

# Living in a Second Language: Self-Representation in Reported Dialogues of Latinas' Narratives of Personal Language Experiences

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*This study analyzes self-representation in narratives of personal language experiences among five Latina immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador living in Los Angeles. Unexpected events in the narratives take the discursive form of reported dialogues between Latinas and the people they interact with in daily communicative exchanges in different social settings, both private and public (home, school, hospitals, shopping malls, and nightclubs). Far from being victimized and despite their level of English proficiency (beginner to intermediate), this group of Latinas portrays themselves as intervening in discriminatory situations that jeopardize their language and ethnicity, and as restoring the moral order violated in the narratives. Self-representation in their narratives of language experiences is analyzed through the quotation formula chosen to introduce the reported dialogues together with the most significant prosodic features of the narrative components: unexpected event, response, and attempt (Ochs & Capps, 2001). The degree of discursive agency (De Fina, 2003) exemplified in these narratives shows different strategies of resistance and empowerment among this group of Latinas.*

This paper examines the role of reported speech in 28 narratives of personal language experiences reported by five Latinas<sup>1</sup> from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador living in Los Angeles as first generation immigrants. Spanish being their dominant language, these women met different communicative challenges with store cashiers, teachers, clinicians, bosses, and family members when using English, reproduced in the form of reported dialogues within the narrative structure. By quoting other's words as well as their own, they not only reported speech but they also assessed the problematic nature of their communicative challenges. As Buttny and Williams (2000) point out, "recreating others' actions through quoting their words is a way of criticizing or resisting troublesome events" (p. 113). Similarly, by bringing past events to the present moment, these women portrayed themselves and the events they told in particular ways, attributing different kinds of *agency* to the characters and events reported. Agency conveys "the degree of activity and initiative that narrators attribute to themselves as characters in particular story-worlds" (De Fina, 2003, p. 93).

The study shows that self-representation in reported dialogues of narratives of language experiences, far from revealing their victimization, portrays Latinas as intervening in discriminatory situations regarding their language and ethnicity. By *defendiéndose* ('defending themselves') (Relañó Pastor, 2001) in these situa-

tions, this group of Latinas made moral assessments of a language order<sup>2</sup> that was different from the one experienced in the host society.

### LIVING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

Spanish is the native language of 27 million people in the U.S. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). Fifty-three percent of the Californian U.S. citizen population 18 years and over who speak English less than “very well” are Spanish speakers. In Los Angeles County, this figure reaches 57%.<sup>3</sup> Although only three of the five Latinas who participated in this study were U.S. citizens, all of them considered themselves as having limited English proficiency to communicate fluently in different social settings. They arrived in California as adolescents or young adults and had been living in the U.S. between 10 and 39 years. Due to family duties and working conditions, they were not able to keep up with ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in neighborhood schools. While probably a factor in their English development, these classes may not have been essential to improving their English proficiency. Researchers agree that patterns of English proficiency and Spanish maintenance among Latino immigrants depend on generation (Hidalgo, 2001; Valdés, 1988), age of arrival (AoA), length of residence in the U.S. (Stevens, 1999; Wong Fillmore, 2000), and language beliefs and socialization practices at home (Schechter & Bayley, 2002).

This group of Latinas preferred to use Spanish to communicate with their children at home and made the effort to communicate in English in public settings (e.g. workplace, schools, stores) despite being looked down upon, discriminated against or rejected because of their heavy accents. Their lives in English as a second language were ones marked by the continuous effort to make themselves understood, *defendiéndose* (‘defending themselves’) with the array of English words and expressions they inevitably picked up from everyday communication with English speakers.

Few discursive studies have captured the everyday life of Spanish-speaker immigrants in the U.S. An exception to this trend is De Fina (2003), who explored the relationship between migration and identity in narratives of immigration experiences told by undocumented Mexicans in Langley Park, Maryland. De Fina established the link between linguistic phenomena and wider social processes such as the immigration experience. Similar to the stories of immigration analyzed by De Fina, narratives of language experiences presented in this article point to the importance of analyzing local discursive practices with regard to global immigration experiences, which include the organization of immigrants’ lives in a second language.

## REPORTED DIALOGUES IN LATINAS' NARRATIVES OF LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES

The discursive practice of quoting oneself or others is called reported speech (Voloshinov, 1973). Defined as “the reflexive capacity of language to report utterances, index and describe aspects of the speech event, and guide listeners in the proper interpretation of their utterances” (Lucy, 1993, p. 11), reported speech is always “constructed” when we report on something someone has previously said (Tannen, 1989). That is, much of what appears in discourse as dialogue, or reported speech, was never uttered by anyone else in any form. In addition, reported speech finds its natural home in the narrative structure since it is one of the main discursive devices narrators use in the telling of personal experiences. Reported speech represents the logic of past events, what happened, who said what to whom, how it was said and why. There has been controversy among researchers on the relationship between quoted utterances and the degree of “faithfulness” they have to the original utterances. Koven (2001) agrees with Tannen that speakers’ quotations are not necessarily faithful reports of the original events and therefore should be considered as “constructed,” “creative performances” of past events (p. 549).

Reported speech has also been connected to evaluation or assessment, displaying the speakers’ positioning towards the quote (Buttny, 1997; O’Connor, 1997) and therefore serving various functions such as “to dramatize a point, to give evidence for a position, or to epitomize a condition” (p. 478). Whether direct, reported, or “constructed,” the speaker “assimilates, reworks, and re-accentuates another’s words” (Bakhtin, 1981; Goffman, 1974; 1981) in the quoted world. The study of reported speech as an evaluative device in narrative structure was first introduced by Labov and Waletzky (1967). In their seminal narrative model,<sup>4</sup> they distinguished two main functions in narrative: the *referential* and the *evaluative* function. The referential function referred to the ability to match temporal sequences; the evaluative function referred to the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative, why it was told, and why it was important. Labov and Waletzky agreed on several semantic, structural, and cultural resources necessary to define evaluation. Among semantically defined evaluation, Labov and Waletzky pointed to direct statements or reported speech as forms of embedded evaluations in narrative. Evaluative devices were not only present in isolated clauses but distributed throughout the narrative structure (p. 32). Labov (1972) expanded the theory of narrative evaluation developed in Labov and Waletzky and distinguished between “external” and “internal” evaluation (p. 371). External evaluation refers to explicit evaluation at the clause level, whereas internal evaluation is realized through implicit, covert evaluative meaning of some statements.

Instead of single statements, this paper focuses on reported dialogues that took place between Latina women and the people they interacted with in private and public social domains. Reported dialogues highlighted Latina immigrants’

agency through the use of the *quotation formula* chosen to introduce the dialogue and the use of prosodic and voice quality features associated with the protagonists involved in the events.

### Variation in quotation formulas

In his comparative study of quotation formulas in Totonac, Kagan-Kalagan, and Biblical Hebrew, Longrace (1994) points out that variations in the quotation formula used in reported speech in regards to the mention/non-mention of speaker and /or addressee are indexical of the intensity of participant interaction in reported dialogues. Although the nature of the quotation itself, regarding the type of speech act that is being portrayed, is the ultimate index of the nature of reported speech, as Longrace observes, the mention of speakers and addressees in pronominal forms is clearly indexical of the intensity of interactions (p. 132). Even the position of the quotation formula, whether “preposed, postposed, or interlarded” (Longrace, p. 141), and its repetition, indexes levels of the narrator’s responsibility in the action being depicted (p. 141). In Spanish, the degree of intensity in direct quotations is related to a variety of linguistic resources Spanish speakers have access to in their conversational repertoire to account for direct reports. Cameron’s (1998) analysis of direct quotations in Spanish considers the possibilities shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Quotation Formulas (QF) in Spanish**

Direct Verb + Clitic <b>(Direct V+C)</b>	Y (And) + Noun-phrase <b>(Y+ NP)</b>	Zero quotatives <b>(–Direct V – C)</b>	Y (And) + Direct Verb – Clitic <b>(Y + Direct V-C)</b>
<b>Le dije</b> “pues la maleducada fue ella.” <b>I told her</b> “well, she was the one being rude.”	<b>Y él</b> “NO español aquí.” <b>And he</b> (goes): “NO Spanish here.”	<b>“SI eso está mal.”</b> “YES that is bad.”	<b>Y dijo</b> “¡OH! ¿vinieron de México?” <b>And he said</b> “OH! Did you come from Mexico?”

1. Direct reports involving a verb of saying and a clitic:  
→ *DECIR* (‘say/tell’) + *LE-LES* (‘him-her-them’)
2. Direct reports lacking a verb of saying and consisting of the conjunction *y* (‘and’) and a noun phrase (NP)  
→ *Y* (‘and’) + NOUN PHRASE
3. Zero quotatives<sup>5</sup>  
→ “...”

4. A fourth variation of the quotation formula commonly used among Spanish speakers but not mentioned by Cameron is the use of a direct verb without a clitic: *DECIR* ('say'/'tell') usually preceded by the conjunction *Y* ('and').<sup>6</sup>

By considering direct quotations as “demonstrations” of a person’s actions, of what someone did in saying something (Clark & Gerrig, 1990), as opposed to simple descriptions or indications of what speakers just said, the use of different direct quotation strategies in the reproduction of speech indexes different degrees of involvement, responsibility, agency, and moral positioning in this group of Latinas’ narratives of language experiences (O’Connor, 1995; Rymes, 1995). For analytical purposes, I focus on variations in the Spanish quotation formulas and analyze them according to 1. The presence/absence of *clitics*; 2. The conversational nature of the reported act; and 3. The actions being depicted.

### Prosodic devices

Research on prosody in conversational reported speech (Couper-Kuhlen, 1998) recognizes the ability of the reporting speaker to “animate” a reported figure “without necessarily composing the words which this figure is made to utter” (p. 2). That is, prosody, which includes different auditory aspects of speech such as loudness, duration, pitch, and pause (Günther, 1999) together with intonation and voice quality, allows a speaker to “animate” a reported protagonist without necessarily having to introduce the dialogue with a prefatory *he-she said /he-she told me*. For Levey (2003), a prosodic feature in reported dialogues “not only facilitates the re-enactment of a past personal drama, but also enables reporting speakers to contextualize their own attitudinal alignment towards the reported dialogue” (p. 311). In addition, the omission of quotation formulas has a stronger “dramatic effect” (Mathis & Yule, 1994, p. 67) than the one achieved with the presence of full quotation formulas. Zero quotatives contribute to the construction of speakers’ attitudes in the sense that “they become iconic representations of different aspects of an interaction” (Mathis & Yule, p. 74). Narrators can give voice to different emotions attaining a higher dramatic effect without the use of explicit quotation formulas. (See Appendix 1 for the most relevant prosodic and voice quality features found in reported dialogues in narratives of personal language experiences).

By means of prosodic devices Latina women were able to signal who participated in the reported dialogues and whose “moral stances” (Ochs, 1996; Ochs & Capps, 2001) regarding communication incidents in different social scenarios were voiced in the narrative structure. In narratives of personal language experiences, moral stances consisted of evaluative judgments that narrators displayed regarding the violation and restoration of actions, values, and behaviors related to language in the narrative world. *Stance* refers to “a display of a socially recognized point of view or attitude” (Ochs, 1993, p. 288). It includes *epistemic* (based on knowledge)

attitudes and *affective* (based on the world of emotions) attitudes about the events narrators talked about.<sup>7</sup>

According to Ochs and Capps (2001), moral stances are part of personal narratives since their main goal is “holding people accountable for their conduct” (p.105). Narrative is the prototypical home of morality since people usually tell significant events that take an “unexpected turn” and are evaluated through moral dimensions about what is good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, normal or deviant in a community of members (Ochs & Capps).

For analytic purposes I have placed emphasis on the ways in which the moral dimension of personal narratives is enacted in Latinas’ narratives of language experiences. In the following sections, I focus on the enactment of morality through the use of reported dialogues introduced by different quotation formulas in a group of 28 narratives about different language experiences. The article analyzes the logic of reported dialogues within a simplified version of Ochs and Capps’ (2001) narrative model,<sup>8</sup> and focuses on three of the seven components they propose to explain why “tellers weave together these narrative components to form more or less coherent logics of experience” (p. 173). For a personal narrative to take place, narrators must have something meaningful to tell, usually related to an *unexpected event* and to which they *respond* and *attempt* to handle in different ways. The logic of Latinas’ narratives of personal language experiences includes the following components:

1. *UNEXPECTED EVENTS*, which were described in the reported dialogues that took place between Latina women and other narrative protagonists in different social settings.
2. *RESPONSES*, which were discursively represented by emotional reactions associated with past undesirable language experiences or verbal actions in the form of quoted utterances.
3. *ATTEMPTS*, which captured Latinas’ strategies in resolving language incidents, and were frequently represented by reported statements.

These three components reflect three aspects of the Latina experience in the U.S. First, unexpected events in the form of reported dialogues tell us about daily communicative challenges of first generation Latinas in the U.S., who struggle to make themselves understood in different social scenarios because they do not have enough English proficiency or they may not feel fully competent to communicate. Secondly, the nature of the communicative challenge provokes responses associated with emotions (anger, frustration, helplessness) or verbal actions that show how these Latinas resist unfair, discriminatory language situations. Finally, the attempt component exemplifies these Latinas’ resolution to deal with difficult communicative challenges.<sup>9</sup>

The analysis of Latina immigrants' portrayal of past communicative events gives us a better understanding of how they presented and positioned themselves in relation to the communicative challenges of their immigrant experience. Unexpected events tell us about those challenges; responses, whether emotional or verbal, tell us about reactions associated with those challenges, and attempts tell us about the different strategies of empowerment chosen by these women to deal with problematic language experiences.

**DATA**

The data were collected using sociolinguistic interviews in Spanish. Table 2 includes the profiles of the women who participated in this study:

**Table 2: Subjects' Profiles**

NAME	AGE	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	SCHOOL-ING	YEARS IN THE US	EMPLOYMENT STATUS	A o A	CITIZEN-SHIP
Silvana	37	Guatemala	7th grade	22	Unemployed Volunteer at <i>Filos</i>	15	Citizen
Gabriela	38	Mexico	8th grade	20	Unemployed Volunteer at <i>Filos</i>	18	In process
Luisa	37	Mexico	High School	20	Unemployed Volunteer at <i>Filos</i>	17	Citizen
Ana	32	El Salvador	High School	10	Unemployed Manager's Assistant	22	No citizen
Teresa	53	Mexico	8th grade	39	Janitorial Services	14	Citizen

Three of the five Latina women I interviewed, two Mexicans and one Guatemalan, were working at the parent center of an ESL adult program at *Filos* school, located in one Los Angeles area school district. Silvana<sup>10</sup> (from Guatemala) and Luisa (from Mexico) were U.S. citizens who had recently passed the U.S. citizenship exam, whereas Gabriela (from Mexico) was in the process of becoming a citizen. Ana, from Mexico, was an ESL student taking adult English classes at *Filos* school and Teresa had been in the U.S. for 39 years and worked as a janitor in a nearby building. Four of these women were selected through personal contact with *Filos* school's principal. Silvana, Luisa, and Gabriela spent their time together working part-time at the parent center. Among their duties were assisting children in the school library, supervising first to fifth-graders at lunchtime, and helping out teachers in between class periods. They had all started ESL classes at school but had found it difficult to keep up with them due to family obligations. Ana was Luisa's good friend, to whom I was introduced during one of my visits to *Filos* school. Teresa was not connected to any of the women; I was acquainted with her personally through her workplace. After several weeks of familiarity, she agreed

to tell me her stories about her language experiences.

The interview methodology drew on Labov and Waletzky's (1967) and Labov's (1972) classic narrative analysis of eliciting stories of personal experience with open-ended questions such as "Have you ever been in a situation where ...?" The participants were prompted to talk about incidents of communication according to the following general questions:

1. *¿Le ha sido difícil la comunicación en su vida diaria dentro de su comunidad o con personas de otras comunidades étnicas?*  
Has it been difficult to communicate in everyday life either within your community or with members of other ethnic communities?
2. *¿Podría recordar algún incidente de comunicación que haya tenido?*  
Could you recall any communicative incident you have had?

There was neither a written questionnaire to be filled out nor any list of questions methodically followed during the oral interviews. By starting with broad general questions about communication and the role that language played in these Latinas' lives, the interview became a locus of ideological exchange in which they shared views and perspectives on issues related to language rights and discrimination, language tolerance, respect, and racism in everyday life. Narratives as answers to interview questions represented the ways in which this group of Latinas constructed their views on daily communication within and outside their community (Schiffrin, 1996, 1997).

I focus on a corpus of 28 narratives selected from 20 hours of audiotape data transcribed following conventions by Sacks, Jefferson, and Schegloff (1974).<sup>11</sup> They were selected based on the high frequency of reported dialogues between Latinas and the social settings described. The volume of reported dialogue data in the body of 28 narratives is indicated in Table 3:

**Table 3: Frequency of Quotation Formulas (QF)**

QF	N	%	Translation
<i>le dije</i>	<b>55</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>I told him/her</b>
<i>le digo</i>	<b>50</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>I tell him/her</b>
<i>dice</i>	44	17	he/she says
zero quotative	38	15	
<i>me dijo</i>	23	9	he/she told me
<i>me dice</i>	19	7	he/she tells me
<i>digo</i>	13	5	I say
<i>dijo</i>	14	5	he/she says
<i>dije</i>	5	2	I said
TOTAL	261	100%	

I found that most frequently, reported dialogues were clearly marked by the repetition of the quotation formula *le dije*. *Le dije* translates as either 'told her/him'

or ‘said to her/him.’ The English choice between ‘tell’ and ‘say to’ does not exist in Spanish. Spanish translation for both lexical forms is *decir*. To express that distinction, the Spanish indirect object of the reported speech, which is typically animate, is always marked by an indirect clitic: *me* (‘me/to me’); *le* (‘him/her/to him/to her’); *les* (‘them/to them’) (Wald, 1987, p. 67).

The presence of the clitic *le* has implications for the actions and characters being depicted. Searle (1969) showed that *le* is frequently used to introduce reported assertions, requests, demands, challenges and dares, and in this corpus it was often used as a response to discriminatory linguistic interactions. In contrast, *le* is hardly ever used when no direct confrontation is being described. The latter corresponds to those situations in which lack of English proficiency diminishes the power of their answer, even though, whatever the nature of the incident, this group of women ultimately managed to resist misunderstandings and abusive situations in different social settings.

Table 4 includes some examples of the use of reported dialogues according to the quotation formula, the nature of the incident being reported, and the interplay of the three narrative components: unexpected event-reponse-attempt.

**Table 4: Reported Dialogues in Narratives of Language Experiences**

UNEXPECTED EVENT	RESPONSE	ATTEMPT
<p><b>Workplace</b> Y entonces pues <b>me dijo</b> un día “I love you.”</p> <p>And then one day <b>he told me</b> “I love you.”</p>	<p>y yo <b>le dije</b> “A::h YEAH?” “Good↑ Ha ha ha.”</p> <p>and <b>I told him</b> “A::h YEAH?” “ Good↑ ha ha ha.”</p> <p>(VERBAL)</p>	<p>se quedó ha ha ha ha como sorprendido (...) eso fue una de las cosas que yo sentí la falta del idioma.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>he was ha ha ha ha like surprised (...) that was one of the things that I felt the lack of language.</p>

<p><b>Nightclub</b>          Y entonces <b>dijo</b> “OH::↑          vinieron de México.          COMO VINISTE↑          Cruzando ↑llegaste muy          mojado ↑”</p> <p><i>And then he said “OH::↑          You came from Mexico.          HOW DID YOU GET          HERE ↑Crossing↑ Did          you get here very wet↑”</i></p>	<p>Y entonces <b>mi esposo se enojó</b></p> <p>And then <b>my husband got mad</b></p> <p>(EMOTIONAL)</p>	<p>y <b>le contestó</b> “imagínate dice <u>quién</u> llegaría más mojado ↑el cruzó el río y tú el océano.”</p> <p><i>and answered to him          “imagine who got here wetter ↑He crossed the river and you the ocean.”</i></p>
<p><b>Home</b>  <b>Y me dijo</b> mi esposo cuando terminó la junta “eres una maleducada que ni siquiera le dijiste a la abogada hasta mañana.”</p> <p><i>And my husband told me when the meeting was over “you are so rude that you didn’t even say goodnight to the lawyer.”</i></p>	<p><b>Le dije</b> “pues la maleducada fue ella (.) le dije (...) yo no DIGO que no hubiera (.) hablado el inglés (...) pero si TÚ estás en la mesa directiva tenía que haber hablado español.”</p> <p><b><u>I told him</u></b> “well she was the one being rude (.) <b><u>I told him</u></b> (...) I am not SAYING she shouldn’t have spoken English (...) but if YOU are in the executive board she should have spoken Spanish.”</p> <p>(VERBAL)</p>	<p>Y algún día yo se lo voy a decir a ella un día va a llegar el día en que yo esté platicando con ella sola le voy a decir <u>qué</u> fue lo que no me gustó y que la peor humillación.</p> <p><i>And some day I am gonna tell her one day the day is gonna come when I am talking to her alone and I am gonna tell her <u>what</u> I didn’t like and that the worst humiliation.</i></p>

<p><b>School</b>  <b>Me dijo</b> “no es que no hizo una tarea.” <b>Me dijo</b> “¿cúal tarea?” <b>Le dije zero</b> “la de español.”</p> <p><i>She told me</i> “no it’s just he didn’t do his homework.”  <i>She told me</i> “what homework?” <b>I told her zero</b> “the Spanish one.”</p>	<p>y a mí me dió CORAJE  <i>and I got MAD</i></p> <p>(EMOTIONAL)</p>	<p><b>Le dije</b> “maestra ¿es que no puede fijarse en los papeles de que él no sabía español?” entonces “y sabe qué ↑” <b>le dije</b> “maestra el niño no sabe escribir ni leer el español” <b>le dije</b></p> <p><b>I told her</b> “teacher can’t you see in the records that show that he didn’t know Spanish” then “and you know what ↑” <b>I told her</b> “teacher the child doesn’t know how to write or read in Spanish” <b>I told her</b></p>
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These examples show variety in the quotation formulas used to introduce the different reported dialogues between this group of Latinas and different figures of authority in various social settings, namely, bosses, comedians, husbands, and teachers. Although reported speech usually initiated unexpected events in these narratives, the examples also show its occurrence in different moments of the retelling whether functioning as verbal responses or as attempts to solve problematic language incidents. The interplay between epistemic and affective stances is related to the quotation formulas these Latinas chose to portray in the narrative events. In general, when reported speech introduces epistemic knowledge as something that the Latinas know about, because, needless to say, they experienced and witnessed these events, the clitic *me* (‘me’) occurs with less frequency, and when it does, it triggers the repetition of the quotation formula *le dije* (‘I told her/him’). On the contrary, when reported speech introduces *affective* stances to either respond or make an attempt to resolve a problematic incident, the alternation between the clitics *me/le* (‘me, him, her’) increases considerably. As Table 3 shows, the quotation formula *Direct Verb + Clitic* is present in 56% of the cases including present and past tenses as well as the alternation of first and third personal pronouns. If we look at the correlation of *me* versus *le* with both tenses, we find a total of 21% use of *le* versus 9% use of *me* for quotation verbs in the past tense, and a total of 19% *le* versus 7% *me* in the present tense. The clitic *le* not only foregrounds quotes with stronger affective stances, but also injects direct interventions on the part of narrators. In other words, the clitic *le* conveys higher agency (De Fina, 2000, 2003) as an immediate answer to solve problematic language experiences and indexes stronger moral assessments. The degree of agency in narrative storytelling is related to the contestation of social place and moral relocations (Relaño Pastor & De Fina, forthcoming) of narrators in the social world they portray.

## ANALYSIS: REPORTING LIFE IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

Communicating in English can be more problematic in social interactions outside the Latinas' home environment (e.g. schools, workplace, hospitals, stores, and nightclubs). Urciuoli (1996) points out that more than problematic, communication is more polarized in the "outer sphere of interaction" due to greater race and class differences. Spheres are understood as "sets of relations polarized by axes of social inequality" (p. 77). Language differences are also greater outside the family and social networking of friends among these Latinas. Language differences are then "mapped" onto the least/more challenging dichotomy of spheres of interaction. Communication challenges are still present within the home environment due to the linguistic gap that exists between immigrant parents and their children (Portes & Schauffer, 1997), as well as the acceptance or rejection of Spanish and the values associated with it. However, outside their community, Latinas find greater communicative challenges when their language (Spanish or low proficiency, accented English) is racialized and classified as a marker of poverty (Zentella, 1997). The following section focuses on the resistance strategies this group of Latinas described in their narratives. Depending on the nature of the incident, they positioned themselves differently, morally assessing the incident, showing more or less resistance, and consequently feeling more or less empowered with regards to the communicative situation and the people they interacted with.

### ***Le Dije: Resistance, Empowerment, and Morality***

I focus on two narratives to illustrate the role of the quotation formula: "Le + Direct Verb" (*le dije*) as an index of resistance strategies, empowerment, and restoration of Latinas' moral order. The clitic *le* implies mentioning of the addressee to whom the reported quote is directed. The difference between the presence/absence of *le* has implications for the portrayal of the quoted world and its characters. Absence of *le* detaches narrators from the actions being reported whereas presence of *le* indicates narrators are fully involved in the action being depicted. Narrative (1) illustrates the difference of involvement between *dijo* ('he said') and *le dije* ('he told him') as introductory quotation formulas:

#### **Narrative (1)**

##### **UNEXPECTED EVENT**

- 01            y entonces dijo: "OH: ↑ vinieron de México  
 02            COMO VINISTE ↑  
 03            Cruzando ↑  
 04            llegaste muy mojado ↑"  
 05 M:        uhmm ↓

##### **RESPONSE**

- 06 T:        y entonces mi esposo se enojó

**ATTEMPT**

- 07 y le contestó “imagínate dice quién llegaría más mojado ↑  
08 el cruzó el río y tú el océano”  
09 M: Oh: ↑  
10 T: entonces le volteó el hombre  
11 y le dijo que se callara  
12 pero no le dijo ‘quiet’  
13 le dijo “SHUT UP ↑ que estoy trabajando”  
14 M: Oh My God °  
15 T: y entonces mi esposo dijo “pues me callaré cuando tú me estés  
tratando Como lo que merezco ↑ un respeto  
16 M: uhmm  
17 T: y el hombre le dijo que se callara  
18 entonces vinieron los del night club  
19 y nos dijeron si por favor podíamos desalojar el lugar  
20 M: Ohhh ↓

**Translation**

**UNEXPECTED EVENT**

- 01 And then he said “OH:: ↑ You came from Mexico  
02 HOW DID YOU GET HERE ↑  
03 Crossing ↑  
04 Did you get here very wet ↑”  
05 M: uhmm ↓

**RESPONSE**

- 06 And then my husband got mad

**ATTEMPT**

- 07 and answered him back “imagine who got here wetter ↑  
08 He crossed the river and you the ocean”  
09 M: Oh: ↑  
10 T: Then the man turned around  
11 and told him to shut up  
12 but he didn’t tell him “quiet”  
13 He told him “SHUT UP ↑ I am working”  
14 M: Oh My God °  
15 T: and then my husband said “I’ll shut up when you treat me like  
I deserve ↑ with respect  
16 M: uhmm  
17 T: and the man told him to shut up  
18 and then the nightclub people came  
19 and asked us if we could please leave the place

20 M: Ohhh ↓

In this example, the *unexpected event* is introduced without the clitic *le* (line 1). T (Teresa) describes discrimination in an incident at a nightclub in Hollywood where she took some friends from Mexico to a variety performance. An African American comedian was making jokes and laughing with the audience, who were predominantly African American. At one moment during the show, he asked the audience for a cigarette and one of Teresa's friends pulled one out. Teresa explains the joke the performer told about Mexican cigarettes, which are usually short. Although not shown in the transcript, Teresa's comment about this joke shows that it is related to Mexican people's height. Teresa then frames the comedian's joke without the clitic (*y dijo* 'and he said'). In this way, she distances herself from the action being depicted and demonstrates how the confrontation started (lines 1-4). When the joke is not welcomed by Teresa's husband, she includes the clitic to introduce her husband's response to the joke in line 7. She portrays the comedian as resisting her husband's joke in line 13, including the clitic *le* in the quotation chosen. On the contrary, the next turn of the confrontation portrays Teresa's husband as "saying" instead of "telling" something to the comedian. Teresa positions her husband as demanding self-respect (line 15) by emphasizing the verb *merezcó* ('I deserve') and using rising intonation:

15 entonces mi esposo dijo "pues me callaré cuando tú me estés tratando como lo que merezcó↑ un respeto  
**and then my husband said "I'll shut up when you treat me as I deserve↑ with respect**

In addition, the absence of the direct quotation formula in lines 2-4 is indexical of the emotional intensity of the event being reported:

02 COMO VINISTE↑  
**HOW DID YOU GET HERE↑**  
 03 Cruzando↑  
 Crossing↑  
 04 llegaste muy mojado↑  
 Did you get here very wet↑

Teresa animates the comedian's joke as offensive to her husband. When the comedian starts making the joke about her husband in lines 2-4, Teresa chooses the "freestanding" (Clark & Gerrig, 1990) or "zero quotative" (Mathis & Yule, 1994) formula to demonstrate with greater flexibility the comedian's intonation. Although Teresa is a silent protagonist in this narrative, she positions herself towards the event by portraying her husband as "doing" something about it. The different quotation formulas chosen to portray the situation in this event have implications for the

events and characters being reported. Whereas the unexpected event is introduced without the clitic *le*, distancing the narrator from the action being reported, the *attempt* component in the narrative introduces *le* to show how Teresa's husband was addressed and responded to the comedian's joke. The response is exemplified by an emotional reaction toward the event (line 6) and followed by a verbal attempt that morally restores the insult that Teresa's husband felt.

Whereas in narrative (1) there was alternation between direct quotations with and without the clitic *le*, in narrative (2) below, I analyze the implications of the repetition of the clitic *le* in the events reported. In this example, *le* functions as an empowerment device whose frequency is related to the Latinas' control of the situation and the restoration of a moral order violated by unfair language incidents.

The following narrative contrasts with the previous one in its more frequent use of the direct quotation [**Direct V + C**] (*le dije*). In the example below, the presence and continuous repetition of *me dijo* ('she told me') versus *le dije* ('I told her'), indicates a higher degree of involvement and resistance to the event compared to the previous example. In this narrative, Ana reports on an incident she had with a cashier at a nearby mall. The cashier refused to address Ana in Spanish, which angered her when she found out the cashier was able to speak Spanish. Ana reports on what she did and said to the cashier. She addresses the cashier with the personal pronoun *tú* (familiar 'you') instead of *usted* (respectful 'you'), which, although it can be disrespectful if one does not know the other person, is also commonly used implying no offense in Salvadoran and Cuban Spanish. In this example, the use of the pronoun *tú* accentuates the confrontational dynamics signaled by the repetition of the quotation formula *le dije*:

**Narrative (2)**

- 01 A: una vez le dije a una cajera...
- 02 M: ¿dónde estaba?
- 03 A: Aquí

**UNEXPECTED EVENT**

- 04 porque yo le preguntaba en español
- 05 **y me dijo** "I don't understand"

**RESPONSE**

- 06 **y le dije**
- 07 y me le quedé viendo así

**UNEXPECTED EVENT**

- 08 **y me dice** "por qué miras así↑" en español

**RESPONSE**

- 09 **y le dije** °"hablas español"°
- 10 **le dije** "por qué eres así le dije

11 y a la señora que iba delante de mí le había hecho así=  
12 también lo mismo

**ATTEMPT**

13 Yo no me quedé así callada  
14 sólo me quedé viendo  
15 **y le dije** “sí me entiendes”  
16 **le dije** “mírame a los ojos”  
17 **le dije** “háblale al manager” **le dije**  
18 “NO ↑” **me dijo** “que no sé qué que no sé cuánto”  
19 “NO” **le dije**  
20 “si te tienen en este lugar es porque dominas los dos idiomas” **le dije**  
21 y quizá lo que yo no entiendo es que estamos en un país que es el inglés  
22 ((risas))  
23 pero es que esa vez me enfureció la mujer  
24 porque esa vez le pregunte  
25 y ella me contestó en inglés  
26 que ella no sabía  
27 que no me entendía  
28 **y le dije** “SÍ me entiendes así que por favor ME hablas español” le dije así

**Translation**

01 A: once I told a cashier  
02 M: where were you?  
03 A: here

**UNEXPECTED EVENT**

04 because I asked her in Spanish  
05 and **she told me** “I don’t understand”

**RESPONSE**

06 **and I told her**  
07 and I stared at her like this

**UNEXPECTED EVENT**

08 and she tells me “why are you looking at me like that↑” in Spanish

**RESPONSE**

09 **and I told her** “You speak Spanish”  
10 **I told her** “why are you like that” **I told her**

11 and she had done like the same thing=  
 12 = to the woman ahead of me

**ATTEMPT**

13 I wasn't quiet like that  
 14 I just stared at her  
 15 **and I told her** "You do understand me"  
 16 **I told her** "Look at me"  
 17 **I told her** "Call the manager" **I told her**  
 18 "NO↑" **she told me** "and this and that"  
 19 "NO" **I told her**  
 20 "If they have you in this place (it) is because you master the two  
 languages" **I told her**  
 21 and maybe what I do not understand is that we are in a country that  
 it is the English (language)  
 22 ha ha ha ha  
 23 but that time the woman made me MAD  
 24 because I asked her  
 25 and she answered me back in English  
 26 that she did not understand  
 27 that she did not know  
 28 **and I told her** "you DO understand me so please you speak Spanish  
 TO ME" **I told her**

In this example, the direct quotation [**Direct V + C**] positions Ana as strongly resisting the cashier by means of the repetition of the clitic *le*. When the cashier does not choose to use Spanish to communicate with her, claiming she did not understand what Ana was asking her (unexpected event-line 5), there is an immediate answer (*y le dije* 'and I told her'), in line 6, which corresponds to Ana's reaction confronting the situation. The rest of the narrative is a continuous back and forth of what the cashier told Ana and what she told the cashier, linguistically marked by the repetition of the clitics *le* and *me*. However, as we can see, the clitic *le* in lines 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, and 28, is more frequently used than the clitic *me*, which only occurs in lines 8 and 18. By means of this linguistic strategy, Ana positions herself as strongly resisting the confrontation. As the narrative structure reveals, there is a response to each of the unexpected statements of the cashier. In the *attempt* component of this narrative, with the repetition of *le* (lines 15-17), Ana portrays herself with more authority than the cashier, demanding even to have the manager come to resolve the situation. Ana is demanding the right to be given service in her language if the person whom she interacts with knows it (line 28). In her attempt to handle the situation, Ana is also making the cashier aware of the communicative obstacles of non-English speakers in everyday life. Ironically, this is one of the reasons why the cashier, according to Ana, got her job (line 20).

The last lines (24-28) summarize the moral violation of the narrative world. Ana morally relocates herself in the narrative by demanding (e.g., line 28: use of *por favor* ‘please’ followed by the clitic *me*) that the cashier remedy the unfair language treatment—that is, the fact that the cashier could understand Ana and refused to provide her service in Spanish.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the role of reported dialogues in Latinas’ narratives of language experiences. It has shown how the analysis of reported dialogues illuminates the ways in which living in a second language is experienced and contested by Latina immigrants and how language dominance is contested. Despite their limited English proficiency, these Latinas depict a complex array of strategies to resist undesirable communication exchanges in different social settings. Whether as main protagonists or as silent witnesses of the reported language situation, Latinas confront and resist unexpected events related to the violation of a moral order (e.g., verbal insults toward Mexican people in narrative (1); the right to be addressed in Spanish if the addressee in the narrative event speaks it (2)). Narratives of language experiences have shown how this group of Latinas claim recognition of their communication difficulties and demand self-respect in different private and public spaces (e.g., reported dialogues at home, school, work, shops, nightclubs, and clinics). The role of reported dialogues in these narratives through the choice of different quotation formulas and prosodic devices to represent the nature of the incidents as well as the actions and reactions of narrators and protagonists toward the event have shown how Latinas position themselves as “doing” something about the difficulties they come across in daily communicative encounters. Far from depicting victimization and disempowerment, the reported dialogues analyzed in this paper have portrayed Latinas as taking the initiative against discriminatory situations regarding their language and ethnicity. By means of emotional reactions and verbal responses introduced by the clitic *le*, Latinas assert an alternative moral order based on mutual respect and acceptance of their language experiences as first generation immigrants in the United States.

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**APPENDIX 1: PROSODIC AND VOICE QUALITY FEATURES  
COMMONLY FOUND IN REPORTED DIALOGUES**

Symbol	Meaning	Example
↑	Rising intonation	<b>Gloria:</b> y dice “ Ay ↑ pero si ellos se sienten mejor hablando inglés” <b>And he says</b> “Ay ↑ <b>but if they feel better speaking English</b> ”
↓	Decreasing intonation	<b>Teresa:</b> y nos dijeron si por favor podíamos desalojar el lugar <b>May:</b> OH↓ <b>and they told us if we could leave the place</b> <b>May:</b> OH↓
CAPS	Louder talk	<b>Teresa:</b> le dijo “SHUT UP ↑ que estoy trabajando” <b>He told him</b> “SHUT UP ↑ <b>that I am working</b> ”
Underlining	Emphasis	<b>Gloria:</b> <u>Le dije</u> “NO Juan” <u>le dije</u> <b>I told him</b> “NO Juan” <b>I told him</b>
:::	Elongated sounds	<b>Teresa:</b> y entonces dijo “OH::: ↑ vinieron de México” <b>And then he said</b> “OH::: ↑ <b>you came from Mexico</b> ”
(0.3)	Silence interval	<b>Ana:</b> y me le quedé viendo así (0.2) y me dice “por qué me miras así↑” en español <b>Ana:</b> <b>and I was staring at her like (0.2) and he tells me</b> “ <b>why are you looking at me like that↑</b> ” in Spanish
(.)	Micropauses	<b>Gloria:</b> yo no digo que no hubiera (.) hablado el inglés <b>I am not saying that she should not (.) have spoken English</b>
><	Fast speech	Silvana: > “Okay ese no es mi problema” le dije < <b>Silvana:</b> <b>&gt;”Okay that is not my problem” I told her &lt;</b>
° °	Soft talk	<b>Ana:</b> y le dije “° hablas español° le dije <b>And I told him</b> ° <b>you speak Spanish° I told him</b>
(( ))	Nonverbal behavior	Silvana: y a MI ↑ ((señalándose)) me iban a poner la vacuna y al niño el chequeo <b>Silvana:</b> <b>and they were to administer the shot to ME ↑ ((pointing at herself)) and the check-up to the child</b>

**APPENDIX 2: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS (ADAPTED FROM SACKS, SCHEGLOFF, & JEFFERSON, 1974)**

↑	rising intonation
↓	falling intonation
CAPS	louder than surrounding talk
.	at the end of words marks falling intonation
,	at the end of words marks slight rising intonation
-	abrupt cutoff, stammering quality when hyphenating syllables of a word
!	animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation
> <	speech faster than normal
_____	emphasis
:::	elongated sounds
.hh	inhalations
ha ha	indicates laughter
uhm uh	shows continuing listenership
◦ ◦	soft talk
(3.3)	time elapsed in tenths of seconds
(.)	micropause
[ ]	overlapping speech
(( ))	nonverbal behavior
( )	non audible segment
=	no interval between adjacent utterances

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> I agree with Torres’s (1997) point about the problem of classifying people of Spanish-speaking origin under one umbrella term, be it as she points out, “Latino, Hispanic, or anything else, given different nationalities, as well as race differences and class issues.” I also agree with Torres on the “situational ethnic identifiers” of “Latino” or “Hispanic” when in need of a unifying term. Although women who participated in this research identified themselves according to national origin, I purposely use the term Latina to include the language experiences they all share.

<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of Mexican immigrant women’s moral reflections on language, see *Relaño Pastor* (forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup> See “Language Spoken at Home for the Citizen Population 18 Years and Over Who Speak English Less Than ‘Very Well’, for the United States, States, and Counties: 2000” (Census 2000). Compared to earlier censuses, whose language questions were about “mother tongue” (defined by census personnel as the language spoken when the person was a child) or about a select group (e.g., foreign born), Census 2000 includes data about language use, English ability, and linguistic isolation using a three-part series of questions:

A. Does this person speak a language other than English at home?  
(For those who speak another language)

B. What is this language? \_\_\_\_\_

C. How well does this person speak English? —very well, well, not well, not at all. Although these questions offer a vague definition of English proficiency based on individuals' assessments, they provide important figures about the presence of Spanish speakers in the U.S.

<sup>4</sup> See Labov (1972, p. 363) for a clausal narrative analysis, according to which the overall structure of a narrative consists of: 1. Abstract or one or two clauses summarizing the whole story; 2. Orientation or set of clauses which identify the time, place, persons, or situation; 3. Complicating action or clauses that present the sequence of events; evaluation or clauses giving the point of the story; 4. Resolution or the part following the evaluation; 5. Coda or the ending that brings the listener back to the present.

<sup>5</sup> According to Cameron (1998), the terms freestanding (Clark & Gerrig, 1990), zero quotative (Mathis & Yule, 1994), and unIntroduced dialogue (Tannen, 1989) refer to verbless direct quotes.

<sup>6</sup> Reported dialogues starting with the quotation formula (Y + Direct Verb – Clitic), whether in the present or past tense were quantified as part of the quotation formula Direct Verb+/- Clitic.

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion, see Besnier, 1990; Ochs, 1993; Ochs and Schieffelin, 1989.

<sup>8</sup> The narrative model proposed by Ochs and Capps (2001) focuses on the dimensional aspects of the narrative. For these authors, instead of thinking of a fixed Labovian narrative structure applicable to any narrative, researchers should think of narrative dimensions, which “establish a range of possibilities” having to do with the following five factors: 1. The number of interlocutors telling the narrative; 2. How tellable the account is; 3. How grounded it is in the surrounding discourse; 4. Whether it follows or not a temporal and causal organization; 5. How much of a moral stance the narrative reflects (p. 23).

<sup>9</sup> For similar results and further analysis of narrative components at the clause level, see Relaño Pastor and De Fina, forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup> All names have been anonymized.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 1 for transcription conventions.

<sup>12</sup> Authority is conveyed by the roles assigned to characters as well as by their knowledge of English as compared to the lack of English proficiency among the Latina participants.

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