explains, contemporary research on gender and immigration has gone beyond an earlier focus on families and communities to examine how 'gender is incorporated into a myriad of daily operations and institutional political and economic structures … (and) organizes a number of immigrant practices, beliefs, and institutions' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003: 9).

In the following interview excerpt, Fabiana, a recent immigrant from Peru, explains the gendered nature of the CEC classes:

> My school and my husband's school are different. […] They don't teach him, for example, about what if a child falls down, what if a child has a wound that swells up. […] They don't teach him that children need to eat vegetables. They don't teach him those kinds of things. Things that are very interesting that they teach us in my school, because we have children.[3] (Interview, 10/18/02)

Fabiana here indicates how her language learning was connected to her life experiences as the mother of a young child. Both she and her

husband were studying English, but she went to morning classes with childcare, while he went to night classes after finishing his day's work in a money-wiring office. In Fabiana's class (but not in her husband's), teachers and students drew upon common discourses[4] of motherhood, shared ways of referring to and evaluating maternal experiences, to 'mark the social significance' of the 'linguistic and cultural forms' taught (Watson-Gegeo, 2004).

If we consider gender as 'a system of social relations and discursive practices' (Piller & Pavlenko, 2001: 17), we can see gendered practices and discourses playing a central role in the immigration experiences of the participants in this research – experiences that to varying degrees included English-language learning. Indeed, language learning itself is perhaps best conceptualized as occurring through participation in speech and literacy events within a (gendered) sociohistorical context – a theoretical perspective that has been referred to as the *language socialization paradigm* (Bayley & Schecter, 2002; Watson-Gegeo, 2004) and as *situated learning* (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).[5] For more discussion of theoretical connections between learning and gendered identities, see Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I explain my study's focus on gender as a structuring factor in immigration and second-language (L2) learning; place participants' language learning in an historical context where 'the globalization of capital … is largely behind the largest migratory wave in U.S. history' (Suárez-Orozco, 2001: 356); describe my own positionality in the site as a Spanish-speaking Anglo-American former ESL teacher turned graduate-student researcher; and then outline my research questions and the structure of the book as a whole.

Gender as a Structuring Factor

Throughout this book, I explore gender in terms of both *practices*, recurrent socially meaningful activities (Scribner, 1997), and *ideologies*, belief systems 'generated in power relations as a dimension of the exercise of power' (Fairclough, 1992: 67) (see endnote 4). To explore the influence of gendered practices and ideologies on the immigration experiences of participants, I turn again to an interview narrative told by Fabiana, who arrived in California with her year-old son in the fall of 2001 to join her husband, Carlos. This narrative constructs her perspective on the social, cultural and political context in which her English-language learning necessarily unfolded (Watson-Gegeo, 2004).

Both Fabiana and Carlos had studied business at a two-year college in Lima, and then worked for 14 years as employees of the import business

owned by Fabiana's father. This family company brought in chemical raw materials, primarily from Asian countries like Taiwan, and then sold them as raw ingredients for the Peruvian pharmaceutical manufacturing industry. When Fabiana began telling the following narrative, she had just explained how this previously successful enterprise had sunk into near bankruptcy in the 1990s, along with many other Peruvian companies. She and her husband found that their upper-middle-class status did not protect them from poverty as the economy worsened. For a long time, they had to live with Fabiana's parents, and according to her, this negatively affected their relationship:

> It was difficult for him because … I would say to him for example, "Hey, help me cook," and he wouldn't help; "Hey, help me wash the dishes," because … it's like it made him feel a little embarrassed (*le daba un poco de vergüenza*) … he didn't feel … like he didn't feel at home, not really, the only thing he wanted was to be in our room, no? There he felt comfortable because he had his things. And afterwards, no? At night he wanted to be with his friends, something that doesn't happen here. (Interview, 11/20/02)

In her narrative, Fabiana focuses on her husband's emotions, not her own, even though she is in a sense complaining about his lack of engagement with her. She quotes herself asking for help with the housework, but his response is no response at all. She emphasizes his feelings of 'vergüenza (shame or embarrassment)' and his sense of not belonging in the house: Carlos is only comfortable in their room with his possessions or when he is with his friends. Immigration was the solution he found to not having a place of his/their own in Peru, especially after getting laid off from his job at Fabiana's father's company.

However, Carlos faced similar problems of dependency once in the United States:

> So then he lived with his sister, so he says it was very difficult for him because he was accustomed in Peru to have his credit cards, to have his driver's license, his salary, and to spend, no? Not exaggeratedly, but at least to give you the little things you like. But to come here and say to someone, "You want a coca cola? You want a soda? OK. I invited you, no? Do you want this?" Or he says, no? that sometimes he had to wait for his sister until five in the afternoon to have lunch with her, no? to eat. His sister says, "if you want I'll leave you some money so you can go out and eat something." "No, better I wait for you." […] Well, like that, and she had to practically support him (*y lo tenía*

> *prácticamente que mantener*), give him his plane tickets and everything, no? And it was like that for a couple months more or less, until he got a job. (Interview, 11/20/02)

In fact, on arrival in the United States, Carlos found that he had even less autonomy than he had in Peru. He lacked the markers of middle-class manhood such as a credit card and driver's license. In her narrative, Fabiana voices the things that he was no longer able to say, the invitations he was no longer able to offer, now that he was completely dependent on his sister for food and shelter. Although his sister's offer of lunch money is humiliating to him, rejecting that offer means sitting and waiting for her to come home and feed him. His dependence is even more total, because she was the one who had bought his air ticket.

After the end of this excerpt, Fabiana went on to explain that his sister was the one who found him his first job in a fried chicken restaurant. Thus, Fabiana's narrative emphasizes her husband's shame and frustration at ending up in a position of dependence. Carlos eventually found an office job with a money-wiring firm, but still considered himself underemployed. In explaining this, Fabiana finally alludes to the fact that they have similar occupational skills, and additionally face similar linguistic and legal challenges:

> He would like another job now, but the problem … well, it's due to papers. He would like, for example, to work in a company where they speak English and where he'd have to speak English. Because we know how to do things, but in Spanish, no? That is, we have experience with a lot of things, for example, filing letters, that's simple, but there are people who don't know how to do it. […] So, uh, but it's because of the language. Me too, for example, if I knew the language, I could work no problem as a secretary. […] Of course, it's easy, it's extremely easy that kind of work. But it's a question of papers (*Pero por cuestión de papeles, pues*). (Interview, 11/20/02)

Despite the commonalities in the professional backgrounds of Fabiana and her husband Carlos, despite what they shared as undocumented immigrant language learners, it is his feelings of frustration, dependency and downward mobility that she focuses on in her narrative – not her own feelings as she spends weekday evenings and afternoons alone with a toddler in a small apartment. She told me that she was studying English so that she would be able to find an office job when her son started school, but she had little need for English in her daily life in California, and her daily attendance at the CEC may well have been as much for

social as linguistic reasons. While gender relations are key, I believe, to understanding Fabiana's experience as a language learner, the effect of gender in her life as a Latin American immigrant woman cannot be seen as restricted to her relationships with her husband and son (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Rather, the gender relations that Fabiana experienced, and that affected her language learning, must be viewed in the larger social and political context in which she was immersed (Watson-Gegeo, 2004). As Villenas and Moreno point out in their study of transnational motherhood, Fabiana's and Carlos's marital difficulties and parenting practices emerged at 'the disjunctures between nationalisms, the states, and the globalized movement of capital and labor' (Villenas & Moreno, 2001: 672). Had the Peruvian economy remained stable during the 1990s, their family life would have developed in different directions, and they may never have needed to learn English.

Peru and the United States

In this section, I explain how I came to understand the larger historical context of Fabiana's narratives of immigration, beyond what she had told me. Canagarajah points to the danger in 'traditional ethnography' of 'treat(ing) the words of informants from the community as sacrosanct'and accepting everything they say as strictly factual. Rather, he argues that it is important to look at the 'larger historical processes and social contradictions' (Canagarajah, 1999: 48) in which a research study is immersed. As Watson-Gegeo explains

> Context refers to the whole set of relationships in which a phenomenon is situated … for an ethnographic description to be adequate, it must cover whole events and behavior in light of both the long-term history of relationships in the immediate setting and the relevant larger historical and institutional processes. (Watson-Gegeo, 1992: 53)

Thus Watson-Gegeo sees context in terms of both community (relationships in the immediate setting) and society (institutional processes), making it clear that both of these domains must be viewed over the long haul, rather than in the 'ethnographic present'.

From the beginning, I conceived this research as critical ethnography and strove to see participants' experiences within a larger context of contemporary US immigration. Also, from very early in the project, I saw participants' life-history narratives as valuable for contextualizing their current experiences of learning. Although gender had not been an initial

focus of my research, it was impossible for me to ignore the fact that these narratives were highly gendered. When in early 2008, I decided to rewrite this study as a book, it became clear to me that gender would necessarily be a central theme, as it had been in the articles I had published about this research in the intervening years (e.g. Menard-Warwick, 2004b, 2006a). However, another thing I had done in the four years since finishing my dissertation was to conduct a study on English-language teaching in contemporary Chile (Menard-Warwick, 2008b, 2008c). Though I had met no Chileans at the CEC, my research in Chile offered me a more detailed picture of the sociohistorical context of the Latin American CEC students' emigration experiences, and specifically the neoliberal policies that had imposed political and economic changes across the region in the1980s and 1990s (Hershberg & Rosen, 2006).

Nowhere in Fabiana's interviews did the word *neoliberalism* appear in my data, and at the time I interviewed her, it did not cross my mind to wonder why all those Peruvian companies had gone bankrupt in the 1990s. I simply accepted her contention that the economy had gone into steep decline, leading to her family's emigration. By 2008, however, I saw that I could no longer consider my 'ethnographic description (of the CEC students) to be adequate' since I had inadvertently ignored many of 'the relevant larger historical and institutional processes' (cf. Canagarajah, 1999; Watson-Gegeo, 1992: 53) that had led my participants' to relocate in California and invest in English-language learning (Norton, 2000).

While my work with Chilean teachers had taught me the word *neoliberalism*, I realized that in order to responsibly describe the context for my CEC study, I needed to embark on a literature review of recent Latin American political and economic history. With some guidance from a librarian, I eventually found myself scrolling through the *Economist Intelligence Unit* database online at my university library. This was an unfamiliar site for an applied linguist, but as I perused year-by-year economic reports written for potential international investors in Peru, I gained new insights into Fabiana's narratives and their historical context (insights reinforced by the other historical reading I was doing). In later chapters, I will fill in some details of how neoliberalism affected the homelands of some of my other participants (Nicaragua and Mexico), but Peru makes a good case study with which to begin.

The immediate roots of neoliberalism's current hegemony in Latin America lie in the 'debt crisis' of the 1980s (Dello Buono & Bell Lara, 2007; Hershberg & Rosen, 2006; McClintock & Vallas, 2003). Like many Latin American governments in the 1970s, the leaders of Peru ran up debts to international institutions, such as the World Bank; in the 1980s, as interest

rates rose, economies sank and hyperinflation raged, Peru like other countries fell behind on its payments (Clayton, 1999; McClintock & Vallas, 2003). In 1990, Alberto Fujimori, newly elected president of Peru, was persuaded to adopt the principles of the newly minted Washington Consensus, a policy package named by US economic analyst John Williamson (Center for International Development, 2003),[6] and subsequently promoted by successive US administrations as well as international economic institutions (Hershberg & Rosen, 2006). The neoliberal principles of this widely adopted 'consensus' include fiscal discipline, a redirection of public expenditure priorities, tax reform, interest rate liberalization, a competitive exchange rate, trade liberalization, privatization, deregulation and property rights (Center for International Development, 2003).

According to McClintock and Vallas (2003), when these reforms were implemented in Peru in the 1990s, the promotion of free trade meant the reduction of tariffs, which led to a fourfold increase in the importation of consumer goods. While Fabiana's family business had been importing chemicals that Peruvian manufacturers could use to make pharmaceutical products, these businesses now for the first time had to compete with the likes of Procter & Gamble and Colgate Palmolive (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2000). As McClintock and Vallas state, it seemed clear to Peruvians that the bankruptcies of local firms had been triggered by the increased importation of consumer goods. However, another contributing factor was interest rate 'liberalization', which had driven annual rates to as much as 30%, making it impossible for Peruvian industries to borrow the money to modernize and better compete internationally (Economist Intelligence Unit, 1999). By 2000, the year that Fabiana's husband emigrated, the Economist Intelligence Unit notes that underemployment had risen to 80%. In their advice to foreign companies wanting to do business in Peru, they write

> The supply of professionals and executives is abundant. Middle-management and top-echelon staff can be found through newspaper advertising, … but such advertisements usually produce a flood of applicants. (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2000: 32)

Analyzing such trends across Latin America, Hershberg and Rosen note that neoliberal reforms during the 1990s tended to 'redistribute income upward, squeeze the living standards of those who could least afford it, and shred whatever was left of a social compact' (Hershberg & Rosen, 2006: 8). The result is what these authors call a 'growing regime of labor flexibility' in which, ideologically, 'every individual is expected to be responsible for his or her own destiny and to anticipate nothing from

society as a whole' (Hershberg & Rosen, 2006: 10). As secure employment became a thing of the past, more and more Latin Americans, like Fabiana and Carlos, took responsibility for their own destinies and headed north.

California and the Politics of Immigration

As McClintock and Vallas (2003) explain, it was not only economic dislocation, but also political violence in many parts of Latin America, especially Central America in the 1980s, that accelerated immigration to the United States (see Chapters 3 and 4). Once in the United States, they add, Latin American individuals have tended to pursue family reunification by legal means if possible or through undocumented immigration if necessary, as when Carlos's sister paid for his plane ticket so he could join her in the Bay Area. In March of 2002, shortly before I started my research, the US Census found that of the nearly 17 million foreign-born Latin Americans in the United States, 51% had arrived since 1990. Hellman's description of the current wave of immigrants reflects the background and immigration experience of Fabiana and Carlos (and most of my other participants):

> The migratory flows include more women than in the past … The migrant pool today is made up of people with higher levels of literacy, more urban experience, more skills, more extensive personal networks … (and) more knowledge of the societies into which they hope to move. Ironically, for all the personal resources that these migrants bring with them, the overwhelming majority remain in minimum-wage, low-skilled, non-unionized sectors of the economy. (Hellman, 2006: 215)

According to US 2000 Census figures, California had the highest percentage of any state of foreign-born residents (26%) and of residents who spoke a language other than English at home (nearly 40%). Moreover, California became a 'majority minority' state in the year 2000, when the state's 'white, non-Hispanic' population dipped below 50% (Baldassare, 2000). The 2000 Census figures list the state's 'Hispanic'[7] population at 32.4% of the total. Among the over 6 million children in California public K-12 schools, 'Hispanic' was the largest ethnic group, at 44.2% of all students in the 2000–2001 school year (Educational Demographics Office, 2001). Moreover, 'Hispanic' students made up an actual majority of nearly 1 million California adult school students, at 51.2% of the total in 2000–2001 (CASAS, 2002). Although it is hard to estimate the population of undocumented residents, a Kaiser Family Foundation report (Schur

et al., 1999) stated that approximately 2 million undocumented immigrants lived in California, the majority of whom were from Mexico. Most immigrants worked at comparatively low-paying jobs in service industries, agriculture, manufacturing and construction, many in the informal sector (Teran *et al.*, 2002).

Few discussions of immigration in California attempt to come to terms with the US-influenced political and economic factors that compel Latin American emigration, and many Californians have found statistics on Latino immigration alarming. In one striking example, an Internet commentator (Francis, 2001) drew on W.B. Yeats' poem, 'The Second Coming' (1920), to equate Latino immigration with the Beast of the Apocalypse. Writing in opposition to favorable remarks on California's demographic shift by a Latino sociologist, Francis writes, 'Well, at least *we* (that is the real "we", the old American people as opposed to the new one lurching toward Los Angeles to be born) know whose side he's on'.[8] Scholar Steven Camarota in the same year wrote more soberly, backing his anti-immigration views with statistics on high poverty and low educational attainment rates among Latinos. He argues that 'policy makers need to consider policies designed to lower the level of unskilled immigration, both legal and illegal' (Camarota, 2001: 10) and that 'a greater effort must be made to improve public education in areas of heavy immigrant settlement to ensure that the lower education level of Mexican immigrants does not persist through the generations … A significant investment in their future would clearly be in the best interests of the country' (Camarota, 2001: 8). Although Camarota avoided inflammatory rhetoric, he clearly saw Latino immigrants as 'them', not 'us'. Moreover, he saw education as the best way to make 'them' more like 'us'. Since I carried out my research, such anti-immigrant sentiment has led to a backlash against immigrants in many communities – but also to a significant immigrant rights movement, which most notably took to the streets in 2006 to demand a path to legalization (Ferre *et al.*, 2006).

While these more recent events are outside the scope of my research, anti-immigrant concerns have given rise over the last two decades to a series of voter initiatives in California, from the 'English-only' proposition in 1986, to Proposition 187 in 1994 that sought to restrict state health and education services for 'illegal aliens', to Proposition 209 that banned affirmative action, to the anti-bilingual education Proposition 227. Billed as 'English for the Children', the initiative was passed by California voters on June 2, 1998, 61–39% (One Nation, 1998). The initiative stated that language minority children should be given one year of intensive English instruction and then mainstreamed into 'regular' classes. In addition,

Proposition 227 appropriated $50 million per year for 10 years to fund ESL family literacy classes (California Voter Guide, 1998). Since passage of the initiative, this funding has been used to create the Community Based English Tutoring (CBET) program, which funded the classes at the CEC where I met Fabiana in May 2002.

Kingston, California

The CEC was located in the central part of Kingston (pseudonym), a small city on San Francisco Bay. According to the Kingston Chamber of Commerce and the Kingston Museum of History, Ohlone Indians inhabited this corner of the bay for 5000 years before it became a Mexican land grant in the 1820s. Both of these sources are hazy about what happened to the Kingston area during the second half of the 19th century, but it is clear that most of the land passed out of Mexican hands after California became a U.S. state in 1850. A small industrial city in the early 20th century, Kingston became a center of shipbuilding during World War II. After the war, most of the shipyards shut down and the city entered upon what the Chamber of Commerce euphemistically termed a period of 'readjustment', from which it has never recovered.

At the time of my research (2002–2003), Kingston had an unemployment rate of over 10%; the county in which it is located had experienced a *doubling* of unemployment since the economic downturn began in 2001 (California Employment Development Department, 2003). Most of Kingston lies between two major freeways, with upscale (mostly white) neighborhoods on the far side of both freeways, at the edge of the Bay and up into the hills. The CEC could be found about halfway between the two freeways, in a neighborhood that also included the main city library, police department, city hall, and courthouse.

US Census data for the year 2000 showed that the Latino population in Kingston had grown significantly since 1990. In the west-central neighborhood in which the CEC was located, Latinos were 38% of the population in 1990 and constituted 62% in 2000, with most of the remaining residents African-American. The somewhat more prosperous east-central neighborhood where some participants lived was more mixed. Latinos had increased from 16% to 22% since 1990, with white residents constituting 36%, African-American residents 21% and Asian residents 17% of the population in the 2000 Census. My research suggested that this growth in the Latino population in Kingston, while echoing growth in the entire state of California, was at least partly due to comparatively low home prices in Kingston. Six of my eight focal participants had lived in San Francisco

immediately before moving to Kingston in the 1990s or 2000s, and five of those eight moved to Kingston when they themselves or a family member purchased a home there. The spring 2003 median price of a home in Kingston was $195,000, while in San Francisco it was $526,400 (Bizjournals.com, 2003). In keeping with the economic conditions in central Kingston, the two elementary schools that the children of study participants attended were officially designated as 'low performing' on the local school district website in spring 2003.

Community English Center

The English classes for parents at the CEC could be seen as a policy response to the low levels of academic achievement that have been documented in the under-resourced school districts that serve immigrant children in California. In recognition of the ways that reading and writing practices are shared between generations, family literacy programs have become increasingly widespread in adult basic education, including ESL. By teaching parents, most programs hope to facilitate the literacy development of their children. Family literacy programs vary widely in philosophy and design, but it was the CEC's ability to respond to immigrant women's language learning needs as parents that made it popular with adult Latina English learners.

The church in central Kingston where the CEC was located was an old 'mission-style' building with white walls and a red-tile roof – and a big iron grating over the entrance to the central courtyard, which one of the teachers explained was to keep people from 'smoking crack' in there at night (Interview, 1/29/03). The grating was always opened by the time I arrived, around 8:30 am. The courtyard was paved, with benches and a large, beautiful magnolia tree. As I entered the courtyard, the babysitting room was on my right, and I often said hello to the baby-sitters on my way past. The intermediate classroom was off the courtyard, next to the babysitting area, while the beginning classroom was upstairs, across from the CEC office. Class sizes varied from a low of four at times in the summer to nearly 40 at one point in the fall.

The ESL program ran from Monday to Friday, year round, but with breaks at the beginning and end of summer, over the winter holidays, and during the Kingston school district spring break. Class started at 8:30 am, but many students arrived late because they had to drop children at elementary schools before coming to class. There was always a 20-min break from about 10:20 to 10:40, during which time mothers of children in the babysitting room gave the sitters a rest. After the break, class resumed

again till 11:45. However, many mothers had to leave in time to pick up kindergarten children at 11:30.

At the time I was doing my research, most students were Spanish-speaking. Most were from Mexico, but there were significant numbers from Central and South America, along with a few from other parts of the world.[9] A large majority of students were female, with rarely more than three or four men in class at any one time. Based on my observations as well as on the brief survey I gave one day in early fall, typical students in both classes were Latinas under 40 with young children and less than a high school education, not currently working outside the home, but often with some previous work experience. The most common jobs held both here and in their homelands were food service and housecleaning. Intermediate students tended to be older and to have been in the United States for longer, but nearly half the beginning students had been in the United States for more than three years.

CEC Teachers

Both teachers were Anglo-American, married, the mothers of grown children, and held certificates in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Kerrie, the intermediate class teacher, had taught at the CEC since 1989, when most of the students were Southeast Asian. Her work trajectory in adult ESL indexes the feminized nature of the profession. Initially, she became certified in TESL before accompanying her husband to Japan for a year in the 1980s, so that she would have 'something to do' there. Surprised at how much she enjoyed English teaching, she decided to continue in the field on returning to the United States, especially because the part-time schedules typical of ESL were convenient for her as the mother of young children.

Describing her students as 'good-natured' and 'interested in learning', Kerrie said that her goal for them was that

> They acquire the English that they want for their own needs, and that they feel confident enough to either move up to [the local college] for more formal instruction. Or to use the English that they get here to find work, or to help in their family situation. (Interview, 1/29/03)

She added that a good class for her was one in which, 'I don't talk hardly at all and they do most of the communication with each other'. Indeed, many students told me that one thing they appreciated about Kerrie's class was how much they did get to talk. Most class activities connected to practical themes, such as employment, housing, schooling and

so on. Kerrie encouraged classmates to help each other. She made it clear that she preferred them to speak English at all times, but did not prohibit them from using their native languages. Kerrie had studied a little French and German but spoke no Spanish.

Jean said she got into ESL initially because a friend of hers needed a substitute for the class she was teaching. She spoke a little Spanish, and sometimes used it for communication with students outside class. Jean had taught beginning ESL at the CEC for 'five or six years'. Describing her students as 'hard-working, upwardly-mobile immigrants', Jean said that her 'biggest goal' for them was 'that they be able to use English in the situations they find themselves, and be comfortable doing it' (Interview, 2/6/03). She often had students work in pairs or small groups, and encouraged them to help each other, preferring them to assist their classmates in English rather than their native languages.

In my interviews with them, both Kerrie and Jean said they tried to get ideas from their students of what they would like to study, and of the kinds of activities they preferred. For the most part, they were free to make curricular decisions. Kerrie said that one thing she liked about working at the CEC is that 'the school district leaves us alone … we have resources here that we can implement and use pretty much as we want' (Interview, 1/29/03). However, through the adult school, the CEC was tied into larger state and bureaucratic systems, which provided resources but also imposed constraints through mandates for testing and documentation.

CEC in State and Federal Context

The ESL classes offered at the CEC were funded through the California office of adult education. Required by the federal Adult Education and Literacy Act of 1998 to implement a state-wide assessment and reporting system (Van Duzer, 2002), California instituted mandatory Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) testing in adult education. CASAS provides multiple-choice tests on 'survival ESL' topics. As described by Kerrie,

> CASAS is a standardized test, so it goes throughout the state. It's the same test regardless of what adult school you go to, regardless of the curriculum that's being used. It's fill in the bubbles, there's no speaking, there's no oral section, there's no writing section, there's no listening section. It's reading and filling in bubbles. […] It's a ridiculous test, and I TOTALLY HATE it ((laughs)). […] It really has nothing to

> do with the curriculum or the style of teaching that we use here. (Interview, 1/29/03)

Describing the conflict between local practices and standardized assessment from the opposite point of view, a US Department of Education report states

> The diversity of goals of adult learners, who mostly participate on a voluntary basis, complicates efforts to ensure program accountability and to implement more rigorous evaluation strategies … Rather than following a formal curriculum package, programs typically use a variety of instructional materials … Often these materials are not standardized across, or even within, sites of a single program. (Kutner *et al.*, 1996: 1)

This report advocated standardizing competencies to be taught and then tying program assessment to those same competencies. CASAS invited programs (and state education offices) to use their competencies for this purpose. However, in California, the only standardization that had been implemented at the time of the research was in testing and reporting requirements. While complying with the 1998 Adult Education and Literacy Act, the state was still a long way from standardizing adult education.

The CBET program, funded by the 1998 California voter initiative that severely restricted bilingual education, actually complicated any push toward standardization. Family literacy is not a competency area on the CASAS list, and it does not come with its own standardized test. Moreover, it targets a particular group of adult learners (parents, mostly mothers), rather than being applicable across the field of adult education. However, family literacy has been a powerful movement in the field, at times drawing strength from the kinds of beliefs expressed above by anti-immigration researcher Camarota (2001): education is the way to alleviate societal problems caused by culturally different low-income families (for a review of these trends, see Auerbach, 1995). Specifically, CBET was funded to provide 'adult English language instruction to parents or other members of the community who pledge to provide personal English language tutoring to California school children with limited English proficiency' (California Voter Guide, 1998). This tutoring was meant to facilitate the transition to English-only schools, but was not much emphasized at the CEC. Both CEC teachers said in their interviews that they 'loved' CBET, especially because the program provided funding for childcare, which had never been available to California adult ESL programs before. As

Kerrie commented, 'without the baby-sitting our classes would really be small. […] So that's been a wonderful benefit' (Interview, 1/29/03). Teachers and students also appreciated the monthly CBET book giveaways.

Thus, the CEC classes and the adult learners within them 'turn(ed) the actual order of things to their own ends' (de Certeau, 1984: 26). These classes existed within the interstices of a bureaucratic system, which would have preferred them to become more standardized, but which so far was not exerting great pressure. They were funded because of societal concern about intergenerational cycles of school failure and poverty in linguistic minority families. However, the students in the classes did not think of themselves in this way. Though their social-class backgrounds and levels of education in their countries of origin varied, most were currently supported by service sector, manufacturing or construction jobs. They spoke Spanish at home with their families, and intended to continue doing so, but expected their children to learn English and succeed in school. Aware of economic decline in California and of discrimination against immigrants, at the same time, as Jean said, 'they still ha(d) a lot of hope […] and energy' (Interview, 2/6/03). As I got to know the immigrants who participated in my research, I found it hard to reconcile their productive lives with the negative pictures of Latino immigration presented by anti-immigrant advocates such as Camarota (2001). While I will give more details about my focal participants in subsequent chapters, basic demographic information about them is available in Appendix A.

Positioning the researcher

It is important to remember that the researcher herself is necessarily a focal participant in her own research. As an ethnographer, I learned about connections between gender and second-language learning through discursive practices, such as classroom observations and interviews, conducted with other participants (teachers and students) at my research site, the CEC. Since observations, interviews – and their interpretations – are widely recognized in qualitative research as 'socially situated in the worlds of the observer' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 12), I explain in this section how my own perspective on family literacy developed both through my work in the field and my reading of the literature.

Of Anglo-American descent, born in California, I had grown up in a small town in Canada, then returned to the United States as a young adult in the early 1980s. I first became interested in ESL teaching around that time, while volunteering with Southeast Asian refugees in Seattle. Over

the next few years, my husband and I additionally got involved with the sanctuary movement, a coalition of church groups organized to support Central American refugees. Between taking classes at the university and spending much of my free time with Guatemalans and Salvadorans, I developed fairly fluent Spanish within a year or two, while gaining a strong interest in Latin American politics. In 1985, my husband and I took an extended bus trip through Mexico and Central America, which included six scary but inspiring weeks volunteering for a human rights group in Guatemala City. In 1988, after earning a Masters degree in teaching ESL at the University of Washington, I took a job at the Universidad Centroamericana in Managua, Nicaragua. My students, mostly women, represented a broad spectrum of political views and were extremely outspoken. We spent the year debating Nicaraguan politics in English, with special attention to gender relations (Menard-Warwick & Menard-Warwick, 1989). It was the most exciting teaching I have ever done.

Returning to Washington state, I was immediately hired to teach ESL at a small community college, where I remained for the next 10 years. My husband and I settled down, bought a house and had two children. Teaching ESL to adult immigrants, while at the same time caring for my own children, I became concerned about the special language learning needs of immigrant parents. I could see the challenges that my adult students faced in maintaining their family's home language and culture while at the same time supporting their children's educational attainment in US society. I thus began looking for guidance to the literature on family literacy (e.g. Mulhern *et al.*, 1994). However, as I read this literature, I found some of it rather disturbing. Nearly all of it recommended focusing on the strengths of parents rather than on what was wrong with them. However, a lot of it was contradictory. I still have an old newsletter article that I read at that time entitled 'Family Literacy – the "Strengths Model"'(Potts, 1991). According to this article, 'the strengths model (is) established on the premise that all families bring to the learning situation abilities, positive attributes, and traits that can nourish and enhance the learning process' (Potts, 1991: 1). Also according to this same article, 'most of these pre-schoolers (in family literacy programs) have suffered developmental blows, perhaps from the lack of stimulation and early encouragement' (Potts, 1991: 2). Even though the immigrant parents in my classes might be having difficulty helping their sons and daughters with English-language homework, I had no reason to believe that these children were 'suffer(ing) developmental blows' as a consequence.

The books and articles I read over the next few years clarified the field somewhat, but raised new challenges. Most of these were reports on

specific programs, seen by the authors as particularly innovative, positive and focused on family strengths (e.g. Auerbach, 1989, 1992; Delgado-Gaitán, 1996; Taylor, 1997). In a review article, Auerbach (1995) contrasted 'intervention' programs that claimed to prevent a wide range of societal problems by 'breaking the cycle of illiteracy' in 'undereducated families' with alternate approaches focused on multiple literacies and social change, often influenced by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (e.g. 1999). Although Auerbach wrote as though interventionist and social-change-oriented approaches were necessarily distinct from each other, a follow-up study of 100 randomly selected programs found in most cases a contradictory combination of 'strengths' and 'deficit' practices and discourses within the very same programs (Elish-Piper, 2000). For example, one program's mission statement claimed to 'empower families to take control of their lives and learning' (Elish-Piper, 2000: 189). However, a teacher in that program told the researcher, 'If they don't seem to be trying hard to do the things we tell them to do, we encourage them to drop out' (Elish-Piper, 2000: 189). Indeed, in a 1996 ethnography of 10 Mexican immigrant families, Valdés rejected the family literacy movement entirely, seeing it as an attempt to foist mainstream values on culturally different communities. She wrote that all programs 'directed at families … are designed to change families' (Valdés, 1996: 197) and thus risk 'seriously damag(ing) the delicate balance that immigrant families maintain' (Valdés, 1996: 200).

All of this controversy was on my mind as I began working on my doctorate in 1999 at the University of California Berkeley, and especially when I began conducting research in CBET classes, beginning with a pilot study in the spring of 2000 at a CBET class held at a Kingston elementary school (Menard-Warwick, 2002), and taught by my aunt, Bernice Brucker. In spring 2001, I began looking for a site for my dissertation research. My aunt was struggling with cancer and no longer teaching,[10] but she helped me make contact with adult ESL teachers and administrators in several San Francisco Bay Area school districts. From the beginning, I knew I wanted to work with Latinas, because I thought it would be easier to build rapport with women than with men, and because Spanish is the only language besides English in which I am proficient. Between May and July of 2001, I visited a total of seven classes in three programs in Kingston, and eight other classes in four adult school programs in three other urban school districts. During these 2001 site visits, I was particularly interested in the CEC, which I described in my dissertation proposal (written fall 2001) as follows:

> Of these sites (in Kingston), I was most impressed by the Community English Center, which has held year-round classes at a church in

> Central Kingston since the 1970s. One of the teachers has worked there since 1989. A majority of students at this site are Latina, but the classes are somewhat mixed in both ethnicity and gender. During my preliminary observations, students seemed to be building community across ethnic/linguistic barriers, which in my experience tends to create a favorable environment for language learning.

Perhaps most of all, I was interested in the CEC because the students and teachers there seemed to respect each other and have a good time together, which was not true of all the sites I visited. I felt this was a community that I would enjoy being part of, where it would be easy to build rapport. Like my aunt's class that I had observed for my pilot study, the CEC was funded by CBET, and thus financially rooted in a deficit model that saw continued use of the Spanish language in education as 'an educational dead-end' contributing to 'low test scores' and 'high drop-out rates' among Latino children (California Voter Guide, 1998). However, the adult learners that I observed at these CBET programs, mostly Latina immigrant mothers of young children, showed no evidence of low self-esteem or limited expectations. Moreover, they seemed committed to bilingualism for themselves and their families. The CEC program was not highly innovative, not incorporating much of a multiple literacies or social change perspective (Auerbach, 1995). Nevertheless, it appeared to be meeting many immigrant women's needs and goals, a first impression that was confirmed over the seven months I spent at the CEC, judging by the program's ability to attract and retain this population of students.

I did not make arrangements to conduct research at the CEC until April 2002, when I was almost ready to begin. At that time, I met with the high-beginning and intermediate CEC teachers, Jean and Kerrie, respectively, to talk with them about my research. In the meeting, I told them that I was particularly interested in second-language literacy. I said that I would like to begin volunteering in the classes in the spring and summer, and then begin more formal research activities in the fall. Both teachers agreed to this although Jean asked me not to use Spanish with students during class time. I told her that I had taught adult ESL for years to students with whom I had no common language, and did not anticipate difficulties in communicating in English. However, as I shall explain below, this stipulation of Jean's came back to haunt me later in the course of research, and was a major reason why I decided to leave the site in December 2002. I began volunteering one day per week in each class in May 2002.

I spent 180 h as a participant-observer volunteer classroom assistant in CEC classes between May and December of 2002. I also observed several

classes at another adult school to which one of my focal students (Brenda) had transferred. Although at times I experienced conflicts between my dual roles as researcher and teaching assistant, in general, the mostly Latina CEC students seemed to welcome my presence as a Spanish-speaking Anglo-American former ESL teacher who could answer linguistic and cultural questions in their own language. After each class session, I wrote ethnographic field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), giving a detailed rendition of what had happened, and making every effort to take my own presence into account. Chapter 5 is based on my CEC observations and field notes.

The teachers and students at the CEC knew that I had taught ESL in the past and that I was now a graduate student at University of California Berkeley. When students asked why I was there, I explained that I was working on my dissertation (*tesis*) for a doctorate in education (*doctorado en educación*). I was happy to learn early on that the practice of writing theses is ubiquitous in Latin American higher education, required for the completion of any program down to the level of the *carrera técnica* (the equivalent of a US junior college degree). While I did not meet anyone who had actually written a *tesis*, I met some who had tried (including Fabiana), and many who had friends or family members who had suffered through the process. I found that my status as a *tesis* writer garnered me instant sympathy. If students wanted more details of my research, I told them I was interested in how people learn to read and write in a second language, and how what happened *outside* the classroom affected what happened *inside* the classroom. These explanations were usually met with nods and smiles rather than further questions. After several months of participant-observation, I selected eight focal students for interviews. I made my selection based partly on the rapport I had developed with particular individuals, and partly in order to represent the demographic range of students at the CEC. Once I had decided whom I would I like to interview, I asked each individual if I could observe her in class and interview her in her home. Everyone I asked agreed without hesitation (in Chapters 3, 4 and 6, I write more about the interviews I conducted).

As much as possible, I became an active member of both classroom communities at the CEC through volunteering. I tutored students individually, led small groups, answered questions on a variety of grammatical and cultural topics, and (contrary to my agreement with Jean) occasionally translated when students were confused. The following passage from my participant-observation journal gives a flavor of what this was like:

> Jean wrote scrambled (review) sentences (on the board), but handwrote a fill-in-the-blanks version for Ana María (an older student

> without much formal schooling). Ana María had trouble with "This week we _____ three _____ tales." She didn't remember what "tales" was. I went and borrowed Fabiana's copy of the folk tales book which was sitting on her desk and showed Ana María, but she finally said "Dígame en español. (*Tell me in Spanish*)." So I explained what was going on in Spanish. She was having trouble with the first blank, so I pointed to the book and said "¿Qué hacemos con éste? (*What do we do with this?*)" Ana María said "leer," and I said "in English?" and she was able to say and write "read". (Field notes, 7/12/02)[11]

It is important to note that this issue of whether or not to use the students' native language in ESL instruction is controversial in the field, and that I will not attempt to resolve this issue definitively within this book. All the adult ESL teachers that I met in Kingston were convinced that an English-only approach is optimal for classroom-language acquisition. Most barely tolerated their students' classroom use of the native language, repeatedly asking students to use English with each other in classroom activities. Likewise, my own teacher training in the 1980s took for granted the value of English-only in ESL. However, during the years I taught, I came to see the social and pedagogical advantages of a bilingual approach to ESL teaching in many circumstances, as advocated by Auerbach (1993). This was a philosophical difference that I never attempted to address during my months at the CEC because of my status as a volunteer.

My most in-depth conversations with students took place during the 20-min break time in the 3-h class. The first weeks I was at the CEC, I felt awkward about starting or entering conversations with students. However, even during my first week, some students began telling me parts of their life story in Spanish without my asking. In early field notes, I described participating in both one-on-one and group conversations about illness, religion, food, pets, grammar and children, among other topics. In the following conversation, a week after I arrived, I was talking in the courtyard with Raquel, a Nicaraguan woman who became one of my focal students, and Emiliana, an older Mexican woman:

> Emiliana mentioned someone's husband who always goes to the church in the evening to pray the rosary, leaving his wife at home. We all agreed that he was an unusual man, and Raquel was enthusiastic about the fact that he was praying, not drinking … Raquel asked us what churches we went to. We both said "católica (*Catholic*)," and Raquel looked slightly embarrassed and said that she was "bautista (*Baptist*)" but she respected all religions, and that someday they would

> all be one. Emiliana said they used to all be one before some churches broke away from the Catholic church, and Raquel brought up Juan Bautista (*John the Baptist*). It could have gotten just slightly sticky, but a child ran by with a large sippy cup in hand, fell lengthwise on the ground, dropped the sippy cup, … and then burst into tears. Raquel restored the sippy cup to the child, and the conversation went in a different direction: pets. We talked about snakes, because there was a large rubber snake lying in front of us … I said people here liked to keep them in their homes, and the women looked like what could you expect in this crazy country. (Field notes, 5/12/02)

As I participated in such conversations, it rapidly became clear that my ability and willingness to speak Spanish was crucial to developing rapport with the students, despite my Anglo background and appearance, and my grammatical/lexical lapses. Although there was a fair amount of turnover in the student body and I certainly did not get to know everyone, by the middle of summer I was no longer worried about how or with whom I was going to start conversations during breaktime. I found myself comfortably joining in with whatever was happening. Although participation as a volunteer meant that I was affecting the learning that took place in the classroom, I felt that the increased rapport I developed with learners was worth the corresponding loss of distance and 'objectivity'.

However, because I was so focused on developing rapport with students (whom I might want to interview), I tended to neglect my relationship with the teachers. They knew that I had also taught adult ESL for a long time, so I took for granted that they would accept me as a colleague. During the break times when I was talking to students, they were usually in their office, working on lesson plans. Our conversations were brief and logistical, focused on class activities. Beginning in mid-summer, and continuing into the fall, we had occasional short meetings to talk about my research activities. Jean sometimes asked for my feedback when she felt an activity had not gone well, and at those times I would try to make some kind of helpful suggestion for how an activity could be modified. These constructive though brief exchanges continued into the fall. However, when both teachers asked me not to attend during the (traditionally chaotic) first week of fall semester, I realized they had put me into the category of 'one more thing to worry about' rather than the category I aspired to: 'helpful ESL colleague'.

As fall wore on, I began to feel more and more like a guest who had overstayed her welcome. Once in November when a student was talking to me in class, Kerrie came by and said we were being 'disruptive'

(Field notes, 11/26/02). I apologized, feeling like a junior high student. Meanwhile, Jean was becoming more insistent that I not use Spanish with the students, and that I ask them to rephrase their questions to me in English. By mid-December, I was beginning to think that maybe it was time to leave the CEC:

> Pilar (intermediate student) came up from downstairs, with her recently arrived sister-in-law Soledad. She introduced her to Jean, and then to me she said, "She only been here two weeks. She no understand nothing. Maybe you can help her a little bit." I nodded and said, "Maybe," feeling bad because it was clear that she wanted me to translate for her sister-in-law. Understanding the same thing, Jean said, "In English, Julia, in English". (Field notes, 12/12/02)

After talking it over with fellow graduate students as well as members of my dissertation committee, I decided that the holiday party on December 20 would be my last day of classroom volunteering or observation, but that I would finish life-history interviews after the winter break.

In any case, during most of my time at the CEC, I felt more comfortable with the adult students than with their instructors. Whereas the teachers saw me primarily as a graduate student, many of the learners appeared to view me as one more Anglo teacher who (surprisingly) was willing and able to communicate in Spanish. Students often addressed me as 'maestra (teacher)'. Even learners who recognized that my main reason for being in the classes was research did not seem to view this as problematic, especially because I used my Spanish skills in ways that they considered helpful. I noted the expression of this opinion in the following field note excerpt (11/12/02):

> Soon after I got there Araceli came in with a friend who was a new student (named Nidia) … I heard Araceli explaining to her who I was. Nidia asked, "Es tutor? (*Is she a tutor?*)" And Araceli explained no, that I was from the university: "está haciendo una investigación, pero habla bien el español, y nos ayuda mucho (*she is doing a research study, but she speaks Spanish well, and she helps us a lot*)." She noticed me listening, and said to me, "¿verdad? (*right?*)." I nodded.

Seeing me in this way, students actively sought my help in Spanish with English, asking me questions that they did not feel able to ask their classroom teachers. Frequently, they brought in documents in English that they wanted me to help them interpret, from parking tickets to job applications.

Research Questions and Structure of the Book

It was through my participation in such discursive practices with the CEC students that my own learning as a researcher took place – in conjunction with my reading of the literature and conversations with fellow graduate students and professors. This book grows not only out of personal interactions with Latin American immigrants in Kingston, California in 2002–2003 – but also out of the recent attention in applied linguistics to immigrant women's agency (Norton, 2000), and to how the restructuring of gendered identities might intersect with language learning (Pavlenko *et al.*, 2001). From my own situated intersection of participation and theory, this book explores the gendered participation of Latin American immigrant adults in both the English-language classroom and in the education of their children.

Gendered practices and ideologies in immigrant communities have often been viewed as constraints to immigrant women's second-language learning and educational engagement (e.g. Goldstein, 1997; Rockhill, 1993), while language learning by male immigrants has remained comparatively unproblematized. At the same time, immigrant mothers have been portrayed as bearers of tradition: caring parents who are unable to operationalize their support for their children's education in a new environment (Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991; Valdés, 1996). Nevertheless, studies that have focused directly on gender in immigrant communities have found tremendous fluidity and dynamism in both practices and ideologies rather than static adherence to or rebellious departure from traditional norms (e.g. Gordon, 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Thus, my central concern in conducting research at the CEC was to understand adult learners' varied perspectives on their educational and language learning experiences and to examine in what ways ESL classroom activities were congruent with their multiple identities and goals. To this end, I took an emic approach to my analysis, focusing on 'the way (participants) understand what they are doing' (Watson-Gegeo, 1988: 576).

It is important to emphasize that neither my written accounts of observed events nor participants' audiotaped comments and narratives can be considered direct representations of 'real experience'. Rather, they are *interpretations* of experience, shaped by my positionality in the setting, as well as the positionality of my participants. Because my participants tended to see me as an English teacher, the insights they shared with me and the narratives they told me could be viewed as addressed to the ESL profession. If telling narratives is an act of self-presentation, then the selves in these narratives are the selves that these Latino/a immigrant students

chose to present to an Anglo educator (Ochs & Capps, 1996). I do not claim to speak *for* or even *with* my research participants (Alcoff, cited in Dutro, 2002–2003), but I am trying to pass their messages along. Although the responsibility for selecting and interpreting the data in this book is mine, I have tried to interpret participants' words and actions in keeping with the ways that they represented themselves to me (Hirsch, 2003). I feel deeply grateful to all of them for trusting me with their stories.

My analysis is guided by the following questions:

(1) What are these learners' perspectives on the ways that relationships with parents, children and spouses have affected their educational opportunities? In what ways have family perspectives on education interacted with the larger sociopolitical context to shape learning opportunities for these participants and their children?
(2) What are the participants' perspectives on the gendered practices and ideologies of their own communities? How do participants report living out these practices and ideologies in constructing their gendered identities as Latin American immigrants in the United States?
(3) From the perspectives of these adult immigrants, how have gendered social positioning and prior educational experiences influenced their learning of English both in and outside of the classroom? How has studying English affected their lives?

Having introduced the social context of this research in Chapter 1, I go on in Chapter 2 to outline the ways that identity and learning have been theorized in recent years. To this end, I review ethnographic studies of gender and language learning in immigrant communities, and then explore some key theoretical concepts, as well as the contradictions these raise. In Chapter 3, through a thematic analysis of life-history narratives, I begin to look at the influence of gendered identities on my participants' decisions and opportunities to learn English. Chapter 4 takes on a different set of educational issues, presenting two ethnographic case studies of women's involvement in their children's education. Whereas in Chapters 3 and 4, I focus on the thematic content of my data, in the next two chapters I undertake more complex discourse analysis. In Chapter 5, I draw on language socialization theory to examine how gender and language learning interact in classroom events of social positioning, while in Chapter 6, I explore changing gender ideologies in local communities through narrative analysis. Finally, in Chapter 7, I summarize the contributions of this study and argue for the value of paying attention to learners' gendered perspectives, needs and goals when making decisions that affect their educational opportunities.

Chapter 2

Second-Language Learning as Gendered Practice[12]

In this chapter, I explore theories of identity and learning that help to make sense of how second-language development is gendered. In this excerpt from a published interview entitled 'The formation of a diasporic intellectual', cultural theorist Stuart Hall explains the reciprocity between identity and lived experience:

> The way in which I'm trying to think questions of identity is slightly different from a postmodernist "nomadic." I think cultural identity is not fixed, it's always hybrid. But this is precisely because it comes out of very specific historical formations, out of very specific histories and cultural repertoires of enunciation, that it can constitute a "positionality," which we call, provisionally, identity. It's not just anything. (Chen, 1996: 503)

Through connecting his theories of identity to his own life narrative as an upper-middle-class Black Jamaican British immigrant, Hall creates more space for himself and other individuals to consciously construct and perform hybrid identities. However, he makes a point of distancing himself 'slightly' from postmodernist ideas of identity, which imply that almost anyone can take on almost any identity at any time. Instead, Hall argues that identities are 'historically specific', not just to the discursive context of the moment but to the life history of the individual ('not just anything'). Within the gendered social contexts of a Mexican village or a British university or a California neighborhood, the social formation of identity is carried out largely, though not always consciously, through historically specific discursive practices, such as reading story books to children (see Chapter 4) or filling in the blanks in a vocational ESL handout (see Chapter 5). As Hall makes clear in the interview, participation in

such 'cultural repertoires of enunciation' has consequences for identity, which are not easily predictable, but that can go far beyond the immediate context of use.

Whereas in Chapter 1, I situated my study in its social context, in this chapter, I outline the *theoretical* context of my work: ongoing debates about how learners' identities intersect with their efforts to acquire additional languages through participation in discursive practices. *Discourses* can be defined as ways to organize meaning and knowledge related to specific domains such as sexuality (Foucault, 1984; Pennycook, 1994), so *discursive practices* are recurrent, goal-directed human activities (Scribner, 1997) that involve characteristic ways of referring to or evaluating particular topics (Davies & Harré, 1990; Weedon, 1987). In my research, such practices ranged from teasing co-workers to composing prayers based on Bible passages to sharing personal experiences in ESL classroom discussions.

Throughout this chapter, I will argue that learning a language or taking on new literacies in a particular social context has consequences for the identities of its users (Norton, 2000). With Wenger, I see identity as 'a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities' (Wenger, 1998: 5). Because identities develop out of relationships with various social groups, identity consists both in how one sees oneself and how one is seen by others. Moreover, because individual human beings belong to multiple groups and tend to have multiple roles and relationships even within groups, identities are best conceptualized as *multiple* (or hybrid, as Hall says) rather than unitary.[13] As educational researcher Carol Lee writes, 'The challenge in many classrooms has been how to apprentice students into disciplinary identities that do not diminish existing identities that students bring both individually and as members of different cultural communities' (Lee, 2004: 130). Thus, identity and learning reciprocally influence each other. A number of studies show that when learner identities are discounted, resistance rather than learning is likely to result (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Lin, 1999). Likewise, when language and literacy development become congruent with learner identities, learning is enhanced (e.g. Ibrahim, 1999; Kinginger, 2004).

Because gender affects group participation (Cameron, 2005; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), identity development tends to be highly gendered, and so the situated learning that arises from participation in discursive practices (Watson-Gegeo, 2004; Wenger, 1998) is likewise inflected by gender. Moreover, individuals who participate in multiple groups may find themselves with conflicting or contradictory gendered identities and learning experiences. Indeed, gender research in applied linguistics has

had to distance itself from an earlier preoccupation with global differences in how men and women learn or use language (Cameron, 2005; Ehrlich, 1997). According to Cameron, contemporary research has come to emphasize *gender diversity* and local explanations for observed differences between masculinities and femininities in particular contexts. Researchers see differences within gendered groups and similarities between groups as significant as the gender differences that were the focus of earlier studies. As Cameron explains, 'masculinities and femininities come in multiple varieties, inflecting and inflected by all the other dimensions of someone's social identity – their age, ethnicity, class, occupation, and so forth' (2005: 487). Because it is difficult to separate gender from other aspects of learner identities, I refer in this book to *gendered* identities (identities inflected by gender) rather than *gender* identities (identities defined solely by gender).

As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet write, 'Gender is constructed in an array of social practices within communities, practices that in many cases connect to personal attributes and to power relations but that do so in varied, subtle, and changing ways' (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992: 484). In a later work, to illustrate this variation, they contrast 'physical masculinities' based primarily on bodily strength with 'technical masculinities' tied to scientific and political power (cf. Connell, 1995; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Ethnographic gender research, such as Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1994) study of undocumented Mexican immigrants in California, has demonstrated how the experiences of individual men and women are profoundly shaped by ethnicity, class, age and nationality, among other factors. For this reason, it has become common to discuss 'masculinities' and 'femininities' as plural terms, and also to contrast 'hegemonic' and 'marginalized' gendered subjectivities (Cameron, 2005; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003).

Although there is growing interest in how learners' gendered identities shape and are shaped by their second-language development (e.g. Davis & Skilton-Sylvester, 2004; Langman, 2004; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko *et al.*, 2001; Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001), research in this area has run counter to the view still held by many second-language acquisition (SLA) scholars that the goal of the field is to understand 'a changing mental representation of the L2 (second language) or interlanguage grammar' with 'social and affective factors … relatively minor in their impact' (Long, 1997: 319). Defending a SLA research agenda focused on acquisition processes and grammatical systems rather than learner identities, Gass argues that 'it is a basic assumption of experimental work that categories, such as hair color, that have no theoretical bearing on the question at hand are not part of a design' (Gass, 1998: 86). While laboratory studies may indeed be able to exclude from

consideration the way indices of ethnicity, such as hair color, can affect opportunities for L2 interactions, ethnographic SLA researchers have begun to pay attention to such phenomena (e.g. Norton & Toohey, 2001). Over the past two decades, while experimental research has tried to draw neat boundaries around language acquisition, ethnographic and discourse analytic studies have generally supported the contention that there 'is no context-free language learning, and all communicative contexts involve social, cultural, and political dimensions affecting which linguistic forms are available or taught' (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003: 157).

To enter into this discussion and situate my findings, I begin by examining ethnographic research on the ways that gendered practices and ideologies have at times constrained language learning in immigrant communities, then go on to review some recent studies that have focused more on immigrants' agency in overcoming constraints. In the next section, I enter into the debates within the identity literature on how to theorize both continuity and change; I conclude by laying out the theoretical concepts that I will draw upon to make sense of my data on gender and language learning throughout the rest of the book.

Constraints and Resources in Immigrant Communities

In reviewing a range of ethnographic findings on L2 learning, multilingualism and gender, Ehrlich points out that speakers' acquisition of linguistic practices and language varieties is often determined by their participation in cultural and workplace practices that vary by gender:

> Men and women may have differential attitudes towards and concomitantly differential motivation and incentive for learning or using languages … depending on the particular way that gender identities and gender relations are constituted in that community. (Ehrlich, 1997: 430)

In this regard, some studies of immigrant women and families have emphasized the gendered sociopolitical constraints that work against language and literacy development. For example, in Rockhill's research in a southern California Latino community, she found that men had more opportunities to speak English in the workplace while women did most of the English-language literacy work of the household. However, when women's L2 learning went beyond survival needs and was identified with education and advancement, it became threatening to many men. Although these women had a strong desire to learn English, most were frustrated in this endeavor due to family pressures, including domestic violence.

Similarly, in a study of Portuguese factory workers in Canada, Goldstein (1997) found that gender practices worked against most women learning English, while facilitating English learning for a few. Portuguese men were more likely than women to have had access to English classes both in Portugal and on arrival in Canada. Moreover, due to skills acquired in Portugal, men were more likely to work in mechanical or technical positions at the factory, and thus had more opportunity to improve their English through extensive contact with non-Portuguese speakers. In contrast, the women in Goldstein's study were far more likely to work on the production lines, where they used Portuguese to make and keep friends and thus to access assistance at work. The few women who managed to attain bilingual skills while moving upward into supervisory positions were mentored by men from their community, who could help them avoid social sanctions.

Whereas Goldstein, like Rockhill, emphasized how women's language learning is often impeded by the gendered practices of their communities, Norton's work (1995a, 2000) significantly introduced a new concern with immigrant women's agency as language learners. In diary entries, her participants portrayed themselves committing to English learning in order to accomplish their goals despite anti-immigrant prejudice and economic exploitation. While pointing out the often negative effect of traditional gender roles on immigrant women's access to the 'public world', Norton (2000) spends little time exploring the dynamics of immigrant social networks, and looks more at anti-immigrant prejudice than gender as a constraint for L2 learning. Indeed, in her analysis, one study participant drew strength from her maternal identity to overcome instances of this prejudice. Having come to Canada so that her children could have a better future, Martina would not let contemptuous co-workers or unscrupulous landlords jeopardize her family's finances. As she wrote in her diary, 'I had known that I couldn't give up' (Norton Peirce, 1995a: 17). Thus Norton's work emphasizes learner agency in the face of larger social structures (in the next section, I explore Norton's theories in more depth).

This focus on agency, as well as on the ways that learner identities affect language learning, has continued in subsequent ethnographic studies. For example, in McKay and Wong's (1996) study of Chinese immigrant youth in California, one boy's gendered identity as a popular athlete facilitated making friends with English-speaking classmates; this improved his speaking skills but gave him less reason to focus on academics. Ibrahim (1999) wrote about Francophone African youth in Canada who embraced African–American identities, acquiring English through rap and hiphop music. This process was gendered in that young male immigrants found

more identity options open to them (as rappers and djs) than did their female counterparts. In Skilton-Sylvester's (2002) study, she showed how Cambodian refugee women's decisions about whether to continue ESL studies depended on the extent to which the classes addressed their lived experiences of work and family life. Finally, Gordon described Lao women in Philadelphia 'negotiating domestic events' (Gordon, 2004: 446), such as interacting with school personnel, selling used cars and advocating for their adolescent children in the juvenile justice system. Gordon found that these events required more complex English than did typical immigrant workplaces, and that women's increasing competence in the language led to tensions in their families.

Thus, over the last two decades, a significant number of North American ethnographic studies have explored how immigrant language learners' L2 development is shaped by their varied identities in historically specific social contexts. While these studies have not all theorized gender (or historical specificity) to the same extent, and have at time reinforced gender binaries (as in Rockhill's (1993) contention that Latina immigrant *women* are prevented by Latino immigrant *men* from pursuing 'educational advancement'), collectively these studies make clear that although gender can have tremendous influence on learners' access to language learning opportunities, there is considerable gender diversity both within and between communities. However, in pointing out the importance of language learners' identities to their second-language development, this ethnographic literature necessarily poses a question as to how learning and identity development can best be theorized. In the next section I turn to that question.

A Fiction or an Existential Fact?

> (T)he selves we have been may seem to us as discrete and separate as the other persons with whom we lead our relational lives. This experiential truth points to the fact that our sense of continuous identity is a fiction, the primary fiction of all self-narration. (Eakin, 1999: 93)

> (The autobiographer) recognizes continuous identity not only as a fiction of memory, but also as an existential fact, necessary for our psychological survival amid the flux of existence. (Eakin, 1999: 94)

As ethnographies on immigrant language learning make clear, the multiple gendered identities that students bring with them affect learning in powerful but unpredictable ways. In the quotes above, Eakin is not theorizing gender or language learning but rather autobiography as

a literary genre: he is discussing a memoir in which the author tries to come to terms with her days in a Nazi youth organization – an 'historically specific' identity if there ever was one. However, the tension between Eakin's remark on page 93 and his follow-up comment on page 94 ('our sense of continuous identity is a fiction … but also an existential fact') drives much of the debate about identity and learning in educational subfields concerned with language. Indeed, Eakin includes *identity* (along with *body*, *self*, *person* and *subject*) as 'terms that seem inevitably to spin in elliptical orbits around any attempt to conceptualize human beings' (Eakin, 1999: 9).

Nevertheless, scholars of education do continue attempting to 'conceptualize human beings' because it is difficult to make sense of learning processes without some attention to socially situated learners. In this section, I examine theoretical tensions in the work of three authors who are 'trying to work through how identities are coherent, yet hybrid and stabilizing, yet dynamic' (McCarthey & Moje, 2002: 232). I first return to Norton's ethnographic study, discussed above, which draws on concepts of investment and subjectivity in its exploration of language learner agency. I then turn to Gee's work on discourses and literacy, and finally to Ivanic's study of intertextuality in academic writing. The theories of all three authors are relevant to understanding how the gendered identities of immigrants intersect with their second-language development, and yet all three have difficulty reconciling the contradiction in which 'a sense of continuous identity is a fiction … but also an existential fact' (Eakin, 1999: 93–94).

Norton: Investment and Subjectivity

In her study of immigrant women in Canada, see above, Norton (1995a, 2000) introduced the concept of *investment*, in contrast to the more traditional construct of *motivation*, to 'signal the socially and historically constructed relationship of the women to the target language' (Norton Peirce, 1995a: 17). In her discussion of how her research participant Martina 'claimed the right to speak' when family finances were at stake, it was Martina's *investment* in the family's future that supported her efforts to learn and use English. Subsequent ethnographers have also drawn on this concept (e.g. Ibrahim, 1999; McKay & Wong, 1996; Potowski, 2004) to depict learners investing in particular identities, with language learning influenced by these identity investments. For example, although McKay and Wong found that Asian–American 'model minority' discourse was resisted by some of the Chinese immigrant youth in their study, it led other individuals to invest in identities as good students.

Norton's investment metaphor builds on French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *capital*, an important analytical tool for a number of writers who locate linguistic and literate practices in larger structures of inequality (Gal, 1989). In Bourdieu's work (1991), societally valued language varieties are seen as 'linguistic capital', assets that can help speakers attain a larger share of society's resources. It is no coincidence that linguistic capital resides in the standardized forms of speech used by dominant social groups. Indeed, since interactions between individuals tend to reflect the societal positions of the interlocutors, these interactions are likely to both display and reproduce the structures of society. The native speaker/non-native speaker interactions that have been considered key to language acquisition in SLA theory (e.g. Long, 1983; Mackey, 1999) can be recognized within Bourdieu's theory as sites where power relations are reproduced.

In drawing on Bourdieu's metaphor of capital, Norton shares her concern with a speaker's competence not only to speak but to 'be *listened to*' (Bourdieu, 1991: 55, italics in original). She argues that immigrant language learners' investments in particular identities (e.g. motherhood) and in the English language enable them to transform power relations and 'claim the right to speak'. However, in her treatment of social identity she departs from Bourdieu's contention that the 'very structures of the social world' (Bourdieu, 2000: 140) are embodied within individuals as 'durable dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1991). Instead, Norton draws from poststructuralist feminist scholar Chris Weedon's conceptualization of *subjectivity* as 'precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak' (Weedon, 1987: 32).

For Norton, the fact that subjectivity is ever-changing, 'opens up possibilities for educational intervention' (Norton Peirce, 1995a: 16). She argues that immigrant women like Martina are able to 'claim the right to speak' not merely because of their *investment* in English, but also because they are able to strategically shift their subject positions during conversations with mainstream Canadians. In her analysis, Martina was able to 'set up a counterdiscourse … by resisting the subject position immigrant woman in favor of the subject position mother' (Norton, 2000: 127). It is perhaps the greater optimism about social change and educational progress in Weedon's work that leads Norton to emphasize her theories of social identity over Bourdieu's. For Norton, language learning crucially involves taking on new subjectivities through setting up counterdiscourses that can resist marginalization.

Norton's work clearly shows the relevance of social theory to scholars interested in language learning at street level. However, in discussing

the insights that Bourdieu and Weedon offer into language, Norton does not problematize the profound differences in their perspectives. As Price points out in a 1995 critique, in Norton's analysis of Martina's experiences, she 'seems obliged to appeal to an ongoing identity (mother) that seems in fact remarkably constant' (Price, 1995: 332). He is arguing that in a strict interpretation of poststructural theory, 'Martina's identity as mother (should) var(y) in meaning and significance according to ongoing discourse practices … (in) the changing discursive and social contexts to which she is subject' (Price, 1995: 333). In replying to this critique, Norton agrees that indeed Martina's maternal identity appeared to change little during the year in which she conducted research; she adds that if she had continued the project over several years as Martina's children grew up, she might 'have found that the meaning of "mother" had changed dramatically for Martina' (Norton Peirce, 1995b: 339). However, this gradual process of gendered identity development appears incommensurable with Norton's assertion, drawn from Weedon, that subjectivities are inherently fluid, shifting within acts of discourse. Responding to Price, Norton wrote that she had never intended 'to serve as an apologist for poststructuralist theories' (Norton, 1995b: 338), but it remains theoretically unclear how to account for the observed connections between Martina's ongoing maternal identity and her second-language development.

Gee: Discourses and Literacy

James Gee, in contrast, theorizes identities that are most notable for their 'remarkable constancy'. In writing about connections between identity and literacy, he argues that literacy practices cannot be separated from their contexts: 'Language and literacy are elements in larger wholes: elements in multiple and socioculturally diverse "ways of being in the world" … which are meaningless if taken out of those forms of life' (Gee, 1996: 122). Gee refuses to consider literacy in isolation from these 'ways of being in the world', which he refers to as Discourses. For Gee, a Discourse is an 'identity kit' that 'always' involves 'ways of displaying … membership in a particular social group or social network' (Gee, 1996: 128). In one (perhaps unconsciously) gendered example of how appropriate language must fit with appropriate actions, he writes, 'if I enter my neighborhood bar and say to my drinking buddy … "gimme a match, wouldya"? while placing a napkin on the bar stool to avoid getting my newly pressed designer jeans dirty … my saying-doing combination … is all wrong' (Gee, 1996: 124).

According to Gee, Discourses are acquired through mostly implicit processes of socialization. All human beings are socialized into a particular primary Discourse within their family, and then into a variety of secondary Discourses in institutions such as schools, churches and workplaces. Because primary Discourses incorporate elements of selected secondary Discourses into them, there can be varying degrees of congruence between particular primary and secondary Discourses. For example, some families practice school-like ways of reading story books to preschoolers in the home. Children of these families then have an advantage in the early grades of schooling compared with children who were not socialized in this way (Heath, 1983). There can also be direct contradiction between certain primary and secondary Discourses, that is, a contradiction between certain literacy practices and a learner's 'sense of continuous identity'.

Gee illustrates these ideas by utilizing Minnis's research on 'the Discourse of law school'. In explaining the difficulties of non-mainstream law students, Minnis discusses the case of a Chicana student who had been socialized to show deference to authority figures and thus found it difficult to engage in adversarial debates with law professors. The problem, according to Gee, is that 'some families and social groups highly value cooperation, not competition' so that 'for some, being inducted into law school social practices means learning behaviors at odds with their other social practices that are constitutive of their other social identities' (Gee, 1996: 135). In other words, this Chicana's new law student identity contradicted her 'sense of continuous identity' based on membership in her family and community (Gee does not mention the gender identity issues that may also be implicated here). Since Gee connects literacy practices to a complete 'identity-kit', this young woman theoretically needs to take on an entire new worldview before she will be able to understand and reproduce the linguistic conventions of legal briefs. Although Gee admits the possibility of becoming 'bi-Discoursal' (i.e. constructing what Hall would call a 'hybrid identity', Chen, 1996), he uses a metaphor of colonization (cf. Kress, 1989) to refer to individuals who uncritically take on Discourses previously foreign to them. While Gee's theories certainly allow for gender diversity (Cameron, 2005) in that different men and women belong to different Discourses, he emphasizes the difficulties inherent in the construction of multiple or hybrid identities.

Along with its application to schooling, the concept of Discourses has been applied to workplace literacy research (Gee *et al.*, 1996) in an ethnographic study of a training program that aimed to inculcate new corporate values among mostly immigrant workers at a high-tech assembly plant in California. The Discourse of the training program claimed to 'empower'

workers to 'take responsibility' for 'continuous improvement' through 'active knowledge and flexible learning' (Gee *et al.*, 1996: 26), based on team work at all levels of the company. However, when researchers looked for new literacy practices on the factory floor, they found that the 'team' approach to manufacturing led primarily to greater care in documenting excuses for low productivity. As the authors write, 'when faced with strict reporting requirements … workers learned to fudge, altering what they reported so that it fit the forms' (Gee *et al.*, 1996: 119). In other words, through participation in discursive practices, workers had taken on new second-language literacies without taking on a whole new 'identity kit'. It would seem that this 'fast-capitalist' Discourse was as multiple, hybrid and fragmented in its enactment as the subjectivities proposed by Weedon. However, Gee's over-emphasis on connections between (D)iscourses, literacies and identities makes it hard to theorize these immigrant workers' strategic adaptation of fast-capitalist discourse to their own ends (i.e. fudging forms).

Intertextuality in Academic Writing

In contrast to Gee's totalizing emphasis on Discourses as complete 'identity kits', Roz Ivanic's 1998 study of academic essays at a British university explores the hybridity and fragmentation of discourses, a phenomenon referred to as *intertextuality* (Kristeva, 1986) or *interdiscursivity* (Fairclough, 1999). Fairclough explains that since texts 'may draw upon a plurality of genres, discourses or narratives, there is an expectation that texts may be … made up of elements which have varying and sometimes contradictory stylistic and semantic values' (Fairclough, 1999: 185). He adds that this will be particularly true during eras of rapid social change, and cites for example a letter written by US Catholic bishops in the 1980s in opposition to the Reagan administration's nuclear weapons policy that 'hybridiz(ed) … military/strategic discourse and theological discourse' (Fairclough, 1999: 199). Similarly, Ivanic found that student essays contained a blend of discourses, and for this reason argues that the returning adult student writers in her study were constructing multiple discursive identities.

In a case study of one essay, Ivanic notes discourses of professional social work, applied social sciences, literary feminism, sensational journalism and 'a person with a heart', all existing in uneasy juxtaposition. Her argument that these are all identities that the writer is taking on in discourse provides a corrective to Gee's contention that new literacies necessarily involve displaying membership in a particular social group,

while being 'colonized' by that group's practices and values. Nevertheless, her approach brings up another set of contradictions. While Ivanic admits that identity can be seen as 'the outcome of previous experiences' *or* as the way individuals 'position themselves in an act of (discourse)', she argues that 'there can be no evidence for (the former) other than (the latter)' (Ivanic, 1998: 105). Therefore, she chooses to focus her analysis on 'discoursal' rather than 'biographical' identity. However, when she uncovers a discursive conflict that appears in some students' reluctance (not merely inability) to write in standard academic forms, her focus on identity as self-positioning in particular acts of writing makes it difficult for her to theorize this contradiction. Her theoretical framework does not easily elucidate why some students resist taking on certain identities.

This is best illustrated in Ivanic's case study of Rachel, the working-class lesbian feminist studying social work who wrote the essay mentioned above, a report on a home visit to a female welfare client. Critical of the discourses of her profession, Rachel is reluctant to use them in her writing. Partial to literary feminism, she prefers to use phrases like 'compulsory heterosexuality' to explain her client's marital difficulties. She also struggles with formal academic discourse, and often mixes it with more informal language. Here Rachel discusses with Ivanic the different identities she sees in one extract of her writing:

> That's me (pointing to "stopped dead in its tracks") and this is me playing the I-have-an-elaborated-code syndrome (pointing to "interesting occurrence") … Sometimes it's like the working class person trying to speak posh … It's one minute with the dinner jacket on, and the next minute with the cleaning outfit. (Ivanic, 1998: 155)

After several of Ivanic's research participants made similar remarks, Ivanic had to confront the fact that although these adult students were capable of using multiple discourses in academic writing, they were unwilling to identify with these discourses equally. Sometimes they saw themselves as 'playing a game', a metaphor that Ivanic happily connects to Goffman (1969), but at other times Ivanic uncomfortably found them claiming '"this is me … I'm here" as if it were some kind of real self' (Ivanic, 1998: 148). As she writes two chapters later, 'Theoretically the idea of a real self is hard to accept' (Ivanic, 1998: 217).

Based on Ivanic's data, there is no question but that Rachel's gendered identities are multiple, hybrid and adapted to her local context (Cameron, 2005). However, in perceiving her research participants' 'sense of continuous identity' as a 'fiction', it is difficult for Ivanic to see it at the same time as an 'existential fact' (Eakin, 1999: 93–94). As Stuart Hall would point out,

although Rachel's identities are 'not fixed' and 'always hybrid' (she is both working-class and an aspiring literary feminist), they are also 'historically specific' (Chen, 1996). Although this is not clear from Ivanic's analysis, one can imagine 'historically specific' reasons why a working-class lesbian (who grew up in Thatcher's England) might be suspicious of the discourses of social work.

Connecting Continuity and Change

Theories of identity need to take into account both continuity and change. The three women discussed above, Czech immigrant mother Martina, the unnamed Chicana law student and Rachel the working-class lesbian social-work student, share certain frustrating, but also perhaps exhilarating, experiences of struggling to participate in new language and literacy practices. Their femininities, individually and collectively, are diverse and adapted to their discursive contexts (although this is less clear in Gee). Taken together, the analyses presented by Norton (1995a, 2000), Gee (1996) and Ivanic (1998) demonstrate that adult learners have a sense of self that is partly, but not entirely, based on previous life experiences, including prior experiences with language and literacy. New discursive practices will be congruent to greater or lesser degrees with these gendered identities. In Ivanic's study, Rachel felt far more comfortable using the language of literary feminism than the language of professional social work. Because Rachel was attempting to produce a social-work report, her multiple identities tended to impede the fluency of her writing.

However, many learners do manage to take on new literacy practices without being 'colonized' (Gee, 1996; Kress, 1989) by values previously foreign to their experience. The Chicana law student could potentially write an aggressive challenge to an unjust legal decision without feeling the need to verbally aggress against her aunts while helping to prepare a holiday dinner. As she goes from her desk to the kitchen, her selves 'may seem to (her) discrete and separate' (Eakin, 1999: 93) – but as Eakin points out, this is a common human experience. Although Martina's maternal identity did not change much over the year Norton observed her, it was nevertheless possible for Norton to identify passages in Martina's diary in which she 'set up a counterdiscourse … by resisting the subject position immigrant woman in favor of the subject position mother' (Norton, 2000: 127). This implies that at certain discursive moments, in which Martina had not yet set up her counterdiscourse, she was *not* in the 'subject position mother' despite her 'remarkably constant' maternal identity.

Given the demonstrated connections between identity and learning, and given the demonstrated contradictions between a learner's sense of continuous identity and the various subject positions that she might be assigned in discourse at any particular moment, in the rest of this chapter, I will outline some theoretical concepts that help to clarify these connections and contradictions (without necessarily resolving them). The first two concepts, *social positioning* and *performativity,* focus on the discursive moment, without entirely discounting longer-term processes of identity development, while *self-reconstruction* focuses on these longer-term processes, without entirely ignoring the discursive moment.

Social Positioning

In exploring 'event(s) of identification, in which a recognizable category of identity gets explicitly or implicitly applied to an individual' (Wortham, 2004: 166), social positioning theory does not so much provide a comprehensive account of identity as explain what happens to identities in discursive events, such as conversations. In all social interactions, speakers claim identities for themselves and assign similar or contrasting identities to their interlocutors, a process referred to as the *negotiation* of identities (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). For example, Torras (2005) shows how linguistic identities are negotiated through code-switching in Barcelona, with interlocutors claiming and assigning identities such as 'monolingual English speaker' or 'bilingual Castilian/Catalan speaker'. Ivanic's work shows that very similar identity negotiations take place when a writer composes a text. In the social positioning literature, claiming identities for oneself is often referred to as 'reflexive positioning', while assigning identities to others is termed 'interactive positioning' (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Davies & Harré, 1990).

In the first in-depth theoretical exploration of social positioning, Davies and Harré (1990) connect this phenomenon to participation in discursive practices. Like Weedon (1987), they explore how discourses define the people who use them in terms of subject positions, that is, socially recognizable categories. However, they also emphasize that human beings can make choices in regards to their discursive participation, choices that often stem from an individual's 'history as a subjective being, that is, the history of one who has been in multiple positions and engaged in different forms of discourse' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 48). Thus, even while positioning and being positioned, speakers may remain 'committed to a pre-existing idea of themselves that they had prior to the interchange' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 56). However, as Blackledge and Pavlenko point out, 'In many

contexts, certain identities may not be negotiable because people may be positioned in powerful ways which they are unable to resist' (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001: 250). In considering how Martina (Norton, 1995a, 2000) was in fact able to resist her landlord's and co-workers' attempts to position her as an (ignorant and exploitable) immigrant, theorists of social positioning could argue that Martina was able to draw upon her 'history as a subjective being … who ha(d) been in multiple positions' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 48) and who perhaps remained committed to some preexisting ideas about herself arising from her past discursive participation.

While few authors have undertaken detailed examinations of positionings in L2 classrooms, two recent ethnographies of high school ESL learners (Duff, 2002; Talmy, 2004) do focus closely on learner positioning within specific classroom interactions. Duff (2002) shows Chinese immigrant students remaining silent in a Canadian social studies classroom, refusing to answer their teacher's questions, and thus resisting her attempts to position them as knowledgeable about Asian cultural traditions. As Duff writes, 'The students did not take up the identity positions she attributed to them' (Duff, 2002: 310). Talmy (2004) shows similar positioning in a Hawaiian high school ESL class, in which Generation 1.5 immigrants who had come to Hawaii in childhood were positioned as 'non-native speakers' and mixed with 'fresh-off-the-boat' (FOB) newcomers. This positioning was exemplified by a class assignment in which students were asked to prepare presentations on holidays from 'your culture'. Demanding the right to present mainstream US holidays like Christmas or Independence Day, the Generation 1.5 students ridiculed newcomers' descriptions of 'exotic' celebrations in their homelands. Thus, some students 'resist(ed) being positioned as FOBs by positioning a classmate as one instead, thereby differentiating themselves from him' (Talmy, 2004: 161).

Although these ESL classroom studies did not explicitly examine gender, several studies of classroom discourse have applied social positioning theory to illuminate the diversity of gendered interactions in local contexts (Cameron, 2005). Davies (2001) explores the constitutive work of language in an Australian physical education class, demonstrating how the adolescent female students supported their male teacher's gendered positioning by ignoring his mistakes while tactfully supplying him with information that he lacked. Likewise, Leander (2002) and Wortham (2004) present studies in US high-school English classes in which particular African–American girls were positioned by their teachers and classmates as outspoken and disorderly (and thus lacking appropriate femininity by mainstream, i.e. white, standards). In Leander's observation, the more vociferously the girl rejected her classmates' positioning of her as 'ghetto',

the more they saw her noisy display of emotionality as enacting that identity. Although none of these authors followed individual students' development over the long term, these learners' experiences of non-participation, resistance or ridicule in classroom contexts where they were positioned as 'alien' (Duff, 2002; Talmy, 2004) or 'disruptive' (Leander, 2002; Wortham, 2004) or even as 'supportive female' (Davies, 2001) seem likely to have long-term consequences for their language and literacy socialization (Duff, 2002).

Gender, Language Education and Performativity

Participation in discursive practices, such as those that occur in classrooms, is certainly shaped by gender: it is unlikely that a classroom of male high school students would have been as tactful about their teacher's mistakes as were the girls that Davies observed (2001). However, such participation is also a way of *performing* not merely displaying gender (Butler, 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Introducing language and gender studies, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet write that gender should be seen not so much as something that people *have*, but rather as something that people *do*: 'Gender doesn't just exist, but is continually produced, reproduced, and indeed changed, through people's performance of gendered acts' (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 4). In this sense, 'having' a (gendered) identity is like having a job or a hobby: if you do not do it, you do not have it.

Performativity, the recognition that people use language to 'do things with words' (Austin, 1962) rather than simply to report on a preexisting reality, has become increasingly influential in understanding the reciprocal relationship between gendered identities and linguistic resources. As Pennycook writes, 'acts that purport to correspond to an identity actually produce it in the doing' (Pennycook, 2004: 15); in this way, gender is an *effect* produced through 'acts, gestures, and desires' (Butler, 1999: 173). For example, Cameron (1997) analyzes how a group of male university students performed heterosexual masculinity by criticizing other young men's perceived effeminate taste in clothing – thus effecting their own gendered identities by verbally distancing themselves from other (less masculine) men.

Performances of gender occur in most human interactions, always to some extent constrained by social context, including factors such as ethnicity and social class. While individuals are theoretically free to perform gender in transgressive ways, in most contexts there are social sanctions for transgressive performances. In order to remain within perceived constraints,

performances of gender tend to draw on past performances as discursive resources, and thus tend to repeat over time (Blackburn, 2002–2003; Dutro, 2003; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). This iteration constructs the effect of stable identities, in a process that can be termed 'sedimentation' (Butler, 1999; Pennycook, 2004). This is similar to Eakin's contention that our 'sense of continuous identity' is a fiction resulting from our narrations. Some sense of continuous identity would seem to be involved when youth perform gender in ways at odds with their current audiences, as when the young lesbian in Blackburn's case study (2002–2003) insisted on reading her erotic poetry to unappreciative gay males. This is reminiscent of the way Ivanic's research participants chose to employ informal discourses to express what they saw as 'the real me', even in formal academic contexts (1998), and perhaps also of the way the Chicana law student mentioned by Gee preferred to offer her professors deference rather than engage them in adversarial debate.

At the same time, as Blackburn writes, repetitive gender performances 'serve not only to solidify but also to destabilize identities because there are slight variations among the previous, the current and prospective performances' (Blackburn, 2002–2003: 313). Thus, while acknowledging the constraints on gendered performances, a number of authors point to performativity as a potential force for individual and societal change (Blackburn, 2002–2003; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Pennycook, 2004). A Chicana law student over the course of a semester can potentially craft a gendered performance that is both respectful and appropriately argumentative. In a fictional account of a young Jewish feminist breaking into the male-dominated legal profession in the 1970s, a black male colleague gives her the following advice about how to perform suburban femininity in order to win cases:

> Let (the jury) see the person who grew up around here and is appalled to find Mafiosi butchering each other and then – just as bad – *driving on the grass* in Eisenhower Park to leave the body. Your shock is real and you've got to use everything you have. (Isaacs, 1996: 298)

It is through the performance of such 'hybrid' but also 'historically specific' identities (Chen, 1996), which draw upon past performances but also alter them in significant ways, that society opens to new gendered possibilities and relaxes old gendered constraints.

Moreover, just as Ivanic saw some of her research participants 'playing a game' in order to enact an academic identity in discourse, a number of current literacy researchers describe an analogous process of individuals 'performing' gender in literacy events and practices. Finders (1997)

describes a clique of early adolescent girls who enacted a 'normal teenager' version of feminity through such literacy practices as writing notes in class and reading fashion magazines. Similarly, Dutro (2002–2003) shows how boys performed masculinity through public choices of reading materials in their fifth-grade class, while Anderson explores how third- and fourth-grade boys and girls 'used a variety of literacy strategies for representing themselves and others as gendered persons' (Anderson, 2002: 391), often challenging gender stereotypes in the process. In an ethnographic study of a high school Honors English class, Godley (2003) shows this process at work in classroom discussions, with young men and women taking on 'literacy positions' tied to gender, race, and social class, such as 'debater', 'athlete' and 'smart student'. All of these authors emphasize powerful connections between learning and identity, demonstrating how language and literacy development becomes particularly intense when it enacts valued identities.

Interdiscursivity and the (Re)construction of Selves

As Pavlenko and Lantolf write, language learning can be seen as 'a struggle of concrete, socially constituted, and always situated beings to participate in (a) symbolically mediated lifeworld' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 155). When immigrants struggle to participate in a new environment and to (re)construct their identities in a new language, they necessarily appropriate discursive resources from the texts they consume and the speech events in which they take part. A few authors have begun to explore this process of appropriation (e.g. Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Vitanova, 2005), drawing on the insights of Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1986).

Bakhtin focuses on how novelists juxtapose multiple *social languages* (similar to what other contemporary theorists call *discourses*) to express entire social worlds, a phenomenon that he refers to as *dialogism*. In Bakhtin's analysis, social languages appear in novels as the *voices* of characters representing particular social groups, in dialogue with characters who have different identities. As an example of dialogism, Bakhtin quotes Dickens' description of Mr Merdle as a man who 'came home from his daily occupation of causing the British name to be more and more respected in the civilized world …' (Bakhtin, 1981: 303). Bakhtin points out that Dickens in this passage is drawing on 'the language of ceremonial speeches (in parliaments and at banquets)' (Bakhtin, 1981: 303) in order to satirize Mr Merdle's pretensions, which are common to his class of British businessmen. Through such *dialogic voicing*, Dickens makes his own reformist

perspectives clear, satirically combining a kind of Victorian capitalist language with other social languages circulating through his society at the time.

For Bakhtin, the social languages that are in dialogue within texts concretely represent the ideologies among which novelists (and by extension all speakers) must position themselves. Indeed, Bakhtin describes an individual's 'ideological development' as an 'intense struggle … for hegemony among various available verbal and ideological points of view' (Bakhtin, 1981: 346). Describing the process of learning new genres and discourses under dynamic conditions of struggle and change, Bakhtin writes

> The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's own only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. (Bakhtin, 1981: 293)

Bakhtin did not see this appropriation as something that happens easily, nor once-and-for-all time. Just as Rachel found the discourse of social work to be incongruent with her own sense of self (Ivanic, 1998), Bakhtin describes language as 'overpopulated with the intentions of others', and adds that 'expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions …, is a difficult and complicated process' (Bakhtin, 1981: 294).

Because of the way this process unfolds over time like a narrative, Bakhtin saw the self 'constituted as a story, through which happenings in specific places and at specific times are made coherent' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 158). Similarly, cultural psychologists Holland *et al.* (1998) draw on Bakhtin's work to describe a process of identity development, which they call 'authoring selves', through the appropriation of multiple discourses. Where Weedon emphasizes the role of agency in choosing between pre-given discourses, these authors see it rather in the capacity to orchestrate (and hybridize) multiple social languages, and in so doing find 'ever newer *ways to mean*' (Bakhtin, 1981: 346, italics in the original). This kind of self-authoring can be seen in Rachel's appropriation of the discourses of literary feminism (Ivanic, 1998) to explore, expand, and embrace her lesbian identity – while continuing to use social work discourse strategically to meet her professional goals. Although Bakhtin does not theorize gender, the orchestration of socially available (and often gendered) discourses is necessarily adapted to local contexts, and at the same time likely to result in significant gender diversity (Cameron, 2005), as individual men and women struggle to construct their voices – in their first language *or* in whatever additional languages they find themselves needing.

In this vein, Pavlenko and Lantolf draw upon Bakhtin to describe second-language learning as the *(re)construction of self*, with this reconstruction resulting from participation in the discursive practices of a new linguistic community. They write

> The ultimate attainment in second language learning relies on one's agency … while the first language and subjectivities are an indisputable given, the new ones are arrived at by choice … (through) a long, painful, inexhaustive, and for some, never ending process of self-translation. (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 169–170)

In noting this agentive struggle to 'expropriate' a second language, these authors, with Bakhtin, come closer to Weedon's conceptualization of the potential of human agency than they do to Gee's contention that discourses 'colonize' the unwary. However, Weedon's argument that subjectivity is 'constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak' (Weedon, 1987: 32) implies a focus on *short-term* interactions, whereas the time frame of self-reconstruction allows for the long-term developmental processes of change over several years necessary for successful second-language learning.

In Vitanova's (2005) study of Russian immigrants acquiring English in the United States, she further theorizes the connection between L2 learning and the Bakhtinian process of self-authoring. Seeing agency as relational, Vitanova argues that while 'the concept of agency does not liberate the self from its discursive constitution … it stems from the self's ability to create new opportunities in establishing one's voice' (Vitanova, 2005: 152). The immigrants in her study 'abandon(ed) an important aspect of their identities' (Vitanova, 2005: 160) upon emigrating and leaving their professional careers. Feeling silenced, they initially saw learning English as key to establishing their own voices in the United States, but found that their acquisition of English grammar was insufficient to overcome their sense of disempowerment. In one case study, however, Vitanova describes how Vera, a journalist turned kitchen manager, constructed a new US identity through starting her own catering business and taking on the discourses of entrepreneurship and gourmet cooking. A grand departure from her previous professional identity, Vera's orchestration of these new discourses was not a momentary act of self-positioning (as in Weedon), but rather a way of 'establishing dialogic relations with others' and 'being recognized and validated as an expert' (Vitanova, 2005: 162). Summing up the process that she observed in her study, Vitanova writes that while 'the lack of language resources' initially positioned her study participants negatively, 'it was through discursive practices with others and through

everyday acts of creativity that they re-established their voices' (Vitanova, 2005: 166).

This is also illustrated in a couple of earlier case studies which explore the relationship between a Bakhtinian concept of voice and second-language literacy development (Lam, 2000; Thesen, 1997). In both cases, the authors describe learners orchestrating discourses in order to construct new identities for themselves in new contexts, while recognizing that 'it takes time to change', as Lam's research participant Almon wrote in an email (Lam, 2000: 472). A Chinese immigrant in California, at school he was seen (and saw himself) as 'silent, shy, straight, dummy, serious, outdate' (Lam, 2000: 475), due to his non-standard English. However, on his own English-language Asian pop culture website, in relation to his fellow multilingual music fans (many of them female), Almon described himself as 'talkative, playful, prankish, naughty, open …' (Lam, 2000: 475). Finding his 'voice' in English through discourses of Asian pop culture, Almon paradoxically found that even academic English became easier for him. Although this is not theorized by Lam, one can argue that Almon reconstructed his masculinity (Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001) from 'dummy, serious, outdate' to 'playful, prankish, naughty' as he took on his new second-language voice.

Similarly, Thesen (1997) rejects the contention that alien discourses 'colonize' those who use them (Gee, 1996; Kress, 1989). In interviews with Black South African university students, she found them strategically drawing on a variety of academic, cultural, and religious discourses. One young man, Robert, described to her the 'radical change in his life' since coming to the university: 'so many books I read, they taught me something' (Thesen, 1997: 498). Summing up the (somewhat ironic) result of this learning, which had situated him 'on the middle' between two cultures, Robert stated, 'I want to go back to Africa' (Thesen, 1997). In finding his voice as an African man and as a university student, Thesen sees Robert 'straddling discourse practices creatively, trying to find the points of intersection between several discourses, old and new' (Thesen, 1997: 497). For Vera, Almon and Robert, the orchestration of new discourses cannot be seen as merely a momentary act of self-positioning (although of course such acts occur), but rather as an ongoing project of self-construction.

Conclusion

Thus, many of the studies discussed above illustrate the ways that learning is enhanced when learners' identities are engaged. This does not mean that educators need to accept learners' pre-given identities as fixed

and unalterable. Ibrahim's 1999 study of Francophone refugee youth shows how powerful learning can take place as learners construct and reconstruct identities, taking on new practices and discourses. Educators need to recognize not only the histories that learners bring with them but also the futures to which they aspire. As Kanno and Norton write, 'to envision an imagined identity within the context of an imagined community can impact a learner's engagement with educational practices' (Kanno & Norton, 2003: 246). Kinginger (2004) offers an extended example of this in a study of a US university student learning French. Describing this young woman's imagined community in France as 'populated with refined, interesting, cultured people who are in turn interested in her' (Kinginger, 2004: 228), the author concludes that her 'stake in language learning is also a bid to break free of the confining circumstances of a peripatetic, working-class childhood, and become a person she can admire' (2004: 240). In this way, although it is important not to discount learners' current sense of their own identities, their investments in second languages and literacy practices (Norton, 2000) may often be linked more to hoped-for future identities than to their current social context.

Nevertheless, as scholars of literacy and L2 learning attempt to theorize identity, a certain tension remains. Theory and research struggle to account for the effects on identity of community socialization and social reproduction, while holding on to a concept of identity as multiple, fluid, dynamic, and constituted in discourse. These views may seem contradictory, but both are necessary to understand connections between identity and learning. Of the authors discussed above, Ivanic theorizes this contradiction most explicitly, contrasting *biographical identity* with *discoursal identity*, then stating her decision to primarily examine identity in discourse, since 'there can be no evidence for (the former) other than (the latter)' (Ivanic, 1998: 105). However, she is uncomfortable when she finds such evidence, writing that 'Theoretically the idea of a real self is hard to accept' (Ivanic, 1998: 217). Caught in a similar bind, Norton writes that she never intended 'to serve as an apologist for poststructuralist theories' (Norton, 1995b: 338).

These discrepancies between theory and data provide opportunities for new theorizing on 'emergent identities' (Thesen, 1997). Concepts of social positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990), performativity (Butler, 1999) and self-reconstruction (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) all provide some guidance as to how gendered identities can be hybrid, not fixed, and yet historically specific (Chen, 1996), both fictitious and existentially factual (Eakin, 1999). In conceptualizing identity and learning, I find *trajectory*, emphasizing both

change and continuity over time, to be a helpful metaphor. *Trajectory* describes a path of development, often through a variety of social contexts, in which each step (or learning event) builds upon the previous ones, though sometimes in unpredictable ways (Schecter & Bayley, 2002). As Gee *et al.* note, this metaphor emphasizes the continuity of 'human lives … through multiple social practices in various social institutions' (Gee *et al.*, 1996: 4).

In my view, the key question is not whether one 'self' is more 'real' than another, but rather to what extent individuals hang on to 'a sense of continuous identity' across social contexts and instances of discourse – and to what extent this sense affects opportunities to learn new languages and literacies. My research shows that immigrant men and women can resist or embrace gender ideologies in explaining their reasons for second-language learning; they can draw inspiration from past family histories of learning or aspire to different paths for their children; they can appropriate ESL classroom literacy practices to their own social ends; and they can perform traditional gendered identities while opening discursive space for other members of their families to gain respect in new ways. In the next chapter, I begin to explore these connections and contradictions through life-history narratives that focus on issues of gender and second-language learning.

Chapter 3

Gendered Narratives of Immigrant Language Learners[14]

So when I began to have children, I began to want to learn (English) so I could teach them. So then they were little and I couldn't
Interview, 10/25/02

In the above interview excerpt, Trini, an immigrant woman from Mexico, explains why she decided to enroll in the family literacy classes at the CEC: her desire to learn English was connected to her developing identity as the mother of young children. At the same time, she makes clear that motherhood brings with it gendered constraints that affect opportunities for language learning. In my study, participants saw themselves positioned in multiple ways by their communities and by the larger society, but learners' gendered identities emerged as a key factor in their decisions to pursue or not to pursue English-language proficiency at particular times in their lives. However, different adults interpreted the cultural imperatives of gender in different ways, depending on their histories and present circumstances. In interviews, these gendered interpretations of experience often took the form of narratives, about choices made or opportunities foreclosed.

In this chapter, I analyze gendered narratives that appear in life-history interviews with three focal participants, Camila from urban El Salvador and Trini and Jorge from rural Mexico. I focus on these participants in this chapter because their narratives illustrate contrasting positions on gender issues. Specifically, I explore their descriptions of how they have lived out or resisted the gendered practices and ideologies of their communities, as well as how their gendered identities as immigrants in the United States have intersected with and affected their learning of the English language. While Ehrlich writes that men and women may have different attitudes toward 'learning or using languages … depending

on … gender identities and gender relations' in their communities (Ehrlich, 1997: 430), the narratives told by my participants suggest that this broad outline, while not incorrect, takes insufficient account of individual agency within changing social contexts. In the next section, I explain my focus on narrative as a way of understanding participants' perspectives on gender and learning.

Narrative: Making Sense of Experience

In order to understand how 'human agency interacts with people's social roles, relationships, and goals', it is helpful to examine the stories of particular individuals (Goldstein, 1997: 177). Narratives can be defined as texts that connect events over time – while reflecting on and making sense of these events. Due to tellers' need to 'manage' or understand the significance of particular experiences, narratives do not recount events objectively, but rather offer tellers' *evaluations* of events (Labov, 1972). Thus, interview narratives should not be seen as straightforward, factual reports of experience, but rather as the enactment, in the research context, of particular identities and perspectives (Schiffrin, 1996; Wortham, 2001). That is, in recounting a story about a personal experience, the teller is claiming to be a particular kind of person (e.g. a 'good mother') in interaction with the other kinds of people who appear as characters in the story (e.g. 'intelligent children'). In this way, identities performed in narrative are rarely autonomous, but rather fundamentally relational (Eakin, 1999). A story about being a good mother means little if no children take part in the recounted events. As May writes, 'narrative identity is the view of self in relation to others and the social, told through stories' (May, 2004: 170); in her view, gendered identities are constructed in narrative through negotiating gendered tensions and contradictions.

Thus, while gender is performed constantly in a wide variety of ways, personal narrative is a key linguistic resource in this endeavor. As Peterson and Langellier contend, narratives themselves are 'performative, in that (they) produce that to which (they) refer' (Peterson & Langellier, 2006: 174; cf. Butler, 1999; Pennycook, 2004): in a personal narrative, the storyteller's self-presentation as a particular type of person creates the effect of *being* that type of person. This is a discursive identity, constructed in the moment of telling, but which at the same time is meant to represent the teller's biographical identity (Ivanic, 1998). In a discussion of gender in language learning autobiographies, Pavlenko cautions that all such narratives are 'discursive constructions' rather than 'factual statements' (Pavlenko, 2001: 214). Nevertheless, she concludes that immigrants' stories do indeed

contribute to a 'complex, theoretically, and sociohistorically informed examination of individuals' perceptions of the social and cultural contexts of second language learning' (Pavlenko, 2001), including the influence of gender. In constructing a perspective on the recounted events, each story arises from and illustrates the teller's world and her place in it. While few language learners will ever write a memoir of their experiences, personal narratives likewise illustrate diverse learners' insights on their positioning within families, communities, and society, and on how this positioning has facilitated or impeded L2 learning over time.

Social Contexts of Emigration

Since all personal narratives illustrate tellers' perspectives on their social contexts, it is helpful for listeners and readers to have some background on the times and places that the narratives reconstruct. In Chapter 1, I outlined the economic trajectory of Peru in the 1980s and 1990s to shed light on Fabiana's immigration journey. The three immigrants profiled in this chapter came from the same generation as Fabiana, shared her first language, and like her were parents of young children – but they had all been in the United States longer than she had, and the economic and political histories that brought them to North America diverged in many ways from hers. Therefore, in this section, I give a quick overview of the Salvadoran civil war (1979–1992), followed by a discussion of the rural Mexican economy in the 1980s and early 1990s. For both contexts, I mention some gender trends noted by earlier researchers.

El Salvador in Wartime

My research participant Camila and her husband Marcos were part of a huge migratory wave of Salvadorans who came to the United States during the 1980s, a decade in which 70,000 of their compatriots died in civil war, and perhaps a million emigrated. The war had begun in the late 1970s, when a deteriorating economic situation led to a growing movement for social and economic change (Menjívar, 1993). When this movement was harshly repressed by the military government, a significant part of the leftist opposition went underground and formed a guerrilla army. As Mahler writes

> Prior to the conflict, only a trickle of Salvadorans had migrated to the United States … It took a bloodbath to convince them to leave … The war left virtually no family untouched … Victims were not only killed

> but slain after they had been taken forcibly from their homes, tortured (including the rape of women), and disfigured. Dismembered bodies appeared in the mornings, left in the public view as a clear warning. (Mahler, 1995b: 25)

Although US president Jimmy Carter cut off military aid to the Salvadoran government early in the conflict, citing human rights violations, Cold War politics led to the aid's restoration by the Reagan administration in 1981, and to its continuation throughout the decade. Although the war ended in a negotiated settlement in 1992, it left a legacy of violence and impoverishment in El Salvador. It also left large numbers of Salvadoran immigrants in US cities (Menjívar, 1993, 2003; Repack, 1997) and suburbs (Mahler, 1995a, b), most with shaky legal status but little desire to return home. In any case, because the United States was backing the Salvadoran government throughout the war, the US immigration service was directed to view Salvadorans as 'economic migrants' rather than genuine refugees – and as Mahler and Menjívar both point out, the war had indeed wrecked the economy.

Gender relations had been little studied in El Salvador before the war (Mahler, 2003). Recent studies are generally congruent with this statement by a Salvadoran refugee woman in Washington: 'In El Salvador, all the women have to do whatever men tell them to do, but not in the United States' (Repack, 1997: 249). However, in Menjívar's study of gender and work, she found that 'Salvadoran immigrants often value orthodox middle-class gender ideals … yet they often live in unstable situations and in poverty that preclude them from realizing such ideals' (Menjívar, 2003: 121). Thus, although Salvadoran women potentially have more freedom after immigration, they may hold on to traditional ideologies even while they adapt to changing economic circumstances.

Exodus from Rural Mexico

At the time Camila left El Salvador, the Mexican economy was also in decline. Like the Peruvian government (see Chapter 1), the Mexican state had borrowed a great deal of money during the 1970s, and rising interest rates during the early 1980s made repayment increasingly unattainable. Mexico's decision to default on its debt in 1982 sent shockwaves throughout Latin America. As Hershberg and Rosen describe the ensuing neoliberal economic 'reforms'

> Enforced both by U.S.-dominated international financial institutions and by the absorption of free-market versions of neoclassical economics

> by local elite, the protection of a secure investment climate quickly became the region's economic and political priority, typically at the expense of social well-being. (Hershberg & Rosen, 2006: 7)

While unlike Salvadorans, rural Mexicans had been migrating to the United States to work for decades (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994), the economic crises of the 1980s (and eventually the 1990s and 2000s) have led to soaring unemployment and underemployment rates in Mexico, combined with declining government support for small farmers. The implementation of the neoliberal reforms described by Hershberg and Rosen was only possible due to the ongoing repression of alternative social movements (Gregorio Hernández, personal comment, 2008), and the resulting economic and political deterioration in recent decades has led far more Mexicans to emigrate permanently than in the past, with far more emigrants now being women (Hellman, 2006, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). In particular, the huge devaluation of the Mexican peso in 1994–1995 in the wake of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) caused new waves of migration to the United States.[15] Moreover, as Hellman points out, even the Mexicans who come from 'traditional sending areas' increasingly seek steady urban employment rather than the field labor that their uncles might have done in the 1960s. Efforts to close the border have generally had the unintended effect of settling undocumented Mexicans more firmly in the United States (Hellman, 2006, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

In her ethnographic study of gender and Mexican migration, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) describes the journey to the United States as a 'rite of passage' for young men (cf. Monto, 1994), facilitated by patriarchal family structures. Invited to travel north by male kin, migrants often left home impulsively, then prolonged their stay indefinitely so as to be able to 'live up to the image of a successful migrant' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 55) on their return home, an image which Hondagneu-Sotelo points out was intrinsically masculine and not expected to apply to female migrants. Under patriarchal mandates to provide for their families, many immigrant men found themselves positioned by racism and lack of legal documents at the bottom of the US labor market. Hondagneu-Sotelo found that women immigrants were most likely to follow a spouse to the United States, but that growing numbers of single women were also taking advantage of opportunities to immigrate, in order '"to know other places" and to earn a target amount of money' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 86). In this way, they were similar to young men of their generation, but unlike them often had to circumvent patriarchal authority in order to leave home.

Describing the situation once immigrants have arrived in the United States, Hondagneu-Sotelo writes

> While patriarchal practices and rules in families and social networks have persisted, through migration women and men reinterpret normative standards and creatively manipulate the rules of gender. As they do so, understandings about proper gendered behavior are reformulated. (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 96)

Specifically, women immigrants often experience increased spatial mobility in the United States, while undocumented men may feel themselves constrained (Hirsch, 2003); additionally, men are more likely to 'help' with housework in immigrant households than at home in Mexico, while women often assume a greater role in family decision-making. As a result, the women in Hondagneu-Sotelo's study 'were more likely (than men) to say they wished to remain permanently in the United States because staying in this country promised the best opportunities for them and their children' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 99; cf. Hellman, 2007).

However, economic changes and increasing emigration are also influencing relations between men and women in rural Mexican villages. Traditionally, 'patriarchal authority along with age determined the social hierarchies of the family; family honor depended on women's virtue and men's ability to protect women's reputations' (Grimes, 1998: 46), but in an age of emigration, 'men's absence and the concomitant need to engage in wage-producing labor have increased women's decisiveness and ability to act, although these are subject to restriction by long-standing gender norms' (Arias, 1994: 171). Moreover, in Hirsch's ethnographic research with transnational Mexican communities (Hirsch, 2000, 2003), she has found new ideals of 'companionate' marriage to be gaining popularity among younger couples. As Hirsch writes, her interviewees see differences in gender relations between the United States and Mexico: ' "En El Norte", they say,"la mujer manda" –in the North, that is, women give the orders' (Hirsch, 2000: 369). Nevertheless, Hirsch also notes a generational shift in how women in rural Mexico are likewise seeking greater equality (and intimacy) in gender relations. Hirsch interprets these changes as the result of the economic upheavals that are bringing women into wage labor – and also as due to the idealization of romantic love by popular television soap operas that first hit rural Mexico in the 1980s. As economic and cultural shifts reinforce each other, traditional gender ideologies remain powerful, but are increasingly questioned.

Conducting Interviews, Interpreting Narratives

The interviews profiled in this chapter were audiotaped in Kingston, California (see Chapter 1) between August 2002 and January 2003; each lasted from one to two-and-a-half hours. I interviewed Jorge in the Kingston Public Library, while Camila's and Trini's interviews took place in their homes. All the interviews were conducted in Spanish, although at times participants code-switched into English in order to demonstrate their use of the language in community settings. In introducing these interviews, I encouraged participants to tell stories about their experiences while answering my questions. During the interviews, I asked participants about childhood experiences with literacy outside of school; experiences with formal schooling; the educational, literacy and work experiences of family members; decisions about schooling, work, immigration, marriage and children; work histories in their homelands and the United States; personal experiences with reading and writing; experiences learning English in and out of school; and goals for the future. These interviews were transcribed by a native speaker of Spanish (Luis Solano, see Acknowledgements), who also consulted with me on translation and cultural issues.

I began open, thematic coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Boyatzis, 1998) after collecting and reading through all my data. One of the over-arching themes that emerged through this process was *social positioning*, which I defined at the time, citing Bourdieu (1991) and Holland *et al.* (1998) as 'the process through which individuals and groups negotiate status and entitlement relative to other individuals and groups in society, based on attributes such as gender, age, ethnicity, immigration status, family roles etc.' (For more extensive theoretical treatment of social positioning, see Chapter 2). Once I finished the thematic coding, I made an indexed, electronic file of all the narrative data segments corresponding to sub-themes of social positioning, such as gender and immigration. Although I had asked no direct interview questions about the impact of gender, narratives in which characters' genders were important to the events recounted were common throughout the interviews.

I concentrate in this chapter on a selection of these gendered narratives. Because I am primarily focused on the thematic content of these stories, I present them in English translation while including key Spanish phrases (for a discursive analysis of two more complex gendered narratives, see Chapter 6). While these are stories of participants' 'real-life' experiences, readers should note that the stories have twice undergone a shaping process to meet the demands of an audience (Cortazzi, 1993). First, the research

participants constructed their accounts according to their interpretations of my identity as an Anglo teacher. Second, I have selected from many hours of audiotaped interviews those aspects of participants' stories which I see as most relevant to the connections between gender and language learning in immigrant communities. As I share these stories, I also share my interpretations. In particular, I look at the identities that participants perform in relation to the other characters as they tell these narratives (May, 2006; Peterson & Langellier, 2006) (for more discussion of reflexivity and representation in ethnographic research, see Chapter 1). All information about the participants is as of the time of my interviews with them in 2002–2003.

Camila's Narratives

Camila, a 36-year-old Salvadoran, had lived in California since 1989. Her parents were divorced, and she had grown up with her mother, who had her own dressmaking business in a small city. Camila and her husband Marcos, an electrician, had a sixth-grade son and a second-grade daughter, both born in the United States. Both children attended a bilingual elementary school near the CEC. The family had owned their own home in a quiet working-class neighborhood in Kingston since the summer of 2000. Camila's mother also lived with them.

At the time of the interviews, Camila did not work outside the home, and had no immediate plans to do so. She was a very regular attendee of the intermediate class at the CEC. Although many of the classroom activities were too easy for her, she was an enthusiastic student, as well as an accomplished storyteller in both English and Spanish. It was primarily due to her storytelling skills that I selected Camila as a research participant. In class, she was always cheerful and confident, so I was rather surprised by her interviews. In striking contrast to her in-class persona, she consistently portrayed herself in life-history narratives as vulnerable and often victimized. Once she began telling stories, she barely paused for breath, and it was difficult to bring the interviews to an end. I interviewed her four times between October 2002 and January 2003, and two of the interviews were over 2 h long.

'I understood that my position was less than theirs'

In the stories below (and in others), Camila delineates the gendered constraints that she had felt in her life, her sense of feminine vulnerability seemingly exacerbated by her wartime experiences. In most of the stories

she told in interviews, the world around her was a place of danger for herself and her children. In this way, she exemplified Bruner's claim that telling narratives is a way to deal with 'trouble' (Bruner, 1990).

In the mid-1980s, Camila graduated from high school in El Salvador, and immediately entered teacher's college. However, she only studied for one year, because at that time

> The soldiers were going around killing teachers. […] Someone would tell them "you know, so-and-so in that room is a guerilla," […] they wouldn't try to find out, they would go directly to the house of that person and kill them without finding out. And so that was the fear (*temor*) that I felt. (Interview, 11/14/02)

This is only a small sample of the many narratives that Camila told of the war years in El Salvador. Through these narratives, she established an atmosphere of danger that seemed to continue even in her tales of life in California. A key word here is '*temor*', a particularly strong word for 'fear', that appears 10 times in her November 14 interview alone. (She used two words for fear, '*temor*' and '*miedo*', a total of 23 times in four interviews.)

Having established the sense of mortal vulnerability that characterized the war years in El Salvador, in the narratives below, Camila illustrates the further gendered constraints she felt. After dropping out of school, she moved in with the family of her boyfriend Marcos (now her husband). However, when Marcos left to seek work in the United States, she no longer felt comfortable in his family's home and went back to live with her mother. It was two years before Marcos was able to send money for Camila to follow him. Meanwhile, her mother, sister and teen-aged nieces treated her like an abandoned mistress:

> My mom let me know that my position in the house was no longer the same as it was when I was a *señorita*. Because she said, "you are now a woman (*mujer*), you now have responsibilities." […] Sincerely I felt humiliated, because my nieces and my little sister were still *señoritas*, and I wasn't any more […] Because I understood that my position was less than theirs. (Interview, 12/5/02)

A *señorita* is an unmarried woman, prototypically virginal and prototypically young. In this narrative, the fact that Camila has lived with her boyfriend outside marriage has caused her to lose this comparatively respected identity. The word by which her mother describes her new status, *mujer*, simply means 'woman' but it carries here an implication of sexual activity, without the connotation of marriage and maturity that

dignify the contrasting term *señora*. Mahler (1995a, 1995b) reports that living together outside marriage (*acompañarse*) was common and accepted among the rural, working-class Salvadorans she interviewed. It may have been Camila's more educated, urban background that led her to valorize the 'orthodox middle-class gender ideals such as stable and legal unions' that she was at that time unable to fulfil (Menjívar, 2003: 121). In this narrative, living with her boyfriend outside marriage causes Camila to experience a humiliating loss of reputation, worsened by her boyfriend's immigration to the United States.

To get out of her mother's house, Camila took a job as a live-in maid for a neighbor:

> I felt useful, not like a kept woman (*mantenida*). And I didn't feel that scornful glance (*esa mirada discriminante*) of my nieces or my sister. (Interview, 12/5/02)

While this job may have kept her from feeling like a *mantenida*, it created new problems. The neighbor was earning extra money by cooking meals for unmarried men. The regular arrival of these men at the house led to vicious rumors, which even reached Marcos in California. The angry letter she received from him accused her of 'prostituting (*prostituyendo*)' herself with the men who visited the house, and demanded that she move back in with her mother. Camila did so, and found a job in a furniture store. However, one day when she was alone sweeping out a storage room, her boss approached and began asking questions about her boyfriend in the United States. When he suggested that her boyfriend had found someone else, Camila looked offended, and he came closer as if to apologize, but then he grabbed and embraced her. In recounting her response, she performs an identity of outraged virtue that contrasts with the way her boss (and her mother and fiancé) have positioned her:

> When I grabbed his hand to take it off me, he spun me around, and he grabbed me and kissed me. So when I felt him kiss me, I remember that I pushed him away with fury […] "What's happening with you, you dirty old man (*viejo abusivo*)?" (Interview, 12/5/02)

In this narrative of sexual harassment, Camila appears powerful, pushing her boss away 'with fury', reproaching him as a 'dirty old man', and effectively defending her honor. However, her boss had all the economic power in the situation: to avoid continued harassment, she quit that job and did not look for another. She lived with her mother until Marcos sent the money for her to join him in California. In Camila's narratives, it was her lack of a man's support that forced her into dependence on her disapproving

mother, each attempt she had made at self-sufficiency through education and work leaving her more vulnerable than the one before.

Reunited with and eventually married to her fiancé in California, Camila transferred her dependency to him. While she had held three jobs in United States, babysitting, sweeping up in a hair salon and stocking shelves in a department store, none of them lasted long, due to conflicts with employers or co-workers: when things did not go well on the job, she could rely on her husband's income and support. Aside from one period of unemployment in the early 1990s, Marcos had worked steadily as an electrician, and Camila had been a homemaker. In the United States, unlike El Salvador, they were able to live out traditional gender ideals of 'stable and legal unions where the men are the financial providers and the women guard a unified family and domesticity' (Menjívar, 2003: 121). Until recent years, most of Camila's L2 learning took place within the family home.

'You are never going to learn English'

Camila's first attempt to study English in class (early 1990) ended due to pregnancy:

> The teacher spoke with my husband and told him I couldn't keep going to the classes because I kept running to the bathroom, everything made me vomit? (Interview, 10/17/02)

In this narrative of failed learning, Camila is victimized by her own physiology, and indeed by 'everything' in her environment. The rising intonation on 'vomit'? invites the understanding and agreement of her audience, whom Camila knew to be likewise a mother (I see from my field notes that we had a further discussion of pregnancy symptoms as I was leaving her house after the interview). However, it is the indirectly quoted voice of the English teacher in this story that points out the incompatibility between maternity and language study.

In a later interview, Camila returned to this disjuncture between motherhood and scholarship. In explaining below why she rejected the option of spending $70 a semester to take English classes at a college near their home in San Francisco, she performs the identity of a self-sacrificing wife and mother, willing to put her own needs behind her husband's 'dream' and her son's education:

> So I thought that is less money for my husband's dream [of buying a home] or for my son's education. So that's why I never demanded

> (*nunca exigí*) to go to the college, and I always got by (*me conformé*) with the television. (Interview 1/9/03)

Thus, Camila describes herself as initially spurning 'education and advancement' (Rockhill, 1993) as a threat to family unity. Her identity in this narrative is relational not only to her husband and son, but to an earlier self who once had the academic ambitions she rejects here.

Once she put her mind to it, Camila in fact learned considerable English from the television. However, during her first few years in the United States, she said she primarily watched Spanish-language soap operas (*novelas*), and had no desire to change the channel. English 'sounded ugly' to her ('*me caía muy feo*'), and she did not feel much necessity to learn it. In her narrative of English learning, it was not until the mid-1990s that her husband finally persuaded her to take the language seriously, in a single dramatic confrontation. In this story, she depicts herself as a selfish and perhaps lazy Latina immigrant, ignorant of US urban perils, who deserves to be taught a lesson in motherhood.

As the narrative begins, one night while she was watching *novelas*, Marcos came up to her and grabbed the remote control. When she demanded to know what he wanted, he asked her in a quiet voice if she loved their son, Marquitos, then three years old:

> "What I want to tell you is this," he said. "One day […] the boy is going to grow up," he said. "And you're never going to learn English, and what's going to happen […] when he's a *teenager* [English in original], […] close your eyes," […] he said, "and put this photograph in your mind," he said, "You're going to be sitting right here, watching your soap operas in Spanish, and next to you he's going to be sitting with the telephone, speaking English and making drug deals (*hablando inglés y haciendo negocios de drogas*). […] When you ask him what he is doing, he is going to think, 'My mom is a fool (*tonta*), she doesn't speak English." […] I looked at my son, and I felt a lump of tears in my throat (*un nudo en la garganta de llorar*). (Interview, 1/9/03)

In this narrative, Camila portrays her husband's moral authority, as Marcos turns upside down her sense of the incompatibility between L2 learning and motherhood. She describes him putting a 'photograph' in her mind, a future image of her now teenaged son dealing drugs while she continues watching soap operas. The code-switch to English for the single word 'teenager' invokes a whole discourse about juvenile delinquency in immigrant communities. The nearest Spanish equivalent, 'joven', lacks negative connotations and does not index the North American context where

young Latinos risk losing the values of their parents and assimilating into the urban underclass (Repack, 1997). This is reinforced with a depiction of the English language as powerful, dangerous and unsavory: 'speaking English' is parallel to 'making drug deals'. At the end of the excerpt, Camila graphically describes her affective response: 'I looked at my son, and I felt a lump of tears in my throat'.

While the constraints that made it difficult for Camila to study remained, Marcos in this story has made it clear that she *must* learn English in order to protect her son from urban perils in the United States. As with Martina in Norton Peirce's (1995a, 2000) study, Camila's investment in motherhood began to propel her L2 learning. She told me that was the last night she watched television in Spanish. She began learning English by paying attention to the numbers on Wheel of Fortune, and when Marcos saw she was serious, he brought home a closed-caption device so that she could see the words in English text on the screen as well as hear them. While watching she took notes on words she did not know, and looked them up in a bilingual dictionary after the show. Her favorite program became *I Love Lucy*: she said that after three or four years of watching all 120 episodes repeatedly, she could recite the dialogue in English with the sound off. Around this time, she began taking her children to the neighborhood library, and checking out books in English to read aloud to them.

However, Camila did not start attending classes in English till the year 2000 when the family succeeded in buying a home in Kingston, and she found out that free ESL classes were offered at the CEC, two blocks from her children's new school, during the hours they were in class. By the time of my research in 2002, Camila had been studying full time at the CEC for two years, and when her teacher tried to refer her to a more advanced ESL class in another program, Camila refused, stating a desire to be near her children in case of emergency (Field notes, 8/15/02). Nearly six months later, her teacher reiterated to me, 'I'm trying to get Camila to move up to a higher class, or to (community college), because she's too high for this level [intermediate]. But she won't do it' (Interview, 1/29/03). Finding the CEC a safe place in a world that still seemed dangerous, she was hesitant to move on.

Jorge's Narratives

Jorge, a 27-year-old Zapotec, came from the state of Oaxaca in southern Mexico, and was trilingual in Zapoteco, Spanish and English. His mother earned a living by selling vegetables and cheese in the market of his hometown. Jorge came to California soon after graduating from high school in

the mid-1990s; on one visit back to Mexico, he had married a woman from his village and fathered a son, now two years old. Though the CEC mostly served women, Jorge said the program met his needs. Comparing his class there with others he had taken, he said it offered 'more confidence, more togetherness, like more camaraderie (*más confianza, más unión, como más compañerismo*)' (Interview, 8/16/02). Pain from the back injury he had sustained in a recent workplace accident (see below) sometimes showed in his movements and facial expressions.

I had initially planned to interview only women, thinking it would be easier to develop rapport with members of my own gender. However, during my first two months at the CEC, I found myself having interesting and in-depth conversations with both men and women. I was struck by the prevalence of workplace injuries among the few men who attended the program[16] and decided that I wanted to document that phenomenon as part of my study. As I began choosing focal students, I invited Jorge to participate, and ended up interviewing him twice, for 2 h each time, in August and September of 2002. By then he had stopped attending classes at the CEC in order to study computer skills, but he returned to the CEC in November, and I had several informal conversations with him. Though not audiotaped, these conversations were detailed in my ethnographic field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

'The thing about work'

Jorge was raised bilingually in a small Zapotec town, a situation he compares to the English/Spanish bilingualism in California Latino communities: 'From the time you (*tú*) are a child, they begin to speak to you in the dialect (*dialecto*) and in Spanish … So the two things you keep combining, you keep understanding. It's like here, learning English with Latino people who speak Spanish' (Interview, 8/30/02). Using the familiar pronoun 'tú (*you*)', Jorge generalizes his experiences learning two languages in childhood to all the children in his community, naturalizing bilingualism and code-switching, both in Oaxaca and California.

For the most part, however, Jorge's narratives focused on the necessity to work and earn money, which had dominated his life since early youth. From the time he was eight or nine, he helped his mother with her money-making endeavors; after she got married, Jorge was additionally expected to work on his stepfather's ranch on weekends. Jorge's mother had not gone to school herself, and according to Jorge, she did not consider education important. He said he would have appreciated more support, but that getting an education was 'siempre de mi parte (*always up to me*)' (Interview,

8/30/02). He told me that he learned to value (Spanish-language) schooling by observing the other people in his community:

> Well, society itself, that's what keeps showing you that the ones who keep having more studies, keep having more opportunities (*los que van teniendo más estudios, teniendo más oportunidades*) to work, to go different places, to do many things. And the ones that don't go to school stay in one place? So I didn't want to be like that. (Interview, 8/30/02)

Constructing two possible identities for himself, Jorge contrasts people who go to school (and have opportunities) with those who do not (and get stuck in one place). Along with 'opportunity', mobility is a crucial difference for Jorge between these types of people he has observed in 'society', and his rising intonation at the end of the utterance invites my agreement. Emphasizing his own agency in pursuing an education, Jorge performs what has been called *technical masculinity* (Connell, 1995; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), in contrast to the *physical masculinity* of men who define themselves through their muscles.

An oil refinery had opened near the community, making work available to local people with secondary educations, so Jorge and most of his generation did attend high school. In his narratives, Jorge depicts his mother putting up with his educational endeavors, as long as they did not interfere with household chores and weekend work on his stepfather's ranch. Below, he describes the conflict that developed between school and home responsibilities when his mother 'optó (*opted*)' to buy 10 sheep:

> I had to (*tenía que*) go to school, from the senior high school, I came back at one in the afternoon, and then rounded up the sheep to take care of them at the river. […] So then (*entonces*) I came back from taking care of the animals, and I had to work, making the cheese, and so I didn't have time to go study. […] I told my mom, either I had to work or I had to go to school. But I had to work. The thing about work, you have to do it every day (*El hecho de trabajo, tiene que hacerlo todos los días*). (Interview, 8/16/02)

Jorge constructs this narrative as a loose causal chain, strung together with the word 'so then (*entonces*)', one circumstance leading to another and eventually forcing him to drop out of high school. All agency in this narrative pertains to his mother, who put this chain in motion through 'opting' to buy sheep. Where she has agency, he has obligations, which he emphasizes through the repeated use of 'tenía que (*had to*)'. He sums up this state of affairs with a generalization about the inescapable nature

of work: 'the thing (literally, "the fact") about work, you have to do it every day'.

In these narratives, Jorge's mother and stepfather position him as an unskilled laborer, a person whose primary value lies in his muscles, his reliability and his willingness to take orders. In this version of physical masculinity, a young man's 'brute strength' is necessarily controlled by individuals with more societal power (Morgan, 1992), as when Jorge's mother 'opts' to buy sheep for him to take care of after school. Thus, like male language learners in other studies, Jorge did not speak of gender directly (Pavlenko, 2001), but his narratives referenced the responsibilities rather than the privileges of masculinity (Vera-Sanso, 2001).

After this point in the narrative, however, Jorge began to emphasize his *own* agency, using the verb 'optar (*opt*)' to describe his own decisions as he began to pursue a kind of technical masculinity. He first decided to do something more 'práctico (*practical*)' (working in a carpentry shop); then to ask his mother and stepfather to let him study a 'practical' trade (marine mechanics) at a vocational high school even though it involved a long commute. He eventually managed to finish high school, although he said his grades were never as good as he would have liked. He then planned to join the Mexican Coast Guard, but a soccer injury prevented him. Despite all his agency in preparing himself for what he calls 'a stable job for life, (with) a stable salary (*un trabajo estable por toda la vida, un sueldo estable*)', circumstances outside his control had again intervened in his narrative.

Around that time, as in Hondagneu-Sotelo's (1994) account of Mexican immigration, a cousin invited Jorge to join him in the United States. Jorge lived in California from then on, sending money home. His cousin got him a job in a carwash, and he worked for the same company for several years. He told me he liked the work because he liked cars, and he enjoyed the opportunity to drive and work on them. However, he became aware that he was underpaid and that the boss frequently cheated him when filling out timesheets. Toward the end of his time there, Jorge told me he felt 'psychologically abused':

> He'd psychologically give you situations in the head (*él psicológicamente te daba situaciones en la cabeza*), for example, many other companies ask for references, no? So one of the things he'd say to me is that 'if you leave the carwash, […] when they ask me for a reference, I'll tell them you're a very bad person […] and wherever you go (*dondequiera que vayas*), you're not going to be able to work'. (Interview, 8/30/02)

As in his narratives about his mother (and stepfather), Jorge portrays himself under the control of a more powerful individual, a control that he

describes as not only economic but 'psychological'. The phrase 'wherever you go' emphasizes that this control extended beyond the boundaries of the carwash itself. In Jorge's stories, physical masculinity is associated with a lack of agency, with an obedience that leads to no rewards: he is controlled first by his mother and stepfather, and then by the owner of the carwash. He only felt able to quit the carwash when friends offered him a job in construction. Eventually, he ended up as a sandblaster in an auto-body shop. In early 2002, he was sandblasting a car chassis when it fell on him, sending his life in a new direction:

> I put it on the wall like this […] to clean it, to take the rust off it? And I couldn't get it to sit right, it slid on me, it came on top of me again ((pause)) and the movement I made throwing the hose so I could grab it was what hurt my back. And now I've been seven months without work (*Y ahorita tengo siete meses sin trabajar*). (Interview, 8/16/02)

Having a car fall on you while sandblasting is a gendered accident: given the current configuration of the workforce, it is an event more likely to happen to a man than a woman. As with the soccer injury that kept him out of the Coast Guard, Jorge depicts physical masculinity as self-defeating: the exercise of 'brute strength' leads to disabling injuries (Connell, 1995). Certainly, for Jorge, this gendered accident led to new investment (Norton, 2000) in English learning and technical training, which till then he had seen as incidental to his long-term investment in his family's economic stability.

'Dedicating a little more to my studies'

Jorge's bosses and co-workers at the carwash spoke Spanish, so he says he learned English initially from interacting with customers:

> The clients would speak English […] You learn the most when they signal you? They tell you the things but signalling them to you (*señalándotelas*), so you understand what they mean. […] So you keep learning little by little, although you can't express yourself (*no te puedes expresar*), but now you can understand what they say. (Interview, 8/30/02)

Describing his process of language learning, Jorge portrays himself as silent and attentive, trying to understand what English speakers want from him. Moreover, by using the familiar pronoun 'tú (*you*)' as well as the present tense, Jorge generalizes his experiences to other immigrants: 'although you can't express yourself, but now you can understand'.

Indeed, from the beginning, this method of learning meant that Jorge found it easier to comprehend than to speak English. His linguistic difficulties 'expressing himself' in English are reflected in his inability to speak up for himself in situations of exploitation. In the narrative below, he is unable to defend himself from a carwash customer who wanted more services than he'd paid for:

> He shouted at me really ugly (*me gritó bien feo*) because he says […] "You didn't …," and I didn't speak English … "I have paid you, why don't you wash my car?" he says to me. "If I have paid you to wash it?" … "Why," he said to me, "Why don't you wash it?" […] I began to speak a little English to try to make him understand a little, that the machine is what washes it? But he began to shout at me really ugly. And we just have to put up with everything (*Y tenemos que sí aguantar todo, pues*). (Interview, 8/30/02)

Here Jorge emphasizes his sense of helplessness by repeating the customer's question, 'why don't you wash my car'? as well as the manner in which he spoke, 'shouting really ugly'. Although he can understand the man well enough to quote him directly years later, in the narrative he appears as a beginning language learner who cannot defend himself. Describing his 'little English' as inadequate to placate the man, Jorge again generalizes his situation to other immigrants: '*we* just have to put up with everything' (italics added). This is the performance of a subordinated rather than a hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995).

Jorge sporadically enrolled in ESL classes during the years he was working, but he said he was often misplaced due to tests that measured only listening skills. In class he felt that his inability to express himself orally led to teachers ignoring him as they focused on more verbally adept students. In any case, before his accident, Jorge could usually take only night classes after working long days, and he never persisted long in one program. In the aftermath of the accident, he spent three months at home unable to do anything, before deciding to begin 'dedicating a little more to my studies (*dedicando un poco más a mis estudios*)' (Interview, 8/16/02). In the summer of 2002, Jorge was studying English 15 h a week at the CEC in the mornings, and also taking night and Saturday classes. The doctor who treated his back injury had referred him to a lawyer who could pursue his worker's compensation claim, and the lawyer referred him to a vocational rehabilitation counsellor. In my first interview (8/16/02), he emphasized his satisfaction with how the insurance and retraining had worked out, repeating several times 'todo está bien (*everything is fine*)'.

As Ochs and Capps (1996) argue, narratives of the past tend to reference current concerns. Perhaps for this reason, there is a great deal of parallelism between Jorge's narratives of his childhood and adult experiences. For Jorge, his third language (English), like his second language (Spanish), is the dominant societal language, associated with economic advancement. Piller and Pavlenko note that some learners will develop bilingualism 'only to a certain extent … (avoiding) the consequences of losing the old and adopting the new ways of being in the world', while others 'may resist the language that positions them unfavorably' (Piller & Pavlenko, 2001: 29). However, Jorge had already experienced the process of becoming educated in an L2 while maintaining the L1 of his community. Therefore, while he felt himself positioned unfavorably by many English *speakers*, the language itself seemed to pose no threat to his identity. In fact, English could be seen as helping him to reconstruct an earlier self that had sought advancement through schooling.

Jorge studied basic computer skills in English at a private business school from August 2002 till January 2003. By the time I talked to him in November, he was not entirely happy with the program: there were tensions between African-American and Latino students, and he did not feel that he received sufficient attention from the instructors (Field notes, 11/19/02). He was even less pleased when both his doctor and his lawyer recommended that he take a lump sum payment on his disability claim rather than continue medical treatment. He was still in pain from the injury (Field notes, 11/26/02). However, overall he felt that he was learning a lot about computers, and even from the beginning he was able to keep up with the English-medium instruction due to the hands-on nature of the course: 'What happens is that I am very practical (*práctico*). When they show me something practical, yes, I understand more quickly than reading' (Interview, 8/16/02).

Claiming an identity as a 'practical' person, Jorge tied his current computer studies to his earlier learning of carpentry and marine mechanics in Mexico. Previously resigned to learning English passively by following directions, after his accident he embarked on an all-out effort to develop new literacies in his L3. At the end of August, Jorge was learning how to cut and paste in Word. By late November when I talked to him again, he was exploring MailMerge and Access, and had definitely surpassed my own computer knowledge. He showed me his textbook, which had case studies on topics like mailing out letters to old customers to thank them for their business (Field notes, 11/19/02). His plan was to go back to Mexico when the course ended, in order to reunite with his wife and son. Referring to his computer training, he said

> That's one of the tools (*herramientas*) that I can bring from here. With a certificate (*título*) from here, from the United States, because any document that comes from here is very recognized (*reconocido*) there. Let's say, it's something better (*algo mejor*). (Interview, 8/16/02)

Jorge's narratives thus exemplify his development of a kind of technical masculinity, based on linguistic and occupational expertise. Like the male immigrants described by Hondagneu-Sotelo, he saw himself on his return 'living up to the image of a successful migrant' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994: 55), due to newly acquired computer skills. His narratives are gendered not because they reference gender specifically but because they aim to make sense of life events that are in many ways typical for Mexican male immigrants of his generation; his older sisters' stories would be very different.

Trini's Narratives

Trini, a 34-year-old Mexican, came from rural Michoacán, where her father worked in construction and her mother made handicrafts. She had lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for 15 years. Trini's husband Alfredo also came from Michoacán, but she met and married him in California. Alfredo had worked for a long time in a mattress factory, while Trini had been cooking hamburgers in a fast-food restaurant for eight or nine years. They had two children, a son in kindergarten and a daughter in preschool. Both children were in English-only classes, but their parents planned to teach them to read in Spanish, and had gotten relatives in Mexico to send them textbooks. Trini had learned conversational English at work, but started ESL classes at the CEC in the fall of 2002, in order to be able to help her children with English-language homework.

Trini and her husband owned their own home in a solid working-class neighborhood, near a freeway and a large shopping center. They had remodeled the garage into living space, and it was occupied by Trini's younger brother and his family. Trini's sister and her family also shared the house. Considering how insightful Trini's interviews turned out to be, it is hard to admit in retrospect that I initially asked her to participate in the project for demographic reasons: I needed another Mexican woman with a sixth-grade education, and I was interested in her work outside the home. I interviewed her four times between October 2002 and January 2003.

'I went without his permission'

When Trini began studying at the primary school in her village, it only went up to third grade. After her third-grade year, some new classrooms

were opened, and she was in the first class of children that completed sixth grade. In interview narratives, Trini emphasized the way her unschooled mother had encouraged her children to learn to read, so they could help her when letters arrived in the mail. As Trini explained, 'She taught us that we should read (*que leyéramos*)' (Interview, 10/25/02). Despite this early encouragement, however, Trini's parents could not afford to send their children on the bus to secondary school in the next town. Moreover, her father feared for his daughters' virtue; in recounting his views Trini mimicked him in a sing-song voice:

> The (high school) girls are real clowns (*bien payasas*), they just go, and you don't know what they are going to do, and in the end they don't even study, in the end they are going to come back pregnant (*van a venir embarazadas*) ((laughing)). (Interview, 12/13/02)

Despite the family's poverty, her father was likewise reluctant to let his daughters out of the home to work for pay. Trini's sisters were obedient in this regard, but Trini was not. Drawing on her mother's example of hard work, she insisted on taking advantage of her limited opportunities for money earning. Although her father prevented her from attending secondary school, he could not keep her from working in the local strawberry and tomato fields:

> My dad didn't let us (*no nos dejaba*) work in the fields, and I went without his permission (*me iba sin su permiso*). I went like to pick strawberries, to pick tomatoes, but way out in the country? and my sisters never went? […] They'd tell me, "let's go to the strawberries, let's go!!!" ((laughing)) Or they'd say like when some farmer was going around hiring, "We need you to pick tomatoes for us tomorrow." And right away I'd go, when they'd tell me "let's go, let's go!" ((laughing)) And so I did work a lot in the fields and my sisters didn't. (Interview, 12/13/02)

The phrases '(he) didn't let (us)' and 'I went without his permission' repeat in many of Trini's narratives. Like Jorge above, she equates mobility with agency and opportunity. She explained her disobedience to me by reiterating her family's poverty:

> We didn't even have bread […] at times we didn't even have a school notebook like I told you, at times we didn't even have a pencil. So I always had the desire to progress a little (*siempre tuve ganas de como de progresar un poquito*). (Interview, 12/13/02)

In keeping with this desire for 'progress', Trini immigrated to the United States at the age of 18, following her older brothers (cf. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Soon after arrival, she met and married Alfredo, who initially shared her father's old-fashioned values. When Trini found a factory job, conflict erupted:

> I came home, and I was really happy (*yo bien contenta*), my husband comes in, and I talk to him. "No, you're not going to work," and I did the same thing that I did with my dad. I went without … (*me fui sin*…) I said, "Ah, I'm going to go anyway." And I did go (*y si me fui*). He went to work, like at five, and I left, like at five or six, just a little after him, because I had to be there at seven. […] And I spent like an hour walking. (Interview, 12/13/02)

Here Trini depicts herself fighting the same battle as a newly wed that she had with her father; when Alfredo did not let her work, she 'went without (permission)'. Through persistence, she finally won him over to her way of thinking: after about two weeks, Alfredo relented and began to give Trini rides to work. She told me that this was a difficult time, that he was angry at her for her independent attitude, but she persisted. Her working allowed them to thrive economically even during periods when Alfredo was unemployed; the home they bought is the fruit of her insistence on earning money. After about seven years of marriage, she says, he changed his ideas about men and women and is now supportive of her endeavors. In fact, when I met him, he made a point of telling me that he helped with housework (cf. Hirsch, 2000). Nevertheless, in telling me these stories of conflict with the men in her life, Trini felt the need to stress repeatedly that she did not think she was doing 'anything bad (*nada malo*)'; after 15 years in the United States she seemed to be still arguing with her father in her mind.

'So now I feel the same as my mom'

Trini began learning English soon after arriving in the United States, at her first fast-food job. The manager, who did not know Spanish, would show her how to put the burgers together, explaining each step in English. Still, she had a lot to learn when she began her current job at Burgerland (pseudonym), eight or nine years ago:

> When I arrived (at Burgerland) I didn't know what *lettuce* was, or what was … well, *tomatoes* I did. But like *pickles*, I didn't know what *pickles* was ((laughing)), *cheese*, things like that I didn't know what it was [italicized words in English in original]. (Interview, 10/25/02)

She learned food-service words in the same way that Jorge learned carwash vocabulary, by following directions.

However, unlike Jorge (or female immigrants in some other studies, e.g. Goldstein, 1997), Trini also had a chance to pick up speaking skills in English at work. At the restaurant, most of her co-workers were Asian immigrants, and she had developed friendly relationships with them through English. She seemed to have particular fun teasing and being teased by a Laotian woman, Angie, the girlfriend of the restaurant's manager, Kevin. When I asked her about practicing English at work, Trini was able to quote both herself and her co-worker in English:

> I ask her, "hey, Angie, you and Kevin uh uh have a seven years boyfriends? And no married! ((laughing)) Why you … a long time no good!" And she say, "yes is long time, my life is no … nothing important, nothing especial, nothing different, everyday same thing. When I stay work, he stay in the house, when he here in the Burgerland, I stay in my home, never going to some place, never we go to dancing, ((laughing)) never to the theater?" And I tell her, "Oh, look for one more, no more Kevin," ((laughing)) and she say, "Oh! I tell Kevin what you say!" (Interview, 11/8/02, English in the original)

In this way, along with the money she earned, Trini's workplace experiences gave her confidence to express herself in her new language – enough to humorously advise her boss's girlfriend to leave him. Her teasing draws on particular gendered values that she assumes her co-worker shares: a preference for marriage over long-term dating or living together and a belief that couples should spend pleasurable time together (cf. Hirsch, 2000, 2003). Moreover, because these comments came in answer to my question about learning English at work, she explicitly highlighted workplace teasing as a means of language acquisition. Certainly, she was lucky in her co-workers, but if she had accepted Alfredo's strictures on her behavior as a married woman, she would never have met them.

However, like most of the women in Goldstein's 1997 study, Trini had no opportunity to develop English literacy at work. For many years, this English that Trini picked up in the workplace was enough for her to meet the demands of daily life. Years earlier she had taken ESL, but found it too difficult to get up for a morning class when she was working till midnight. After her children were born, however, Trini felt a renewed interest in education (see opening quote to this chapter). Her practice since adolescence of purchasing and reading magazines led directly into buying 'board books' for her son when he was an infant. In the fall of 2002 with her son in kindergarten and her daughter in preschool, she thought about how her

mother had always encouraged her to learn. Explaining her desire to support her children academically, she told me, 'So now I feel the same as my mom' (Interview, 10/25/02). Trini began ESL classes during the hours her children were in school:

> My son was asking me lots of words in English? And I don't know what to tell him ((laughing)). […] His homework is easy, but for me it's difficult. […] And so now I began to think of them … that maybe if I begin (to learn English), like to show them a little that I want to get ahead like that (*salir adelante así*), so that they also see that I am making a little more effort? (Interview, 1/17/03)

Through her use of the phrase 'get ahead (*salir adelante*)', Trini connects English to the same discourse of progress she had used to explain her insistence on working her way out of poverty. Fond of reading in Spanish (she was reading the 2002 autobiography of journalist Jorge Ramos at the time I interviewed her), Trini did not feel that she could read English at all before beginning the classes. Her husband wrote her a love letter in English to motivate her, but she was initially unable to decipher it. After two months of daily study, however, she reported to me that she could now read the words she knew how to say (including the letter from her husband). She told me she was also beginning to figure out the nuances of English grammar, like the verb *to be* and the difference between *go* and *went*. In explaining how her husband's ideas about women had changed over the years, she noted the way he encouraged her studies, even when her own energy flagged:

> "Oh, Alfredo, it's like I am not learning much English, it's like sometimes I get discouraged (*me desánimo*)," and then he says, "No, you are learning, go [to class]. Don't stop going." ((laughing)) And he, a little, is encouraging me (*me está animando*), and … at the beginning, when we got married, he wouldn't have let me (*no me hubiera dejado*). (Interview, 12/13/02)

Thus, although Trini came from a conservative rural family, she had resisted the constraints of gender since childhood. Many of her stories are 'counternarratives' (Ochs & Capps, 1996) that take a moral stance against traditional gender ideologies. As a result of her efforts, she and Alfredo could now be said to exemplify a model of 'companionate' marriage increasingly popular among Mexican immigrants (Hirsch, 2003), and in fact the above narrative performs the identity of a 'modern' wife who depends on her husband for emotional as much as financial support. These companionate ideals can be seen not only in his helping her with

the housework, but also in the love letter he wrote to encourage her to learn English – and additionally in Trini's teasing insistence that her co-worker abandon an inattentive boyfriend. At the same time, Trini consistently portrayed herself taking the obligations of motherhood seriously, wanting to show her children that she too was 'making an effort' to learn English, so that they would be inspired to study hard. As with Camila, her investment in her children's future led to investment in her own L2 learning (Norton, 2000).

Discussion

As the narratives of Camila, Jorge and Trini illustrate, language learning is not so much mediated by 'the way that gender identities and gender relations are constituted in (a) community' (Ehrlich, 1997: 430) but rather by the way that individuals *respond* to the gendered expectations that are placed on them by their families and communities. In this section, I review the gender ideologies indexed by their narratives, and the ways my participants portray themselves living out or resisting these ideologies and practices. I then examine how these responses appear to have mediated their L2 learning.

Gender ideologies in practice

The gender ideologies and practices portrayed in the narratives above are, in broad outline, fairly similar to those described in other ethnographic studies of Latino communities, where parents are expected to have authority over children, and men over women, with women primarily responsible for taking care of the home and men for earning money (Arias, 1994; Grimes, 1998; Hirsch, 2000, 2003; Mahler, 1995a, 1995b, 2003; Valdés, 1996). However, many recent studies emphasize the changes that are taking place in both immigrant and sending communities (Hirsch, 2000, 2003; Mahler, 1995a, 1995b; Menjívar, 2003; Repack, 1997). Within these changing social contexts, there is room for considerable variation among individual couples, some emphasizing tradition and others 'progress', as illustrated in the narratives told by Camila and Trini.

The authority of the older generation is a feature of all of these narratives, regardless of whether participants' parents were married. Both Jorge and Camila were raised by single mothers, who provided for their families and exercised considerable control over them. While Jorge's mother primarily enforced his work responsibilities, Camila's mother was more concerned with promulgating sexual morality. In Camila's narratives of

more recent years, her mother's moral authority had been transferred to her husband. Like Camila, Trini described familial concerns about her sexual behavior, and indeed came from a community that had more restrictive gender practices than Camila's. While Camila spoke at great length in interviews about her decision to attend an academic high school and then continue on for teacher training, Trini depicted herself as unable to attend secondary school at all due to her father's fear for her virtue. Indeed, even at their most rebellious, Trini's 'counternarratives' (Ochs & Capps, 1996) do not question traditional sexual morality. However, where Camila's stories take restrictive gender ideologies for granted, Trini recounts active rebellion against first her father's authority and then her husband's, insisting on the right to earn money. Thus, both women tended to handle their husband's authority in the same way they had dealt with their parents'.

Participants' exercise of their own adult responsibilities was likewise highly gendered. While no one in Jorge's narratives expressed concern about his sexual behavior, he never had the option of choosing not to work for pay, as Camila had done. Although he struggled to get an education and to master English, his own learning always had to take second place to his role as a breadwinner. Earning money to provide for his family, so far, had been the only way he had been able to exercise fatherhood: at the time of the interviews, he had not yet met his two-year-old son back in Mexico. In contrast, both Trini and Camila depicted themselves in narrative as committed wives and mothers, invested in their familial roles (Norton, 2000). Both women also described themselves as having primary responsibility for the care of their children: Trini was the one who had to answer her son's questions about English, while Camila, not her husband, needed to monitor their teenager's phone calls. For both women, their recent language learning endeavors had arisen from these primary investments, which even Trini did not question in her narratives. Nonetheless, whereas many authors (e.g. Rockhill, 1993) have tended to see gender roles as entrenched and inflexible, these learners' struggles exemplify the potential fluidity of family life in immigrant communities (Hirsch, 2000, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

L2 learning and agency

The literature on language and gender has heretofore emphasized women's agency in acquiring or resisting L2s (e.g. Gordon, 2004; Norton, 2000), but at the same time has noted the gendered constraints that women face (e.g. Goldstein, 1997). This is not a contradiction, if agency is defined as 'the socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001: 112). Within

any sociocultural context, the exercise of agency involves interacting with the local resources and constraints. The sense of constraint found in earlier research on immigrant women is substantiated by Camila's self-portrait in narrative as a wife and mother who had to place her own needs behind those of her family and reject educational ambitions as a threat to family finances. Instead, she attributed her successful language learning to her husband's moral authority: he was the one who clarified her *duty* to learn English in order to protect her son from assimilation into the US underclass. In Camila's narratives, she finds herself caught between gendered constraints and gendered obligations, with no choice but to creatively draw upon the media resources in English available to her. After a decade in California, when she finally found an ESL program structured around the needs of homemakers, she was already fairly competent in English.

Similar themes of agency and constraint are apparent in Jorge's narratives. While he often emphasized his own agency in pursuing his educational and vocational goals, at other times, he depicted himself controlled by more powerful individuals, economically exploited, subject to injury, lacking mobility and access to education. For Jorge, 'the thing about work' is that 'you have to do it every day' – and the work available to him was characterized by 'gendered vulnerabilities' (Jackson, 2001) such as heightened risk of injury and death on the job (National Research Council, 2003). While previous studies of language and gender have assumed that it is unproblematic for immigrant men to learn the dominant language in the workplace (Goldstein, 1997; Rockhill, 1993), Jorge's story points to pitfalls in this view. Full acquisition of his L3 is difficult for him not simply because he shares an immigrant language with his co-workers (Gordon, 2004), but more radically because of the way he is positioned at his workplace (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001). In his narratives, he has access to English, but only as someone who obeys orders and follows directions. In this way, his gender 'advantages' as a male are countered by his class, his ethnicity and his immigration status: he is a man, but he is also an indigenous Latino undocumented worker. It took a falling car to allow Jorge to pursue his long-abandoned goals for a technical career.

In contrast, Trini's narratives contain numerous depictions of her own agency in response to constraints in her life. Unlike Camila, she had rejected gender ideologies that would keep her dependent, and her work in the restaurant industry had led to making friends across linguistic borders, giving her some comfort in speaking English. However, like many immigrant workers, Trini had no opportunity to develop English literacy on the job. Moreover, while rejecting gendered constraints, she had not rejected gendered responsibilities. Until she had children, she was content

with the language skills she had. More recently, however, she had begun to think about how she could help and encourage her children to get a good education. As with Camila, her investment in her children's future led her to invest in her own L2 learning (Norton, 2000). Feeling the need to help and encourage her young children in their education, she began taking ESL classes to develop English literacy, an endeavor supported by her husband.

Thus, the narratives told by these immigrant adults (and others I talked to in the course of my research) construct varied perspectives on the gendered constraints the tellers faced, and on the degree of agency they felt able to exercise in confronting these constraints. Nevertheless, in explaining their opportunities to acquire English, my participants made it clear that language learning could not be separated from the gendered responsibilities of their daily lives, from their personal histories of education, work and family life. In these narratives, immigrants invested in L2 learning when it was congruent with other investments they had made, often connected to family roles and gendered identities, such as motherhood. In Chapter 4, I explore in more detail some immigrant mothers' involvements in their children's education.

Chapter 4

The Sociohistorical Construction of Parental Involvement in Education[17]

While participants in my study had multiple gendered identities (Norton, 2000), in this chapter, I focus on one identity in particular that was important to all of my female participants: motherhood. Specifically, I examine connections between mothering and education in the sociohistorical context of my study. In the ESL composition below, one of my participants reflects on her US-born daughter's experience in an urban California school, and upon her own involvement in her daughter's education:

> My daughter is student the school Gary. She have 8 years old. She goes a to public school. She is good student. She not have problem with your homework. I think excellent teacher. The teacher told me, she is progressing and different subject. The teacher told me my daughter helps the teacher in the class. I'm thinking about going to the conference the parents. I think everything to do with my daughter is important. (Raquel Ríos, October 29, 2002)[18]

In this paragraph, the writer contradicts stereotypes (Hidalgo, 1997) about school failure and immigrant parent alienation. Moreover, in thus entering the debate on urban education, she raises questions about the typicality of her experience for immigrant parents. How far can we generalize Raquel's sentiments about her bilingual daughter, or her patterns of communication with her daughter's English-speaking teacher?

In a 2003 press release, the website of the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) described a new initiative to reach out to 'Hispanic families', whom it described as often 'speak(ing) little to no English, possess(ing) low literacy skills in their native language due to limited education, and frequently struggl(ing) to assist their children's English

language development'. Because family literacy programs strive to facilitate the participation of parents, for example, by providing childcare, they have become a significant site for women especially to engage in language study. However, there has been little research on the experiences or perspectives of immigrant mothers who enroll in such programs. Curriculum and program development is often based on assumptions about potential students such as the description of 'Hispanic families' on the 2003 NCFL website. To confront such assumptions and stereotypes, Hidalgo calls for a Latino family research paradigm based on exploring 'the sociohistorical contexts of Latino families' lived experiences' (Hidalgo, 1997: 105).

Previous studies on relationships between US schools and immigrant families have tended to emphasize commonalities in language socialization and literacy practices among families in the same communities. Few studies have looked at how literacy practices and approaches to education can vary *within* communities and even within families, or on the influences (if any) such variation in practice can have on the school success of immigrant children. Moreover, research has rarely contextualized ESL family literacy programs within larger social histories of immigration. Therefore, through the experiences and perspectives of Central American immigrant mothers (Brenda and Raquel Ríos from Nicaragua, and Serafina Tzul from Guatemala), I examine how family histories of education intersected with the larger sociopolitical context to shape participants' involvement in their children's education.

Language Socialization, Immigrant Families and US Schools

Parental involvement in learning has most commonly been seen ahistorically, as a collection of parental 'best practices' leading to school success for children. 'Involved' parents read aloud to their children, help with homework, volunteer in classrooms, conference with teachers, attend school meetings and encourage career aspirations. It is generally believed that parents who do all or most of these things contribute to their children's school success (e.g. Epstein, 1994; Paratore *et al.*, 1999; US Department of Education, 1997). However, many authors view such mainstream involvement practices as particularly challenging for immigrant parents. Indeed, for several decades, ethnographers have been documenting 'cultural mismatches' between mainstream schools and minority communities (e.g. Heath, 1983).

To explore and perhaps remedy such mismatches, ethnographers over several decades have been conducting language socialization studies in

immigrant communities. In explaining how language socialization takes place, Watson-Gegeo writes that 'cognition originates in social interaction and is shaped by cultural and sociopolitical processes' (Watson-Gegeo, 2004: 332). Traditionally, language socialization research has looked at how children are socialized *through* language *to use* language (Ochs, 1988), in 'the process of becoming a culturally competent member of society' (Ochs, 1992: 335). Often this has been defined in terms of *guided participation*, during which children develop the skills valued in their own community (Rogoff, 1990). Because of its emphasis on learning through participation, language socialization research has strongly influenced a broader view of learning as situated in sociocultural contexts (Bayley & Schecter, 2003; Duff, 2002; Watson-Gegeo, 2004).

Language socialization studies in immigrant communities have often found respect for education but conflict between the individualistic values necessary for academic success in the United States and the families' traditional values of reciprocity (e.g. Carger, 1996; Valdés, 1996). Such studies have likewise tended to document a profound lack of communication between the families and their children's schools. As a result, teachers have perceived the families as 'uninvolved', especially when their children are unsuccessful academically. As Delgado-Gaitán and Trueba write about a Mexican-American community in California

> Some parents had not yet learned how to translate their verbal support of education into practice on a day-to-day basis. That is, parents always verbalized a strong belief in education for their children, but they did not always know how to operationalize those values. (Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991: 84)

Such findings could support the importance of family literacy instruction, but Valdés argues against this. Although she makes clear the negative consequences for children when schools and families are unable to work together, at the same time, she warns against education programs that try to change families' cultural values and parenting practices.

However, other studies have found that the gulf between Latino immigrant families and US schools is not necessarily as wide as these authors have suggested. Delgado-Gaitán (1996) describes a group of parents in California who were able to become involved in their children's education through organizing and educating themselves. As a result, they were able to pressure the schools to provide better ESL and bilingual education programs for their children. Other authors describe more individual efforts on the part of Latino immigrant parents to socialize their children academically. Goldenberg (1987) describes parents in Los Angeles who

successfully shared with their children the decoding skills they had learned in their home countries. Although a few parents did this on their own, many more were encouraged to do so when bilingual teachers began sending home materials that parents could use in working with their children (Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991). Likewise, Volk and de Acosta (2003) describe a wide range of language socialization activities that Puerto Rican families in the US Midwest undertook in support of their children's literacy development, from supervising homework to including children in family Bible reading.

In discussing this bilingual parental involvement, these authors assume educational contexts where children were expected to develop Spanish literacy in school and where many school personnel were fluent in both Spanish and English. Such bilingual contexts can no longer be taken for granted. Writing at a time when bilingual education was beginning to suffer serious threats, Galindo quotes Latino parents testifying at a public hearing in regards to how first-language programs facilitated their school involvement. As one parent put it, 'If the bilingual program is gone … the opportunity for parents like me to be a real part of the teaching program will be lost too' (Galindo, 1997: 122). Unfortunately, bilingual education has been severely restricted in California since the 1998 voter initiative, Proposition 227 (California Voter Guide, 1998). Though some schools have continued reaching out to parents bilingually, fewer options exist now than formerly for parents to assist their children academically.

In this historical context of shrinking options for bilingual education and bilingual parent involvement, *educación*, the moral and attitudinal socialization that parents offer their children, has become increasingly important in supporting children's academic success (although *educación* alone may not be sufficient, as Valdés shows in her 1996 ethnography). Recent research has emphasized the messages Latino/a parents give their children about school achievement. These include pride in one's heritage in the face of racism (Villenas, 2001), the value of hard work (López, 2001) and the importance of 'valerse por si misma,' which Villenas and Moreno (2001) translate as 'self reliance'. Such 'pedagogies of the home' (Delgado Bernal, 2001) can be seen as both 'accommodation and resistance' (Olmedo, 2003) because they challenge stereotypes while creating space for alternative cultural values in mainstream institutions.

Taken together, these studies make it clear that language socialization and parental involvement in education are not unitary phenomena; however, authors generally stress commonalities rather than differences within and even across communities. In making cultural generalizations, these studies tend to essentialize particular forms of caring, particular forms of

involvement, as characteristic of communities and families. Despite Hidalgo's 1997 call for a sociohistorical perspective on family research, most authors continue to overlook the dynamic and heterogeneous nature of culture as it is lived by particular families in particular communities (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Kramsch, 1997). In contrast, this chapter shows how immigrant mothers drew on varied personal histories and cultural resources in striving to support their children in a specific historical moment, and within a challenging urban environment.

Conducting Research with Immigrant Families

In order to communicate with and learn from diverse families, my research necessarily involved a focus on 'the way (participants) understand what they are doing' (Watson-Gegeo, 1988: 576). I thus employed ethnographic research methods that would help me to elucidate adult English learners' perceptions of the social, historical, economic and political forces that had influenced their identities (while also taking into account my own presence in the setting as an Anglo-American, Spanish-speaking, former ESL teacher, see Chapter 1).

As well as understanding the long-term educational trajectories of participants (Schecter & Bayley, 2002), I wanted to get a current literacy snapshot of their households, so my first interviews with participants explored their current reading and writing practices and those of other members of their households. When I arrived at participants' homes for an interview, we always engaged in small talk as I came in and set up the tape recorder, on the sofa or the kitchen table. Usually children were present, playing or watching television. Often they needed attention during interviews, but I felt that these 'interruptions' gave me a better picture of participants' lives. Some women offered me refreshments, like soda or orange juice, and I generally accepted. Before my first interview with each person, I gave participants a consent letter in Spanish to read and sign, emphasizing that they should feel free to not answer any question that made them uncomfortable. In practice, this rarely happened (but see my account of Serafina below). After turning on the tape recorder, I began asking questions that I had typed out in Spanish. I revised my list of questions for each follow-up interview depending on what we had talked about. Though I began interviews with the first question on my list for the day, I asked subsequent questions as topics related to them surfaced. When conversation flagged, I would go back to questions that I had not asked yet.

In the home literacy interviews, I inquired about reading materials and activities at home in both languages; writing materials and activities at

home in both languages; reading and writing in the workplace if any; and reading and writing at school. I also asked about relations with teachers and about family involvement in school activities, including homework. As part of these interviews, I asked participants to show me examples of things that they read and wrote in English and Spanish. For the most part, they showed me their ESL homework and their children's story books. Occasionally, they showed me business letters they had received. I also was able to observe and audiotape most of the participants reading aloud to their small children. Mostly, they chose to do this with some difficulty in English (probably since they associated me with their English class), even if they sometimes read aloud in Spanish. Including these observations, most of the home literacy interviews were between 60 and 90 min. In addition, I asked participants to lend me copies of the reading materials they showed me. After each interview, I would photocopy these materials before returning them to the participants.

As discussed in Chapter 3, I began life-history interviews after completing the home literacy interviews. During these interviews, I asked participants about childhood experiences with literacy outside of school; experiences with formal schooling; the educational, literacy and work experiences of family members; decisions about schooling, work, marriage, children and immigration; work histories in their homelands and the United States; personal experiences with reading and writing out of school in youth and adulthood; experiences learning English; and goals for the future. At the end of interviews, I would usually sit and visit with participants. Often they would ask me about my life experiences, about my husband and children. Though I did not record these conversations, I did write field notes about my visits to participants' homes. After collecting data, I began the process of thematic data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), as also discussed in Chapter 3. Data in this chapter were primarily coded as 'family literacy', with subcodes such as *educational background*, *home literacy practices*, *school involvement* and *future goals*.

The Ríos Family: A Nicaraguan Immigrant Household

In this case study, I focus on Nicaraguan sisters-in-law Brenda and Raquel Ríos, as well as their two school-aged daughters who attended the same neighborhood elementary school. In keeping with calls by Latino family researchers to situate studies within their sociohistorical contexts, I begin with background on the Ríos family: their housing and employment situation at the time of the study, my relationship with them and their

history of immigration, against the backdrop of recent Nicaraguan history and gender relations.

Raquel had lived in California since 1994. She and her husband Esteban, a sheet-metal worker, had two daughters, Marina (8) and Mikela (3), both born in the United States. Although Esteban had long-term steady employment at a factory in San Francisco, high housing costs in the area had led the family to purchase a home in Kingston, where house prices were half what they were in the city. Although Raquel characterized the block they lived on as 'calma (*calm*)' (Field notes, 1/10/03), gang violence was common in the larger neighborhood (according to local newspapers), and local unemployment reached over 10% in 2003 (California Employment Development Department, 2003). Raquel, aged 30 in 2002, had attended eight years of school in Nicaragua. She had never worked outside the home. Brenda, married to Esteban's brother, Martín, immigrated to the United States in 2001, along with her husband and their daughter Nathaly, aged six in 2002. Brenda was 24 years old in 2002, had finished high school in Nicaragua and worked there in retail. At the time of the interviews, she and her husband worked at nights, cleaning a grocery store. The two families shared a home and attended the same Baptist church.

Though Raquel had been in the United States much longer than Brenda, both started taking ESL classes in the fall of 2001 in a beginning class. Both women mentioned a desire to help their children with schoolwork as one reason why they were studying English. By the fall of 2002, Raquel had reached a low-intermediate ESL level while Brenda was at a high-intermediate level. Raquel's daughter Marina was in an English-only third-grade class, and Brenda's daughter Nathaly was in a bilingual first grade (current California education law allows schools to educate children bilingually with a signed parental waiver, but the school did not have space in a bilingual class for Marina). According to the 2002–2003 online 'report card' for the neighborhood school the girls attended, only 9% of students 'met or exceeded' state standards, and the school was considered to be in the bottom decile of the state Academic Performance Index (API) (California Department of Education, 2004). While educators may argue about what such rankings based on standardized test scores actually mean, they do suggest that accessing a high-quality public education might be problematic for the children of research participants in Kingston. Nevertheless, both girls were considered successful students by their mothers, who continued to find a variety of ways to support their educations. Their efforts must be seen and appreciated against this challenging urban backdrop.

Brenda was the first student who befriended me when I started volunteering at the CEC in May 2002, and we had many pleasant conversations

over the summer. I asked her in July if I could interview her, and eventually met with her six times, finishing in October. The last time I saw her, in February 2003, I told her I was applying for a job that would require me to finish my dissertation by August, and she sternly replied that I should 'work day and night to take advantage of this opportunity' (this is a good illustration of Brenda's philosophy of life, as I observed it). It took me a little longer to get to know Raquel at the CEC, but I decided to interview her in the fall partly because she was fun to talk to, and partly because she was so different from Brenda. She never wanted to schedule anything in advance, but I truly enjoyed listening to her funny and dramatic stories whenever she could make time to tell them. She put up with me through six interviews between October and February, and at the CEC Christmas party she even gave me a couple of china wall plaques, like the ones she had in her own kitchen, one with pears and one with strawberries. I have them up in my faculty office now.

The Nicaraguan civil war and its aftermath

Although the family members I discuss here have much in common with Latino immigrants from many countries, they identify strongly as Nicaraguans, and their education, gender and immigration experiences have been shaped by the complicated history of that small country. Brenda and Raquel were born during the right-wing Somoza dictatorship, and were children at the time of the leftist Sandinista revolution in 1979. As the Sandinista government reorganized the political and economic system, they worked to extend educational opportunities for the poor majority of Nicaraguans (Arnove, 1994). Due to Cold War politics, their rule was opposed by the US-backed *contra* rebels, in a civil war that lasted throughout the 1980s (Walker, 2003) and killed 30,000 Nicaraguans (White, 2005) out of a population of 3 million. Though Brenda's father had worked for the Sandinista government, she had negative opinions about the Sandinista leadership. Raquel's family was even more divided: she had a Sandinista uncle and a *contra*-supporting father (see Chapter 6 for more discussion of the wartime experiences of Raquel's family). Although her husband Esteban had completed his obligatory military service in the Sandinista army, he emigrated in the late 1980s rather than further risk his life in the reserves. Since several of his siblings also immigrated to California, he became part of an extended family network in the San Francisco Bay Area, but it took him six years to save enough money for Raquel to follow him.

In the 1990 national elections, around the time Brenda started secondary school, the Sandinistas were defeated by a coalition of parties

committed to rolling back their revolutionary policies. Though Nicaragua's economy had suffered from shortages and hyperinflation under Sandinista rule, the neoliberal economics of the 1990s (similar to the Peruvian policies discussed in Chapter 1) caused the country to fall from 60th in the world on the United Nations Human Development Index in 1990 to 116th in 2000 (Walker, 2003). Unemployment and underemployment during the 1990s stood at around 60% (Babb, 2001), and education was increasingly privatized and out of reach for the majority of Nicaraguans (Arnove, 1994). In 2001, when Brenda and her husband followed his older brother Esteban to the United States, she characterized the Nicaraguan economy as 'really, really, really bad (*malísima, malísima, malísima*)' (Interview, 9/6/02). Specifically, this meant that almost three quarters of Nicaraguan households were living in poverty, national per capita earnings were the lowest in Central America at less than US $500, while world prices for coffee, the main crop for Brenda's home region, were falling precipitously (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2001).

Although gender relations in Nicaragua can be described as patriarchal, based on male privilege and power (Dore, 2006), ethnographic studies conducted in the 1990s (Babb, 2001; Bayard de Volo, 2001) found Nicaraguan family structures and gender ideologies to be centered primarily on the figure of the *mother* (rather than on the father or the male/female couple). While female-headed households are common around the world, they had begun to seem almost the norm in Nicaragua. The male breadwinner was still an ideal (and the Ríos brothers appeared to take this seriously), but contemporary gender discourses in Nicaragua described men as prototypically absent, at least from the homes where their female partners were raising their children. Indeed, although Brenda and Raquel had fond memories of their fathers, they had not been around much when they were growing up. Ultimate responsibility tended to fall on women for the care of children, with adult sons often contributing economically to the households of their own mothers. While Nicaraguan motherhood was commonly venerated as the embodiment of generosity, nurture, hard work and self-sacrifice (Bayard de Volo, 2001), women bore the brunt of the 1990s neoliberal economic reforms, making up for cuts in social services through their efforts in the household and their creative participation in informal sector employment (Babb, 2001). (For more on Nicaraguan gender ideologies, see Chapter 6.)

Brenda and Raquel had thus grown up in a polarized nation where decades of political, military and economic 'remedies' had led to no real improvement. At the time of the interviews, both proclaimed themselves ready to commit their families to what could be considered the

'American dream' of advancement through hard work and education. Raised by single mothers, they took their maternal responsibilities very seriously. To this end, they had attached themselves to their husbands' extended family in the United States, receiving financial, emotional and cultural support from that social network as they pursued their goals for their children. Their strategies for success in the new land were in fact similar to strategies that they described family members pursuing in Nicaragua, but they saw more opportunities for advancement in the United States.

Findings: Biliteracy and schooling

From early in data collection, it was clear that Brenda and Raquel, despite some similarities in social background, had different relationships to literacy and schooling. As Raquel told me twice on tape, 'I'm not studious (*estudiosa*)' (Interviews, 11/21/02, 2/11/03), while Brenda made a point of studying English every afternoon. Below I outline differences in these women's backgrounds, perspectives and language socialization practices – as well as the ways they both managed to 'operationalize' their support for their children's schooling (Delgado-Gaitán & Trueba, 1991).

'My mom always told me that I should study'

If Brenda generally had a stronger academic background than Raquel, this was primarily due to her mother's persistent support for learning. Both women are the daughters of hard-working single mothers in the same small Nicaraguan city: Raquel's mother was a cook, and Brenda's mother owned her own clothing store. However, while Raquel's mother had little formal education, Brenda's mother had worked her way through a business degree at the local university, and she encouraged her children to get as much education as possible, a 'pedagogy of the home' (Delgado Bernal, 2001) that had a strong influence on Brenda. As she said in an interview, 'My mom always […] told me that I should study (*que estudiara*), that even if I don't like it, I should study because in the future it's going to serve me or my children' (Interview, 8/19/02). Her mother also passed on a love of books by reading poetry aloud.

When Brenda got married and pregnant at 17, she finished high school by taking night classes at a nearby private school, with the help of her mother: 'My mom always told me that if you want to keep studying, I will take care of the little girl. So I had the opportunity' (Interview, 8/19/02). She also took classes in handicrafts, including basket-making and metal work. Though Brenda had hoped to attend university, family commitments

instead led her to develop her own small retail business, selling things like backpacks and baseball caps. Given that by the end of the 1990s only 11% of those who started primary school in Nicaragua finished high school (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2002), the fact that Brenda went as far as she did evidences her mother's dedication.

In contrast to Brenda, Raquel left school without regrets after eighth grade to take care of her sick grandmother and never went back: 'My grandma was at home alone […] so I decided it was better to stay home and help her'. In reflecting on this decision, she told me that she actually preferred housework to school work: 'It was also that I wasn't very good at studying, […] I got bored a lot. […] It's like I am one of those people who like to be moving around (*moviéndome*), […] I don't like to sit in one spot (*un solo punto*)' (Interview, 11/21/02). While Brenda had stressed her mother's enjoyment of literature, a narrative that Raquel told about her mother validated practical skills over book knowledge:

> My mom is a specialist in cooking (*especialista en las cuestiones de cocina*). [….] She knows how to cook very well, always, and when she started cooking, she didn't know anything about how to cook […] (but) she began to learn with a lady (*señora*) who didn't know either, but she had books. […] My mom's boss at work (*la patrona*), she would begin like this ((Raquel pretends to read off a place mat, then mimes looking over her shoulder)): "look, Elena […] here it says so many cups of I don't know what," and then my mom would … ((Raquel gestures dumping a cup into a bowl)). "It takes so many spoonfuls of I don't know what … and you are going to add I don't know what and I don't what." […] My mom had no need to read, […] in the end, the student learned more than the teacher. (Interview & Field notes, 11/21/02)

By imitating cookbook discourse while leaving out all specific content words ('this many cups of I don't know what'), Raquel succeeded in making this discourse sound peculiarly empty, as empty as the placemat that she was pretending to read from. She didn't say her mom *could not* read the text, but rather that she did not need to: 'the student (the one who was following orders and doing practical work) learned more than the teacher (the one who was reading)'. In her own life as well, Raquel had emphasized household skills over academic knowledge.

At the time of the interviews, the two sisters-in-law continued to have different personal goals related to education. Brenda, the more recent immigrant, was still hoping to pursue a college education, 'Well, I'm thinking of studying one more year of English, and then looking for a way to get into *college* (English in the original)' (Interview, 8/19/02).

However, this goal was complicated by the fact that she remained undocumented. As an alternative, she said she hoped to start her own business in the United States. While Raquel was not similarly ambitious, she was thinking about getting a job: 'Maybe in the future when Mikela starts to school, I think it would be better to help my husband [financially], even if it was only *part time* [English in the original]. But I don't know yet, well, I don't know exactly what I'd do' (Interview, 11/21/02). Meanwhile, she and her husband agreed that it was better for now to focus on studying English.

'Here are my little books'

While both women found reading and writing important to their lives at home, they tended to have different priorities for literacy. Since Raquel's husband Esteban paid the bills and dealt with other kinds of official paperwork in English, neither woman seemed much concerned with this type of functional literacy. Biblical literacy in Spanish was far more important in this household, especially to Raquel (cf. Volk & de Acosta, 2003), and the Spanish-language Bible was her principal reading material. A devout Baptist, who had converted to that faith after arriving in California, Raquel valued the Bible as a guide for living. She particularly liked the Psalms, and said that she and her husband used them daily to 'enter into prayer (*entrar en oración*)' (Interview, 10/2/02). Oral Bible reading was also the language socialization practice that Raquel most emphasized in my interviews with her: on a daily basis she encouraged her daughters to listen carefully to the biblical texts, and compose spoken prayers relating these texts to their own life concerns. Through this participation in family Bible study, the girls had daily opportunities to see their parents not only reading the Bible but also discussing the meaning of this book for their lives, an activity in which Brenda and her husband also participated.

Aside from family Bible study, Raquel did not read to her daughters, but encouraged her third-grader Marina to read aloud to her younger sister Mikela, everything from *Amelia Bedelia* (Parish, 1963) to Bible stories. Indeed, although Brenda said that she herself was not very religious, both women showed me children's story books, based on material from the Bible, in both Spanish and English. When I observed Marina reading aloud for her school homework, she picked out a biblically based English-language children's book (Anderson, 1984):

> I asked Marina if she would show me her favorite book, and she smiled and headed for her room. However, whatever it was she couldn't find it. Raquel went in to help her, and eventually I followed them in.

> Marina's books fill a shelf along the floor, most appear to be paperback picture books. After a bit they pulled out a book called *God Is With Me*, and Marina brought it out to the kitchen. I turned on the tape recorder and she read it out loud, softly and without much expression, but clearly and correctly. Mikela had come over to hear the story and was noisily eating a carrot. Raquel was trying to get Marina to read louder for the recording, even miming "turn up the volume" to her. The book is based on Psalm 139, and I commented to Raquel that "it is like a psalm," and she agreed. (Field notes, 10/22/02)

In addition, I audiotaped Brenda reading aloud to Nathaly the biblical creation account in Spanish (Watchtower, 1978):

> When she was finished reading, I asked her why Nathaly liked that one (Nathaly was listening shyly). Brenda said, in English, laughing, "For the picture." I repeated, "She likes it for the picture?" Switching to animated Spanish, Brenda replied, "Yes, and she asks me lots of questions. Always […] For example, how did God get down to earth? […] She knows that he's in heaven […] And she likes to ask me where the little animals (*animalitos*) came from? Who are the parents of the little animals?" Brenda was laughing throughout. (Field notes, 8/2/02)

Outside of class, Raquel did little writing, aside from letters to her mother in Nicaragua: 'I chat about my girls, how they are doing in school, […] how they are growing, […] that Mikela hasn't been eating lately, or that she got sick, or Marina is doing really well in class, she has really good teachers …' (Interview, 10/2/02). Like Raquel, Brenda wrote to her mother often, mostly about her daughter ('she wants to know everything about the girl', Interview, 8/2/02), but also about her work and studies. More than Raquel, Brenda was focused on completing her ESL class homework, trying to study English for a couple of hours every afternoon. Showing me her bedroom, she said, 'Here are my little books (*mis libritos*). A lot of story books in English and Spanish. Also books to study' (Interview, 8/2/02). These latter included several used English grammar workbooks given to her by relatives.

Another site for language socialization was the public library, which Brenda and Nathaly often visited to check out books and use the computers. When I observed them at the library, Nathaly played educational computer games, and also colored in and labeled line drawings provided by the library:

> Nathaly asked Brenda to look at what she was drawing. I asked if the bear had a name. After some thought, and a little prompting from her

> mother, Nathaly said, "El nombre de él-l … es … (*His name … is …*)" She drew a pink tag on the side of the bear's head and wrote "Nathaly." She then wanted to write the bear's father's name, and asked her mother for an easy name to write. Brenda told her to write Cesar. Nathaly asked how many letters it had, and Brenda said five. Ready to write, Nathaly asked, "S?" Brenda replied, "No. Empieza con C. C. (*It begins with C. C.*)." Together they sounded out the name, and Nathaly wrote it (Field notes, 7/24/02).

The books they showed me that Nathaly had enjoyed listening to in the past included *Are You My Mother?* (Eastman, 1993), bilingual in English and Spanish, and a Spanish-language science book on butterflies (Julivert, 1991). As Brenda put it, 'She likes books about little animals (*animalitos*)'. In addition, Brenda sometimes checked out older children's books for herself in Spanish, because the adult collection in Spanish was minimal. Recently, she had enjoyed a collection of biographies of great women in history. She also perused the periodicals section, including *People* in English and Spanish editions, and *Selecciones*, the Spanish-language edition of Reader's Digest, which she had previously read in Nicaragua: 'For example, how a person survives cancer? Or when a mom has a baby? Real stories (*historias reales*). I like them a lot' (Interview, 8/2/02).

'I help her every day listening when she reads'

Both women were involved with their daughters' elementary school, although in somewhat different ways. One thing they both did was to attend parent meetings and conferences. This was facilitated by the availability of translators, and Brenda was able to tell me the topics of discussion at a recent meeting, as well as the agenda for the next: 'Now (it's about) the after school programs, what they're going to have, music, painting. […] After this *meeting* [English in the original], I think they are going to have another that is about the money for the school, what they're going to spend it on' (Interview, 9/10/02). Raquel had realized at a recent meeting that after a year of ESL classes, she could understand most of what had been said in English: 'I asked […] the same person who translated for me in second grade, I said to her, "Look, I want you to listen to what I'm going to tell you, the teacher said this and this […], you tell me if that's correct or no" then she told me, "Yes, that's everything, it's like you're telling me"'(Interview, 10/2/02).

Brenda occasionally took time from her own studies to volunteer in Nathaly's classroom. She particularly enjoyed helping with crafts projects (*manualidades*) and holiday events: 'The teacher always calls me. […] For

Halloween I helped to paint the kids, I knew they were getting in costumes (*iban a disfrazarse*), I brought paints, and I painted them there' (Interview, 9/10/02). When I observed her adult ESL class right before Thanksgiving, she left early, along with another classmate whom she had recruited to help:

> She and Catalina were going to Nathaly's class. Brenda said, "I think the teacher is poor." She meant "pobrecita (*poor thing*)," and soon switched into Spanish. Brenda explained that the teacher is old, and she has 20 kids in her class, and they are all very … I suggested, "Active? Wild?" Brenda nodded and said that the teacher has no help. "Pobrecita … …Ya es de edad, es adulta, y nadie le ayuda (*She is elderly and no one helps her*)." So today, Catalina and Brenda are going to help them all make paper turkeys so they will have them for next week. (Field notes, 11/21/02)

Raquel did not volunteer in the classroom, but participated with a team of parents who did a thorough cleaning of the run-down school building, especially the bathrooms:

> The doors were really black (*negrísimas*, *negrísimas*), and even full of spiderwebs, and under the sinks were full of spiderwebs […] and about half the wall tiles were […] really black, black, black, full of grease, who knows what? So we grabbed brushes and sponges, the ones for dishwashing, the strong ones, to wash everything. We cleaned it really well, and it looked good. (Interview, 10/2/02)

While Brenda's level of formal education (and experience in Nicaragua doing handicrafts) allowed her to participate comfortably in traditional parent–volunteer activities, Raquel's contribution to her daughter's poorly maintained school building should not be underestimated.

Supervision of homework was a language socialization practice that both women engaged in. Brenda said she found this difficult because Nathaly did not like being corrected, and preferred to do everything as quickly as possible. 'She almost never does bad assignments, when she does them, but she has this problem of not analyzing' (Interview, 9/10/02). Raquel's challenge lay in the fact that Marina was in an English-only third grade, and she did not always understand the vocabulary in her daughter's homework (although often she could figure out the directions based on her knowledge of typical assignments in Nicaragua). Marina herself said that if she had a question about her homework, she usually would ask her teacher the next day. She showed me the monolingual English dictionary (Webster's) that she used to look up words she did not know.

However, Raquel said that often Marina's father Esteban could answer her questions when he came home from work, since his spoken English was the best in the household and he had finished high school in Nicaragua. Finally, Raquel reported, 'I help her every day listening when she reads'. Marina's teacher simply required that parents sign a form certifying that their children had read 20 min daily, but Raquel tried to ensure that Marina was reading aloud correctly, paying attention to 'the accents and the commas' (Interview, 10/2/02).

'There is a time for everything'

Both Brenda and Raquel had definite ideas about what academic success might mean for their daughters. Before Marina started kindergarten in a bilingual program in San Francisco, Raquel made an effort to prepare her. A friend was a school secretary, so Raquel asked her what Marina would need to know. Based on her friend's advice

> I taught her the alphabet in Spanish. […] I taught her to memorize our house number. I taught her the names of her mom and dad. […] And in case of emergency, the number that she should learn in an emergency, that was 911. […] And I taught her and I made sure she knew […] that her private parts nobody should touch, nobody! […] And she should also respect the other children. And when she was outside of class […] she should take advantage of that moment to play, and also take advantage of class time, there is a time for everything. And she learned it very well. (Interview, 1/23/03)

Thus, Raquel drew on advice involving academic, social, lifeskills, time management and safety information in socializing her daughter for a US kindergarten. This mother–daughter pedagogy (Delgado Bernal, 2001; Villenas & Moreno, 2001) had apparently served Marina well.

Marina was successful at that bilingual school, but Raquel worried about the girl's transition to an English-only class when the family purchased a home in Kingston. At that time, Marina was starting second grade, and did not know much English. As Raquel told me, 'I thought that she wasn't going to advance, that she was kind of stuck there (*se quedó ahí estancadita*) … But no, afterwards they told me that she was making progress, and doing well. […] And now in third grade, she understands everything' (Interview, 10/2/02). The girl was reportedly first in her class at memorizing the multiplication tables. Based on Marina's experiences, Raquel felt that both schools were good, the one in San Francisco where she began, as well as her current school. She told me she would always pray, 'God, give wisdom (*sabiduría*) to my daughter Marina to understand the class'

(Interview, 1/10/03). At the same time, she remained concerned that Marina might abandon her home language, despite the girl's immersion in a Spanish-speaking, biliterate, extended family: 'I never leave off telling her that I don't want her to forget her Spanish' (Interview, 10/2/02).

While Raquel was satisfied with their neighborhood school, Brenda was aware from her ESL classmates that it did not have a good reputation, and she was concerned that Nathaly was getting into fights. She hoped to move her family into a better district, but had so far been unable to do so because of the high cost of housing and the lack of good-paying jobs. Nevertheless, Brenda felt that her daughter was successfully learning basic Spanish literacy, English and simple arithmetic. She appreciated the school's new principal and his accessibility to parents. In her opinion, the school may not be 'the best … but it is all right' (Interview, 10/15/02). In addition, the school offered her daughter the opportunity of bilingual education, even though there had been no space in the bilingual second grade when Marina transferred in. This was important to Brenda, who had heard about the advantages of bilingual education from her aunt in Miami even before immigrating, and again from relatives in California. As she said

> I want my daughter to have her language, to maintain it, write it, read it, and speak it well. […] My sister-in-law Rosa, she says that she repents of having put her son in English-Only (*sólo en el inglés*), […] now he is a man, and he doesn't speak Spanish …. He has withdrawn (*retirado*) from the family. (Interview, 9/10/02)

Looking ahead, both Raquel and Brenda said they hoped their daughters would go to college. Raquel reported that Marina wanted to be a doctor, but commented that she would need a strong stomach for that line of work (Field notes, 10/2/02). Brenda said that Nathaly had the personality to become a lawyer, but she felt that young people should decide their own ambitions, 'they have to decide what is right for them, what they like (*que les conviene*, *que les gusta*)' (Interview, 10/15/02). Nevertheless, with both cousins still in primary school in a troubled urban district at the time of the study (and Nathaly still undocumented), it would be hard to say what the future holds for them, despite their parents' evident support.

The Ríos family: Summary

This case study demonstrates how immigrant parents who are not highly educated by North American standards were able to draw upon a

variety of historically available community resources, along with their first-language and bilingual literacies, to support their children's education even in an underfunded urban context. These resources ranged from adult ESL classes, to bilingual school personnel, to extended family members who had lived in the United States for a long time and could answer cultural questions such as the advantages of bilingual over English-only education. Of the two women discussed above, Brenda's literacy and language socialization practices brought her much closer to the mainstream image of the educated, 'involved' parent, while Raquel had never prioritized education for herself, considered herself 'not studious', and read no texts at home but the Spanish-language Bible. Nevertheless, even though Brenda was more educated and practiced more 'mainstream' parent involvement activities, this does not mean that her language socialization practices were more successful at fostering educational achievement than Raquel's. Both girls were reported by their mothers to be making progress in literacy and math, and in my observations both were able to competently perform the kinds of work their teachers required. It was Nathaly, not Marina, who was reported to be getting into fights at school. Despite their differences, both women supported their daughters' educations by attending school meetings and supervising homework, and they were able to draw significantly on Spanish-language literacies in this effort.

Thus, within a sociohistorical context of economic downturn and underfunded schools (Hidalgo 1997), the Ríos family drew on a wide array of personal and familial resources to help their daughters academically, demonstrating both 'accommodation and resistance' (Olmedo, 2003). Certainly, Brenda and Raquel were trying to 'accommodate' the expectations of their daughters' school for correctly done homework, for attendance at parent meetings and for volunteer efforts as needed. At the same time, in supporting their children's maintenance of Spanish, they were resisting state efforts in the direction of monolingualism (California Voter Guide, 1998). Moreover, with their long-term high expectations for their daughters' achievements, they were countering societal beliefs about the life chances of Latino immigrant children; they were refusing to let economic and political limitations limit their dreams.

Serafina Tzul: A Quiché Maya Refugee

In this next case study, I focus on a participant with a very different background: indigenous Guatemalan refugee, Serafina Tzul, whose young son was attending an English-only preschool. To situate Serafina's educational challenges within her sociohistorical context (Hidalgo, 1997), I offer

some background on her living situation and our relationship at the time of the interviews, before detailing recent Guatemalan history and gender relations.

Serafina came from a rural Quiché Maya community, and had arrived in the United States as a political refugee in the mid-1990s. In 2002, she was 44 years old. She had completed three years of schooling in Guatemala, where she had worked as both a housemaid and a weaver. Her son Mateo, born in California in 1998, was four years old, and she had had no recent contact with his father, a Mexican immigrant. At the time of the interviews, she and her son shared a room in the home of a Mexican couple in Kingston, but she was in the process of applying for her own apartment in a public housing project. Since her arrival in California, Serafina had mostly worked in home healthcare, but was unemployed for many months during 2002. That fall, after she had agreed to serve as a focal participant for my study at the CEC, she obtained a full-time temporary job in a garment factory. With her permission, I decided to continue interviewing her even though she could no longer attend classes.

However, my relationship with Serafina grew more complicated over the course of the interviews. Like many of the CEC students, she at times asked me for favors, such as help in filling out application forms in English (most notably for public housing). Although I was happy to oblige, she frequently apologized for bothering me, or even offered me money. At the same time, I was discovering that parts of Serafina's life were painful for her to discuss. Even though I tried to make it clear that she did not have to answer specific questions, I ended up cutting the interviews short because they seemed to be making her depressed. I am focusing on Serafina in this chapter because her educational experiences raise issues that I think is important for the ESL profession to come to terms with; however, in respect to Serafina, I will not go into detail about the most difficult parts of her life. Rather, some aspects of her story can be clarified through a look at recent Guatemalan history.

The Guatemalan civil war and its aftermath

Guatemala was at war for over 30 years till Peace Accords were signed in 1996. During those 30 years, it is estimated that more than 200,000 civilians were killed, perhaps half of them in *la violencia* (the violence) of the early 1980s when government troops perpetrated a series of massacres in the mostly indigenous highlands (Foxen, 2007; Jonas, 1991; Zur, 1998). Like other Central American civil wars, this one was fuelled by Cold War politics: the Guatemalan military was largely funded by the United States,

despite some cutbacks due to human rights concerns from the late 1970s to the early 1980s.

Because the Guatemalan population is about 60% indigenous, the war was as much an ethnic as an ideological conflict. The Guatemalan Maya speak 22 different languages and have preserved distinctively separate cultures since the Spanish conquest 500 years ago, with Quiché (also spelled K'iche) speakers the largest group. Guatemalan Indians have been exploited by the *Ladino* majority, contributing to social inequality in a country where over 80% of the total population lives in poverty (Jonas, 1991). Recent decades have seen increasing expropriation of indigenous land by export-oriented agribusiness and the military, severely affecting subsistence agriculture and contributing to the radicalization of displaced indigenous farmers. Because the guerrilla foot soldiers were mostly indigenous, *all* Guatemalan Indians were seen as potential subversives. Although the 1985 presidential elections were proclaimed internationally as restoring democracy and human rights, and although the level of political killing dropped after that time, fear and suspicion lingered on in traumatized communities, which were still closely monitored by the military for 'subversive' activities. As Zur described the Quiché region in the mid-1990s, 'everyone is (still) afraid' (Zur, 1998: 120).

According to ethnographers, traditional gender ideologies among the Quiché are based on *complementarity* between men and women, with each having an important role in the community (Menjívar, 2003; Zur, 1998). Because of this ideal of complementarity, marriage was seen as mandatory for all young people, and there were strong expectations for fathers to be involved in socializing their children. However, the death of so many men in the war left large numbers of widows unable to remarry and bereft of the male support they had been taught to rely upon. According to Zur, 'A crucial concept in K'iche social relations (is that) men protect women not only from physical dangers … but from supernatural perils. Being without a man is an anomalous and therefore dangerous situation for an adult K'iche woman' (Zur, 1998: 8). While changing circumstances forced many women, like Serafina, into self-reliance, Zur found that this normative expectation of supportive marital relations remained in force into the postwar period. (Note the contrast with the Nicaraguan context chronicled by Babb, 2001 and Bayard de Volo, 2001, where single motherhood was more widely accepted and indeed respected.)[19]

According to Menjívar (2003), this notion of complementarity has led to less gender conflict around employment issues in Los Angeles Maya communities compared to their local Ladino counterparts (see Trini's story in Chapter 3), since it had always been expected that indigenous women

would make an economic contribution to the family. However, in the Quiché community Zur studied in rural Guatemala (1998), women were seen as 'conservers of tradition', and discouraged from receiving education or going outside their community. Most were monolingual Quiché speakers. As Zur points out, schooling in Guatemala is Spanish-only, Ladino teachers are often racist against Indians, and becoming educated involves exposure to ideologies that are alien to the Quiché people. Perhaps for these reasons, in Guatemala in the late 1980s only 15% of rural women could read at all (Jonas, 1991).

Findings: Literacy, learning and language loss

Throughout the time I spent interviewing her, I was struck by Serafina's commitment to education as well as by the difficulties she had faced in accessing schooling since childhood. Though her Quiché-speaking family's ideologies of gender and language appeared less conservative than those described by Zur (1998), the racist educational conditions she faced were the same. Serafina had made an effort to study second languages and literacies at various times in her life, and she had strong hopes for her son. However, his placement in an English-only preschool was making it hard for her to support him academically, as I detail below.

'He said, "I am going to learn"'

Serafina grew up in the Guatemalan highlands, where her parents had a small farm and also made traditional crafts for sale in the capital. After one interview, she showed me some of the products they made:

> Serafina went back into the bedroom and came out with her *huipil* (smock) and *corte* (wrap-around skirt), and also with a tablecloth. The *huipil* was very intricately embroidered, by her mom she said, in rather somber colors but a complicated design. The *corte* was woven by her sister, very fine weaving with cotton thread, and again a very complicated and subtle design in shades of green, purple, and black. The tablecloth looked like it was produced for sale at Christmas: it had an embroidered design of white poinsettias with green leaves and white candles with yellow flames. (Field notes, 11/22/02)

Serafina's family spoke Quiché at home although her parents knew some Spanish through their business endeavors. Neither of them had ever attended school, but her father learned to read as an adult: 'Oh, when he was already grown up […] he was learning with my brothers

and sisters, […] because at times they would call him to parent meetings at the school, he says that he had to sign or had to read some paper (so he said) 'I am going to learn' (Interview, 11/22/02). Some of her siblings did well at the local school, and one of her brothers even went on to teachers' college and became a school principal. However, Serafina failed first grade three times: 'I didn't pass because the others seemed to be faster, or I don't know, they wrote faster'. She described her first-grade teacher as 'angry (*enojada*)', adding that 'if we didn't pay attention […] she had a chain like this and she would hit us like this on our fingernails' (Interview, 11/15/02). She then left school to work at home as a weaver, her parents saying, 'Well, if you don't want to study, it's better that you work' (Interview, 11/15/02).

Quiché-speaking regions of Guatemala suffered some of the worst fighting of the civil war in the 1980s (Foxen, 2007; Jonas, 1991; Zur, 1998), but Serafina and I did not discuss the politics of that era. This would have been around the time, however, when she spent five years in (comparatively peaceful) Guatemala City as a maid for a well-to-do family. While there, she took adult literacy classes and finished third grade. The classes met on weekends, then provided supplementary instruction over the radio on weekday evenings, a format that worked well for Serafina. When I asked how she'd come to value education as an adult, she replied, 'When I had to fill out some paper, or I had to like write a letter, well, I saw that I really did need it a lot' (Interview, 11/22/02). She also took sewing classes and received a certificate from a vocational school. Missing her parents, she eventually returned to the highlands.

'I had no plans to come'

Serafina's village was threatened in the mid-1990s with confiscation by local military authorities: 'They were going to make a house for the military people there, so they were going to take away the land from us (*nos iban a quitar el terreno*). But we were beginning to protest because they were going to take it from us, where my parents were born, and where we have always lived' (Interview, 11/22/02). Discussing such land expropriations historically, Zur explains the threat they pose to Maya identities that were traditionally based on 'a territorial claim in a community of one's ancestors and the means to secure part of one's food supply' (Zur, 1998: 29). The lack of legal means to defend land claims had been a major contributing factor to the civil war (Jonas, 1991). However, by the 1990s, after a decade of 'democratization', a (somewhat) reformed legal system was beginning to make it possible for communities like Serafina's to obtain

their rights, which would have been unthinkable earlier. The villagers hired a lawyer in the capital and eventually won the case.

Although her parents were able to continue living in the family home, Serafina received death threats for her part in protesting the proposed confiscation, and had to flee the country alone: 'I had no plans to come, but they threatened me with death (*me amenazaron de muerte*)' (Interview, 11/22/02). Arrested by immigration authorities in Texas, Serafina was befriended by a US nun, who bailed her out, brought her to California, and found her a lawyer. Eventually, Serafina was granted refugee status and became a permanent US resident.[20] Her inability to return home demonstrates the tenuousness of human rights in 'democratic' Guatemala:

> Life has changed little for Guatemala's indigenous population … the conditions which gave rise to rural insurgency persist and the mechanisms of terror created to suppress it have been renamed rather than dismantled … To many Indians "the truth is that the violence always continues". (Zur, 1998: 5)

Arriving alone in California during economic boom years, Serafina found work doing home healthcare for Spanish-speaking clients. For three years after her son was born, they lived with the elderly Filipina that she cared for. Serafina became very fond of this woman, and also learned some English from her: 'When I was going to buy food, she would make my list in English. […] I only knew Spanish, (but) she would write it for me (in English) […] so I would learn. And if I didn't, I had to guess what it was. […] "You have to study more and take a lot of interest (*poner mucho interés*)", she told me' (Interview, 12/2/02). However, Serafina lost the job when the woman's family put her in a nursing home in early 2002. Unable to find another position, Serafina went on public assistance when her savings ran out. Under California's welfare reform measures, she was placed in Spanish-language job-hunting classes: 'They were classes on […] how to present yourself at a job. How to dress for an interview. One has to be very elegant' (Interview, 10/22/02). When she still could not find a job, her caseworker finally recommended that she study English.

Serafina's contact with the welfare system was enabled by the possession of permanent residency, but also made necessary by her lack of local relatives who could help her find work. The weakness of her local social network (she had no relatives nearer than Texas) also meant that she faced greater literacy demands than my other participants, who could call on educated, bilingual kin to help them read documents such as complicated

phone bills. Contact with social service agencies involved a plethora of paperwork, and at times she would ask my help:

> Serafina showed me a form about getting Christmas present assistance. It was simple, and I filled it out for her on the spot. It was from the welfare office and wanted info like the name of her caseworker, but she was able to pull out some welfare paperwork and find her caseworker's name, M. Sánchez. Also the address of the office, which turns out to be the place where she is also supposed to turn in the paperwork. It also asked basic info like address and phone number and if you were a single head of household and working or disabled and what kind of aid you were receiving. And your kid's pants and shirt size (5-6) and his social security number, which she said she would have to look up later. (Field notes, 11/6/02)

While struggling with these bureaucratic texts in English (or sometimes in Spanish), Serafina was also interested in reading in Spanish recreationally, like some of my other participants. When her favorite Spanish-language radio talk-show host, Cucuy, announced on air that he had published his memoirs (Almendárez Coello, 2002), she bought the book. As she explained in my last formal interview with her:

> He is from Honduras, and he tells his whole story here. […] He speaks a lot of his life in this country. […] I like him a lot because he is a person that speaks a lot of God. […] I heard him because he says sometimes we have problems, he says, (but) if we are in good health, we have our eyes, our hands, and we walk well, why not give thanks to God? […] And I really like to listen because he motivates me, he gives me strength. (Interview, 12/2/02)

Serafina was willing to invest scarce funds in this text because Cucuy, a fellow immigrant, had surmounted the problems she faced, while holding onto a faith in God that she shared.

'What I didn't have, I want for my son'

While looking for work, Serafina put her son Mateo in a subsidized all-day preschool near her home. Because she was having problems with his behavior, the welfare office found her a therapist. She appreciated and tried to follow the therapist's advice: 'try to get him not to watch so much television, to do constructive things (*cosas constructivas*), like painting' (Interview, 10/21/02). She also enrolled in Spanish-language parenting classes at a local community center: 'because at times you don't know how […] to bring up children properly (*educar a los hijos*)' (Interview, 10/22/02).

According to Zur (1998), it is Quiché men who are expected to socialize boys into traditional values. In any case, based on recommendations from the therapist and the parenting class, she had gotten some children's books for Mateo, mostly in English, as I found in an early visit to her home:

> Serafina wanted to read to me in English, so mostly that is what we did. The first book she read to me is *I Am A Kitten*, a little Golden Book in board book form. She said that she reads it to her son and it is easier for her (than her English textbooks). She read the whole book, stumbling and hesitating on some words, reading others clearly, misreading others plausibly. She consistently read "wash myself" as "wash my face." Her voice quality changes when she is reading a word that she is just trying to sound out compared to a word that she knows already. Or sometimes she just gets self-conscious when she thinks she might be about to make an error, and waits to be told what the word is. (Field notes, 10/22/02)

She said she read to Mateo regularly and indeed when I met him for the first time, he was very enthusiastic about showing me his books. Serafina was definitely making an effort to be the kind of 'involved' parent valorized in the family literacy literature (e.g. Paratore *et al.*, 1999).

However, a new problem was looming for Serafina's relationship with her son. His daycare was English-only, and in a few months, he seemed to be forgetting Spanish: 'That's what worries me. […] I need to help him, and if I don't understand, how am I going to help him? […] Sometimes he just says things in English, but I don't know what he wants' (Interview, 12/2/02). Literature on language socialization by 'involved' parents has assumed that they and their children share a common language, at least so they can give them inspirational messages (e.g. Delgado Bernal, 2001); however, Serafina's social circumstances were separating her and Mateo into different linguistic worlds, and she was finding it increasingly difficult to communicate with him even about basic routines.

Mateo's preschool also gave him homework assignments, which she had trouble helping him with, as I found on one of my first visits to her home:

> Mateo's assignment was a sheet with letters on it, arranged something like this:
>
> A GHIOAR
> U XUIMNK
> Y ZWERHY
> etc, filling a page.

> The directions at the top, in English, said to circle the letter that was the same as the first letter in each line. She said she understood that Mateo was supposed to circle something, but she wasn't sure what. I showed her the first two, and she kept nodding, but when I got to the third and asked her to show me which to circle, she said she didn't understand. I explained again, somewhat more slowly, and she said "Ahh," and pointed to the two letters that were the same in the first three lines. She then showed me the other parts of the homework, one section that had a row of capital A's dotted in to trace over, then a blank line to copy them on, then the same with small a's. That was clearer to her, I just confirmed what she thought. (Field notes, 10/21/02)

Thus, though Mateo's homework tasks were not impossible for Serafina, she had difficulty reading directions in English, and she had no one she could regularly ask for translation help.

At the time I interviewed her, Serafina was trying to transfer Mateo into a bilingual preschool, but also feeling the necessity to study English herself: 'I really need to learn English (*yo necesito aprender mucho el inglés*)' (Interview, 10/28/02). She had purchased several beginning ESL textbooks, but had difficulty studying them on her own. Her caseworker had suggested that she get a part-time job around full-time ESL, but the factory position she found through friends in October was temporary and full time, and she had to drop out of school.

This was her situation at the time I interviewed her in the late fall of 2002, worried about her son, unable to study English and without permanent employment. When I asked her about the future, she said she wanted Mateo to get a good education: 'I want my son to study a lot, […] to have a career when he grows up, because parents want the best for their children' (Interview, 10/28/02). In a subsequent interview, she quoted her father on the same topic: 'Because what I didn't have, I want for my son (*lo que yo no tuve, quiero que mi hijo lo tiene*)' (Interview, 11/15/02). In February 2003, unable to find work or to get Mateo into a bilingual preschool, she sent him to live with her sister in Guatemala City.[21]

Serafina Tzul: Summary

This case study shows how Serafina, with less formal education than either Brenda or Raquel, was able to draw upon some of the same resources to support her son's education, making the most of her basic Spanish

literacy and minimal English, and drawing inspiration from the hard-won history of education in her family. She had the same dreams for her son that Brenda and Raquel had for their daughters, and unlike Brenda she had legal papers that connected her to state-funded assistance. However, without a supportive family network in the local community, Serafina lacked the access that the Ríos women enjoyed to housing, employment, childcare, cultural information, transportation and translation. Although she was aware of the advantages of bilingual education, in 2002 she was unable to find a bilingual preschool for her son. Moreover, though she had been taught in her parenting classes how to be 'involved' in her son's learning, successful language socialization depends on parents and children sharing a common language, and Serafina found her level of English inadequate to this task at a time when Mateo was losing Spanish. She managed to read aloud to him in English, but could not help much with his homework, and was often unable to answer his questions.

If agency is defined as 'the socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001: 112), it can be seen from Serafina's story that she had in fact displayed considerable agency as an adult in pursuing educational opportunities. Though schooling had never been easy for her, she kept coming back for more, in the same way that her father had. However, it is important to reiterate that educational trajectories necessarily intersect with the sociopolitical constraints that families and individuals confront. Though her caseworker encouraged English study, the welfare system provided little support for this endeavor, aside from subsidizing the daycare where her son was losing his language. Despite Serafina's agency, she faced constraints outside her control that restricted what she could accomplish.

The Sociohistorical Context of Parental Involvement in Learning

Previous studies on US schools and immigrant families have tended to focus on a mismatch between the 'mainstream' expectations of the schools and the traditional language socialization and literacy practices of the newcomers. Authors have tended to portray literacy and educational practices as more-or-less unitary and unchanging across families and communities (e.g. Valdés 1996). The current study, in contrast, demonstrates the variability of educational backgrounds, literacy practices and orientations towards schooling, within Latino immigrant communities in the same city, and even within one household. While Brenda was introducing her daughter Nathaly to the public library's science books,

coloring projects and computers, her sister-in-law Raquel was teaching Nathaly's cousins how to compose their own prayers based on biblical texts. Indeed, this research shows how immigrants draw on a variety of sociohistorically available resources to construct their own involvement in their children's education in a particular historical moment. It also suggests the limits to parental involvement in the face of poverty and inadequate social support.

Family literacy critics, such as Valdés (1996), have rightly feared the imposition of mainstream values on immigrant families, while Mateo's language loss is a good example of what can go wrong. These cultural concerns potentially pose a dilemma for ESL instructors regarding how to teach a second language without negatively impacting the first language – with the dilemma particularly acute in California where ESL family literacy has been funded through an anti-bilingual education voter initiative. However, throughout my observations and interviews at the CEC, adult English learners continued to value bilingualism and their own cultural traditions, while seeing the CEC classes as a way to attain new goals for themselves and their children. It was not Serafina's ESL class but her son's preschool that was driving a linguistic wedge between them.

Indeed, while family literacy programs have been described as a way to break 'the cycle of … illiteracy' (e.g. National Center for Family Literacy, 2008), the educational histories of both Brenda and Serafina, different as they are, suggest that this metaphor may not be the best way to conceptualize the intergenerational experiences of many learners who may benefit from these programs. Rather than *cycles* of repeating mistakes, their family histories may better be seen as *trajectories*, in which each generation builds on the experiences of the preceding one, as when Serafina drew on her father's example in pursuing adult literacy instruction. While other metaphors may be appropriate for other learners, such as Raquel (who valued household skills for herself, but schooling for her daughters), the key point is that the personal and family history of the learner constitutes an important part of the social context of any educational endeavor. Educational programs need to build upon rather than discount these histories.

Thus, the efforts that Brenda, Raquel and Serafina made to support their children's education must be seen within a sociohistorical context of globalization where 'mothering exists at the disjunctures between nationalisms, the states, and the … movement of capital and labor' (Villenas & Moreno, 2001: 672). Clearly, supporting their children was important to these women, but as these authors contend, 'for migrating Latin American diaspora women, their work of mothering is made exceedingly difficult'

(Villenas & Moreno, 2001: 672). All three women shared similar hopes for their children for future academic and career success, but all had seen their own educations cut short by social constraints in their homelands. Driven to emigrate by civil strife and neoliberal policies, they now found themselves near the bottom of the US economy – a position that has consequences for the academic development of their children.

As women who were invested in their maternal identities (Norton, 2000), my participants have undoubtedly continued their educational efforts since my study concluded in 2003. However, it must not be forgotten that in the current political climate, schools for immigrant children often lack resources of all kinds. While Raquel may have written, 'I think everything to do with my daughter is important' (see beginning of chapter), it is not clear that the larger society agrees. A year after I finished collecting data for this study, newspapers carried stories about budget problems in the Kingston school district, which were necessitating the closure of all libraries, the layoff of all counsellors and the elimination of all sports and arts programs. A local ballot measure eventually made up some of the missing funds, but because none of my participants were US citizens, they were unable to vote on the measure.[22] This funding shortfall points to the need for schools and larger communities, as well as parents, to live by Raquel's words as they work together to educate young people from diverse backgrounds. Moreover, by respecting both the capabilities and the aspirations of their immigrant students, teachers can help learners extend their family trajectories of learning. As even family literacy critic Guadalupe Valdés concludes, 'It should be possible to move into a new world without completely giving up the old' (Valdés, 1996: 205).

Chapter 5

Gendered Positioning in ESL Classroom Activities[23]

> *The question that haunts (ESL programs that serve women) is whether the attempts to accommodate women ... ultimately serve to maintain or alter the present status and conditions that women are faced with ... We do suspect that there are moments already occurring where ... issues of identity and power are problematized and not simply accommodated*
> Harper *et al.*, 1996: 17

As educational ethnographer Frederick Erickson writes, 'the choices and actions of (teachers and students) constitute an enacted curriculum' (Frederick Erickson, 1986: 129). In this chapter, I examine events of gendered positioning that occurred during my observations in CEC classrooms. In my analysis, these positionings became an important element of the CEC curriculum, as it was enacted in interaction between teachers and students. They thus became part of CEC students' second-language socialization as they began to construct voices in English. In analyzing my classroom data, I found positioning by gender to be ubiquitous on the part of both teachers and students, with other kinds of social positioning comparatively rare (when compared to my interview data). That is, teachers and students were far more likely to apply *gendered* identity categories, such as 'mother', to other individuals than they were to apply categories such as 'Latino/a', 'working class' or 'immigrant' (for more on social positioning theory, see Chapter 2). My CEC observations support Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2003) contention that *institutions* serving immigrants are structured by gender.

In earlier chapters, I have explored the gendered contexts of immigrant language learning. However, in this chapter, I look more closely at interactions that take place in the ESL classroom from the perspective of language socialization theory. Given that many of the CEC students had little opportunity to use English outside of class, participation in such

interactions constituted their principal means to develop their second language and literacies. Traditionally, language socialization research has looked at how children are socialized *through* language *to use* language (Ochs, 1988), as discussed in Chapter 4. However, as Miller and Goodnow point out, theories of socialization are starting to 'move beyond the passive individual shaped by socializing agents to make room for the active, constructive, transforming or resisting person' (Miller & Goodnow, 1995: 8). Thus, a central foundation of contemporary language socialization theory is that 'linguistic and cultural knowledge are constructed through each other', with learners seen as 'active and selective agents in both processes' (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003: 165). If this is true of research with children in first-language settings, it is even more true of immigrant adults who are appropriating second-language structures and practices based on a lifetime of language use and cultural participation. When immigrant adults voluntarily undergo second-language socialization in institutions designed and funded by mainstream society, questions of power and agency necessarily arise, especially when these institutions to some extent have assimilationist agendas (see Chapter 1).

As discussed in Chapter 2, learners begin to develop second-language identities through participation in discursive practices. Because classroom discourse and interaction routines tend to position immigrant language learners in fairly narrow ways, for example, as 'homemakers' or 'entry-level workers' or even 'welfare recipients' (Auerbach & Burgess, 1985; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002), issues of power cannot be separated from issues of participation in adult immigrant ESL classrooms, and a critical understanding of classroom interaction can be key to making sense of the 'voices constructed by learners in a target language' (Ehrlich, 1997: 440). Thus, I use critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodology in this chapter, in order to 'shed light on the way power relations work … through a close linguistic analysis of texts' (Kumaravadivelu, 1999: 466). In my analysis of classroom discourse data, I explore the ways gendered positioning was concretely manifested in the ESL classroom, as well as how social positioning events appeared to affect L2 socialization in this context. In my analysis, typical classroom events tended to reinforce or at least 'accommodate' traditional gender ideologies, though not always in predictable ways. However, I additionally note less ordinary interactions in which traditional gender ideologies were 'problematized' (Harper *et al.*, 1996: 17). I conclude by arguing that ESL teachers need to provide space for learners' (multiple) self-positionings as well as encouragement to question the identities that society is assigning them.

Researching the 'Feminized' Classroom

Funded through a family literacy program, the CEC offered support services such as childcare, and its lessons often focused on parenting themes. With a largely female student population, this was a 'feminized' approach to ESL (Harper *et al.*, 1996). As I have discussed in earlier chapters, the adult learners brought with them their family commitments and their previous trajectories of schooling and employment as they enacted the curriculum jointly with their teachers. In exploring this enactment, it is important to keep in mind that the students who attended the CEC classes five mornings a week participated *voluntarily*. Studying English was a choice they made on a daily basis, and always this choice competed with other responsibilities, from laundry to paid employment to doctors' appointments to church activities. While learning English was a desirable goal in the long run, there was no immediate pay-off to class attendance. Students would not have continued in the program if they felt they were wasting their time, if they were confused, bored or disrespected.[24]

All the students I interviewed had similar things to say about why they liked the CEC classes and teachers, but Raquel's description of Jean was particularly eloquent:

> She is very affectionate (*cariñosa*), very affectionate, she is one of those that if you have a problem and start to cry, she is one of those who almost cries with you. [. . .] She is one of the people that try to give like confidence (*confianza*), and that really helps the student. (Interview, 2/11/03)

The qualities that Raquel emphasizes are the same ones participants had used in their descriptions of 'good teachers' from their own childhoods when I interviewed them, especially the word 'affectionate (*cariñosa*)'. As adults, these learners continued to value warm, nurturing relationships with their teachers – and with classmates as well.

Data for this chapter were collected partly through participant observation in the ESL classroom (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998), and partly through more formal audiotaped observations. As discussed in Chapter 1, I served as a classroom volunteer for seven months, documenting interactions that I had observed or taken part in through ethnographic field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Watson-Gegeo, 1988). Additionally, I audiotaped 20 h of classroom interaction, primarily during literacy activities (broadly defined). During these audiotaped classroom observations, I would place an audiorecorder with a microphone near a particular focal student, and also sit next to her, taking handwritten notes on the interactions. Each

observation lasted approximately 1 h. I tried not to interact much with the students while I was observing, but I would answer direct questions, and occasionally offer unsolicited help. I transcribed these tapes immediately after each observation, and incorporated them into my field notes. The discourse data analyzed in this chapter were collected in this way, during observations of five different students, conducted between October and December 2002 at the CEC. Because I was not at the CEC for a full school year, nor did I attend everyday, I may have missed classes that could have contradicted the assertions I make here. Nevertheless, there were strongly gendered trends in the enacted curricula for both classes, as designed by both CEC teachers, and as taken up by the students.

In the findings section of this chapter, I draw upon the tools of CDA to take a close look at social positioning in gendered classroom interactions. Specifically, I use ethnographic field notes and interview excerpts to contextualize microanalyses of closely transcribed audiotaped classroom interaction discourse, which appears with line numbers below (see Transcription Conventions, Appendix B). As Fairclough (1992) explains, CDA views *discourse(s)* (see Chapter 2) as shaped by social structures, but also as socially constitutive, constructing social identities, human relationships and various kinds of knowledge: it is these constructions that I particularly attend to in this analysis. In conducting CDA to analyze power relations in particular social settings, van Dijk recommends concentrating on linguistic and paralinguistic structures that 'can vary as a function of social power … (such as) stress and intonation', (van Dijk, 2001: 99) – and which are, moreover, relevant to the research questions of a particular study. However, while van Dijk posits that some linguistic structures 'are grammatically obligatory … and hence irrelevant for a study of social power' (van Dijk, 2001), it is precisely these structures that are most subject to learner error. Such structures thus become key resources for social positioning in the L2 classroom, as I illustrate below.

Findings: Social Positioning Events in the ESL Classroom

As mentioned above, gendered social positioning was common in a wide variety of activities, in both classrooms that I observed. For many students, the reinforcement of traditional gender ideologies in classroom talk seemed to facilitate their construction of L2 voices that were congruent with their L1 identities and cultural values, without the kind of wrenching changes demanded of L2 learners in other contexts (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Often the CEC's emphasis on the learners' gendered identities

had positive results for second-language socialization. As discussed in Chapter 4, maternal identities were important to many learners, and many CEC students were studying English so as to better participate in their children's schooling.

To give a concrete illustration of this congruence, I will briefly examine the response of Laura, a good friend of Trini's, to one assignment (for more discussion of Laura's background, see Chapter 6). In my interview with Laura, she told me that she did not work outside the home because her husband wanted her to 'devote herself' to her five-year-old daughter Eva. Before beginning English classes, she had learned a little of the language by checking out library books and reading them to her daughter: 'The little bit (of English) that I know (is) because I read her lots of books' (Interview, 10/11/02). Thus, Laura had approached initial English acquisition through family literacy practices before ever entering an ESL program. When I asked Laura in the same interview which CEC classroom task had been most interesting, her daughter replied for her, 'The drawing'! Agreeing, Laura pulled out of her folder an illustrated composition about her hometown:

> I grew up in Santiago del Valle, Jalisco, Mexico. It was in the country. It was a quiet and peaceful place. When I looked out the window, I saw the hill, the house of my neighbor and the birds in the tree singing. Things I liked there are a Tranquil place and the Traditional Mexican food. Things I liked to do when I was a Child were to play with my sisters around the block. I left my Country because I married and my husband came to USA for the best future for us.

Laura told me that she had never written much before aside from letters in Spanish, but she had written the first draft in class, after reading a model that the teacher had provided. The second draft she wrote at home after teacher-proofreading. Eva participated in this process with keen interest, because this was a story about her mother's hometown, where she had never been, but about which she had heard many stories. Inspired, the girl decided to write and illustrate her own story (For Laura's and Eva's drawings, see Figure 5.1). Eva's text read as follows: 'REPLFMWNB. hayI.ostvAc.Eva.KLRO[several letters unclear]ONYAoFSyy KOcETOGlk'. This was translated for me by her mother, according to what Eva told her at the time, as 'Yo nací en San Francisco. Me llamo Eva. Soy contenta. (*I was born in San Francisco. My name is Eva. I am happy*)'. In this way, Laura's identity as an English learner at the CEC nurtured her identity development as a mother involved with her daughter's academic and cultural *educación* (see Chapter 4).

Figure 5.1 My hometown: from Jalisco to California

However, not all gendered classroom activities had such positive results, and indeed, the impact of gendered social positioning on language learning was quite varied in these classrooms. To illustrate the range of ways that gender interacted with English lessons, I begin by looking at gender in classroom small talk, and then go on to explore gendered positioning in three official instructional units: a unit on civics in Jean's beginning class, as well as units on schooling and employment in Kerrie's intermediate class. I critically analyze this last unit in most depth because it best illustrates the potential influence of gendered social positioning on the long-term L2 socialization of the CEC students.

Gendering in Classroom Small Talk

Semi-official classroom small talk between teachers and students, a lively feature of both classes, was a key site for gender performances (Butler, 1999), and especially for the good-humored reinforcement of stereotypical gender identities. A typical example came in Jean's beginning class, after a series of female students said they had cleaned their houses over the weekend. Turning to Oswaldo, one of only two male students in attendance that day (out of 21 students total), Jean asked about *his* weekend activities. He said, 'Me cleaning my house', which led to hoots of laughter from the assembled women, and one even called him a liar. Then Jean said, 'I know what he told Ruth. He cooked chicken at KFC [Kentucky Fried Chicken]' (Field notes, 9/16/02). Thus, as tended to happen (see further examples below), Oswaldo's step outside traditional gender roles was met with ridicule. It was not clear to me whether he was joking about the housecleaning (I knew his wife was in Mexico), but his contribution was certainly taken as a joke by the class.

Much more than Jean, Kerrie kept her intermediate-level students paying attention through a performance of flirtatious femininity. She once told a young male student that he looked like the film star Antonio Banderas (Field notes, 8/6/02). At times she humorously offered her services as a matchmaker, as in this field note excerpt:

> Kerrie moves people around to distribute them more neatly around the classroom. The table behind where I'm sitting has emptied during break, and Kerrie tells Demetrio and Mayra to sit there. During the conversation cards activity Kerrie had asked Demetrio if he had a girlfriend (no) and if he would like to have a girlfriend (yes). Once Demetrio and Mayra sit down together, Kerrie muses, "Demetrio and Mayra. That's a good idea". (Field notes, 12/10/02)

Some of the students in this class adopted a similar discourse in teasing Kerrie back, and she happily played along with this:

> Mona said she dreamed about talking to a big handsome man in English because he didn't know Spanish. She added, "I dreamed with your son, Kerrie." Kerrie was very amused, especially because Mona had recently met her adult son. She said, "How old are you?" Mona said, "I'm married". (Field notes, 10/2/02)

Even a discussion of such a mundane topic as bus transfers could turn into an opportunity for performing gender:

1	**Lupita:**	If you close the eyes to the driver, he give you three↓ hours.
2		((She demonstrates winking and laughs.))
3	**Kerrie:**	Do they stamp the time on the transfer, (.5) or can you use it when it expires? (.5)
4	**Students:**	No. No.
5	**Kerrie:**	You sure? Because I had a transfer yesterday, they stamped the time. […]
6	**Camila:**	They stamp the time? (.5) What about if I show him my leg? ((laughing))
7	**Kerrie:**	What?
8	**Camila:**	((laughing harder)) What about if I show him my le:g? ((laughing and
9		laughing, joined by other students)) He giving for me free the whole day↓
10		((Kerrie demonstrates showing her leg.))

(Audiotaped classroom observation, 12/3/02)

Lupita and Camila, both tough, plainly dressed women in their 30s, have a lot of fun here humorously positioning themselves as femmes fatales, while positioning bus drivers throughout the conversation as prototypically male, susceptible to their feminine charms and easily corruptible. If Lupita's wink could earn her an extra hour of bus riding in Line 1, surely the sight of Camila's leg (Lines 6 and 8) should be worth an all day trip (Line 9)! Their teacher Kerrie joins in the fun in Line 10 by striking a beauty contestant pose. Collectively, though humorously, all

three women were reinforcing ideologies about the power of female attractiveness.

Other ongoing (gendered) themes in class small talk included boredom with football and excitement over sales at the mall. After the class gave Kerrie a Macy's gift certificate for her birthday, she wrote a thank-you note on the board, and had the class read it out loud. In calling on Jorge, who had been away from the class for a while studying computers (see Chapter 3), she mistakenly referred to him as Eladio, then realized her error:

11 **Kerrie:** ((apologizing)) This is not Eladio, this is Jorge. (.3) When you get older↑, (.3) your
12 mind kind of °is not so good any more°. Jorge, would you read number two↓.
13 **Jorge:** (1.0) ((reading from the board)) I look forward to going to Macy's to buy some
14 new clothes.
15 **Kerrie:** Good. Yes, thank you very much for the gift↑ card. Now I can go to Ma↑cy's
16 °and buy some new clothes°.
17 **Student:** Friday? [The class had been talking earlier about what a busy shopping day the
18 Friday after Thanksgiving is]
19 **Kerrie:** No way Friday. I think I'll wait till after Friday ((laughs, joined by many
20 students)).
21 **Raquel:** ((laughing)) Specials Fri↑day, yeah!
22 **Kerrie:** But you know, if I wait, (.3) maybe after Thanksgiving there'll be sales.
(Audiotaped classroom observation, 11/26/02)

Kerrie's self-deprecating humor in Lines 11–12 both apologizes to Jorge for having forgotten his name, while drawing on a common discourse about birthdays, aging and forgetfulness. Having the students read her thank-you message off the board positions her as both a teacher and a grateful recipient of gifts, while also providing vocabulary that students might use themselves in the future. Through Kerrie's performance of gender in English, she offers her female students resources for the construction of a feminine voice in their L2. Although Macy's sells a variety of products, it is prototypically a woman's clothing store, and Kerrie portrays herself in Lines 15 and 16 as a typical female consumer, while the conversation that ensues in Lines 17–22 positions the entire class as competent mall shoppers who know how and when to find the best sales (a stereotypically female expertise, although Raquel later cited her husband as the source of her knowledge about the Friday specials).

The Unit on Civics

Civics is a content area which is not innately gendered. When I interviewed Jean, the beginning class teacher, in early 2003, she described her approach to teaching civics as follows[25]:

> How do you get things done in the world ((laughs)). [...] The unit we're doing now is taking responsibility for some sort of change in

> their neighborhood. [. . .] We made a whole list of things today. They want streetlights, and they want more cops on the streets, and they want cleaner streets. So those are some things that [. . .] you know, I'm hoping to give them the tools to act on. (Interview, 2/6/03)

However, the civics unit on the theme of 'neighborhood' that I observed in the fall of 2002 focused not on advocacy but on neighbors helping each other, and tended to cast ESL students in traditional gender roles. In one lesson, Jean donned a frilly apron to perform a dialogue on borrowing an egg from a neighbor (Field notes, 11/20/02). Here I will focus on a discussion of babysitting that took place during a civics lesson in early December (I observed another very similar discussion of babysitting a week later in the same class). As the interaction begins, the class is examining a handout entitled *How do people help each other?* and specifically picture number 3, which illustrates 'babysitting'. It shows the silhouette of a young woman holding up a waving infant, while an elegantly dressed couple departs:

23 **Jean:** ((summing up the discussion so far)) Leaving the baby with the baby-sitter
24 ((laughs)). How many people … (.5) Do your neighbors baby-sit for you?
25 **Trini:** (.5) No my neighbors, my husband. ((laughs))
26 ((The whole class bursts out laughing))
27 **Jean:** ((recasting)) Not your neighbors, your husband↓. (1.0) Anybody's sister
28 baby-sit? (.5) Relatives? (.5) Auxiliadora?
29 **Auxiliadora:** No.
30 [. . .]
31 **Magda:** A few: months ago↑(1.0) I going to work↑ (.3) my neighbor (.5) °taken my
32 children°.
33 **Jean:** ((recasting)) Your neighbor took your children↓. Your neighbor babysat for
34 your children↓.

(Audiotaped classroom observation, 12/4/02)

In this excerpt, babysitting has been presented as one of six principal ways that neighbors can help each other. Magda, one of the most fluent students in the beginning class, offered an actual example of this in Lines 31 and 32, which was accepted, though grammatically recast, by the teacher (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Jean's falling intonation as she repeated both women's contributions in Lines 27, 33 and 34 lent her teacherly authority to the content of both utterances, even as she corrected their grammar. However, while Magda's neighbor, assumed to be female, occasioned no merriment, Trini's Line 25 comment about her husband babysitting was met with laughter, which positioned her family as anomalous. Her long efforts to restructure gender in her household (see Chapter 3) were apparently not seen as plausible or perhaps even desirable by her classmates.

Generally, in these lessons from the civics unit, students were quite engaged in talking about how people helped them, and how they helped

other people. As usual, there was a lot of joking and laughter. However, one student brought up a more serious issue, which was never foregrounded by the CEC teachers in my observations. The handout with the baby-sitter picture also included a fuzzy silhouette of figures with notebooks and pens, representing 'help with English'. Jean asked several students, 'Who helps you with English'? First, Florita replied that her daughter helped her, then Celia said that other shoppers helped her in the grocery store, and finally Agustina told Jean that nobody helped her. Before Jean could call on someone else, Celia re-entered the conversation:

35 **Celia:** Teacher, (.5) my daughter (.8) when ask me something (.5) she put ˇangry
36 (.3) "ˇMo:::m ((breathy voice)), why (.2) not (.2) you (.2) speak (.2) Eng↑lish?"
37 **Jean:** (1.0) Yeah, it's difficult you know, sometimes the (.3) children (.3) learn faster
38 because they go to school all the ti↑me. (.3) Sometimes they are not very
39 patient with their mothers or their fathers.
40 **Celia:** My other son? No↓ (.3) he don't say nothing to me. (.3) But my daugh↑ter
41 (.3) she angry. "ˇMo:::m ((breathy voice)), why not you speak English?"
42 **Jean:** Did you say "help me"? ((laughs)) Did you say to her "help me"?
43 **Celia:** I say (.3) "I trying the school."
(Audiotaped classroom observation, 12/4/02)

The strongest voice in this excerpt is that of Celia's 'angry' daughter, quoted in Line 36 by Celia herself, who has caught perfectly the drawn-out breathy tones of injured (pre?)adolescence. In Celia's rendition, repeated for effect in Line 41, the girl to me sounds beyond exasperated, almost threatening. She is backed by the power of English-only ideology, a strong force in California, as the girl has undoubtedly witnessed in school. In performing her daughter's voice here, Celia is at the same time voicing Anglo society (Bakhtin, 1981), a voice that negatively positions Celia as an inadequate mother based on her L2 competence. In Line 37, Jean hesitates a full second before responding to Celia's comment, and then sympathetically tries to de-personalize the situation by talking about children in general in Lines 37–39, and offering a potentially face-saving explanation as to why the girl's English is better than her mother's (Line 38). The rising intonation that follows this explanation invites Celia's agreement, but Jean then sympathizes with Celia by gently describing the girl (and other children like her) as 'not very patient'. *Impatience* is a negative quality, but not a terrible failing, a character trait that can be expected of children rather than blamed upon parents. All this implies that Celia does not need to take her daughter's anger to heart.

However, Celia brings the focus back from children in general (her son is not like this) to her daughter in particular, who is still angry, still breathy and still almost threatening as Celia repeats her words in Line 41. This time Jean does not hesitate. In Line 42, she reframes the discourse to that

of the civics lesson on people 'helping each other'. As a pedagogical move, this reintegrates Celia's remarks as on-task contributions to the discussion, but Jean's laughter as she says them perhaps indexes the inadequacy of the words 'help me' in the face of Celia's daughter's (ideological) challenge. Celia does not laugh. In quoting her response to her daughter in Line 43, she reminds Jean of why she comes to class to study English – while the emphasis on the word 'trying' suggests that the CEC may or may not be a solution to her dilemma.

The Unit on Schooling

In any case, the family literacy content in the curriculum corresponded to many students' reasons for coming to the classes. Students saw these classes as resources that could help them keep up with their children's acquisition of English, as Celia expressed in her interaction with Jean. Although the ideological issues raised in this interaction were never discussed directly in my observations, teachers were aware of students' interest in their children's education. Therefore, throughout most of September and October, Kerrie's intermediate class covered a unit on schooling in the United States. Kerrie described the lessons from this unit as things that parents of schoolchildren should know. Discussing a lesson about school personnel calling parents, she told me that the purpose was, 'Well, to be able to *say* stuff like this, if you get a phone call from school, what's your appropriate response'? (Interview, 1/29/03). In introducing this lesson to the class, she asked students for their experiences:

44	**Kerrie:**	When there's a fight, who often calls?
45	**Fabiana:**	The princi{pal↓.
46	**Kerrie:**	{The principal. Do people from school call your house for any other reason?
47	**Camila:**	Yes. [. . .]
48		((Kerrie writes "reason" on the left side of the board, and "who" on the right.))
49	**Kerrie:**	Camila, you said (.5) other people call. Who else calls you from school?
50		If there's trouble?
51	**Students:**	Counsellor.
52	**Kerrie:**	A cou↑nsellor? OK↓ (.5) And why might a counsellor call? [. . .]
53	**Camila:**	(1.0) When the (.3) when the children . . . cut . . . class↑.
54	**Kerrie:**	[. . .] Oh, OK, that's good. When the students are cutting (1.5) class. ((She
55		writes "cutting class" under "reason" and "counsellor" under "who".))
56	**Camila:**	When when I take my little girl to the pre↑school=
57	**Kerrie:**	=Mmhmm=
58	**Camila:**	=I saw a lot of students over there in San Francis↑co. They cutting . . . class.

(Audiotaped classroom observation, 10/15/02)

In this excerpt, Kerrie successfully elicits students' prior knowledge about reasons for school phone calls, including the personnel titles of likely callers,

as when Fabiana, in Line 45, suggests 'the principal' as the one who would call a parent to report a student fight. Camila's double hesitation in Line 53 is probably related to her desire to remember the correct idiomatic expression, and Kerrie praises her in Line 54 for having done so. Camila then bids for a chance to tell a short narrative, by beginning the story with a rising intonation in Line 56, while Kerrie's 'Mmhmm' in Line 57 accepts this bid. In performing concerned motherhood, Camila's story demonstrates her construction of an L2 voice congruent with L1 identities and ideologies. Throughout this excerpt, Kerrie positions her students not just as English learners but more importantly as *knowledgeable* parents, who are savvy about local schools. This may be true of Camila, who could have learned the vocabulary 'cutting class' from her sixth grader, but less likely to be true of Fabiana, whose only child was two years old and attending the CEC daycare.

Kerrie then told her own narrative about observing truant students at the mall, asking students if they had also seen this, and receiving positive backchanneling in response. In this way, she positioned herself and her students as concerned adults and residents of the local community. Repositioning herself as language teacher, Kerrie then introduced the vocabulary word 'misbehave' and for the subsequent 24 turns, the class practiced this word and discussed its definition. Finally, in order to connect this vocabulary with her earlier elicitation of student experiences, Kerrie brought up again a student narrative that served this purpose.

59 **Kerrie:** So Esther (.5) the secretary called you because … one of your children …
60 mis<u>behaved</u>?
61 **Esther:** Yeah ((laughing)).
62 **Kerrie:** ˇWe don't have to say why. (.5) °Talk to me later if you want.° O↑K.
63 (.3) Any other <u>rea</u>sons they might call? (1.8) Has a <u>teach</u>er ever called you?
64 (.8) About your … son or daughter? Lupita?
65 **Lupita:** When some student doesn't feel <u>well</u>.
66 **Kerrie:** Oh, they call you at <u>home</u>. ˆ<u>Yeah</u>. OK. Who <u>called</u> you?
67 **Lupita:** (.3) The secretary <u>call</u> me when my son was (sick) at schoo↑l. […]
68 **Kerrie:** OK. OK. So if your children get <u>si:ck</u> or hurt at school, yeah, the secretary
69 will call you↓ (.3) ˇRight, that can be (.3) <u>sca</u>ry when you get a phone call.

(Audiotaped classroom observation, 10/15/02)

Esther's narrative had been told in a soft voice, almost in an aside. I had heard most of it, and noted its embarrassing nature in my field notes, which I will not share here. Kerrie's remarks to Esther in Line 62 also acknowledged this aspect of the story, when in a lowered voice she gave Esther the option of discussing the issue with her privately. She quickly returned in Lines 62–66 to eliciting student experiences, again positioning students as knowledgeable and caring. She thus honored the adult learners' expertise as mothers of children attending US schools. She also

kept the discussion comfortable by not forcing Esther to confess her child's misdeed to her classmates ('We don't have to say why'), and by using affective language to empathize with Lupita in Line 69 ('That can be scary when you get a phone call').

Kerrie followed this discussion with dialogue practice in pairs, using written scripts from a textbook, so students could learn some functional expressions useful for school phone calls, for example, 'I am afraid so' and 'Thank you for letting me know'. Through these dialogues, students also learned the meanings and pronunciations of 'Ms' and 'Mrs'. While Kerrie was teaching the students appropriate English-language responses to bad news, she gave them credit for cultural knowledge about what kind of bad news they might expect to receive. By the time the students were practicing the telephone expressions, they had spent quite a bit of time pooling information about the situations in which they might need them.

The Unit on Employment

Kerrie's assumptions about her students led her to take a different approach to her unit on employment that followed the unit on schooling (this unit began in November and was still continuing at the time I interviewed her in late January). She had approached the unit on schooling assuming that her students collectively had considerable experience with the US school system as *mothers*, but she did not expect them to have much cultural knowledge about the US employment system as *workers*. She continued to position them as *mothers*, that is, full-time homemakers who might plan to work someday. While I did observe an activity in which students listed jobs they had held in the past, I never heard Kerrie elicit workplace experiences in the way that she elicited experiences with, for example, parent–teacher conferences. This was despite the fact that a sizable minority of the students did work outside the home, and even more had experience with paid employment in their countries of origin (the day I surveyed the class, 6 out of 19 students in attendance were currently employed, while 16 had at least some previous work experience).

Kerrie described her approach to me as follows:

> I have mostly younger women? And [I want] to get them thinking about going back to work and pros and cons? and what they might have to consider. [. . .] Because when people say "what can you do?" they'll say "I can't do anything." And I wanted to introduce skills ((pause)) and also show them that they do have a lot of skills? [. . .] Because they all would say, "I can't do anything, except clean my house and take care of kids and cook or sew". (Interview, 1/29/03)

Thus, Kerrie's employment-oriented lessons were addressed to those members of the class (like Raquel, see Chapter 4) who had little or no workplace experience, rather than to those (like Lupita quoted above) who ran their own housecleaning businesses – or to Fabiana who had international business experience in Peru (see Chapter 1). While the skills that Kerrie mentions above (cleaning and cooking) could be seen as primarily applicable to *working-class* jobs, it is gender positioning rather than social-class positioning that continued to predominate in this unit, since the emphasis was not so much on the jobs that students could find in the future, but rather on the skills they already possessed as homemakers (skills shared by middle-class and working-class women alike).

In the two classroom activities that I analyze below, I illustrate the diversity of gendered identities in this class (Cameron, 2005) through the contrasting responses of Camila and Fabiana to the way Kerrie was positioning her students in this unit. While both Camila and Fabiana were full-time homemakers in their mid-30s with employed spouses and young children, who had grown up in urban settings and had similar levels of education, they differed in that Camila had lived in the United States longer and spoke English more fluently (see Chapter 3), while Fabiana was a former businesswoman from a higher social-class background. These 'intra-group differences' (Cameron, 2005: 484) became crucial in the social positioning events analyzed below.

Taken together, these events illustrate the CDA view of 'the classroom as a site of struggle ... where ideological, discursive and social forces collide' (Kumaravadivelu, 1999: 475). Since L2 socialization takes place through participation in speech and literacy events, the ways that students are positioned in these events necessarily affect their construction of L2 voices (Ehrlich, 1997). However, especially in the second of the events below, it is clear that the students are not merely *positioned* by their teacher but are also actively *positioning* themselves and each other – and are thus active agents of their own socialization, within the constraints of the ESL classroom context, as well as the larger societal context.

'Fabiana, tell me two skills that you have': In the interview extract above, audiotaped two months *after* the intermediate-class observation detailed below, Kerrie describes her approach to teaching employment skills at the CEC: convincing the women in her class that homemaking activities are marketable. Otherwise, she claims, 'they *all* would say, "I can't do anything . . .''' (Interview, 1/29/03, italics mine).

To this end, Kerrie had students fill out a Skills Chart on a handout, putting a check next to listed items. Some of these skills could be seen as stereotypically feminine, such as *clean house*, *cook* and *cut hair*, while others

could be seen as more masculine, such as *fix a car*. The handout also left some blanks at the bottom for students to add 'some skills that are not on the list', as well as space to 'write three sentences telling what you can do'. Presented with this handout, Fabiana checked off several skills, including *clean house*, *cook* and *do math*. I stepped out of my observer role to suggest that she add '*accounting*' at the bottom. She did so, and then wrote '*buy/sale chemical products*', checking the pronunciation of the phrase with me. After having the students practice the structures 'can you _____'? and 'I can _____', Kerrie went over the handout with the whole class, directing students in turn to 'name two skills that you have'. After asking a number of students and receiving answers such as 'drive a car', 'cook' and 'garden', the teacher came to Fabiana:

70	**Kerrie:**	Fabia:na, tell me two skills you↑ have.
71	**Fabiana:**	(0.6) Me?
72	**Kerrie:**	Mmhmm.
73	**Fabiana:**	Mmm:::→ (1.2) I can do:: (0.8) coo↑k?
74	**Kerrie:**	You can cook?
75	**Fabiana:**	(.2) I can do: … buy/sell chemical pro↑ducts?
76	**Kerrie:**	You can→
77	**Fabiana:**	Buy↑Sell↑ … Chemical pro↑ducts?
78	**Kerrie:**	Buy: and se:ll→
79	**Fabiana:**	((showing Kerrie her paper)) °Chemical … pro↑ducts°?
80	**Kerrie:**	Chemical products! … Wow! … So you can buy and sell chemical
81		pro↓ducts … What are chemical pro↑ducts?
82	**Fabiana:**	Uhhh: (1.4) Ace:→ … Acetaminophe↑n?
83	**Kerrie:**	A-sa-phine?
84	**Fabiana:**	(Acetaminophen?) ( ).
85	**Researcher:**	Acetamin↑ophen? Like ty↑lenol?
86	**Fabiana:**	Tyleno:l→
87	**Kerrie:**	It's a med↓icine. Pharmaceu↓tical (0.8) For health, right?=
88	**Fabiana:**	=(Yes).=
89	**Kerrie:**	=(It's a) me↓dicine … Was that your experience?
90	**Fabiana:**	Yes↓.

(Audiotaped classroom observation, 11/12/02)

Fabiana began in Line 73 by mentioning one of the expected skills, cooking, but made a mistake with the verb phrase, by inserting the auxiliary 'do' after 'can': 'I can do cook'. In this case, Fabiana's non-standard use of a 'grammatically obligatory' structure (van Dijk, 2001) indexed her identity as a learner. In Line 74, the teacher recast this in a question as 'You can cook'? with the corrective feedback invoking their relationship as teacher and student (Fairclough, 1992). However, Fabiana did not 'uptake' the implied correction (Panova & Lyster, 2002). Instead in Line 75 she proceeded to

her second example, which she had written in the blank at the bottom of her handout. It is interesting to note, based on her interviews, that she had only learned to cook since coming to the United States a year earlier, but that buying and selling chemical products had been her career for 14 years. Within the discourse of employment being utilized in this class, Fabiana should have potentially been able to claim the subject position 'businesswoman'. Indeed, she attempted to reflexively position herself in this way (Davies & Harré, 1990). However, she was unsure how to express 'her skills' in English, as evidenced by her repetition of her earlier error with 'do': 'I can do buy/sell chemical products'? The rising tone at the end of this assertion is a contextualization cue indexing uncertainty (Couper-Kuhlen, 2001), a recognition of her lack of power in this interaction.

In replying 'you can …' in Line 76 with a flat, continuing intonation, Kerrie provided a contextualization cue to indicate that she had not understood Fabiana's contribution, and was leaving a blank for her to verbally fill. This fill-in-the-blank intonation further reinforced Kerrie's teacher identity in relation to Fabiana: not comprehending Fabiana's attempt to reflexively position herself as 'businesswoman', Kerrie interactively repositioned her as 'language learner' (Davies & Harré, 1990). In Line 77, both accepting her teacher's repositioning and *also* hanging onto her own reflexive positioning as '(former) businesswoman', Fabiana broke her answer into its component parts, using question intonation for each one: 'Buy? Sell? Chemical products'? filling in the blank left by the teacher as well as trying to determine which part of her meaning had not been understood. The teacher's reply in Line 78 with the same flat, 'continuing' intonation ('buy and se:ll→') indicated that she had still not understood the skill that Fabiana was claiming. The fact that Fabiana's 'skill' and thus her positioning were contrary to the teacher's assumptions about her students doubtless contributed to this misunderstanding. However, apparently deciding that this might be a pronunciation problem on her own part, Fabiana resorted in Line 79 to written English, showing the teacher her paper, where she had written 'chemical products'.

Kerrie's initial response in Line 80 was enthusiastic, 'wow'! but she then in Line 81 asked Fabiana to *define* chemical products: 'what are chemical products'? While the 'wow' suggested that the teacher was accepting Fabiana's self-positioning as someone with a valuable skill, her follow-up question was a speech act that reinforced her positioning of Fabiana as 'learner'. Fabiana in Line 82 interpreted this as a request for an example, responding with an English/Spanish cognate, 'acetaminophen'? (the active ingredient in tylenol). In drawing on the specialized lexis of her former profession, she was claiming an identity as a knowledgeable person

(Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2001). Her rising tone continued to index her uncertainty, although it could also be interpreted as a bid for shared understanding (Couper-Kuhlen, 2001; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). However, through several turns (Lines 82–85), during which I chipped in with my understanding of what Fabiana was saying, Kerrie did not appear to recognize the word *acetaminophen*. Finally, in Line 87 she realized that we were talking about medicine. She then in Line 89 reintroduced the discourse of employment that this class was studying, asking Fabiana if this was her 'experience'. Fabiana agreed that it was. In this way, Fabiana and the teacher came to some agreement that Fabiana could be positioned within the classroom discourse as someone with 'skills' and 'experience'. However, Fabiana's more ambitious attempt to reflexively position herself as 'businesswoman' had gotten lost in the teacher's non-comprehension.

With basic understanding established, Kerrie returned to Fabiana's grammar error:

91 **Kerrie:** So you ca:n→
92 **Fabiana:** (0.8) I can do↑?
93 **Kerrie:** No↓ do. Try↓ it (.2) Say 'I ca↑n'.
94 **Fabiana:** I ca↑n? (0.8) Buy↓.
95 **Kerrie:** Uhhuh↓.
96 **Fabiana:** Sell↓.
97 **Kerrie:** Uhhuh↓.
98 **Fabiana:** Chemical pro↓ducts.
99 **Kerrie:** Chemical pro↓ducts. OK↑ (0.5) Probably we would say (.2) uh, "medicine" or
100 "pharmaceu↑ticals"? (0.5) Things you get at the pharmacy? (.2) Medicines? (.2)
101 Did you (.2) learn↑ that (.2) skill? (.2) Did you have trai↑ning?
102 **Fabiana:** No↓.
103 **Kerrie:** Did you go to schoo:l to learn about that?
104 **Fabiana:** No↓.
105 **Kerrie:** No, OK↓ We'll talk about (.2) what that's called (.2) next week. Goo:↑d for you:
(Audiotaped classroom observation, 11/12/02)

Again, using an incomplete phrase with an elongated flat tone in Line 91, the teacher left a blank for Fabiana to fill with a correct grammatical form, emphasizing their teacher/student relationship. Again accepting the teacher's positioning of herself as 'learner', Fabiana recognized this as a request for a grammatical structure. In Line 92, she repeated her earlier error with rising intonation that continued to index her uncertainty: 'I can do'? Noting her continued error and continued uncertainty, Kerrie offered her negative feedback in Line 93: 'No do'. This was followed by explicit correction: 'Try it. Say "I can"', a speech act that further indexed Kerrie's teacher identity. This level of explicitness finally resulted in 'uptake' on Fabiana's part in Lines 94–98, although she continued using a rising tone for this structure ('I can?'), while breaking the rest of the statement about

her work experience into its component verb and noun phrases. Her falling tone on each of these phrases offered a contextualization cue to indicate her growing confidence with this vocabulary. However, her lack of a sentential intonation contour indicated that she was not yet confident with the structure she was using, and this prompted the teacher to reinforce each of her words with 'Uh huh'.

Furthermore, in Lines 99–101, the teacher corrected her use of the phrase 'chemical products', suggesting that 'medicine' or 'pharmaceuticals' would be more appropriate, and defining these as 'things you get at the pharmacy'. In fact, the chemicals that Fabiana's company imported were the raw ingredients used for making medicines, but her inability to explain this in English undermined her claims of knowledge and thus her power in the interaction (Fairclough, 1992). Lacking vocabulary, she did not try to resist Kerrie's assumptions about her background, or to further reflexively position herself in ways congruent with her 'pre-existing idea of (herself) that (she) had prior to the interchange' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 56).

In Lines 101–103 Kerrie steered the encounter back into the general discourse of employment that the class was studying. *Training* was the next topic in the employment unit, so the teacher asked Fabiana to address this. When Fabiana proved unable to do so, Kerrie in Line 105 said they would talk more about 'that' next week. She ended by praising Fabiana ('good for you'), a speech act that reinforced her powerful position as teacher and Fabiana's comparative lack of power as learner. Although this was a unit on employment, the interaction did not assist Fabiana in (re)constructing a *professional* voice in her L2 (Vitanova, 2005). Concluding this exchange, Kerrie went on to Camila, again asking 'what are your skills'?

106 **Camila:** I can read and write Eng↑lish (.3) and I can take care of sick people.
107 **Kerrie:** OK. You can take care of sick people. Mercedes! (.3) Tell me two skills you have.
108 **Mercedes:** (1.0) I can fill out a form↑
109 **Kerrie:** Uh huh.
110 **Mercedes:** And I can fix a car↑ ((laughing))
111 **Kerrie:** You can wha↑t? ((Many students laughing))
112 **Camila:** Fix a car.
113 **Mercedes:** Fix a car.
114 **Kerrie:** You can fix a ˆca:r:↑ ((Many students laughing)) (1.0). Wo:ww:!
115 **Mercedes:** Yeah, I can fix a car↓ ((laughing hard))
116 **Kerrie:** (.5) Do you think she can find a job with that skill? ((Many students laughing))
117 **Students:** Yeah ((laughing)).
118 **Araceli:** I think for a womans is hard↓.
119 **Kerrie:** Eladio, tell me two skills.
(Audiotaped classroom observation, 11/12/02)

While Fabiana's reflexive positioning of herself as a businesswoman had met with incomprehension, Mercedes' claim to a stereotypically

(working-class) masculine skill in Line 110 (reiterated in Lines 113 and 115) was eventually understood, with some support from her friend Camila – but it met with the same laughter that in Jean's class had greeted talk of men babysitting or housecleaning. Kerrie did not laugh, but her rising intonation on 'you can what'? in Line 111 and on 'fix a car' in Line 114 both times expressed amazement as well as admiration. However, neither the admiration nor the amazement seemed to change her assumptions about her students, because it was two months later when Kerrie told me that '*all* (her students) would say, "I can't do anything except clean my house and take care of kids and cook or sew"' (italics added). Meanwhile, the issue of gender-based employment discrimination (raised by Araceli in Line 118) remained unaddressed.

'Camila, what do they say for Number 4'?: The following activity took place later in the employment unit, when I was observing Camila. In this lesson, students were matching pictures of occupations to statements that workers in that occupation might say (e.g. matching a picture of a hairdresser with 'how much do you want me to cut your hair'?). When Kerrie and I looked at the handout together during her interview, she told me that she had chosen this activity 'Partly just for fun, partly to see if they can match what a person says with their job, if they really understand what that job entails' (Interview, 1/29/03). At no time during the activity did she position the students as potential applicants for these jobs. In explaining the pedagogical value of this activity, she primarily emphasized that there was some ambiguity involved in matching pictures to statements, that there was not always one correct answer, and that therefore students would need to negotiate their answers. It was this ambiguity that left room for the social positioning events below.

In the following set of data excerpts, Camila appeared to develop greater understanding of a basic (but tricky) English verb, and to employ this understanding to build gender solidarity and reinforce her own position as the most advanced student in the classroom. Before the passage begins, Camila and Pilar (a younger Mexican woman), had been comparing their answers, and had disagreed on which occupation to match to statement number 4: 'I am so bored making the same thing every day'. Pilar argued for the electronics factory worker, while Camila contended that it had to be the security guard. Camila told me later that in considering electronics work, she was thinking about her husband's experience as an electrician: 'Yeah, it's like my husband, teacher'. Camila's husband's work was quite varied, and she assumed electronics factory workers likewise had the chance to assemble a variety of products. In contrast, the security guards she saw around town all looked bored, in her opinion.

After going over the rest of the handout and agreeing on the other answers, Pilar and Camila then consulted their teacher.

120 **Camila:** Teacher, fi:nished.
121 **Kerrie:** (1.8) You and Pilar agree↑?
122 **Camila:** No↓.
123 **Kerrie:** You don't agree! (.2) Aha!
124 **Pilar:** (1.0) Becau:se (.2) I think for me↑ I think electronics factory is bo↑ring, and
125 they say:→.
126 **Camila:** No↓.
127 **Kerrie:** (0.8) Camila, what do they say for number 4?
128 **Camila:** Security guard.
129 **Kerrie:** What do they say?
130 **Camila:** ((reading)) I'm so bored making the same thing everyday.
131 **Kerrie:** What does the security guard make?
132 **Camila:** (0.5) Jus:t loo↑k for the people. Noth↑ing (.2) He don't make noth↓ing (.2) He, he
133 jus:t→
134 **Kerrie:** Read that again→
135 **Camila:** (0.5) Answer for making the same thing↓ ((tone of enlightenment)) (.2) I was
136 thinking about the (.2) this↓ one ((pointing to the picture of the maid)). The
137 maid↓.
138 **Kerrie:** OK.
139 **Camila:** Because she made beds↓ (.2) Everyday.
(Audiotaped classroom observation, 12/13/02)

Judging from her 'Aha!' in Line 123, the teacher seemed pleased that there was controversy between Camila and Pilar. From the point of view of an ESL teacher, disagreement leads to a livelier interaction and more speaking practice. However, she also took the opportunity to reinforce her teacher identity in Lines 127–134, through pointing out to Camila a linguistic detail of Number 4: the word 'making'. The Spanish verb *hacer* translates into English as both 'make' and 'do'. This leads to confusion on the part of many learners, as when the teacher asked in Line 131, 'What does the security guard make'? and Camila replied in Lines 132 and 133, 'Nothing. He don't make nothing'. Camila's answer makes more sense in standard English if 'do' is substituted for 'make' in both the question and the answer. This is another example where non-standard use of a 'grammatically obligatory structure' becomes relevant to the analysis of social power in interaction, contrary to van Dijk's contention (van Dijk, 2001: 99). The teacher identified the source of Camila's confusion and successfully elicited a self-correction in Lines 134–138. Very quickly Camila noticed her own problem with the word 'make'. She switched her answer

for Number 4 to an occupation that unequivocally *makes* something: a maid makes beds. This was not the answer the teacher would have chosen (she admitted to the class much later that she was thinking of 'factory worker'), but in saying 'OK', she indicated her willingness to accept 'maid' as an answer. While Kerrie had invoked her teacher identity in correcting linguistic errors, she did not question Camila's knowledge of occupational duties.

The teacher then asked Camila to work with Tomasa, a Guatemalan in her 30s.[26] They went over all their answers and found themselves in agreement, especially on 'maid' as the answer for Number 4. The teacher next brought over Eladio, a young Mexican man, to compare answers with the two women. It should be noted that Eladio's answer, 'factory worker', was the one Kerrie later admitted she herself would have chosen. However, at this point she was still encouraging students to practice English through attempting to resolve their disagreements.

140	**Kerrie:**	All ri:ght (0.8) let's see, you have factory worker, you have maid, so number 4,
141		you two disagre↑e↓ (1.0) So↓ (.2) can you explain why you have maid?
142	**Eladio:**	Maid↓ maid↓ maid↓, all people put maid↓.
143	**Camila:**	Which one do you have?
144	**Eladio:**	I put (.2) electronics factory work↓er.
145	**Camila:**	Why?
146	**Eladio:**	Why (.2) becau::se (0.6) somebody working in the (0.6)
147		¿cómo se dice, fá↑brica?
148		(*how do you say it, fac↑tory?)*
149	**Tomasa:**	Fabric=
150	**Camila:**	=In the fab↓ric.
151	**Eladio:**	The fabric? OK:::→ (0.5) uh (.2) For example, make (.2) make TV↑s?
152	**Camila:**	Mmhmm↓.
153	**Eladio:**	All day (0.5) make (.2) sa↓me thing.
154		(1.0)
155	**Tomasa:**	Electronic factory work (0.8) Este es lo que tenía primero.
156		*(This is what I had first.)*
157		Fabric work↓er. Electronic fabric work↓er.
158		Es lo que tenía primero. Y lo cambié↓ a maid↓.
159		*(It's what I had first. And I changed↓ it to maid↓.)*
160	**Camila:**	(0.8) Because the the secret word is ma:king.
161	**Tomasa:**	Mmmhmm.
162	**Camila:**	She mak↓ing the beds.

In Line 142 Eladio states his observation that in this class full of women, most had chosen 'maid' as the occupation most characterized by boredom. I do not know if Eladio had personal experience as a factory worker, but despite vocabulary difficulties, he was able to use his English in Lines 143–153 to stake a claim to knowledge on this topic (Fairclough, 1992), explaining to Camila and Tomasa in Lines 150–153 that electronics factory

workers are required to produce the same item over and over again: 'For example, make … make TVs? All day make same thing'. His rising tone on 'make TVs' appeared to index a bid for agreement (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003), rather than any lack of confidence in his argument, and Camila's 'Mmhmm' in Line 151 indicated her agreement that making TVs is something that factory workers do. The falling intonation on *same* that brought Eladio's argument to a conclusion in Line 153 indicated his certainty as to the correctness of this proposition, and his concomitant sense of power in this interaction. Thus Eladio reflexively positioned himself as someone knowledgeable about factory work, and the pause after his statement suggests that the women were for the moment willing to entertain his positioning. Indeed, Eladio's reasoning began to sway Tomasa in Lines 154–159. Noting that she had had this answer before, she implied that Eladio's answer was at least possible.

However, perhaps because of Camila's conviction that electronics work was intrinsically varied and interesting, and perhaps because of a desire to maintain her position as the most skilled English speaker among the students, Camila in Lines 160–162 was not willing to let go of the linguistic insight that led her to choose *maid* in the first place: 'Because the secret word is making … She making the beds'. Here she reinforced Tomasa's decision to change her answer from factory worker to maid. Eladio had used this same word 'make' to describe factory work, but Camila seemed now unwilling to accept his authority. Moreover, in constructing an argument on linguistic grounds, thus making a claim to superior knowledge of English, she reinforced her positioning as 'most competent student.' In the next passage, as gender solidarity began to be co-constructed, Eladio's position further eroded:

163 **Tomasa:** Make↑, make es hace:↑r.
164 *(is ma:↑ke.)*
165 **Eladio:** Sí, sí→ (.2) Yo sé, pero→
166 *(Yes, yes→ (.2) I know, but→)*
167 **Tomasa:** Entonces→
168 *(So→)*
169 **Eladio:** ¿Cómo puedo explicar a e↑lla? (.2) No pue↑do explicar↓.
170 *(How can I explain to her? (.2) I ca↑n't explain↓.)*
171 ((The women laughed.))
172 **Camila:** Trate.
173 *(Try.)*
174 **Tomasa:** ((laughing)) Try:↑ to.
175 **Eladio:** OK. Make (.2) puede ser, usted hace→
176 *(can be, you make→)*

Tomasa began in Line 163 by repeating Camila's linguistic argument, explaining to Eladio something he already knew: the English word 'make' is translated in Spanish as 'hacer'. Negotiating linguistic identities (Torras, 2005), she interactively positioned Eladio as an incompetent speaker of English, undermining any authority he might have claimed in positioning himself as knowledgeable about factory work. Apparently accepting this identity as 'incompetent English speaker', Eladio in Line 165 switched to Spanish in an attempt to maintain the knowledgeable position he had earlier claimed. His Spanish-language question in Line 169, 'How can I explain to her'? suggests that as a knowledgeable person he had the responsibility to explain. However, in framing this as a question, Eladio acknowledged the difficulty of this task, then restated this as an impossibility: 'I can't explain'. His emphasis and rising tone on the first syllable of 'ella (*her*)' indexed how gender was becoming salient in this interaction. As the women began laughingly to encourage his efforts, he kept struggling in Line 175 to frame his argument in Spanish: 'OK. Make (.2) puede ser, usted hace (*can be, you make*)'. His flat, continuing intonation on the final word 'hace' indicated that he was not finished speaking, while the women's laughter constructed a teasing relationship that minimized his power.

177	**Tomasa:**	OK↓
178	**Eladio:**	Usted→
179		*(you→)*
180	**Tomasa:**	Make↓=
181	**Eladio:**	=°Uh huh°=
182	**Tomasa:**	=Make in the morning, make un bed, make uh→
183	**Camila:**	The beds↓
184	**Tomasa:**	The beds↓.=
185	**Eladio:**	=°Mmhmm°.
186	**Tomasa:**	(.2) Clean the bath↑room.=
187	**Eladio:**	=°Mmhmm°
188	**Camila:**	Pass the vac↑uum.
189	**Grethel:**	{Yes}
190	**Tomasa:**	{Pass} the vac↑uum=
191	**Grethel:**	=Uh huh.
192	**Tomasa:**	(.2) Clean the mirr↑ors. (.2) Everyday. Ev{eryday.
193	**Camila:**	{The same thing}.
194	**Grethel:**	{Everyday clean} the des↑k.
195	**Tomasa:**	Everyday the same thing, that's why the work is boring.
196		(1.0)
197	**Eladio:**	All day?
198	**Tomasa:**	All day↓
199	**Grethel:**	{Everyday the same↓.}
200	**Camila:**	{Everyday the same↓}thing↓.
201		((The women continued repeating these same arguments for 22 more
202		turns, during which Eladio once managed to say the word "OK …"
203		and a little later "Uh, but … uh …" before being interrupted again.))

As Eladio paused, Tomasa in Line 177 seized power by interrupting (Kumaravadivelu, 1999), and when he started speaking again, she interrupted him again. Using English, she was negotiating a linguistic identity as a competent bilingual (Torras, 2005). In Line 180, with a strong falling intonation to index authority, Tomasa repeated the word 'make', which they had all agreed was important in answering the question. Then, positioning herself as knowledgeable, she went on in Lines 182–192 to explain the repetitive nature of maids' work: 'Make in the morning, make un bed, make the … Make the beds. Clean the bathroom … Pass the vacuum. Clean the mirrors. Everyday. Everyday'. In this way, she positioned Eladio as someone ignorant of the repetitive nature of housecleaning. This was reinforced by Camila in Lines 183 and 188, when she emphatically repeated 'the beds' to index her strong agreement, then added 'pass the vacuum', which was similarly repeated by Tomasa. In Line 188, Grethel, a Peruvian woman sitting nearby, began backchanneling agreement, and in Line 194 she joined in the argument: 'Every day clean the desk'. The rising tone on key words (bathroom, vacuum, mirrors, desk) indicated that these were items in an (incomplete) list. Thus, in adding to the list of tasks, Grethel reinforced the positioning of her female classmates as authorities on cleaning, as well as their positioning of Eladio as incompetent. The women's agreement on the nature of housework constructed a relationship of solidarity and thus discursive power in this interaction.

The gendered nature of this positioning is not indexed linguistically (as it was earlier by Eladio) but can be inferred from the genders of the interlocutors and the stereotypically feminine nature of maid's work (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Moreover, the women undertook this positioning very forcefully, enacting the repetitive nature of the work by repeating the names of the tasks over and over again, often echoing each other, at times speaking in unison, and putting strong emphasis on key words (van Dijk, 2001), as when Tomasa summed up the argument in Line 195 by saying, '*Everyday* the same thing, that's why the work is boring'. Eladio's final contribution to the interaction, a stuttered 'Uh but uh', confirmed as much as it contested their positioning of him as incompetent. As they interrupted him yet again, and continued repeating their arguments, I jotted in my notes that he 'sighed and looked frustrated'.

Younger than the women, outnumbered in terms of gender, unable to claim a competent bilingual identity, Eladio was 'positioned in powerful ways which (he was) unable to resist' (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001: 250). In positioning Eladio as incompetent, the women reflexively positioned themselves and each other as comparatively knowledgeable about both work responsibilities and English vocabulary. Given the way that the

employment unit had focused on housekeeping skills, these women could be seen as embracing the teacher's gendered positioning in order to enhance their own status as good students skilled in the areas the teacher had been emphasizing, both linguistic and vocational. On the other hand, their joint argument that nothing could be more boring than housework indicated resistance to this positioning even as they embraced it.

Discussion: Language Socialization and Gender Positioning

A majority of CEC students were mothers of young children, and most of them were not currently working outside the home. Moreover, the CEC was funded by the state to offer family literacy instruction, program content that did in fact coincide with the goals of many learners to participate more fully in their children's education. The teachers were aware of students' goals in this area, and tried to accommodate them. They also recognized students' collective parenting experience and would draw on this in class discussions. Thus, during class discussions on family-related topics, students were given a lot of credit for (non-linguistic) knowledge, and usually plenty of opportunities to attempt to convey their knowledge, experiences and opinions about family in English. In my observations, the opinions and experiences expressed by students tended to correspond with traditional gender and family ideologies. These ideologies included an emphasis on parental authority, female nurturing and male providing (Valdés, 1996) – along with a recognition of the power of feminine beauty and the desirability of being part of a heterosexual couple. As far as I could see, Kerrie and Jean appeared to take these ideologies for granted: the teachers did not question the class laughter at the idea of Oswaldo cleaning his house, or Trini's husband caring for their children or Mercedes fixing cars. Because traditional ideologies went unchallenged by teachers, most students, most of the time, could feel comfortable participating in classroom discussions about family topics without having their cultural values shaken in any way.

I do not know how the students who were the targets of laughter felt, but generally it appeared that their classmates' sense of comfort based on shared gender ideologies facilitated participation in language-learning activities with family themes. In the example from Kerrie's class above, the conversation about phone calls from school constructed an easy consensus about the proper role of mothers in nurturing and disciplining their children – and in collaborating with the public schools in this endeavor. This conversation then served as a legitimating introduction to the follow-up activity in which students practiced dialogues

with expressions useful for home – school communications. In this case, Kerrie's assumptions about her students seemed to be congruent with at least most women's sense of their own maternal identities, and this congruence seemed to facilitate classroom participation and ongoing processes of language socialization. However, some of the most difficult issues for immigrant parents, such as the conflict over English between Celia and her daughter, did not appear to be dealt with in the CEC curriculum.

Kerrie's unit on employment proved to be less consensual, and the conflicts and misunderstandings that arose during language-learning activities (see above) can be at least partly attributed to discrepancies between the teachers' assumptions and the students' aspirations. Despite students' generally traditional gender ideologies, many of the Latina homemakers in the class had more work experience or more extensive ambitions for future employment than their English lessons took into account. This curricular incongruity should not be blamed on some personal foible of Kerrie's, given that a similar trend in vocational ESL has existed for a long time. More than two decades after Auerbach and Burgess's (1985) challenge to the common curricular assumption that immigrants belong in entry-level jobs, ESL materials and activities continue to position learners in this way. Even beyond ESL, research on Latina immigrant workers confirms that they disproportionately end up in low-end service occupations (American Sociological Association, 2005; Menjívar, 2003). Though vocational ESL instructors may see themselves as 'empowering' students to enter the workforce, their classroom materials and activities often tend ironically to reproduce these (disempowering) societal tendencies (but see Auerbach & Wallerstein, 2004). Kerrie, to her credit, at least tried to encourage her students on many occasions to upgrade their employment skills at the local community college (Field notes, 6/3/02, 7/25/02, 9/24/02, 12/10/02).

In the classroom activities from the employment unit described above, the teacher and students drew from common discourses about work and gender that defined people in socially recognizable categories (Wortham, 2004), such as homemaker. Some of Kerrie's assumptions about her students' aspirations may have been drawn from her own experiences with societal discourses that shape opportunities for women (for more on Kerrie's background, see Chapter 1). And yet, as recent literature on immigrant women and language learning would predict (e.g. Norton, 2000), learners exercised considerable agency in this classroom. Attempting, and to some extent succeeding, to negotiate their way out of the discourses

imposed on them, these women participated in typical discursive practices of vocational ESL without necessarily letting go of their 'pre-existing idea(s) of themselves' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 56). Fabiana claimed a skill that had not been discussed in class but that was key to her pre-immigration identity as a businesswoman, while Camila and her partners drew on their background knowledge about particular occupations to construct emphatic answers to the trickiest question on the handout. Moreover, Camila, Tomasa and Grethel's forceful arguments about the repetitiveness of housework indicate both their awareness of how they are positioned in the current labor market – and also their critique of this positioning. They discursively construct employment as an intensification of domestic drudgery, rather than as an escape from it.

In her presentation of a language socialization paradigm for L2 acquisition, Watson-Gegeo (2004) emphasizes that linguistic structures are encountered in sociopolitical contexts that drive home their significance. Thus, in language learning, 'grammatically obligatory structures' are no longer 'irrelevant to a study of social power' (van Dijk, 2001: 99). Fabiana's interaction with the teacher above was a grammar/vocabulary learning event that was simultaneously an event of positioning. In this event, Fabiana learned both that *can* is followed by the base form of the verb – and that her newly acquired cooking skills were more relevant to her employment future than her 14 years in business. Several weeks later, Camila learned that distinguishing *make* from *do* could be crucial in assuring that her perspectives on common occupations would override those of her classmates. Through classroom discursive practices, both of these women were being interactively positioned and thus socialized into their teacher's (and society's) notions of realistic career goals for Latina immigrants in the current sociopolitical climate. Their development of L2 voices was necessarily tied to that socialization.

A socialization paradigm calls attention to how learners are constrained by powerful discourses, which construct identities, relationships and knowledge (Fairclough, 1992). At the same time, however, it points to the ways that learners are active agents in appropriating linguistic and cultural practices in new settings (Miller & Goodnow, 1995). Indeed, the activities analyzed in this chapter invited as well as limited learner agency (Watson-Gegeo, 2004): Kerrie had left blanks in the skills handout for students to write in abilities not listed, and she valued the built-in ambiguity involved in matching comments to occupations. Camila, in particular, was able to draw on these possibilities to position herself as linguistically and vocationally knowledgeable, constructing strong arguments for an answer

that the teacher would not have chosen. In so doing, she was successfully (re)constructing a voice in her L2 (Ehrlich, 1997; Vitanova, 2005).

It must be admitted, however, that Camila's power to position herself seemed to be due to her already fluent English and the fact that she was prototypically a homemaker in a class geared to homemakers. As Duff writes, 'Variable levels of participation and mastery of local conventions (can) accentuate differences among students and perhaps variable outcomes of language socialization' (Duff, 2002: 291). The teacher's assumption (perhaps based on her own history) that the students in her class were homemakers may have supported Camila's development of an L2 voice – but tended to limit the voices of less typical students such as Fabiana, Mercedes and Eladio. Thus, the enacted curriculum at the CEC (Erickson, 1986) reproduced larger societal ideologies of gender and of language, while the interactive positioning observed in these classrooms tended to reinforce the competence of students who met the teacher's discursive expectations.

A (Different) Conclusion: Social Repositioning in the Classroom?

Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 3, some research participants were beginning to redefine their positions as women within their families and communities, a process that Harper *et al.* refer to as 'rewrit(ing)' gender (Harper *et al.*, 1996: 10). In my observations, I never saw this redefinition become the focus of an official class discussion. However, as Harper *et al.* surmise in the opening quote to this chapter, I did indeed observe 'moments … where issues of identity and power are problematized and not simply accommodated' (Harper *et al.*, 1996: 17). In the cases I observed, these 'moments' were created by students. Part of the enacted curriculum, these moments of problematization indicate the dynamic nature of gender and family in immigrant communities (Hirsch, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994).

One such 'moment' arose on a day late in the summer term when Kerrie's class had dwindled to a small core of committed long-time (female) students. Kerrie led them through a lengthy writing activity, in which they were to describe a favorite family member, not a parent. In every case, students wrote happy memories of affectionate uncles, helpful sisters and adoring grandmothers. Toward the end of the 3 h class, Kerrie convened the group to read their stories aloud. What unfolded was so raw and intimate that I deliberately did not take careful notes on the details

(still less did I audiotape), but my field notes give a flavor of the spontaneous 'problematizing' that arose:

> Kerrie moved everyone into a circle around one of the back tables to read their stories aloud. But there was a little conversation beforehand about grandparents and one woman said she'd never known her grandparents and that she didn't regret it because everyone said they weren't nice people. This led into a long discussion about families, and I won't even try to give all the details. The woman who had introduced the topic started crying and said she was seeing a psychologist to try to forgive her parents, she went in search of kleenex and came back with toilet paper which she shared with a second woman when she started crying, talking about saying goodbye to her dad when she left for the U.S., the only time he said he loved her. This second woman talked a lot about her conflicts over childrearing with her mother and expressed determination to raise her children differently than she had been raised. Next a third woman told about her alcoholic father and his nighttime drunken rages. Kerrie initially tried to get people to read their stories but they kept wanting to share details about family problems that no one had written about, so she just let them. (Field notes, 8/13/02)

Whereas the writing activity brought out a traditional discourse of family unity (see Chapter 6), the initial remark about grandparents who 'weren't nice people' opened the floodgates of a counterdiscourse (Norton, 2000), an alternative way of talking about family. This was a psychologized discourse that the first woman would have picked up in counselling and that the others could have accessed via television. Nonetheless, the conversation was heartfelt, as demonstrated by tears and shared toilet paper, and it certainly 'problematized', rather than accommodated, the power relationships between parents and children.

Another such 'moment' of problematization, not surprisingly, involved Trini (see Chapter 3), who had been cultivating a friendly relationship with a tough, outspoken Mien student, Famlinh. The conversation below took place during break time:

> Famlinh asked me to explain to Trini and Laura what "hate" is. It turns out that she is being sexually harassed at work by a Spanish-speaking man, and she wants to tell him she hates him. I told Trini and Laura, who didn't know, that "hate" is "*odiar*." When Famlinh explained the situation, Trini told her that she can tell the guy, "*Te odio.*" He keeps telling Famlinh that he loves her, and when she tells him that she is married, he says that in his country people can have a lot of husbands

> and wives. He told her he isn't from Mexico, which Famlinh is skeptical of, but Trini and Laura were somewhat relieved. But they did tell her that in Mexico you can only have one wife or one husband. Famlinh practiced saying, "*Te odio*," several times. (Field notes, 12/4/02)

In constructing solidarity between women and against male power across ethnic and linguistic barriers, this event demonstrates how adult learners can 'rewrite' traditional gender practices within the interstices of a feminized classroom. It also shows how gender discourses can become fluid within multicultural communities, as when Famlinh's Spanish-speaking harasser takes advantage of her ignorance about Latino culture to 'feed her a line' about the appropriacy of his behavior – he too is 'rewriting'. In any case, teachers who want to implement a critical pedagogy that will be meaningful to immigrant students might be advised to build on the 'problematizing moments' that 'already occur' (Harper *et al.*, 1996) in class.[27]

This chapter contends that educators can best facilitate learners' constructions of L2 identities and voices when they listen for and support their diverse reflexive positionings. Many of the problems in Kerrie's employment unit could have been avoided through a recognition of learners' *multiple* identities (Norton, 2000): these immigrants were mothers and English learners, true, but they were also experienced workers, and in some cases (former) professionals – among other things. When teachers provide a space for critical reflection in ESL classrooms, they facilitate learners' reconstructions of L2 voices (Ehrlich, 1997; Vitanova, 2005) strong enough to question the identities that society and their own communities are assigning them.

Chapter 6

Changing Gender Ideologies in Local Communities[28]

While Chapter 5 examined the enactment of 'traditional' gender ideologies at the CEC as well as the curricular contradictions that arose from this enactment, this chapter explores the fluidity of gender ideologies even in 'traditional' communities. I conduct this exploration through a discursive analysis of extended personal narratives told by two participants in my study, Laura and Raquel (for more information on Laura and Raquel, see Chapters 5 and 4, respectively). Both stories detail events in which a relative of the narrator violated the family's gendered cultural expectations: an out-of-wedlock pregnancy in a Mexican village and a military enlistment in wartime Nicaragua.

Told by the two women in my study whose lifestyles were perhaps the most conservative (since neither had ever worked outside the home), these narratives illustrate how shifts in gender ideologies are not merely an artefact of life in (famously liberal) California, but are connected to larger social changes in Latin America (Hirsch, 2003). Because the recounted events took place prior to immigration, their relevance to participants' language learning experiences may not immediately be apparent. However, I have found these particular narratives immensely helpful for clarifying the multiple gender ideologies present in participants' communities, and especially for illustrating how these ideologies intersect with the investments in family and education that ultimately affect second-language learning in immigrant contexts (Norton, 2000).

The gender diversity emphasized by Cameron (2005) can be conceptualized in terms of *competing* masculinities and femininities, often as a result of cultural and ideological changes that are historically in progress. As Turiel explains, although culture has been said to entail '*shared* understandings among members of a group that provide solidarity,

cohesion and harmony' (Turiel, 1999: 77, italics in the original), cultural participation inevitably involves conflict between individuals and social groups, often based on contested moral judgments, which in turn arise from inequalities in the social hierarchy. Such competing ideological perspectives feed cultural change – and become raw material for narrative. In analyzing these narratives, I explore how the tellers orchestrate multiple voices and discourses to make sense of social and cultural changes in their communities, particularly in regards to gender, both before and after immigration. In so doing, I construct a stronger understanding of how these women have come to reconcile their own identities as traditional homemakers with their new dedication to studying English and supporting their daughters' education.

Evaluation and Dialogic Voicing

Recounting personal narratives is a discursive practice whose functions are primarily evaluative rather than descriptive (Labov, 1972). Through storytelling, individuals make sense of bewildering circumstances (see Chapter 3), and share the lessons they have constructed from painful experience. As novelist Margaret Atwood reminds readers:

> When you are in the middle of a story it isn't a story at all, but only a confusion; a dark roaring, a blindness, a wreckage of shattered glass and splintered wood … It's only afterwards that it becomes anything like a story at all. When you are telling it, to yourself or to someone else. (Atwood, 1996: 298)

Indeed, the management of transgression, the sorting out of 'shattered glass' in human relationships, can be seen as a central purpose of storytelling: '(narrative) is built around established or canonical expectations and the mental management of deviations from these expectations' (Bruner, 1990: 35). Schiffrin (1996) and Ochs and Capps (2001) concur that narratives commonly recount events in which some sort of social expectation has been violated, and in so doing reconstruct the normative expectations of the community, including expectations for 'appropriate' gender performances (Butler, 1999). Thus, narrative performance is key to language socialization (Miller & Goodnow, 1995).

As human beings tell and re-tell stories about their lives, they construct coherence in their accounts, enacting particular identities (Schiffrin, 1996; Wortham, 2001), and giving the teller a sense of continuity over time (Eakin, 1999). However, even this process of sense-making can be filled with ambiguity and ambivalence, and despite the tendency of storytellers

to construct continuity and coherence out of 'splintered wood' (Atwood, 1996: 298), narrative identity development is also a 'story without closure, constantly open to change' especially when 'the creation of coherence is no longer guaranteed by the defining force of collective identities … (but becomes) the responsibility of the individual person' (Kraus, 2006: 104). While Holmes analyzes a homemaker's narrative that proudly conveys 'the extent to which she meets society's prescriptions' (Holmes, 1997: 207), May (2004) explores how single mothers' narratives negotiate contradictions between conflicting gender imperatives – in relation to their own parents, their former male partners and their children. Whether the lives they portray are traditional or alternative, such narratives can be seen as integral to the tellers' performances of gender in family contexts; indeed, family narratives, such as those analyzed in this chapter, illustrate the relational aspects of identity particularly clearly (Eakin, 1999).

A common device for constructing narrative evaluations through contrasting identities is reported speech, or what Bakhtin refers to as *dialogic voicing* (1981, 1986) (see Chapter 2). A focus of Bakhtin's literary analysis is how novelists juxtapose multiple *social languages* to express entire social worlds. Similar to what other authors term *discourses* (e.g. Pennycook, 1994), social languages represent the multiplicity of ideologies and identities among which novelists (and by extension all speakers) must position themselves. Ideologies are often not stated explicitly, but may find concrete linguistic expression as discourses. These appear in novels as the voices of characters representing particular social groups, and thus portray 'specific points of view on the world, for conceptualizing the world in words … They may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of his intentions' (Bakhtin, 1981: 292). This refraction of an author's voice through the voice of characters can be referred to as *double-voicing*.

Moreover, the interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1999) that Bakhtin found in novels can also be seen in other speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986), including academic essays (Ivanic, 1998) and personal narrative (Koven, 2001; Wortham, 2001), especially in reported speech. For example, Moonwomon-Baird (1999) analyzes a life-history interview in which the teller constructs a complex lesbian identity through blending the discourses of feminism and 12-step recovery; in this narrative, in*tra*-textuality was particularly important as the teller constructed evaluations by referring back to earlier parts of her story. In Maybin's study of narratives told by schoolchildren, she found that 'reconstructed dialogue … enable(s) (tellers) to play on ambiguity and explore a variety of evaluative perspectives simultaneously. In reproducing the voices of different characters, (tellers) can briefly

take on and try out that character's viewpoint' (Maybin, 1996: 37–38). The evaluation in the narratives she studied was often ambiguous, with issues 'explored and negotiated rather than resolved' (Maybin, 1996: 47). According to Maybin, the emotional tone of the children's speech (e.g. gentle, gruff, hysterical) was particularly important in constructing identities and exploring different points of view on social problems such as marital discord. However, while narrative is a key site for performances of gender (e.g. Holmes, 1997; Pavlenko, 2001), few studies have explored the performance of *changing* gender ideologies through the juxtaposition of competing discourses in narratives.

Narrative Contexts

The stories discussed in this chapter are notable for demonstrating how narrators come to terms with historical changes in gender ideologies through the use of dialogic voicing (Bakhtin, 1981) that draws upon varied societal discourses (Fairclough, 1992, 1999). As Fairclough warns, the identification of discourses within texts is 'obviously an interpretive exercise' (Fairclough, 1999: 207), which can be strengthened through triangulation with other data. Thus, discursive analysis of a narrative text needs to be grounded in the analyst's understanding of the sociocultural context(s) of the story (Page, 2003). These narratives are not just about Laura and Raquel, the California immigrant women who tell them, but about changes and conflicts within their families. Moreover, the narratives are not just about their families, but rather about the responses of the tellers and their family members to larger changes taking place in their societies. In addition, while these narratives recount events that took place before immigration, they were told in the United States to an Anglo-American listener, and shaped to meet that context of telling.

Laura and her husband came from the same small village in the Mexican state of Jalisco, a region which has a long history of emigration to the United States (Hellman, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). Her father was a fisherman, but fishing was bad, and the family relied increasingly on her mother's food-vending business, in which all the children worked. Laura told me that although people in her village were not 'accustomed' to women working outside the home, they did not criticize her mother, because they saw her as a *luchista*, that is, one who struggles to get ahead (*salir adelante*) and provide for her family (Interview, 11/15/02). While rural Jalisco is stereotyped by urban Mexicans as a site of unremitting *machismo* (González-López, 2003), in Hirsch's Jalisco research (2000, 2003), she found that a generational shift was taking place in family ideologies, from an overwhelming

emphasis on *respeto* (respect for traditional hierarchies) (cf. Valdés, 1996) toward more value placed on *confianza* (trust) among family members. In interviews that González-López conducted in California with immigrant women from Jalisco, she found that mothers in particular were seen as figures of *confianza*, in whom their daughters could safely confide. While mothers felt responsible for preserving their daughters' virginity, partly because it was seen as a valuable asset on the marriage market, and partly because premarital sex violated *respeto*, they also valued education and professional careers for their daughters as a chance for them to assert independence from gendered constraints.

While traditional gender ideologies in rural Jalisco are noticeably loosening, partly as an unintended effect of emigration and transnationalism (Hirsch, 2003), the 1979 leftist Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua purposely set in motion a vast array of social changes, many of which ran counter to traditional ideologies of gender and the family, as Raquel's narrative below illustrates. During the 1980s war between the Sandinista government and the US-backed *contra* rebels, Raquel was growing up in a close-knit extended-family household in a small city in the mountains, with her maternal grandparents, her mother, her aunt and two uncles. Her grandfather worked at the local granary, and also did construction; her grandmother took care of the home, with help from Raquel (see Chapter 4); her mother and aunt were employed as a cook and a nanny, respectively, in wealthy families; and her youngest uncle was successfully climbing the career ladder in the local coffee industry. Working hard for the good of the family household was seen as appropriate gendered behavior for both men and women. Raquel saw her father only occasionally – he had several other children by several other women. Employed as a barber, he was sympathetic to the *contra* rebels, and served a prison term for collaborating with them.[29] Although Raquel did not see her father's behavior as particularly commendable, it was apparently within the range of acceptable masculinities in the local context, and she did not evaluate him harshly – her primary feeling toward him seemed to be amusement. Then there was her Sandinista uncle, about whom she told the narrative below.

As a young man from a working-class urban background, Raquel's uncle was in many ways a typical Sandinista supporter. The Sandinista leadership was male dominated,[30] and many young men found their brand of idealistic machismo appealing. Sandinista ideology placed a strong emphasis on both men and women sacrificing themselves for the betterment of society. They descibed this project as the creation of *El Nuevo Hombre* (the New Man) and *La Nueva Mujer* (the New Woman) – although women's concerns were on the back burner for the duration of the war

(Babb, 2001). For young men, Sandinista commitment primarily involved fighting against the US-backed *contra* rebels. Traditional Nicaraguan masculinities had emphasized taking financial responsibility for relatives (and often multiple female partners), but this new Sandinista masculinity had a higher purpose. Meanwhile, the self-sacrificing Nicaraguan mother at the heart of the traditional family was now encouraged to offer up her sons to the good of the nation. When the Sandinistas lost the 1990 elections, it was widely noted that the winning opposition candidate, Violeta de Chamorro, had projected an image of traditional motherhood, and that a majority of her support came from women voters who were tired of the strain that war had placed on their families (Bayard de Volo, 2001).

Finally, although it is important to understand the gendered ideological contexts in which Laura's and Raquel's stories are set, it should also be noted that both women had resided in the San Francisco Bay Area since the mid-1990s, where these narratives were recounted in late 2002 and early 2003. At that time, both women lived in Kingston, and both had husbands who commuted into San Francisco for full-time working-class jobs. Both had school-aged daughters who had been born in the United States. After being full-time homemakers for years, both women had begun taking ESL classes five mornings a week, in part so they could support their daughters academically. The girls were doing well in school so far, and both mothers said they would like to see their daughters go to college and pursue professional careers. Neither woman had been able to go much beyond primary education in her homeland. Thus, in coming to terms with ideologies of gender, both women were implicitly taking stands on their daughters' futures.

Narrative Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, my initial data analysis of the life-history narratives was thematic (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). One significant theme that emerged from that analysis was *social positioning* (Davies & Harré, 1990) (see Chapter 2): the ways participants described ethnicity, gender, immigration status, politics and social class having affected their lives. Out of all the narratives of gendered social positioning in my data, the two narratives that I discuss here stood out among the rest on the dimension of *tellability* (Ochs & Capps, 2001). Each of these stories came out in a flood of words that would have been hard to interrupt. In fact, Raquel told me in two different interviews the same story about how her uncle enlisted in the army and lost his leg, though I mentioned I had already heard it; out of 33 interviews, this is the only story that I was told twice.

Ordinarily somewhat reserved and given to brief, concise replies, Laura's account of her sister's pregnancy and her family's varied reactions went on for two pages of single-spaced transcript without a break. In other words, I consider these stories *tellable* because out of everything in the interviews, they seemed to be what Laura and Raquel most wanted to tell me. In Ochs and Capps' analysis of narrative dimensions, *tellability* indexes the significance of events for the narrator in the context of telling. As the context involved a semi-formal conversation with an Anglo-American English teacher in the aftermath of immigration, I believe the tellers saw these pre-immigration events as particularly salient for understanding their lives today, their efforts to learn English, and their hopes for the future – and perhaps especially their daughters' futures. Their stories echo each other in important ways, drawing upon similar discourses and representing similar attempts to come to terms with cultural changes before and after immigration.

Evaluation, those parts of the narrative that offer perspectives on the recounted events (Labov, 1972; Martin, 2003), is key to the performance of gender and the portrayal of shifting ideologies. To analyze these narratives, I therefore began by distinguishing evaluative statements from those that were non-evaluative in function. For example, the following passage from Raquel's narrative (indirect reported speech from her uncle) consists of event and orientation clauses (Labov, 1972) that I did *not* code as evaluative: 'Pero dice que cuando le disparó, estaba otro, y no se fijó, y el otro le disparó a él en la pierna (*But he says that when he shot [the sniper] there was another, and he didn't notice him, and the other one shot him in the leg*)'. In contrast, the following statement on a similar topic is clearly evaluative, giving Raquel's own opinion: 'habían un montón que les faltaban sus pies, ayy, era horrible (*there were a lot of people who were missing their feet, ohh, it was horrible*)'. This is an evaluation stated directly by the narrator, but many others take the form of reported speech from characters. For example, in describing her father's reaction to her younger sister's pregnancy, Laura reports that 'se puso bien malo y todo, y "no está casada no más tuvo el niño" (*he made himself feel very bad and everything, and "she's not married, she just had the baby*")'. This statement combines a report of a feeling, 'very bad', with a direct quote that justifies this feeling on the basis of gendered ideology. This blend of *affect* with *judgment* based on ideological values (Martin, 2003) was common to most of the evaluations in these narratives, and yet it was clear that the characters and the narrator were basing their evaluations on several *different* sets of values rather than the 'established or canonical expectations' that Bruner (1990: 35) claims to be the basis for narrative evaluation.

Since these competing ideologies found concrete expression in particular discourses, I further categorized evaluative statements in terms of the discourses they drew upon. Within Laura's narrative, I identified three principle discourses. To do so, I divided the evaluative statements from Laura's narrative into three groups of utterances with similar thematic, attitudinal and lexical content (Moonwomon-Baird, 2000). I provisionally labeled these three discourses as *family unity*, *sexual morality* and *educational advancement*. To state the central propositions of these discourses at the most basic level, *family unity* posits that family members should be united and supportive of each other; *sexual morality* assumes that women should abstain from sexual activity outside of marriage; and *educational advancement* holds out the hope that formal education is the path to success. Placing each group into a table, I coded the utterances in each table for the expression of more specific propositions within the discourses. For example, when Laura says that her father 'made himself feel very bad and everything, and "she's not married, she just had a baby"' the specific proposition within the discourse of *sexual morality* expressed in this quote could be stated more explicitly as 'sexuality outside marriage negatively affects the whole family'.

Within Raquel's narrative, I also identified three principle discourses (Fairclough, 1999) which partly overlapped those in Laura's narrative. *Family unity* and *educational advancement* appear in narratives told by both women, but *sexual morality* does not appear in Raquel's story. Instead, to instantiate her uncle's ideologies, Raquel employs a discourse of *revolutionary commitment*. For example, when she quotes her uncle saying, 'Hay que defender el pueblo (*it is necessary to defend the people*)', she is double-voicing his discourse of *revolutionary commitment*, and specifically the proposition that he has an obligation to 'the people' as a political entity. This contrasts with Raquel's own evaluative statement as narrator, 'era muy cerrado en su mundo, no sé, era, ay no, *crazy* (*he was all shut up in his own world, I don't know, he was, oh no*, crazy)', in which she employs a counter discourse containing the proposition that political engagement is a form of madness. Throughout my analysis, I kept in mind Fairclough's (1999) and Martin's (2003) cautions on the interpretive nature of such analysis, as much as possible grounding my work in the sociocultural context of my larger study.

Multiple Voices, Multiple Evaluations

In the following narrative passages, I analyze the voices and discourses that the narrators dialogically draw upon to evaluate the changes in gender ideologies that are taking place in their families, communities

and nations. In constructing their own perspectives on the recounted events, Laura and Raquel double-voice their characters (and in one case Laura *triple-voices* a character quoting other characters) 'for the orchestration of (their) themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of (their) intentions' (Bakhtin, 1981: 292). My close analysis of the discursive resources used in these stories necessitates a detailed transcription of the original Spanish text, which I then translate into English. As well as translating the words, I also attempt a translation of paralinguistic resources such as intonation that indicate the information structure and emotional tone of the narratives. For transcription conventions, see Appendix B.

Laura's sister (Interview, 11/15/02): Throughout the narrative, Laura spoke quickly, with relatively few pauses or false starts, suggesting that this was a story she had told before. She frequently used a rising tone at the end of declarative clauses, perhaps to elicit my understanding of the situation (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). The story arose when I asked about how she and her husband Ramón had decided to get married. In response she explained her refusal to go with Ramón to the United States before marriage:

1. Pero mi papá siempre: desde chica nos ha tenido acostumbrada a que él … su orgullo de él↑ … es que nosotras haigamos "salido de blanco" de la casa↑ … Y yo le decía a él, "Y cómo Ramón cómo voy a … irme yo si tú sabes que mi papá él lo que siempre anhe:la … Ya viste mi hermana más chica que yo tuvo un fracaso↑ … tuvo un niño↑ … y por eso mi papá se sintió que se iba a morir: él se sintió … se puso bien malo y todo↑ … 'y no está casada no más … tuvo el niño.'" … Entonces yo le decía, "¿Como le voy a pagar yo también con eso y si es lo que siempre nos ha: inculcado desde chiqui↑ta?"

1. But my dad al:ways since I was small, he has accustomed us to … his pride↑… is that we should leave home "wearing white."↑ … And I told him, "And how, Ramón, how am I going to … leave [with you] when you know that my dad, what he has always lo:nged for … You already saw that my little sister had a disaster↑ … she had a baby↑ … and because of that my dad felt that he was going to die:, he felt … he made himself feel very bad and everything↑ … and 'she's not married, she just … had a baby.'" … So I told Ramón, "How could I too repay him like that if this is what he's al:ways taught us since I was lit↑tle?"

In telling this narrative, Laura performs a gendered identity (Butler, 1999) that both accepts and calls into question traditional gender ideologies

in her community. As Bakhtin might note (1981), Laura's voice puts her father's values in ironic quotation marks: 'su orgullo de él es que nosotras haigamos "salido de blanco" de la casa (*his pride is that we should leave home "wearing white"*)'. Focusing on her father's emotions, she makes the female purity symbolized by the bride's white dress (Patricia Baquedano-López, personal comment, 2003) not a moral absolute or cultural imperative, but crucial rather to her father's affective well-being. She voices her father's employment of a *sexual morality* discourse, but in so doing she refracts (Bakhtin, 1981) her own support of *family unity*. That is, when she refuses her boyfriend's invitation to emigrate unmarried, the value she promotes through her stance is not sexual virtue but daughterly concern. Thus, she leaves open the possibility of competing gender discourses, even within one small village.

The narrative extracts below are taken from her response to my follow-up query, 'what happened to your sister'? Laura began by explaining that her father had agreed to allow his youngest daughter to take a job as a favor to a relative who owned a local pharmacy (previously he had not allowed his daughters to work outside the family food-vending business). It was at the pharmacy where her sister met the young man who got her pregnant:

2. Y pues nunca … supimos <u>na</u>da, o sea que tuviera no:vio. En veces … con un muchacho que platica:ba o algo ahí↑, pero así↑, así pasó: … y pasó el <u>tiem</u>po, […] y … yo creo mi hermana … se ((slight laugh)) se creyó de él y to:do↑ Y ya después el muchacho se vino para acá↑ Y ya después ahí la gente decía, "¡AYYY:↑ a mí! Se me hace que Clarita está embarazada," mi hermanita se llama Clarita.

2. And we never … knew <u>any</u>thing, about her having a boy:friend. Sometimes … she was with a boy that was cha:tting or something there↑, but like that↑, it happened like tha:t … and <u>time</u> passed, […] and … I believe that my sister … ((slight laugh)) believed in him and e:verything↑ And after that the boy came here↑ [to the United States]. And then the people there were saying, "OHHH:↑ my! Clarita's gone and got pregnant on us," my little sister's name is Clarita.

In this excerpt, Laura stresses her family's lack of knowledge, the clandestine nature of the affair: 'Y pues nunca supimos <u>na</u>da, o sea que tuviera novio (*And well, we never knew <u>any</u>thing about her having a boyfriend*)'. This lack of knowledge emphasizes her family's innocence in these events, and thus implies traditional virtue and the embrace of the discourse of *sexual*

morality. Moreover, in using the pronoun *we*, and assuming a collective innocence that applies to her whole family, Laura is implicitly invoking a discourse of *family unity*: in this part of the narrative, there is no conflict between these two discourses. After the boy 'se vino para acá (*came here*)', that is, emigrated, Laura introduces a new voice into the story, which will remain important throughout: '*la gente*', that is, the collective voice of people in the village. (I capitalize this phrase henceforward to represent the townspeople as a collective character.) La Gente here let out a cry of pain, '*¡ayyy a mi*'! They go around saying (loosely translated), 'Clarita's gone and got pregnant on us'. In this voice, the girl's pregnancy, as yet unknown to Clarita's family, is seen by La Gente as injurious to themselves: here Laura double-voices the discourse of *sexual morality* through the words of the townspeople.

Laura expends many more sentences emphasizing the family's complete ignorance up until Clarita's sixth month of pregnancy. Finally

3. Hasta ya que pasaron seis me↑ses a mi mamá le dijeron … en la tienda, fue a la tienda, y le dijeron, "Oye, María, te quiero decir algo … …pe:ro: … … yo no sé si es cierto o no," dijo, "pero ya:, ¿ya tienen que saber ustedes?" Y ya le comentaron a mi mamá que si era cierto que mi hermana estaba embaraza↑da y mi mamá dijo "no sé:." Dijo, "no te <u>ha</u>gas, sí sabes." Dijo, "no <u>sé</u>."	3. After six months↑ had gone by, they told my mom … in the store, she went to the store, and they told her, "Listen, María, I want to say something to you … … bu::t … … I don't know if it is true or not," they said, "but alrea:dy, you already must know?" And now they commented to my mom if it was true that my sister was preg↑nant, and my mom said "I don't know:." They said, "Come <u>off</u> it, you do know." She said, "I don't <u>know</u>."

The village store is the traditional place where gossip collects (Luis Solano, personal comment, 2002), and this is where the voice of La Gente and the heretofore unheard voice of Laura's mother finally collide. In setting up the question '¿ya tienen que saber ustedes? (*you [plural, indexing the family] must know*)', and in the response to the mother's answer, 'no te <u>ha</u>gas, sí sabes (*come <u>off</u> it, you [singular, familiar] do know*,' La Gente refuse to accept the possibility of the family's ignorance (which Laura has been at great pains to stress). The discourse of *sexual morality* is operating here, in that the shame of an illegitimate pregnancy is presupposed. However, La Gente also invoke the discourse of *family unity*: they assume a family must know when something happens to one of its members.

Though it is being used against her by the townspeople in the above extract, the discourse of *family unity* constitutes a resource for Laura's mother throughout the rest of the narrative:

4. Y ya mi mamá llegó a la ca:sa y pues llegó llora:ndo, y ya nos habló a nosotros primero↑, a mis hermanas … a mí y a mi otra hermana↑… dijo "¿Ustedes sabían que tu hermana está embara↑zada?" y le dijímos, "No:" Dijo, "¿Están seguras o me están ocultando?" Le dije, "No." Me dijo, "Hablen con ella." Le dije, "No, hable uste:d.." Dijo, "No … porque no tiene:: … ella no tiene::: … el valor de decírmelo a mí que soy su madre, o la confianza↑"

4. And then my mom came ho:me, and well, she came home cry:ing, and she spoke to us first↑, to my sisters … to me and my other sister↑ … she said "Did you know that your sister is preg↑nant?" and we told her, "No:" She said, "Are you sure, or are you hiding something from me?" I told her, "No." She told me, "You two speak with her." I told her, "No, you: talk to her." She said, "No … because she doesn't have:: … she doesn't have::: … the courage to tell me, to tell me who am her mother, or the trust↑"

The final sentence of this segment clarifies that the source of the mother's affective reaction – 'llegó llora:ndo (*she came home cry:ing*)' – is not so much shame over her daughter's sexual impropriety, but rather a sense of hurt feelings that the girl has not seen fit to confide 'a mí que soy su madre (*in me, who am her mother*)'. The emphasis on *confianza* (trust) in the narrative corresponds to the findings of both Hirsch (2003) and González-López (2003) on the increasing importance of this value in Mexican ideologies of the family. It is at this point in the story when the interdiscursivity becomes clear, as Laura's mother invokes *family unity* in contrast to *sexual morality*. In this excerpt as well, Laura introduces her own voice as a minor character in the drama, one who does not want to get involved, but instead as narrator, 'refracts her own intentions' (Bakhtin, 1981: 292) by double-voicing other characters. Finally her older sister asks Clarita directly if she is pregnant:

5. Y no más ella contestó, "Si … ¿y qué?" ((serious tone)) … Y así le contestó↑ … y dijo, "Ooo:::, entonces sí es cier↑to," y dijo "Sí …" Entonces pues la gente decía del pueblo que nosotros la teníamos encerra↓da en la ca↓sa, porque ella no quería salir ya con noso:tros.

5. And she just answered, "Yes … so what?" ((serious tone)) … And that's how she an↑swered her … and she said, "Ooohh:::, so it is true↑," and she said, "Yes …" So the people of the town said that we had her shut↓ up in the house↓, because she didn't want to go out anymore with u:s.

Clarita's voice appears here for the first time, 'Si … ¿y qué? (*Yes … and so what?*)'. Although her words are defiant, the tone Laura uses to voice those words carries a recognition of the gravity of her situation.[31] In any case, the girl is denying that her pregnancy is any business of the family, rejecting her mother's discourse of *family unity*, although it is unclear why. She additionally rejects this discourse by refusing to show herself in public with the rest of her family. At the same time, La Gente interpret Clarita's refusal to go outside in terms of the discourse of *sexual morality*: as a sign that the family is ashamed to let her be seen.

Laura goes on to contrast her parents' very different reactions to the problem:

6. Y dijo mi mamá↓, "No la vamos a … no la vamos ni echar a la ca:lle, ni decirle nada, Ramo … tú, Pablo, porque … es mi hija y también me due:le," dijo, "y como le vamos a dar la ca:lle?" Y mi papá dijo, mi papá duró días que no le hablaba↑ Y siempre estaba ma:lo, bien agacha:do ((breathy tone)) y ma:lo y ma:lo↑ Y ya hasta que con mi mamá, "Oooh: no, que la gente dice que yo me afrento de mi hija," dijo, "Al contra:rio, de hoy en adelante la voy a cargar conmi↑go a donde yo va↓ya."

6. And my mom↓ said, "We are not going to … we are not going to throw her out in the stree:t, nor say anything to her, Ramo[32] … you, Pablo, because … she is my daughter, and because it hur:ts me too," she said, "and how are we going to give her the stree:t?" And my dad said, my dad went for days without talking to her↑ And he always felt very ba:d, really hi:ding his face ((breathy tone)), and ba:d and ba:d↑ And then my mom said, "Ohhh: no, the people say that I am ashamed of my daughter," she said, "On the con:trary, from this day forward I am going to bring her with me↑ wherever I go↓."

Here Laura's mother begins by evaluating negatively two possible courses of action: expelling Clarita from the family home and scolding her. She twice rejects the first option, the second time embedding it in a rhetorical question that indexes moral impossibility. She justifies her refusal to punish Clarita based on her relationship to the girl – 'porque … es mi hija (*because … she is my daughter*)' – and her own feelings about the situation – 'también me due:le (*it hur:ts me too*)'. As the mother's statements imply here, the discourse of *family unity* includes the proposition that family members share pain – and therefore must support each other. In her second statement, she responds to the townspeople's contention that the family is keeping Clarita shut in the house: 'Oooh: no, que la gente dice que yo me afrento de mi hija (*Ohh: no, the people say that I am ashamed of my*

daughter)'. This represents *triple*-voicing on Laura's part: in saying, 'yo me afrento de mi hija (*I am ashamed of my daughter*)', Laura is quoting her mother, who is in turn quoting La Gente's invocation of *sexual morality*. Here, Laura's mother counters this discourse with 'Ohh no' and 'Al contrario (*on the contrary*)', with the latter phrase strongly emphasized by Laura's voice. In this context, 'la voy a cargar conmigo a donde yo va↓ya. (*I am going to bring her with me wherever I go*↓)', represents the mother's use of *family unity* to justify supporting her daughter while defying public opinion. Her strong falling intonation at the end of this statement adds authority to her words.

While Laura voices her mother's powerful use of the *family unity* discourse, she represents her father as silenced by shame. She begins with 'Y mi papá dijo (*And my father said*)', and then breaks off. Rather than say anything, her father 'duró días que no le hablaba (*went for days without talking to her*)'. Although he has no voice, his discursive stance is clearly evoked in the actions and affect attributed to him: he is silent, he is hiding his face (*agachado*), he feels bad. Judging his daughter's pregnancy negatively, he also feels deep shame at being judged by La Gente, who share his discourse of *sexual morality* . It is important to note Laura's sympathy with both of her parents: throughout her story, she focuses on her father's emotions without critiquing his views directly. Nevertheless, by alternating her mother's strong voice of defiance with her father's shame and silence, she portrays her mother's viewpoint as the prevailing one. Within the interdiscusivity of this narrative, Laura's voicing of her parents gives priority to *family unity* over *sexual morality*. Laura ends her narrative by adding more details of her sister's life up to the present. In so doing, she introduces the discourse of *educational advancement*:

7. Y mi herma↓na para poder mantener a su ni↑ño y mantenerse ella↑ Pues ahí siguiéndole, ayudándole a mi mamá↓ … a vender↑ Ahí saliendo dinerito, también ella es muy luchi↑sta porque … se enseñó ahh … hacer pas<u>te</u>les↑ Iban maestros de acá digamos de San Miguel y eso a dar clases↑ … La gente del pueblo, y ella fue a … repostería↑ Y se enseñó hacer pasteles↑ Y

7. And my sis↓ter, to be able to take care of her chi↑ld and maintain herself↑ Well, she's there continuing on, helping my mom↓ … selling things↑ She's there making a little money, also she is very <u>luchi↑sta</u> because … she taught herself uhh … to bake <u>cakes↑</u> Teachers from here let's say from San Miguel went to give classes↑ … The people in town, and she went to … the bakery↑

ahorita … ya está haciendo para vender↑ Que la gente le ordena que un pastel de bo::das, uno de quinceañe:ra y pues ella ya hace sus pasteles y todo, y pues ya … también: salió adelante … con su niño y ahorita ahí está↓.

And she taught herself to bake cakes↑ And now … she's making them to sell↑ The people order from her a we::dding cake, one for quinceañe:ra [fifteenth birthday] and well now she bakes cakes and everything, and well, these days … also: she got ahead … with her child, and as of now, she's still there↓.

Laura uses the word '*luchista*' to describe her sister, a noun/adjective derived from the verb *luchar* (to struggle). A *luchista* is one who struggles, who works hard to succeed against great odds. Using the word 'also' in this context probably refers to the fact that she had previously described her mother in the same way (see above). In this story, Laura considers what happens when gender ideologies are transgressed, and concludes that actually things can turn out all right: 'salió adelante (*she got ahead*)'. La Gente are transformed from cruel gossipers to business customers. In the discourse of *educational advancement*, women can 'get ahead' by hard work and education. While Laura began by noting her own refusal to transgress *sexual morality*, her story demonstrates the complexity of gender discourses in her community.

Raquel's uncle (Interviews, 11/21/02 and 1/10/03): The first time Raquel told me this story, I had asked her about the educational background of people in her family. She introduced her uncle as someone who liked to study, then told the following story about how he lost his leg in the war. Two months later, when I asked why her husband had left Nicaragua, she launched the same narrative as a way to explain the political situation in the 1980s. Both versions begin with the day her uncle came in and announced his enlistment in the Sandinista military. More than Laura, Raquel varied the speed and pitch of her narratives, sometimes with evaluative effect. She also employed two refrains to emphasize her overall evaluation over the course of a long narrative: with only slight word changes, Raquel repeated 'su locura le costó cara (*his madness cost him a lot*)' five times over the two versions, while seven times she used the phrase 'ni lo llamaron (*they didn't even call him*)'. When she double-voices a discourse of *revolutionary commitment* through her uncle's words, she is simultaneously employing a counterdiscourse that interprets Sandinista ideals (and masculinities) as a form of madness. However, she additionally describes her uncle, drawing on the discourse of *family unity*, as

'la ovejita negra de la familia (*the little black sheep of the family*)', with the diminutive form indexing affection (Gregorio Hernández, personal comment, 2004).

The following passage is from the second version of Raquel's narrative (Interview, 1/10/03). It begins with her evaluation of Sandinista military service, then goes on to describe the day her uncle left for the war:

8. Yo creo que iban >como pollitos a morir↑/ […] Mi tío … me acuerdo que a él ni lo llamaron↓ Este fue al contra::rio […] Era … muy cerrado en su mun↑do, no sé ((laughing)) era ay no::, ˇcrazy. […]Yo recuerdo esa ve:z↑ … >vemos que llegó con una mochiH:↑la … una mochila y comenzó a meter/ … to:do en la mochila↓	8. I believe they went >like little chickens to die↑/ […] My uncle … I remember that they didn't even call him↓ He went a::nyway […] He was … all shut up in his own world↑, I don't know ((laughing)), he was oh no::, ˇcrazy. […] I remember that ti:me↑ … >we saw him come in with a ba:Hck↑pack … a backpack and he started to put/ … e:verything in the backpack↓

Through her metaphor of 'pollitos (little chickens)', Raquel positions the young soldiers as weak, ignorant and doomed – not the qualities of the brave New Man promoted by her government. She voices the oft-repeating line by which she indexes her uncle's madness – 'ni lo llamaron (they didn't even call him)' – and gives a more specific appraisal of his mental state: 'muy cerrado en su mundo (*all shut up in his own world*)', that is, in English 'crazy' (a word on which she markedly lowers her pitch to emphasize her evaluation). Having made her own beliefs clear, she supports and elaborates them with a visual representation of her uncle leaving for war: '>vemos que llegó con una mochiH:↑la … una mochila y comenzó a meter/ … to:do en la mochila↓ (*>we saw him come in with a ba*:H*ck↑pack … a backpack and he started to put/ … e:verything in the backpack*↓)'. Although these appear to be simple 'event clauses' (Labov, 1972), there is more going on: the first part of the utterance is spoken rapidly, but with syllable elongation, a rising tone, and marked aspiration on the first iteration of 'mochila (*backpack*)', inviting the listener's agreement that appearing with a backpack in this way is somewhat outrageous. Thus she constructs an evaluation which depends not only on voice tone but additionally on audience agreement that publicly packing to leave is not the way to announce a life-changing decision. This can be seen as a violation of *family unity*. Raquel

then reports on the ensuing conversation between her uncle and grandmother:

9. Y entonces dice mi abuelita↓, su mamá↓… "Este … hi↑jo, ¿ <qué ha::↑ces/?" ((breathy voice)) … Entonces, "<Oh ma::↑má … no ve::s↑/ que están saliendo los camio:↑nes? … tengo que aprovechar >de agarrar uno de los camiones porque tengo que irme a pelea:r↓/"	9. And so then my grandma↓, his mom, says↓ … "Uh … son↑ <what are you do::↑ing?/" ((breathy voice)) … So then, "<Oh, mo::m↑… don't you see::↑/ … that the tru:cks↑ are leaving? … I have to take advantage >of the chance to catch a truck, because I have to go fi:ght↓/"

Here Raquel portrays her grandmother taking the responsibility to question her son's aberrant behavior. In this context, where it is clear what the uncle is doing, asking '¿qué haces? (*what are you doing*?)' demands not information but explanation (Schiffrin, 1996). This question is spoken slowly, but with a breathy quality; moreover, Raquel strongly emphasizes the word 'ha::↑ces (*do::↑ing*)' with rising pitch and syllable elongation, indicating the incomprehensibility of the young man's behavior. At the same time, through using the word 'hijo (*son*)', she depicts her grandmother claiming the moral authority of motherhood (Bayard de Volo, 2001), and thus invokes the discourse of *family unity*.

In portraying her uncle, however, Raquel draws from a different discourse, that of *revolutionary commitment*. In his first comment, Raquel portrays him with a voice of exaggerated reasonableness. The first few words, '<Oh ma::↑má … no ve::s↑/ ("*<Oh, mo::m↑… don't you see::↑/*")', are drawn out at great length, with rising intonation on 'mom' and 'see', implying that the answer to his mother's question should be obvious. This challenges the question's implication that his behavior makes no sense. He goes on to draw connections that are only logical to those who share his discourse and new model of masculinity: if the trucks are leaving, then I have to get on them, because I have to go fight. He ends with a strong falling tone indexing confidence in his conclusions.

As the narrator, however, Raquel uses her uncle's 'logical' words and exaggeratedly 'reasonable' tone to poke fun at him: not only is he drawing connections where none exist, he is assuming that his listeners share his discourse of *revolutionary commitment* and will thus accept these nonexistent connections. This is a clear example of double-voicing where the narrator refracts another's words to give her own perspective (Bakhtin, 1981). Since she has already explained her viewpoint on the young man's

political beliefs, she can count on in*tra*-textuality (Moonwomon-Baird, 2000) to make her evaluation clear. At the same time, by having her uncle begin his explanation with the phrase, 'oh, mom', Raquel indicates his recognition of the discourse of *family unity* and the authority it gives his mother to question him:

10. Y le dice, ">Y tú:↑ con quién vas a ir a pelear si ni cono:ces a esa gente … y ni te han/ llama:::↑do:?" ((slight breathy laugh)) … Entonces dice … "<No impo::rta↓ … Hay que defende::r↑ el pue:blo↓/ … ˆque e:sos no se me:tan aquí:↑" ((breathy voice)) …

10. And she says to him, ">And you:↑, who are you going to fight if you don't even kno:w those people [the enemy] … and they [the military] haven't even/ ca:::lled↑ you?" ((slight breathy laugh)) … So then he says … "<It doesn't ma::tter↓ … It's necessary to defe::nd↑ the peo:ple↓/ … ˆso that tho:se ones [the enemy] don't get i:n he:re↑" ((breathy voice)) …

Speaking rapidly, Raquel's grandmother rejects her son's obligation to fight based on two arguments: he does not know his enemy personally and he has not been drafted. The phrase 'ni te han llamado (*they haven't even called you*)', evokes a sense of parallelism between Raquel as a narrator and her grandmother as a character. Although here Raquel puts the phrase in her grandmother's mouth, in six other instances it appears as her own comment. In every case, the phrase is said with very strong affect, here indexed through a strong rising pitch and exaggerated syllable elongation on 'llama:::↑do: (*ca:::lled*↑)'. Moreover, the fact that she and her grandmother share this phrase establishes the like-mindedness of the teller and the character: it is senseless to fight unless you are legally obligated to do so.

Replying, the uncle discounts the question of legality, dragging out the words 'no impo::rta (*it doesn't ma::tter*)', in the same exaggerated tone of reasonableness as above. Where his mother has depoliticized the conflict through referring to the enemy as '*gente*', he re-politicizes it by drawing on another word for people, '*pueblo*', people in the political sense. The dramatic rising pitch and exaggerated syllable elongation on the word 'defende::r↑ (*defe::nd*↑)', followed immediately by the definite falling intonation on 'el pue:blo↓ (*the peo:ple*↓)', adds to the impression that this is an oft-heard political catchphrase. As she voices her uncle making a positive evaluation of his enlistment through the discourse of *revolutionary commitment*, Raquel simultaneously double-voices her own negative evaluation of that decision.

However, after Raquel quotes her uncle's sloganeering, she has him add a more deictic phrase, 'que esos no se metan aqui:↑ (*so that those ones [the enemy] don't get in he:re*↑)'. By grammatically connecting these two clauses, the uncle brings together 'el pueblo' as a political entity and 'aquí (*here*)', his hometown (or perhaps even the family home). In Raquel's voicing of her uncle, the rising tone on 'aquí' invites agreement with this equation. Raquel's voice in this part of the utterance is not humorously exaggerated as in her previous renditions of the young man's speech. In this way, she seems to indicate understanding that her uncle's motives were not entirely unreasonable; they had some basis in their shared reality, and not only in his own discourse. She then resumes a more directly evaluative role as narrator.

11. Y ento::↑nces … ((slight laughter)) >por haber hecho e:so, no sé/ … to↑do tiene su consecue:ncia ((slight laugh)) … hay veces … vi:↑no … y y SE FUE↓ … Sin llama:rlo se fue↓ … pues mi abuelita como dicen el dicho "˘con el alma en un hilo↓"	11. And so:: then↑ … ((slight laughter)) >having done tha:t, I don't know/ … e↑verything has its co:nsequence ((slight laugh)) … in time … he ca:me↑ … and and WENT↓ … Without being ca:lled he went↓ … well, my grandma, as the saying goes, "˘with her soul on a thread↓"

Following the last quote from her uncle Raquel sums up with 'Y entonces (*And so then*)', a pause, and some exasperated laughter. 'Todo tiene su consecuencia … hay veces (*Everything has its consequence … in time*)', she states, a phrase related to her repeating evaluation mentioned earlier, 'su locura le costó mucho (*his madness cost him a lot*)'. Clearly, she sees her uncle's amputated leg as the result of his rashness. The rising tone on 'vi:↑no (*ca:me*↑)', followed by the falling pitch and abrupt raise in volume on 'SE FUE↓ (*WENT*↓)', contribute to a sense of impending doom. She is making a judgement against her uncle's decision, but her tone makes clear the strong affective component to her evaluation (Martin, 2003). She uses a proverb to reference the painful state in which the enlistment left her grandmother – 'con el alma en un hilo (*her soul on a thread*)': within the discourse of *family unity*, suffering is necessarily shared.

The rest of the narrative passages below come from the first version of Raquel's story (Interview, 11/21/02). For reasons of space, I omit here a lengthy account of how Raquel's uncle was shot in the leg during a battle in a remote part of the mountains; how he was transported to a hospital in the capital, where his leg was amputated above the knee; how Raquel's

mother visited him there and 'her nerves were affected (*se le alteraron los nervios*)' at the sight of his suffering. Coming home with one leg did not end her uncle's dedication to the Sandinista cause, nor his family's skeptical evaluation of his activism. As Raquel told me

12. Al regresar se comenzó a interesar: … siempre estaba con ˇe↓llos trabajando, si ya trabajaba en una ofi<u>ci</u>na con e↑llos … o sea no se alejó siempre de lo mismo↓ […] y comenzó a movilizar:se … viajaba de lu:↑nes … a viernes, <u>fí</u>jese … desde: … la capital a la casa↑ … viaja de lunes a viernes, su trabajo … Los <u>sá</u>bados estudiaba sabatinos >a una ciudad que quedaba cerca, que era San Ignacio↓/ … eso era t<u>Ho</u>dos los sábados … se sacrificó ta↑n:to que se graduó de abogado↓

12. When he came back he began to get in:terested … he was always with ˇthem↓ [the Sandinistas] working, he already worked in an <u>of</u>fice with <u>them</u>↑ … he never got away from the same old thing↓ […] and he started to get a:ctive … he travelled from Mo:↑nday … to Friday, just <u>think</u> of it … fro:m … the capital to home↑ … his work was travelling from Monday to Friday … Saturdays he was studying >in a city nearby, that was San Ignacio↓/ … that was <u>e</u>Hvery Saturday … He sacrificed himself so:↑ much that he graduated as a lawyer↓

Raquel's negative evaluation of her uncle's work with the Sandinistas is perhaps implied by her reluctance to use their party name. Instead she says 'con ellos (*with them*)' – the first time on a very low pitch, which seems to emphasize a kind of disgust, and the second time with question intonation, probably to make sure her I understand her meaning. In saying that her uncle 'no se alejó siempre de lo mismo (*never got away from the same old thing*)', she suggests that he should have learned his lesson, but did not. She seems both sympathetic and exasperated toward his busy work schedule, described with strong emphasis on key syllables: traveling 'de lu:↑nes … a viernes, <u>fí</u>jese (*from Mo:↑nday … to Friday, just <u>think</u> of it*)'. Moreover, she conveys a similar reaction to the educational endeavor he began at this time, studying '<u>tHo</u>dos los sábados (*<u>e</u>Hvery Saturday*)' with the aspiration adding an extra layer of emotional reaction against her uncle's overcommitment.

In this part of the narrative, Raquel is not focusing on the law degree her uncle earned, but rather on the excessive amount of sacrifice that it involved: 'se sacrificó tanto que se graduó de abogado (*he sacrificed himself so much that he graduated as a lawyer*)'. Here she seems to disparage the discourse of *educational achievement* by connecting it to her uncle's

revolutionary commitment (one can imagine her uncle making the same connection more positively). In fact, perhaps to make sure I got the point (I was quite ready to admire his accomplishments), Raquel then repeated the details of her uncle's weekly schedule all over again, using the word 'sacrifice' twice more. Interspersed with this reiteration, however, were some more positive comments:

13. Aho:ra >ya es un abogado/ y ya tiene clientela y todo↓ … Pero le costó↓ … porque muy cansa↑do … le costó mucho↓. Al final que se graduó y ahora (***) tal vez no gana tanto dinero, pero sí ya es graduado y todo: … y ya la gente lo busca y es buen abogado↓.

[…]

((laughing)) O sea que si fue progresando en la familia, así: … después de los trancazos como dicen ((laughing)) … Bueno él por lo menos, esa fue la … como dicen ((laughing)) la "ovejita negra" en la familia ((laughing harder)).

13. Now: >he is a lawyer/ and he already has a clientele and everything↓ … But it cost him … because (he was) very tired↑ … it cost him a lot↓ In the end he graduated, and now (***) maybe he doesn't earn that much money, but he did graduate and everythi:ng … and now the people look for him and he's a good lawyer↓

[text omitted in which Raquel reiterates the sacrifices her uncle made to achieve this goal] ((laughing)) That is to say he did get along all right in the family, like tha:t … after all the blows, like they say ((laughing)) … Well, at least he was the … like they say ((laughing)) the "little black sheep of the family" ((laughing harder)).

Here Raquel goes back and forth between the discourse of *educational achievement* – 'ya es un abogado y ya tiene clientela y todo (*now he is a lawyer and he has a clientele and everything*)' – and her counterdiscourse to *revolutionary commitment* – 'Pero le costó … porque muy cansado … le costó mucho (*but it cost him … because he was very tired … it cost him a lot*)'. Although the picture she paints is similar to the end of Laura's story, where the transgressor gains new skills and opens a respectable hometown business, she cannot just forget the 'trancazos (*blows*)' he suffered along the way. In humorously calling him 'la ovejita negra en la familia (*the little black sheep of the family*)' she conveys affection – but also the idea that her uncle's idealistic masculinities cannot be redefined within the bounds of reasonable behavior. However, at the end of her story, Raquel resurrects the discourse of *educational achievement*, and manages to

connect it (still somewhat ambiguously) with the discourse she values most, *family unity*.

14. Ya está como más con la fami:lia:, ya ˇdiferente todo … <ya tiene su cHasa, tiene ya su trabajo en su propia casa, tiene su carro … y mane:ja sí:/ ((laughing)) con un pie↑ y con una prótesis↑ … ">Maneja," dice mi mami, "como que ((laughing)) nada," dice mi mamá, "a mi me da horror ((laughing)) yo no me monto/ con él:." >Mi mamá dice "está como lloviendo, le digo dice yo no ahí me voy a estrellar contigo ahí"/ ((laughing)). ((pause)) Pero sí … >siempre (lleva) a mi abuelita/ a pasear … ((serious tone)) ˇMi familia es muy unida↓ … especialmente en las malas↓

14. He's now like more with the fa:mily:, now everything's ˇdifferent … <now he has his hHouse, he now has his work in his own house, he has his car … and he e:ven dri:ves/ ((laughing)) with one foot↑ and a prosthesis↑ … ">He drives," says my mom, "Like ((laughing)) nothing," says my mom, "it gives me the shivers ((laughing)), I don't get in/ with hi:m." >My mom says, "If it's like raining, I tell you, I'm not going out there to crash with you"/ ((laughing)). ((pause)) But, actually … >he's always (taking) my grandma/ out for a drive … ((serious tone)) ˇMy family is very united↓ … especially in hard times↓

Just as Raquel had evaluated her uncle's political commitments negatively for taking him away from the family, she evaluates his current endeavors positively for bringing him back home. Her voice slows as she draws out and emphasizes the material achievements that are the result of his law practice and thus of his education: his own home and legal office – and the car he drives … Suddenly she starts laughing. Apparently, the family has never reached consensus as to whether owning a car is a good thing for a man with one leg and a history of rash action. Laughing and laughing, talking fast, Raquel voices her mother's scathing comments, 'Está como lloviendo, le digo dice yo no ahí me voy a estrellar contigo ahí (*If it's like raining, I tell you I'm not going out there to crash with you*)' – and then contrasts her mother's scorn with her grandmother's willingness to go out for a drive with her son. It appears, perhaps, that in this family, acceptance of driving a car with a prosthesis implies acceptance of her uncle's 'sacrifice' and what he gained from it. For Raquel, at least, telling this story far away in California, *family unity* wins out, as her laughter stops and her voice slows and deepens: 'mi familia es muy unida, especialmente en las malas (*my family is very united, especially in hard times*)'. Her uncle, a Sandinista New Man, in the end is able to exemplify the same

responsible masculinities as his father and brother, despite the different path he has taken.

Multiple Discourses/Counterdiscourses

In the stories above, it is clear that the characters and the narrators are making different evaluations of the recounted events. As texts that entertain competing 'world views', the narratives told by Laura and Raquel are constructed with a high degree of interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1999). In my analysis, there are four principal discourses competing within these narratives, to which I have provisionally affixed the following labels: *family unity, sexual morality, educational advancement* and *revolutionary commitment*. The first three of these discourses were common to many of the narratives I recorded in my larger study, whereas the last appears only within this narrative. In this section, I summarize the characteristics of each of these discourses as they appear in the narratives about Laura's sister and Raquel's uncle, giving examples of representative statements belonging to each discourse, then discussing how the discourse intersects with local ideologies about the appropriate behavior of men and women.[33]

Family unity

Raquel expresses this as a positive value at the end of the first version of her narrative (Excerpt 14): 'My family is very united, especially in hard times'. A great deal of her story is about family conflict, yet this is the way she chooses to sum it up. The same discourse is also very influential within Laura's narrative. It appears both in the narrators' own evaluations, and in direct quotes from powerful, respected, older female characters (Laura's mother and Raquel's grandmother). In my analysis, the discourse expresses similar propositions in both narratives. First of all, it assumes that family members *share pain*, as Raquel describes the effect on her mother's nerves when she visited her wounded brother in the hospital (p. 154), while Laura's mother says 'because she is my daughter and because it hurts me too' (Excerpt 6). Secondly, the discourse assumes that family members should *spend time together*. In reporting positively on her uncle's current situation, Raquel describes him in Excerpt 14 as 'more with the family'. At the end of Excerpt 6, Laura endorses her mother's plan to bring Clarita with her 'wherever she went'. Thirdly, family members *accept each other*. Again in Excerpt 6, Laura's mother rejects any idea of disowning Clarita or even scolding her: 'how can we give her the street'? When Raquel jokes (Excerpt 13) that her uncle is the 'black sheep' she softens this judgement

by using the diminutive form of sheep ('ovejita') to show her affection. In the ideologies indexed by this discourse, both men and women are expected to maintain strong connections with family and fulfil familial responsibilities; however, these responsibilities vary by gender, with the role of older women in safeguarding family togetherness stressed above all.

Sexual morality

This discourse does not appear within Raquel's story about her uncle; it appears to be a discourse that mostly applies to women, although men may be shamed by the behavior of female relatives. The discourse of sexual morality appears in reported speech from Laura's father and from the people of her hometown. She draws on this discourse to explain her own (virtuous) behavior, but does not use it to evaluate her sister. First, the discourse of sexual morality assumes that *female sexuality outside of marriage negatively affects whole families and communities*, not merely the woman herself. Even the townspeople are portrayed in Excerpt 2 voicing a collective cry of pain in response to Clarita's pregnancy, '¡Ayyy a mí!' As for Laura's father, in Excerpt 6 he is described as 'hid(ing) his face' and 'feel(ing) that he was going to die' in response to his daughter's pregnancy. To avoid shame, this discourse posits that *it is necessary to control female sexuality*, both through restricting young women's mobility, and through teaching them to be virtuous. According to Laura (Excerpt 1), foregoing sexual activity outside of marriage is what her father 'has always taught us since we were small'. This discourse expresses traditional gender ideologies in which chastity is key to respectable female behavior.

Revolutionary commitment

The discourse of revolutionary commitment appears only within Raquel's story, and is subscribed to only by her uncle. When she directly quotes this discourse in his voice, she invariably double-voices her own perspective that revolutionary sentiment is unreasonable and dangerous. For the most part, however, what appears in this story is not her uncle's voicing of his revolutionary commitment but the comments that Raquel and other family members make to counter this discourse. Although the political beliefs of Raquel's uncle are somewhat hidden under all this double-voicing, the impression given is that he believes that *it is important to sacrifice oneself, to give one's all, for 'the people'* (as an abstract political entity). This can be seen both in the words that Raquel puts in his mouth in Excerpt 10, 'it's necessary to defend the people', and in his actions, first

enlisting in the military, then taking on a demanding political job involving a lot of travel despite his injury. His family's counterdiscourse against these sentiments and actions primarily involves the proposition that *revolutionary commitment is crazy, and crazy behavior has negative consequences*. More than once Raquel comments that 'his madness cost him a lot'. While it is certainly possible for women to adopt a discourse of *revolutionary commitment*, this discourse was tied in 1980s Nicaragua to a new iconicized masculinity (*El Nuevo Hombre*) that elevated self-sacrifice for social change (especially on the battlefield) far above the fulfilment of family responsibility (Bayard de Volo, 2001).

Educational advancement

This discourse is primarily found at the end of Laura's narrative, and at the end of Raquel's first version of her narrative. It is employed evaluatively by the narrators themselves, and not by characters in the narrative. The central proposition of this discourse is that *if you get educated and work hard, you will be successful*. As Raquel explains her uncle's current situation in Excerpt 13, 'In the end he graduated, and now (***) maybe he doesn't earn that much money, but he did graduate and everything, and now the people look for him, and he's a good lawyer'. Laura additionally uses the positive term 'salir adelante (*to get ahead*)' as a final evaluative summation of her sister's accomplishments in Excerpt 8. This discourse can thus be applied to either men or women, although it could potentially conflict in different ways with male and female responsibilities in traditional ideologies of gender.

Taking Positions on Changing Gender Ideologies

As seen above, the narrators weave competing discourses into their narratives, partly through their own evaluative comments, and partly through the reported speech of characters. Rather than take a single moral stance based on one coherent gender ideology or set of social norms (Ochs & Capps, 2001), these tellers explore multiple perspectives (Maybin, 1996). However, the tellers do not give equal weight to all the positions they entertain. By the end of the stories, they make explicit evaluative statements that stake out positions for themselves among the competing evaluations of the different characters. In this section, I explore the role of the different discourses in the tellers' evaluations of gendered ideologies.

The most valued discourse in both narratives is that of *family unity*. Raquel states it in the strongest position in her story, her final evaluative summing up in Excerpt 14: 'my family is very united, especially in hard

times'. Moreover, this discourse is most often voiced by respected matriarchs to counter other discourses employed by less powerful characters. This is particularly striking in the case of Laura's narrative. In explaining her own observance of *sexual morality*, she claims an identity as a good daughter based not so much on her purity as on her consideration for her father's feelings (Excerpt 1). This implicitly prioritizes *family unity* over chastity. Laura's views become clearer as she contrasts her parents' reactions to the pregnancy in Excerpt 6. Whereas her father is silenced, her mother rejects shame in favor of family togetherness: 'Ohhh no, the people say that I am ashamed of my daughter … On the contrary, from this day forward I am going to bring her with me wherever I go'.

Likewise, Raquel uses the discourse of *family unity* to argue against her uncle's decision to go to war. She counters his discourse of *revolutionary commitment* by showing the effect of her uncle's decision on other people in the family: in Excerpt 11 her grandmother's 'soul hanging by a thread' as she waited for news of her son; her mother's 'nerves affected' by reports of her brother's injury (see p. 154). Raquel then uses *family unity* discourse to report favorably on his current activities in Excerpt 14: 'He's more with the family now'. However, she quickly complicates this statement by describing family reactions to the way he drives 'with one foot and a prosthesis'. While her mother refuses to get in the car with him, her grandmother is happy to go out for a drive. Raquel ends her story by stating that 'my family is always very united, especially in hard times', but these differing reactions underscore the dialogic expansiveness of this story (White, 2004). Was 'so much sacrifice' worth it in the long run?

The final discourse, not so much in direct competition with the others but rather tacked on at the end, is that of *educational advancement*. After the transgressions have had their consequences, after pregnancy, childbirth, war and amputation, both transgressors are eventually portrayed as getting ahead through education. While there is a vast difference in level of commitment between law school and a cake-decorating class, the results of these enterprises turn out to be surprisingly similar. Both transgressors earn respect as small business owners in their own hometowns. According to Laura in Excerpt 8, the people who cruelly gossipped about Clarita's pregnancy now buy her cakes, 'for weddings and 15th birthday parties', and Raquel in Excerpt 14 likewise portrays the people of her hometown patronizing her uncle's law practice: 'the people look for him, and he's a good lawyer'.

Through all four of these competing discourses, Laura and Raquel finally arrive at their own positions. While Laura makes it clear that she herself is a good daughter who would never hurt her father in the way Clarita did, her final evaluation of her sister is based on respect for her

accomplishments. By praising her sister's struggles to get ahead as a single mother in her own hometown, she is also endorsing her mother's use of *family unity* to support rather than condemn her sister in her pregnancy. In so doing, Laura minimizes the importance of *sexual morality* for young women, and potentially for her own daughter. Raquel's position remains more ambiguous, as she is not reconciled to the way her uncle's discourse of *revolutionary commitment* overrode *family unity* during the war years. Nevertheless, in employing narrative to make sense of these troubling events, Raquel is unwilling to entirely silence her uncle, and she portrays his eventual ability to meet both political and familial commitments through the same discourse of *educational advancement* that Laura used in the resolution of her sister's story.

At this point it is important to reiterate that although these stories were about events that took place in 1980s Nicaragua and 1990s Mexico, they were told in the San Francisco Bay Area of California in late 2002 and early 2003. Highly tellable stories, recounted with great emotion, they arose in the context of life-history interviews with an Anglo graduate student, who was assisting in their English classes. I think it is safe to say that of the four discourses discussed above, Laura and Raquel would be mostly likely to identify *educational advancement* with my interests. In fact, Raquel initially introduced her uncle's story by referring to him as 'one who liked to study'. I think, however, that there is another reason why this discourse came into these stories: I see the tellers' employing these narratives to make sense of events in their homeland from their new perspective as immigrants in the United States. Both had daughters who were doing well in U.S. elementary schools. Both women were proud of their daughters, and both were thinking about the prospect of sending them to college in the future. Their own current educational project of learning English was not merely for their own convenience, but also to support their daughters' educational trajectories. For this reason, the discourse of *educational advancement* is not merely one that they identify with me, the interviewer – rather it is a discourse that speaks to them about their own current ESL studies, but more importantly about the future of their family in the United States.

As Kraus writes, 'the experience of migration … (in) bring(ing) … individuals into contact with many different collective identities, lead(s) to reflections and self-inquiries' (Kraus, 2006: 108). From this perspective, the experience of immigration, made concrete by the presence of an Anglo audience, may have encouraged Laura and Raquel to take on discursive positions adapted to their new social context. As Laura positions herself among the discourses in her story, she constructs identities for herself as a

good daughter, wife, sister and mother – but also as a modern woman who values education and is open-minded about other people's sexual behavior. This is an identity that allows her to affiliate with tradition-minded male family members (most notably her husband), but also to make friends from other backgrounds, to pursue educational opportunities, to potentially work outside the home and certainly to prepare her daughter to do so. While Laura does not herself rebel against traditional gender ideologies, she opens discursive space for other women to do so. Likewise, when Raquel acknowledges in her uncle's story that there need be no conflict between *family unity* and *educational advancement*, she is making it easier for herself to accept the changes that will occur if her daughters pursue higher education and careers.

Thus, in telling stories in Spanish to an Anglo teacher in California about conflicting discourses in their hometowns, Laura and Raquel are not simply reporting on gender in Latin America, or on their own identities as Latina immigrant woman. Rather, in these narratives, gender is 'produced, reproduced, and indeed changed, through (their) performances of (these) gendered act(s)' (Eckert & McConnell-Giner, 2003: 4). In discursively positioning themselves among other members of their families, these tellers are constructing gendered identities that can span their families' (remembered) pasts in Latin America as well as their (expected) futures in the United States. As individuals use the resources of interdiscursivity in performing narrative accounts of past events, they have the opportunity to reshape their own identities – and also the contexts in which they tell their stories.

As these heartfelt, ambiguous narratives provide concrete images of gendered changes within the tellers' communities, they illuminate the fact that cultural evolution is inevitably a messy, never completed process of repositioning. Specifically, these stories illustrate how people construct positions among competing discourses within changing societies; they demonstrate how this positioning then shifts over time until previously unthinkable perspectives become acceptable. The ideological work accomplished in these narratives opens spaces in which the tellers themselves, and especially their daughters, can pursue educational opportunities that were never possible to their female relatives in previous generations. Moreover, as I discuss in the next chapter, the discourses of *educational advancement* and *family unity* that Laura and Raquel voice in this chapter are key to understanding a range of life decisions made by participants in this research. In Chapter 7, I build on my discursive analysis of participants' interview narratives to explore the pedagogical implications of taking into account learners' gendered perspectives – while teaching the dominant societal language in an immigrant community.

Chapter 7

(Gendered) Identities and Language Learning: Continuing the Dialogue[34]

I begin my conclusion with one final narrative. One day in October 2003, taking a break from the final process of tying together this research into a dissertation, I was walking through the mall when I ran into Pilar. I had not seen her for 10 months, since that time in December 2002 when she asked me to help her newly arrived sister-in-law, provoking Jean's interjection, 'In English, Julia, in English'.[35] As I mentioned in Chapter 1, this was a key event in convincing me to leave the CEC earlier than planned. After Pilar and I introduced our children to each other, the first thing she asked was why I stopped coming to help in the classes. Not wanting to get into my differences with her teachers, and realizing suddenly I had no idea how to justify the value of research over practice, I explained weakly that I had had to write my *tesis*, that it was a lot of work, that now I was almost done and looking for a job. She nodded understandingly. A strong mix of emotions washed over me: I felt defensive, apologetic, deeply grateful. I am not sure what else I could have said to her at that moment, but reflecting on this encounter at the time – and again, five years later – I feel renewed responsibility to bring the voices of adult language learners into the ongoing academic conversations about literacy, language learning and educational policy.

As Arnetha Ball wrote, in concluding her own research on narratives told by inner-city learners in the United States and South Africa

> Engagement … on the part of (educators), may mean more than listening to individuals as they share their stories. It also entails an active response to the narratives in order for communication to take place … Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the dialogic nature of

> communication reminds us that response has a direct role in shaping meaning from discourse. (Ball, 1998: 173)

In writing about dialogue, Bakhtin was theorizing the nature of language and communication, with each utterance 'aware of and mutually reflect(ing)' (Bakhtin, 1986: 91) past and (potential) future utterances, not just within a particular conversation, but in the speaker's world. From this perspective, the meaning of an utterance is not finalized until it meets with a response. However, in explaining the value of learner narratives, Ball found the need to go beyond Bakhtin's descriptive standpoint and invoke another, more activist, theory of dialogue, that of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire:

> The starting point for … dialogues and their resulting programs or political action, however, must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the lives and aspirations of the students (Freire, 1970) … Narrative accounts … can provide the spark needed to begin dialogic communication between students, teachers, policy makers, administrators, curriculum developers, and even researchers. The response from these interested Others, however, is critical if meaning is to be constructed and if meaningful change is to ensue. (Ball, 1998: 179)

Freire sees dialogue not as an inherent property of communication, but as a value to be cultivated. For Freire, the purpose of education is to 'name the world' (Freire, 1999: 68), that is, to bring the structures of society into conscious awareness through language, in order to 'transform the world' (Freire, 1999: 69). This naming and subsequent transformation takes place in 'dialogue' (Freire, 1999: 69) between learners and educators, an encounter in which 'there are neither utter ignoramuses nor true sages; there are only people who are attempting together to learn more than they now know' (Freire, 1999: 71). This is not exactly what Bakhtin meant by dialogue, but it is what Ball wants to encourage through her research. Her hope is that educators who understand inner-city students' oppressive realities will be moved to take action for social transformation.

The immediate reality faced by my participants at the time of my research was a California city with high rates of crime and unemployment, underfunded schools, and comparatively cheap housing which nonetheless required immigrant families to share small dwellings with numerous relatives. Participants who had strong, supportive family networks benefitted from them tremendously as they shared scarce material resources, knowledge about the new society, and a determination to maintain key aspects of

their home culture (most notably the Spanish language). The value of having a strong family in the local area became clearest to me in talking to Serafina, a single mother with no relatives nearby, who was at a loss to keep her son from losing his language in an English-only preschool while she sought steady employment and an affordable apartment.

Participants' shared reality also consisted in histories of migration from their homelands, some due to political violence, some to economic chaos some to a complicated combination of both. The United States, to which they had come with hopes of a better future, had in every case contributed to the conditions in their homelands that drove them out – funding the wars of the 1980s (Jonas, 1991; Menjívar, 1993; Walker, 2003), then insisting on the neoliberal economic 'remedies' of the 1990s that favored international business interests over the well-being of local people (Babb, 2001; Dello Buono & Bell Lara, 2007; Hellman, 2007; Hershberg & Rosen, 2006). Thus these immigrants' ties to their new homeland extend back to the years before they left their old one. They arrived into endless debates as to the effects of increasing immigration on the US economy and culture (Hellman, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003) – but their own first priority had to be the well-being of their families, as they made the best life they could in a land of great abundance but limited hospitality.

Just as Ball moved in her analysis from Bakhtin's descriptive theories to the more activist philosophy of Freire, I move in this final chapter from a summary of my findings towards a discussion of their implications. Thus, in the next section, I outline the answers to my research questions, while in the following section I explore the ways that my study contributes to the theoretical debates summarized in Chapter 2. Finally, I connect my findings to ESL pedagogy. Still not satisfied with my answer to Pilar, I conclude this chapter by arguing for the value of paying attention to learners' perspectives and experiences when making decisions that affect their educational opportunities.

Research Questions

(1) What are these learners' perspectives on the ways that relationships with parents, children and spouses have affected their educational opportunities? In what ways have family perspectives on education interacted with the larger sociopolitical context to shape learning opportunities for these participants and their children?

Most participants reported that their parents had encouraged their early education, and nearly everyone had fond memories of elementary school. The one exception was Serafina, who repeated first grade three

times and then dropped out. She described her teacher as 'enojada (*angry, strict*)'. However, she later had a more positive experience completing third grade through adult education classes. In contrast to the relative ease of primary education, most participants had found attending secondary school to be difficult, due to both financial difficulties and gendered constraints. Trini and Laura were not allowed to attend at all. Raquel dropped out after two years to take care of her sick grandmother. Brenda, Camila and Jorge graduated from high school, but only after surmounting various challenges: Brenda's pregnancy, Camila's complicated relationship with her fiancé and Jorge's need to earn a living. The two participants with some post-secondary education had not been able to finish their degrees, Camila due to the Salvadoran civil war and Fabiana because of her full-time responsibilities in the family business. Raquel was the only participant who expressed no regret over the level of education that she had attained (eighth grade); all other participants said they would have liked to go further.

Spanish-language literacy had played a positive role in the lives of participants, and some were beginning to have a similar relationship with literacy in English. Most wrote letters regularly to relatives in their homelands, especially their mothers, and received frequent letters in return. Brenda was the only participant whose mother read aloud to her as a child, mostly poetry, but Trini, Laura and Fabiana recalled sharing newspapers and magazines in their youth with their fathers and siblings. At the time of the interviews, Brenda, Trini and Serafina were reading non-fiction books in Spanish recreationally. Jorge did not read for fun, but was keeping up with the English-language reading requirements in his computer course. Camila mostly watched English-language TV, but fondly remembered some of the Spanish literature she read in high school. Raquel read the Bible in Spanish daily. However, Fabiana was the only participant who had ever worked at a job that involved much reading and writing.

As participants contemplated further education in the United States, the well-being of their families remained their highest priority. Moreover, they continued to face constraints related to gender and finances, often now compounded by immigration status: Brenda was planning to go on from adult school to community college classes in winter 2003 until classmates told her that she would have to show proof of legal residency (see Chapter 4). Jorge was not able to study English seriously until a back injury made manual labor impossible for him, and he needed to develop new skills to support his family (see Chapter 3). Most of the women in my study had only begun to take English classes when they found that the CEC location, schedule and curriculum fit in well with their family

priorities. With their household obligations met, their family members – and in particular their spouses – generally supported their efforts to learn English. Participants were inspired in these efforts by their own parents' struggles to learn and study (Brenda and Serafina), by their parents' encouragement of their own earlier schooling (Brenda, Trini, Camila and Fabiana), by their desire to participate in their children's education (Brenda, Raquel, Camila, Serafina, Laura and Trini), and by their aspiration to 'salir adelante (*get ahead*)' (Brenda, Jorge, Fabiana and Trini). They generally continued to have high hopes for their children's educational attainment.

(2) What are the participants' perspectives on the gendered practices and ideologies of their own communities? How do participants report living out these practices and ideologies in constructing their gendered identities as Latino/a immigrants in the United States?

Although details varied somewhat from one participant to another, all had been influenced by 'traditional' gender ideologies, especially in regards to family roles and responsibilities. The primary obligation of mothers to care for their children was a central value, which no one disputed. In fact, I heard no one question a mother's *desire* to put her children's nurture ahead of everything else, and although Camila's and Jorge's Chapter 3 narratives portrayed their mothers as stern and unsympathetic, I recorded no 'transgression narratives' (see Chapter 6) about mothers who were neglectful or irresponsible. The same traditional ideologies gave men an obligation to provide for their families economically, but participants recognized that fathers did not always fulfil this obligation. Nevertheless, they tended to value marriages in which men earned the primary income and women were primarily responsible for the household.

However, within families, relationships between men and women were undergoing some changes, as best exemplified by Trini and Alfredo (see Chapter 3), who had grown up in conservative rural villages, but who now both worked and shared some household responsibilities such as childcare. The women I interviewed who were not currently working looked forward to contributing to family income in the future; female employment was seen as desirable as long as other gendered obligations were met. Women saw possibilities for renegotiating their family responsibilities as their children got older; the space they had recently managed to create in their lives for language study was a foretaste of this. They unanimously voiced a desire for their daughters to have 'careers' when they grew up. However, the laughter that tended to accompany classroom remarks about men doing housework (see Chapter 5) indicates the limits of gender rewriting (Harper *et al.*, 1996) in participants' communities.

(3) From the perspectives of these adult immigrants, how have gendered social positioning and prior educational experiences influenced their learning of English both in and outside of the classroom? How has studying English affected their gendered identities?

Because female participants' were positioned within their families and communities as primary caregivers to their children, their opportunities to learn English outside the classroom had been somewhat restricted. Few had worked much outside the home. Trini successfully fought with her husband for the right to work, but not all women felt the need or desire to do the same. Moreover, opportunities to learn English on the job were often limited. As discussed in Chapter 3, Jorge acquired English from interacting with customers at the car wash, but his listening comprehension developed far more than his expressive ability. Trini's Chapter 3 narrative about her co-worker illustrates how interacting with immigrants from other linguistic backgrounds could help develop English conversational skills (Brenda had a similar experience), while Serafina learned some English from the elderly Filipina for whom she served as a home caregiver (see Chapter 4). However, participants' US jobs had not required much reading or writing in any language.

Investment (Norton, 2000) in their children's *educación*[36] offered participants more incentive to develop English. Camila claimed to have learned considerable English from watching television so that she would be able to protect her children from urban dangers (see Chapter 3). Most participants read story books aloud to their children several times a week, primarily in Spanish but occasionally in English. As mentioned in Chapter 5, Laura had found that checking out English-language library books to read to her daughter had been particularly helpful to her own L2 development. All the mothers whose children were in school supervised their homework and helped with it when necessary and possible. Raquel told me that participating in English-language parent meetings at her daughter's elementary school with the help of a translator had gotten her to the point where she could understand much of what happened at the meeting on her own (see Chapter 4).

For the most part, experiences of learning English in class at the CEC had been congruent with each participant's 'sense of continuous identity' (Eakin, 1999) as illustrated in her narratives. Located within two blocks of an elementary school that primarily served Latino immigrants, the CEC was designed to be convenient for homemakers with young children, operating during school hours and providing childcare for toddlers and preschoolers. Several participants described the long-time CEC teachers as 'cariñosas (*affectionate*)', similar to their favorite elementary school

teachers. The CEC curriculum was designed to meet the needs of traditional homemakers, and while teachers verbally supported students' aspirations for employment or further education, they did not create a space for learners to problematize the constraints they faced in such endeavors. Instead the classes made it easier for learners to cope with current responsibilities. They could better assist their children with English-language homework, talk more confidently to their children's teachers; it was easier for them to ask questions while shopping; they were less worried about accessing translation help at medical clinics; those who were working learned vocabulary they could try out on their co-workers. Homemakers gained confidence to look for work in the future that might require English competence. Moreover, the social life of the classes decreased the sense of isolation in the United States that some had experienced. For all participants, it could be said that attending ESL classes at the CEC enhanced their sense of agency without disrupting their ordinary routines of life: learning English had been a positive experience for research participants because it had *not* involved making major life changes.

Theoretical Implications

In this section, I review the theories of identity and learning that I discussed in Chapter 2 – in relation to the struggles, dilemmas and contradictions faced by the immigrant learners in my study. I begin by discussing the implications of *gender diversity* for studies of SLA; I then summarize my findings on how the theoretical constructs of *social positioning* and *performativity* can be useful for elucidating learners' agency in confronting gendered constraints. While there is scant evidence in my data of learners actively *reconstructing* their identities in a new language, this does not mean their identities were static. Rather, they were finding ways to recontextualize, reinterpret and to some extent translate L1 discursive practices into a new multilingual context, with their past educational trajectories continuing to influence their efforts to acquire a second language.

SLA and gender diversity

Language development is mediated by identities that are, as cultural theorist Stuart Hall argues, historically specific, not fixed, and always hybrid (Chen, 1996). Although this book is not really a study of SLA, it does explore the complexity of the contexts in which language acquisition occurs. This research thus fills in spaces left by previous SLA investigations that have had little to say about learners' identities, their past and

present lives outside the classroom, or their larger contexts of learning. As Rampton writes (cited in Firth & Wagner, 1997: 293), SLA theorists have traditionally 'remain(ed) restrictively preoccupied with the space between the speaker and his grammar, rather than with the relationship between speakers and the world around them'.

SLA is a discipline that is becoming increasingly diverse, through connections to the related fields of critical applied linguistics and language socialization, as Rampton's own work (e.g. Rampton, 1995) illustrates. Nevertheless, influential SLA researcher Michael Long was not inaccurate in characterizing the discipline as follows: '(M)ost SLA researchers are … endeavoring to understand a mental process and a changing representation of the L2, or interlanguage grammar' (Long, 1997: 319). From this perspective, when an immigrant mother says to her ESL teacher, 'My other son? No, he don't say nothing to me. But my daughter she angry. "Mom, why not you speak English?"'(see Chapter 5), what is of most interest is the learner's non-target-like syntax, perhaps especially her use of negatives, which are beginning to evolve away from no+ verb (e.g. 'you no speak English') but are still nowhere near 'native-like' (Schumann, 1978). Her errors in English index the state of her interlanguage (IL), the mental grammar she has internalized of her second language, while her relationship with her children is a 'social and affective variable', which, according to Long should be 'relatively minor in its impact (on her IL)' (Long, 1997: 319).

In examining the acquisition of target language morphosyntax, SLA researchers over the years have found that learners tend to acquire structures in the same order – but not at the same rate or with the same eventual attainment (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). It is in these areas where the circumstances of learners' lives seem to make a crucial difference (Dietrich *et al.*, 1995) – including opportunities for interaction with people who are proficient in the target language. When gender has been factored in as a variable, findings have been inconsistent (Ehrlich, 1997): women in general do not seem to acquire English negatives, for example, any faster than men in general. This can be explained, to some extent, by seeing gender as a sociocultural construct whose meaning varies from one community to another. As Cameron explains (2005), recent research has emphasized gender *diversity* along with the importance of local context and community practices.

The concept of gender diversity, according to Cameron (2005), is at the heart of the paradigm shift in language and gender studies over the last two decades, as researchers have turned from looking for global differences between 'men' and 'women' to examining the gendered linguistic

practices of local communities (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992, 2003). Community is a word often hard to define, and I cannot claim that my research participants belonged to one community, even though they all studied English at the CEC, lived within several miles of the site, and spoke the same first language. They did not all know each other, and did not necessarily have mutual acquaintances. For most participants, the primary group of people with whom they interacted regularly was an extended family social network. These networks were made up of immigrants from their homelands living in the local area – siblings, uncles, cousins and sisters-in-law. Brenda and Raquel were clearly part of the same extended family network, and Trini's and Laura's communities were in close contact. Other than this, participants only saw each other at the CEC, and did not necessarily talk to each other directly while studying there.

Nevertheless, the multiple communities to which participants belonged shared many gendered practices, discourses and ideologies, all of which had the potential to affect language learning. Though some details of these varied among individuals, there was considerable commonality in participants' emphasis on the discourse of *family unity* (see Chapter 6). As Raquel said, in explaining her family's support for its 'little black sheep', her Sandinista uncle: 'My family is very united, especially in hard times' (see Chapter 6). When I asked Fabiana what she had learned from her mother while growing up, she replied:

> That family comes first (*la familia es lo primero*), no? That is the most important thing. Family comes first, and if you have the opportunity to advance economically, well, you're going to … but always without neglecting your children, no? (Interview, 11/20/02)

It is important to note that in voicing the discourse of *family unity*, Fabiana found it necessary to invoke gendered responsibilities. She went on to explain that even though she and her husband needed the money, she did not feel that she could put her two-year-old in daycare and go to work. These kinds of responsibilities were taken very seriously by everyone I interviewed. When Brenda got married and pregnant in high school, the childcare responsibilities fell on her and her mother, not on her husband. Raquel left school after eighth grade in order to take care of her elderly grandparents. Being male, Jorge felt a different set of responsibilities, but they were equally demanding: since he was in high school, he had to work and earn money to help support first his mother and eventually his wife and son. The fact that the women in his family also worked did not allow him to neglect this responsibility in order to pursue educational opportunities.

Despite these commonalities, however, I found perhaps even more gender diversity in language learning than Cameron or Ehrlich would have predicted. Though I saw little variation in community practices and ideologies, women had different involvements with the English language. Trini and Laura had similar rural Mexican backgrounds, the same level of education (sixth grade), children the same age, husbands employed full time in working-class jobs, and besides were close friends. Nevertheless, Laura had begun picking up English literacy through 'devoting herself' to her daughter, at her husband's request, an enterprise that had come to include reading to her daughter in English – whereas Trini had acquired spoken English through talking to co-workers after overcoming her husband's (and father's) stiff resistance to her working outside the home.

I found considerable diversity in gendered involvements with English even within one household. When Brenda arrived in California in the fall of 2001, she and her sister-in-law Raquel started taking English classes together at the same beginning level even though Raquel had been in California since the early 1990s. Within a year, Brenda had considerably surpassed Raquel's level of English by studying in the afternoons before going on to her night-time janitorial job – while Raquel concentrated on housework, childcare and Spanish-language Bible study. Moreover, Camila's Chapter 3 narrative about watching television illustrates how one woman's relationship to English can change dramatically even as other details of her social context remain the same (for an alternative interpretation of Camila's television narrative, see Kramsch, 2009). Learners' connections with family members, friends and co-workers were crucial in facilitating their language learning – as was the agency they could exert in taking advantage of language learning resources while overcoming gendered constraints.

Social positioning and performativity

In exploring learners' agency in regards to gendered constraints and resources, I found the theoretical constructs of *social positioning* (Davies & Harré, 1990) and *performativity* (Butler, 1999) to be particularly useful. Performativity invites attention to the ways that gendered identities are constructed through recurring actions that individuals carry out, moment after moment, day after day, year after year. In my research participants' families (and in my own family), maternal identities were typically brought into being through historically specific practices, such as reading children stories, checking their homework, pouring them glasses of juice – and also by telling stories to other women about one's experiences caring for children, as in Camila's and Trini's Chapter 3 narratives. Paternal

identities could be constructed the same way, but I did not encounter such performances of fatherhood during my research. However, maternal identities can potentially change moment by moment, day by day, as women vary their performances (Blackburn, 2002–2003) – by deciding to put their toddler in the babysitting room at the CEC, for example, as Fabiana had done. As described in Chapter 3, when Camila told me her story about the last time she watched TV in Spanish, she was performing a particular maternal identity, that of an immigrant mother concerned about urban dangers, while at the same time recounting a linguistic turning point (Bruner, 1994) in her gendered performances. Laura's Chapter 6 narrative performed and thus effected an identity as a traditional 'good woman' – who was at the same time open-minded about alternative gendered identities.

Social positioning is a similar concept in many ways, as it invites attention to how identities are actively constructed. However, in comparison to performativity, social positioning puts more emphasis on interactions with other people. In this way, it focuses not only on how people are actively positioning themselves (reflexive positioning) but also on how they are being interactively positioned by others (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Davies & Harré, 1990). Because of this focus on interaction, this theory is particularly useful for analyzing classroom discourse. When Fabiana in Chapter 5 told her teacher, 'I can do buy/sell chemical products', it's a bit of a stretch to say she was *performing* a career woman identity, but she was clearly trying to position herself as a (former) businesswoman in an activity that had a tendency to position all of the female students at the CEC as homemakers and English learners.

Though performativity and social positioning focus on the discursive moment, a language socialization perspective recognizes the ways that long-term processes of L2 development go hand in hand with identity development (Duff, 2002; Gordon, 2004; Watson-Gegeo, 2004; Watson-Gegeo & Nielson, 2003). Learners construct second-language voices (Ehrlich, 1997; Vitanova, 2005) through participating in second-language discursive practices, while the ways they are positioned in those practices affect the second-language identities and voices they can construct (see Chapter 5). When they are positioned in gendered ways, these positionings have the tendency to constrain their future L2 gendered performances. Although long-term developmental processes are comparatively difficult to observe, I found numerous examples of how social positioning interacted with gendered performances and language learning in ways likely to have ongoing consequences for language socialization. An English learner and former businesswoman like Fabiana is going to have a difficult time

performing *career woman* in her second language if the larger English-speaking society consistently positions Latina immigrants as *domestic help* …

The recontextualization of discursive practices

Thus, the interaction between Fabiana and her teacher analyzed in Chapter 5 indexes the unfortunate fact that English learners are often positioned in educational settings in the same way that they are in the larger society – as lacking any valuable prior experience, whether academic or vocational. McKay and Wong describe one such teacher as follows:

> (He) rejected as irrelevant any knowledge the immigrant students might have brought with them (including native-language literacy and school experiences) that did not fit into his system. Although he did allow the use of bilingual dictionaries, he made no effort to find out about his students' writing proficiency in Chinese. In such a framework, the students came across as rather ignorant and pitiful. (McKay & Wong, 1996: 590)

This is the type of approach that has been critiqued in adult literacy work by Auerbach (1989, 1995) and Taylor (1997) for focusing on learners' 'deficits' and devaluing their strengths. Educators who discount the discursive resources that students bring with them cannot use those resources to foster new learning. Indeed, McKay and Wong make a strong point that the teacher described above could have better assisted his students in developing their writing abilities in English had he drawn on their Chinese literacies. While rhetorical conventions may vary between languages, L2 writers can often build upon the skills in organization and content that they have already acquired in their first languages. Even unschooled adults do not arrive as 'blank slates' but bring with them past experiences of learning and participation in discursive practices.

In conducting ethnographic research, it is comparatively easy to see how immigrants are positioned in the classroom and larger society, and to speculate on how such positioning might contribute to longer term processes of language socialization. However, it is perhaps even more important for researchers and especially educators to understand the practices, perspectives, skills and ideologies that learners bring with them. In contrast to the above teacher's deficit perspective on his students (McKay & Wong, 1996), Dyson (2001) advocates building on learners' multiple discursive resources. This process is conceptualized in her 2001 article on intertextuality and literacy development, which describes how two little

girls, African–American first graders, produced a brief written and illustrated text on a science fact: 'the earth orbits the sun'. Drawing a picture of space led them first to speculate on the whereabouts of their ancestors who had gone to heaven and second to draw space robots who morph into hiphop singers: in the production of one brief text, these children had drawn on resources from school, church and popular culture. Dyson refers to this 'process of differentiation and translation' as 'recontextualization' (Dyson, 2001: 15).

Examining similar recontextualizations of discursive resources in foreign-language pedagogy, Risager reminds us that these are 'not necessarily bound to any one language' (Risager, 2007: 174). Thus, in multilingual settings, she argues that intertextuality must be seen as 'double', with 'every communicative event … a confluence of two flows: a linguistic flow in a specific language, and a discursive flow within a specific topic area' (Risager, 2007). At the same time, Risager stresses the personal connections that human beings make to particular discursive practices in the process of identity development:

> (Although) linguistic … or discursive practice can be separated from its cultural content and via migration be brought to another, a human being's linguistic … and discursive resources cannot be separated from his or her life context … People do not migrate away from themselves. (Risager, 2007: 176)

Rather, in leaving their homelands and crossing international borders in search of better opportunities, immigrants *recontextualize* linguistic and discursive practices.

However, immigrants' recontextualization of discursive resources has rarely been a focus of language and literacy research. When Gee wrote that 'language and literacy are … elements in multiple and socioculturally diverse 'ways of being in the world' (Discourses) … which are meaningless if taken out of those forms of life' (Gee, 1996: 122), he was explaining a basic tenet of literacy theory, the importance of social context (cf. Street, 1984, 2000) – which SLA theory would do well to take into account. However, what Gee does not consider here is immigrants' personal experience with being 'taken out of (their previous) forms of life'. Immigrants bring with them languages, discourses and literacies that generally retain some meaning for them, but which may be *seen* as irrelevant by citizens of their new nations, including language teachers and researchers. Insofar as immigrants' investments in the cultural and discursive resources they bring with them are recognized at all, these investments are generally offered as evidence of their attachment to their first language and home culture.

Thus connections between immigrants' discursive resources and their processes of cultural adaptation, including language learning, have been little considered.

It is true that my participants seemed to have little interest in assimilating into mainstream Anglo culture, let alone attempting to 'become a native' of that culture (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 170), and I found little of evidence of identities reconstructed through acquiring English in the way that Pavlenko and Lantolf describe in fully proficient bilingual and bicultural individuals. While participants were clearly recontextualizing literacy practices from previous schooling experiences, and using these to make sense of their own ESL studies and their children's homework (see Chapter 4), most remained at early stages of L2 learning, and found it difficult to express themselves (*expresarse*) in English. Spanish was still the language of emotion, affection and storytelling, although a few women had managed to develop friendships in English, like Trini's with her Asian co-worker. Some were beginning to use English for classroom joking, but mostly it was a language for conducting business. There are very few examples in my data of what Lin (1999) calls 'creative discursive agency' in English. As an observer listening to participants in both languages, I did not notice any particular difference between their English selves and their Spanish selves, except that what they could do in English was more limited. The life-history narratives told to me by study participants do not suggest that tellers had to 're-invent' themselves in English.

A possible exception to this assertion is Jorge, for whom English study was essential in reconstructing *technical* masculinity following a workplace accident (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). Camila's case is even more complex. Her English was fluent and expressive, if not entirely grammatical, and she used it with confidence. Although she displayed no desire to 'become a native of another language and culture' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 170), I noticed a striking contrast between the strong, confident, cheerful persona that she projected in both Spanish and English in the classroom, and the anxious, unhappy, threatened and victimized woman who appeared in the Spanish-language narratives she told me in her home. A close reading of language learning autobiographies (e.g. Hoffman, 1989) might suggest that she is less integrated than the other participants because her English has advanced to the point where she is in a 'phase of loss' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 163) or 'the unraveling of the self' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 167). Her powerful classroom voice (see Chapter 5) seemed to co-exist with earlier voices constructed through experiences of intimidation, humiliation and alienation (see Chapter 3). Her process of 'self-translation' undoubtedly continues, and will perhaps be 'never-ending' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 170).

In any case, participants' lack of interest in joining Anglo society does not mean that they had 'settle(d) in communities in which they (could) continue to live, as closely as possible, the lives they led in their native countries in order to follow their own customs and traditions' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 170). All the women were maintaining the Spanish language at home, along with many important values, and some traditions and customs. However, coming to California had been a tremendous life change, which most of the women saw as basically positive, for reasons that went beyond the obvious economic ones, but that had a lot to do with increased individual autonomy, spatial mobility and possibilities for personal development (cf. Hellman, 2007; Hirsch, 2003). No one, least of all Trini (see Chapter 3), was attempting to replicate in urban North America the life of a Mexican village, with its stricter gender ideologies and higher degree of community surveillance. Contrary to Pavlenko and Lantolf's contention, 'the negotiation of new meanings and the construction of new subjectivities' was in fact quite relevant 'to (their) personal agenda(s)' (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000: 170). For many, emigration had led to the construction of new subjectivities – in Spanish. Raquel, for example, was quite definite that her conversion to the Baptist faith (see Chapter 4) would have been impossible had she remained in the bosom of her Catholic family in Nicaragua.

Nevertheless, much of this identity work took place through the recontextualization of the discourse I call *family unity* (see Chapter 6). Although there was considerable disagreement, negotiation and even conflict in participants' extended families, they used this discourse of *family unity* to portray their families as ultimately strong and supportive. They also employed this discourse to positively evaluate the (possibly questionable) actions of themselves or other family members, if these could be seen as contributing to the good of the family as a whole. In this way, Trini emphasized the value *to her family* of her own decision to work and earn money over the objections of her husband – thus enabling the purchase of their home in Kingston, and giving her English conversation skills that helped her to participate in her children's education. Trini had recontextualized this discourse as part of her ongoing negotiations with her extended family about the extent to which they would all maintain traditional practices and ideologies. While Valdés (1996) emphasizes the way values of family unity are connected to rigid ideas of *respeto* and family hierarchy, Trini (and other young Latina women) are instead relating *family unity* to a discourse of *advancement*, in which working, or immigrating, or learning English, or getting an education, can be seen as a way for the entire family to salir adelante (*get ahead*) (Hellman, 2007).

This connection between *family unity* and *advancement* is not entirely new: Laura used similar terms to describe the reaction of the people in her

village to her mother's food-vending business: even though 'they weren't very accustomed to women working outside the home', they saw Laura's mother as a *luchista* (one who struggles), who 'has gotten ahead and known how to bring the whole family along (*ha salido adelante y ha sabido llevarnos a todos*)' (Interview, 11/15/02). *Luchista* is a competing model of femininity that existed in rural Mexico, but is perhaps gaining strength in transnational families (cf. Hirsch, 2003). Part of the strength of this model lies in the fact that being a *luchista* is quite compatible with the discourse of *family unity*. Moreover, the use of common discourses to evaluate experiences before and after immigration helps to establish coherence and continuity as immigrants actively reconstruct a sense of self in a new environment (Vitanova, 2005) – even when both the discourses and the selves are undergoing renegotiations in the aftermath of emigration.

Although all my data on these discourses are in Spanish, I find it very easy to translate them into English, as Risager contends (2007). Fabiana's contention that 'family comes first' is a not uncommon sentiment in English, while 'getting ahead' is a stereotypical preoccupation in the 'land of opportunity' that the United States represents in the global imagination. Nevertheless, discourses can become associated with particular languages. In Schecter and Bayley's (2002) account of a young woman's bilingual trajectory, she associated Spanish with traditional gender discourses that would keep her in the home and subservient to her husband. Therefore, when she divorced her husband, she began speaking to her son in English. She switched back to mostly Spanish when her son was a teenager, concerned that he was losing all ties to Latino culture – but continued to use English for topics like safe sex that she felt uncomfortable discussing in the language of her parents. I think it is no accident that students were speaking English the one time in Kerrie's class when they commandeered a space to say negative things about their relatives, employing a discourse that could be called *the dysfunctional family* (see Chapter 5). This was a competing discourse that was beginning to claim space in the Kingston Latino communities alongside of *family unity* – but was unlikely to win out as long as immigrants remained dependent on extended family social networks for economic and cultural survival (see Chapter 4).

Trajectories of learning

In the same way that Schecter and Bayley (2002) described one woman's changing linguistic practices in Spanish and English as a *trajectory*, this can be a useful metaphor for describing connections between second-language learning and gendered identity development. Although all metaphors

necessarily simplify complex lived realities, they do so by focusing on key parts of those realities. A trajectory perspective emphasizes the resources adult learners bring to educational endeavors, including the discourses they use to make sense of new experiences. The investments that drive language learning (Norton, 2000) arise from learners' personal histories, often in response to investments of parents or other relatives. Serafina, for example, drew on her Quiché-speaking father's adult experience of learning to read in Spanish to inspire her own study of English (see Chapter 4), and several times quoted him saying 'it's never too late to learn'. In this way, her investments in education built on his, and her trajectory connected literacy learning in a Guatemalan village to ESL classrooms in California.

Because the trajectory metaphor connects learners' experiences in successive times and places, it puts stress on the fact that learners' investments must always be lived out in concrete historical circumstances. While all learners bring discursive resources with them into new contexts of learning, the constraints inherent in those contexts interact with the available resources to shape the amount and kind of learning that can take place. Serafina's personal literacy trajectory began in an historical context of oppression, when as a Quiché-speaking first grader she faced an 'angry' Spanish-dominant teacher (see Chapter 4). The teacher's strictness and Serafina's 'slowness in writing' were partly idiosyncratic to these two individuals, but also rooted in 500 years of colonial relationships between Serafina's community and that of her teacher – as was the eventual confrontation with the Guatemalan military over land confiscation that drove Serafina to California. Once in the San Francisco Bay Area, her need to learn English was also historically driven. Situated first as an illegal immigrant, and later as a legal-refugee single mother, Serafina faced such historical phenomena as insecure low-wage employment, welfare reform and English-only preschools, which cumulatively made learning English both absolutely necessary and extremely difficult. Caught in this (gendered) historical bind, Serafina dropped in and out of the CEC as her circumstances dictated, studying English on her own with books and cassette tapes when her four-year-old son was sleeping. She read out loud to him mostly in English, though she did not know how to pronounce most of the words, because those were the books she had available; she did not teach him Quiché Maya, saying '¿con quién va hablar? (*who is he going to talk to?*)'. However, when she became concerned that he was losing Spanish faster than she was learning English, she sent him to her sister in Guatemala City.

A study of Serafina's morphosyntactic development over the months of my study would find little to report (as in Schumann's famous 1978

investigation into Costa Rican immigrant Alberto's stalled acquisition of English negation). Nevertheless, her complicated educational trajectory across multiple languages, cultures and literacies is not uncommon among adult immigrants in the United States, none of whom acquire English in SLA laboratory settings where such complexities can be factored out. Using the metaphor of *trajectory* allows us to see the continuity in Serafina's efforts to acquire second languages and literacies over her lifetime, despite the constraints she faced. It is also possible to say that Serafina had 'a socially and historically constructed' *investment* in learning (Norton Peirce, 1995a: 17), but the trajectory metaphor emphasizes how these investments are renegotiated as social and historical circumstances change.

Indeed, the trajectory metaphor emphasizes the dialectical connections between continuity and change across a number of theoretical constructs and possible contexts of second-language research. If a woman's choices to participate in particular discursive practices stem from her 'history as a subjective being, that is, the history of one who has been in multiple positions and engaged in different forms of discourse' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 48), we can envision trajectory as a way to represent the connections between these multiple positions and different forms of discourse in her life. Trajectory also represents the way that repetitions of gendered performances 'serve not only to solidify but also to destabilize identities because there are slight variations among the previous, the current and prospective performances' (Blackburn, 2002–2003: 313). As immigrants recontextualize discursive practices and make agentive choices about the extent to which they will reconstruct themselves in a second language (Vitanova, 2005), their long-term processes of recontextualization and self-reconstruction can also be conceptualized as a trajectory.

Multicultural educators can build on what learners already know (Nieto, 2002), but only if they take time to pay attention to where learners have come from, and where they see themselves heading. These connections between past, present and future learning are what the trajectory metaphor emphasizes. With a clearer understanding of immigrants' desires to hang onto past identities while constructing new ones, educators will be better equipped to support learners as they struggle to 'expropriate (language) and force it to submit to (their) own intentions' (Bakhtin, 1981: 294).

Implications for Educational Practice

In conducting ethnographic research with eight Latin American immigrant adults at an ESL program in California in 2002–2003, it is not my

intent to generalize their experiences to all adult learners, or all second-language learners, or all Latinos. Instead, what I would emphasize is the value for educators of learning from their own students, who are likely to have different perspectives on life, learning and identity than the participants in this research. Rather than accepting my answers to the questions I have raised, educators should seek their own answers – and begin to develop their own questions. As Lyons and Laboskey write, discussing narrative research by teachers, 'The purpose is not to replicate, but rather to extend these investigations into new settings' (Lyons & Laboskey, 2002: 11) – in which the key question is 'How can we draw on (learners') knowledge and experience to inform instruction'? (Auerbach, 1989: 177). Throughout most of this section, I will be talking about fairly general ways to draw on learners' backgrounds. However, I will conclude by offering some concrete arguments from two of my research participants (Brenda and Jorge) on how a bilingual approach to second-language pedagogy would potentially build upon their previous educational experiences and connect to the discourse of *family unity*.

For the most part, classroom instructors have been left to deal with language learners' challenges and dilemmas with little help from SLA or literacy theory. They watch with pride as a learner like Brenda rises through level after level of ESL, urge her to go on to college and feel disappointed when she takes a job instead. They see learners like Serafina dig into challenging ESL activities and literacy materials, and then drop out of class suddenly for unknown reasons; they welcome these learners when they return months later, again for reasons their teachers may never know. While many of the circumstances that cause some students to progress and others to drop out are beyond educators' individual power to influence, the ESL profession can *collectively* support immigration, welfare and educational policies that have potential to make learners' dilemmas less acute. On a programmatic level, administrators can seek grant-funding to pay for childcare, and for tutoring services to serve learners with irregular work schedules.

In addition, though teachers cannot provide easy solutions to the complex societal problems confronted by many immigrants, they can at least make students' daily struggles into explicit topics for classroom reading, writing, grammar practice, vocabulary exercises and discussion activities. Language and literacy learning becomes most relevant to adult learners when they can draw connections between the classroom and their concerns and goals outside the classroom. Second-language educators inspired by the work of Paulo Freire (e.g. Auerbach, 1989, 1992; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 2004; Wallerstein, 1983) have long advocated a 'problem-posing'

approach to instruction, in which the curriculum is built from the themes learners themselves identify, integrating language practice and social critique even at beginning levels (Kumaravadivelu, 1999). In this approach, the task of teachers is not to provide solutions, but rather to facilitate discussions and other language-learning activities based on concrete representations of immigrant trajectories. As an example, Auerbach quotes a brief composition that speaks to Fabiana's dilemma: 'My name is Batheemise My country is Haiti. Before I was Businesswoman. Now I am restaurant worker' (Auerbach, 1992: 76). This is the representation by a learner of a problem she sees in her life. When such a representation is in turn 'posed' to other learners, they can be encouraged to question the way society is positioning them as immigrants and low-wage workers. In this way, employment dilemmas become a resource for language learning rather than a constraint that gets in the way.

While some family literacy programs fall back on prescriptive parenting curricula that position language learners as ignorant, unskilled and in need of guidance (for critiques, see Auerbach, 1995; Valdés, 1996), problem-posing activities provide a more empowering way to reinforce the intergenerational dimensions of L2 learning. Rather than telling learners how to raise their children, teachers can plan discussions or writing assignments on immigrant learners' investments in education and family (Norton, 2000), positioning students as experts on their own lives. When traditional gender ideologies surface in such discussions, teachers need not take these as given and unquestionable. As my research shows, even within one immigrant 'community', ideologies vary between families and individuals; they are subject to change over time. Recognizing how language learning is mediated by social positioning, ESL teachers and programs need to accept responsibility to serve learners who are constrained by gender ideologies, as well as those who are beginning to question them (often the same people!). To this end, illustrative examples of gendered discourses can be used to spark discussion on the ways that changing gendered identities support or conflict with language learning. In such discussions, learners can share stories about the lessons they have taken from their parents, the cultural traditions they would like to maintain or modify and the hopes they have for their children.

The narratives that students tell about their learning trajectories are potentially a contribution to a dialogue in which teachers and students work together to 'name the world' in order to transform it (Freire, 1999: 68). Across many cultures, narrative is a resource that people draw upon to make sense of experiences (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Educators can welcome learner narratives, not only as a form of language practice, but also as a

way for the teachers themselves to learn their students' perspectives on a variety of complex social and educational issues that have touched their lives over the years. At beginning levels of ESL, the Language Experience Approach (Auerbach, 1992) involves students dictating stories to the teacher, while at more advanced levels, class newsletters collect student narratives for wider sharing. Students are frequently asked to share stories of life experience as part of cooperative learning activities, with issues raised in narratives then ideally becoming foci for further discussions or writing projects. Such common autobiographical practices represent learning opportunities for both students and educators, as long as teachers keep in mind that recounting life histories can be painful for some learners, and that it is wise to build in ways to opt out of assignments and discussions.

Therefore, although teachers need to remember that students' classroom autobiographies are necessarily simplified, selective, partial and shaped by perceptions of appropriateness, they can also recognize that the experiences and perspectives shared by learners in classroom narratives are often precisely those things that they would like teachers to take into account in lesson and curriculum planning. By paying close attention to students' contrasting and conflicting narratives (many of which will be on gendered themes), teachers can begin to come to terms with the struggles and dilemmas which so many language learners face in their personal lives and which mediate their language learning. To quote Trini again, 'So when I began to have children, I began to try to want to learn [English] so I could teach them. So then they were little and I couldn't' (Interview, 10/25/02). Based only on learner comments that appear in Chapter 5, CEC teachers could have created activities on themes of family conflict, sexual harassment, employment discrimination and who does the housework. In any ESL class, 'there are moments already occurring … where issues of identity and power are problematized and not simply accommodated' (Harper *et al.*, 1996: 17). Teachers can help create and sustain such moments, if only through asking questions like 'why? do you agree? does this happen to anyone else?' when students bring up potentially controversial issues. Combining the telling of such personal stories with critical analysis of the social context may be a powerful space for language acquisition.

Unfortunately, however, this is not the direction that adult immigrant ESL is going in the United States. Indeed, a report for the U.S. Department of Education (Kutner *et al.*, 1996) decried the diverse goals of adult learners as complicating accountability efforts. To enforce such accountability, the 1998 Adult Education and Literacy Act mandated the use of standardized competency tests in federally funded programs (Van Duzer, 2002).

Many ESL teachers and administrators are now caught between such governmental mandates and the imperative they feel as committed professionals to be accountable to the diverse needs and goals of learners in their classrooms (for a CEC teacher's comments on standardized testing, see Chapter 1). Since students only fully engage with activities that they see as meaningful, teachers who work to impose a mandated curriculum without reference to student needs, goals and desires often find that resistance rather than learning is the end result (Canagarajah, 1999; Norton, 2000). Although a full discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this book, below I suggest some ways that educators can build upon learners' trajectories, even in programs that are in some ways based upon deficit models.

First, it should go without saying that teachers need to respect students' home language and culture, and avoid materials and activities that position them negatively. From there, teachers need to find ways to build bridges between learners' first language and literacy practices – and the language skills or competencies mandated by their funders. In order to do this, teachers need to pay attention to learners' backgrounds with education and literacy. Some teachers will be able to ask students about such resources in their own languages, while others may need to rely on bilingual aides, but most ESL teachers should be able to incorporate simple activities into their classes that allow students to report on their previous experiences with schooling, as well as ways that they or their family members have used literacy and other linguistic practices outside of school settings. Teachers can then create lessons that help students do in English what they are already doing in their first languages – and find ways to adapt these practices in the direction of program requirements. For example, given the importance to funders of the multiple-choice test genre, teachers can incorporate (low-stakes) multiple-choice reading comprehension exercises as part of students' explorations of relevant texts. Moreover, while building on students' L1 practices, teachers should not discount their capacity and desire to take on new practices that may be culturally unfamiliar to them. Laura's short composition on her hometown (see Chapter 5) is a good example of how a sense of history and tradition can be reflected within a L2 literacy practice new to the learner.

Whatever the context of teaching, my central recommendation to educators is to *pay attention to students* and their trajectories of past experience – because the connections between identity and learning are so varied, so complex and so influential. To this end, Kincheloe suggests that 'One of the quickest ways to apply teacher research to the pursuit of good teaching involves, simply, teachers listening to students' (Kincheloe, 1991: 16;

cf. Wallerstein, 1983). Actual decisions about teaching, program planning and curriculum development should be informed by listening – and by reflection. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) recommend deliberate *conversations* and *journaling* as ways to encourage this attitude of listening, an important recommendation because simply asking teachers to 'listen to students' does not ensure that they will really be able to make use of what they hear. In my observation, Kerrie and Jean had generally created in their ESL classes a 'situation where (many) students (felt) comfortable to open up' (Kincheloe, 1991: 22). However, as I sat in their classrooms, there were a number of occasions when I realized they had misunderstood or forgotten relevant comments that students had made in their hearing. When I taught adult ESL, I often felt that classroom events were going by too fast for me to understand or reflect on what was happening, so I do not mean to single out Kerrie and Jean for criticism. Rather, I want to point out the importance of *active* listening and reflective practice, as in Cochran-Smith and Lytle's recommendations.

Conversations can be short or long, formal or informal, scheduled or spontaneous. In the first place, teachers, administrators and program planners should make a point of talking to the learners whose education they are attempting to foster. I found out a lot about the CEC students just by hanging out with them at break time once or twice a week. While hanging out and conversing can be difficult across language barriers, translation can be an option, as can efforts to learn the languages in which learners are fluent. Moreover, linguistic expertise is not always necessary for self-expression. In my early years of teaching ESL, an elderly Hmong woman in my class looked at a National Geographic picture of an opium field, and said the following to me about her own life in Laos: 'Every day farmer. Every day. Hot. Baby crying' (Vang Yi, personal comment, 1986). Her words were so succinct, I memorized them on the spot, understanding better why she seemed content with her new life of making handicrafts and caring for grandchildren in a Seattle apartment. This is the kind of insight that educators can use for lesson planning or curriculum development.

Moreover, along with talking to learners, teachers need to converse with each other about what is happening in their classrooms and schools. This could involve colleagues in the same program having a cup of coffee every week, or might be easier over the phone or e-mail. For these conversations to contribute to reflective practice, they would need to be both supportive and critical, so that colleagues do not simply reinforce each other's assumptions about their students and the process of learning. Pedagogical conversations need to involve asking how teaching practice

can become more responsive to learners, given the constraints and resources inherent in the situation (Auerbach, 1992). Expert facilitation can be helpful in taking such conversations to a deeper level (Dyson, 1997), as can the practice of *journaling*. While it can be hard for teachers to find time to sit and write, even brief accounts of the incidents and insights that seem most crucial can provide meat for reflective conversations A journal entry can allow a teacher to catch hold of a key student narrative before it gets forgotten, then help to focus a conversation with colleagues on ways to help struggling learners.

This kind of reflective practice can also help educators come to terms with larger educational issues. One perennial unresolved issue that affected my research involved the appropriate use of students' native language in the classroom. All the teachers I met in Kingston, not just Jean and Kerrie, felt uncomfortable with this. None of them had come up with specific ways to encourage students to speak more English in class, but they all felt they should. Through journaling, teachers could have tracked the purposes for which students were using Spanish and English, and the outcomes of this use. Through conversations with colleagues, they could have developed common strategies for encouraging English, and policies on when to encourage and when to discourage the use of Spanish. An expert facilitator could have helped the teachers question their assumption that English-only activities were always most desirable. They might have begun to comprehend how their own identities as language learners and users were affecting their classroom practice.

Moreover, through conversations with students, teachers might have understood better why using Spanish felt so necessary to so many learners in so many circumstances. Brenda said she appreciated her teachers' English-only policy, but then immediately began mentioning times when she herself felt the need to make an exception (Interview, 9/10/02). Two weeks later, I observed her sneaking looks at her bilingual dictionary immediately after her teacher had said no dictionaries (Field notes, 9/26/02). Since all her past education had been in Spanish, such occasional uses of her first language seemed to help her build upon prior knowledge. Jorge was more definite in his views, and several times he brought up his frustration with English-only teachers:

> Only English, English, English. The teacher talks […] and you don't get involved in the class. And that makes it really hard for us to learn English. […] And many of the classes also have teachers who speak Spanish, but don't want to use it because of the simple fact that (*el simple hecho de que*) you want to learn English. […] When I went to

> Altagracia School? There was a teacher who speaks Spanish, who is Latina and speaks Spanish, but never spoke in Spanish. Everything in English, everything in English. […] We spoke Spanish asking what does that mean, what did this say. […] She didn't answer. So I think that a teacher, in order to be able to teach English, if you have a student that is asking a question in Spanish? Speak to him in Spanish a little, but at the same time speak in English. So that everyone will have confidence (*confianza*) to ask you in English. (Interview, 8/16/02)

There are in Jorge's argument here what Bakhtin would call '*dialogic overtones*' (Bakhtin, 1986: 92, italics in the original). Jorge engages with the discourse of the English-only movement; with a kind of bureaucratic discourse ('*el simple hecho de que*') that makes him sound reasonable and educated; with a pedagogical discourse about learners 'having confidence' and 'getting involved'. These discourses are in dialogue with each other within this narrative, and Jorge orchestrates them in order to participate in a more Freirian dialogue with me, whom he knows to be an English teacher. He is posing for me the problem of native-language use in the classroom, suggesting that teachers who can respond to their students' use of Spanish will foster confidence in using English.

This is perhaps the least gendered of my findings, the importance that my research participants placed on *bilingualism* – for themselves, for their children and for their teachers. *English-Only* discourse positions learners and their families as lacking language; as having no linguistic resources to draw upon; as needing to give up all that is valuable in the past in order to move into an uncertain future. In contrast, *family unity* discourse connects to a discourse of *bilingualism*, in which English learning may be required to help the family advance but Spanish maintenance is necessary to keep the family together: this can be seen in Brenda's Chapter 4 comments on her husband's nephew: 'My sister-in-law Rosa, she says that she repents of having put her son in English-Only, […] now he is a man, and he doesn't speak Spanish. … He has withdrawn from the family' (Interview, 9/10/02). The dialogue that Jorge opens here is the kind of exchange between students and educators that Arnetha Ball (1998) calls for above. As Ball would say, the meaning of Jorge's comments, and indeed of this entire book, depends on the response of the 'interested others' with whom I share it.

Notes

1. Chapter 1 draws from Menard-Warwick (2004a, 2006a).
2. Name of people and places are pseudonyms, except for Jorge at his request, or as otherwise noted.
3. All interview excerpts from CEC students were originally in Spanish unless stated otherwise. All translations are by the author. In this chapter, I am concentrating on thematic content rather than on specific discursive resources, so I am omitting the Spanish-language original texts while including key Spanish phrases. Transcription conventions appear in Appendix B.
4. Discourses may be seen as the semiotic instantiation of ideologies, which may otherwise remain unspoken.
5. I draw specifically on language socialization theory in Chapters 4 and 5.
6. Williamson (2002) admits that the name was a public relations error, but argues against the subsequent tendency of anti-globalization activists to use 'Washington Consensus' as a cover term for all neoliberal economic reforms enacted in Latin America during the 1990s.
7. I put 'Hispanic' in quotation marks because in the San Francisco Bay Area where this research was conducted, 'Latino' is a more common term in both Spanish and English.
8. I found Francis's website through a Google search using the terms 'Latino immigration'. Google lists sites in order of popularity. I find it somewhat frightening that Francis's site was in the top 10.
9. During the course of my research at the CEC, I met approximately six Vietnamese students, four Lao students, four Mien students, a Punjabi woman, a Chinese woman and a Nigerian man.
10. Bernice Brucker, not a pseudonym, died of cancer on September 20, 2002, during the time when I was conducting research at the CEC. This book is partly dedicated to her memory.
11. I had reasonably effective strategies that I used when I was working with Laotian and Vietnamese students for establishing mutual understanding even when we had no common language (e.g. mime and drawing pictures). However, I did not feel that refusing to use my common language with Ana María would have been helpful to her at this point when she was already frustrated.
12. Chapter 2 draws from Menard-Warwick (2005c, 2007b, 2008a and forthcoming).

13. Although this is somewhat beyond the scope of this theoretical discussion, a distinction could be made between *multiple* identities (distinct from each other) and *hybrid* identities (that blend into each other).
14. Chapter 3 draws from Menard-Warwick (2004b, 2006a).
15. Two out of three of my Mexican research participants (Jorge and Laura) left Mexico in 1994, although they did not mention the peso devaluation to me.
16. According to the National Research Council (2003), Latino men in the United States are 50% more likely than Latina women and 33% more likely than men of other ethnicities to suffer workplace injuries, with foreign-born Latinos, like Jorge, at highest risk.
17. Chapter 4 draws from Menard-Warwick (2005a, 2007a).
18. ESL compositions in this book are used by permission of the students' who authored them.
19. Zur (1998) and Bayard de Volo (2001) both conducted ethnographic studies on organizations of women who had lost family members to wartime violence. Interestingly, the organization in Zur's Guatemalan study was defined as a group of *widows* (even though many had also lost children), whereas the organization in Bayard de Volo's Nicaraguan study was defined as a group of *mothers who had lost children* (even though many were also widows).
20. In the late 1990s, at the time of Serafina's successful asylum application, only 10% of Guatemalan applicants in the United States were granted refugee status (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 1999), but this was up from 2% in the 1980s when the U.S. government was backing the Guatemalan military during the worst years of the violence (Gzesh, 2006).
21. Serafina is the only one of my research participants with whom I have stayed in touch through sporadic phone calls. From these brief, informal conversations, I know that Mateo spent approximately a year in Guatemala, re-learning Spanish, and also picking up the rudiments of Quiché. When he returned in 2004, Serafina got him into a bilingual elementary school in San Francisco, where she was once again working in home healthcare. However, these developments, while certainly encouraging, are outside the scope of this current research, since I did not interview her formally after December 2002.
22. This information is from the San Francisco Chronicle. I am not giving specific article references in order to preserve my pseudonym for the city and the school district.
23. Chapter 5 draws from Menard-Warwick (2004a, 2006b, 2008a).
24. After a new teacher was hired for the CEC's afternoon class in summer 2002, students from that class began migrating into Jean's morning class, complaining that the new teacher hired for the summer session talked too much and too fast about topics that were of no interest to them (Field notes, 7/12/02). A different teacher was hired for fall, but the complaints continued, and Jean's class ballooned in size to close to 40 attendees as the afternoon class fell to three students (Field notes, 10/7/02). It was not until this second new teacher was replaced that the afternoon class began to recover its former popularity (Field notes, 1/29/03).
25. Interview excerpts in this chapter are not as finely transcribed as classroom observation excerpts because I am primarily concentrating on the thematic content of the interviews.

26. Although I did not interview Tomasa, she told me during a classroom conversation that she had worked as a secretary in Guatemala and as a housekeeper in California. She was attending the CEC while recovering from a workplace knee injury, and was hoping to get back into secretarial work (Field notes, 9/24/02).
27. Katz (1999) points out problems that arose in a vocational ESL program when teachers tried to impose a feminist agenda on students with other concerns.
28. Chapter 6 draws from Menard-Warwick (2005b, 2007b).
29. Raquel was not certain of the exact nature of her father's offense, but thought it involved allowing the *contras* to hide papers on his land.
30. The Sandinista leadership included a sizeable minority of women, some of whom were avowed feminists (Babb, 2001), but the most powerful and visible positions were held by men. Some women served in the military; this was valued patriotic behavior, but young women were not encouraged or indeed required to take part in military service in the way that young men were.
31. Defining stretches of talk as marked/unmarked by a particular emotional tone is an everyday interpretive exercise within human interaction. However, as some studies have shown (e.g. Pavlenko, 2002), individuals and cultural groups may disagree on the emotional tone conveyed in a particular instance. Thus, my interpretation that Clarita's words 'sí, y qué (*yes, so what*)' were voiced by Laura in a 'serious tone' should be seen as arguable. Nevertheless, if I do not offer my interpretation of the emotional tone of this utterance, readers will be tempted to read a *defiant* tone into the words, which (in my repeated listening to the audiotape) is unwarranted. A linguistic analysis of the suprasegmental features of particular emotional tones is beyond the scope of this book.
32. This is an interesting slip of the tongue, whereby Laura almost inserts her husband's name, Ramón, in this remark addressed to her father, suggesting a certain identification between these two men.
33. These ideologies do not tend to be stated explicitly and must be inferred from the stories themselves, from the broader ethnographic context of my study, and from the published literature on gender relations in Latin America.
34. Chapter 7 draws upon Menard-Warwick (2004a, 2005a, 2006b, 2008a).
35. See Chapter 1. Pilar also appears in Chapter 5, arguing with Camila over whether factory workers, maids or security guards experience more boredom on the job.
36. As discussed in Chapter 4, this term includes both academic schooling and moral guidance.

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Appendix A

Focal Participants' Demographics (At the Time of the Interviews)

Pseudonym	*Level*	*Country of origin*	*Age*	*Years of schooling*	*Years in United States*	*Occupation in homeland*	*Current occupation*	*Ages of children*
Brenda	B to I[a]	Nicaragua	24	12	1	Retail	Janitor	6
Jorge	I	Mexico – indigenous	27	12	8	Student	Student (disabled)	2
Raquel	B to I	Nicaragua	30	8	8	Homemaker	Homemaker	8, 3
Camila	I	El Salvador	36	13	14	Retail	Homemaker	11, 7
Fabiana	B to I	Peru	32	14	1	Import business	Homemaker	2
Serafina	B	Guatemala – indigenous	44	3	7	Weaver	Factory worker	4
Laura	B	Mexico	31	6	7	Food vendor	Homemaker	5
Trini	B	Mexico	34	6	15	Farm-worker	Fast-food cook	5, 3

[a]B = Beginning, I = intermediate, B to I = changed from a beginning to an intermediate class during the course of the research.

Appendix B

Discourse Transcription Conventions

...	Untimed pause (less than one second)
(1.0)	Timed pause
:	Syllable elongation
=	Latching
↑	Rising pitch on preceding syllable or word
↓	Falling pitch on preceding syllable or word
→	Markedly level 'continuing' pitch
∧	Markedly high pitch on following syllable or word
∨	Markedly low pitch on following syllable or word
CAPS	Loud speech
°speech°	Quiet speech
>speech/	Rapid speech
<speech/	Slow speech
Underlining	Emphasis
H	Exaggerated aspiration
Italics	Code-switching
(*italics*)	Translation of phrase
(unclear speech)	Transcriptionist doubt

(*Continued*)

Continued

(***)	Tncomprehensible speech
(( ))	Taralinguistic behavior, e.g. laughter
{ }	Overlapping speech
[ ]	Author's explanation
[. . .]	Text omitted

Appendix C

Data Collected on Focal Participants

	Audiotaped classroom observations	*Home-literacy interviews*	*Life-history interviews*
Brenda	4	2	4
Jorge	0	0	2
Raquel	3	2	4
Camila	3	1	3
Fabiana	3	1	2
Serafina	1	3	3
Laura	3	1	1
Trini	3	2	2

Audiotaped observations ranged from 45 min to 1.5 h, averaging roughly 1 h.
Interviews ranged from 20 min to 2.5 h, averaging roughly 1.5 h.

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