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Identities at play: language preference and group membership in bilingual talk in interaction

Holly R. Cashman

Department of Languages and Literature, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-0202, USA

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Abstract

Traditionally, the sociolinguistic approach to the study of codeswitching has taken social structure as primary and viewed language practices as reflecting that structure. Cameron [Cameron, Deborah, 1990. Demythologizing sociolinguistics: why language does not reflect society. In: Joseph, J.E., Talyor, T.J. (Eds.), Ideologies of Language. Routledge, London, pp. 79–93] describes this tendency in sociolinguistics in general as the 'language-reflects-society' approach. In contrast, research in the conversation analytic (CA) tradition has argued that social structure must be demonstrated to be relevant to the participants themselves through a close, detailed examination of turns at talk in sequential context [Schegloff, Emanuel A., 1991. Reflections on talk and social structure. In: Boden, D., Zimmerman, D.H. (Eds.), Talk and Social Structure: Studies in Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis. Polity Press, Oxford, pp. 44–70; Schegloff, Emanuel A., 1997. Whose text? Whose context? Discourse and Society 8, 165–187]. In this paper I examine the relationship between social structure (social identities) and conversational structure (codeswitching, language preference) using data from bilingual talk-in-interaction. Specifically, I investigate the relationship between social categories such as ethnicity and group membership, and conversational codeswitching. The spontaneous conversation data analyzed involves twelve participants with varying ethnic and linguistic backgrounds who come together in a senior citizens' day program at a social service agency in an urban Latino community in the Midwestern United States.

Keywords: Codeswitching; Talk-in-interaction; Identity; Play; U.S. Spanish

E-mail address: Holly.Cashman@asu.edu.

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1. Introduction

Early research on codeswitching tended to link language choice/use to social structure in a rather straightforward way. Societal divisions, it was presumed, were reflected in a division of labor within the linguistic repertoires of bilingual speakers. Gumperz (1982: 65) claimed that the 'marked separation' of in-group and out-group standards was what best characterized the bilingual experience, and that this division was reflected in bilinguals' language practices. Speakers in a minority language community, he observed, chose to use the minority language/regional dialect when speaking with other members of their ethnic community, but opted for the majority language/standard variety when speaking with outsiders. He described this tendency as a division between the 'we code' (in-group) and the 'they code' (out-group), although he recognized that this model did not predict actual usage or language choice by speakers in a given situation. A type of 'metaphorical' codeswitching was posited (Blom and Gumperz, 1972) to account for codeswitching not explained by the 'we/they code' - that is, language alternation which is not a response to changes in participant constellation, topic, or setting. Metaphorical codeswitching, though, still relied heavily on the 'we/they code' dichotomy, as the metaphorical weight of the codes derived from their social meaning as in-group or out-group, prestigious or lowly, urban or rustic ways of speaking (Gumperz, 1982: 93–94).

While the 'we/they code' dichotomy is intuitively appealing, it was ultimately unable to satisfactorily account for the infinite ways speakers use language in bilingual situations (for discussions of this point cf. Sebba and Wootton, 1998; Kulick and Stroud, 1990). Subsequent empirical research and theorizing has led to a much more complex, nuanced understanding of both social structure and conversational structure (cf. Gafaranga, 2005). It has been demonstrated, for example, that often the switch itself (and the contrast it provides), rather than the direction of the switch (from minority language/regional dialect to majority language/standard or vice versa), is a conversational resource (Auer, 1984; Li, 1994; Alfonzetti, 1998). It has also been demonstrated that bilingual speakers may use the majority language to invoke a minority identity or the minority language to invoke a majority identity (Bailey, 2000; Sebba and Wootton, 1998) and that speakers may use language varieties that do not straightforwardly belong to them to do a range of identity-work, including claiming group membership (Rampton, 1995, 1999; Lo, 1999; Bucholtz, 1999) and rejecting affiliation with group members (Rampton, 1995, 1999; Cashman, 2001).

In this paper I examine the relationship between social structure and conversational structure using data from bilingual talk-in-interaction. I rely on the ethnomethodological perspective of identity, summed up by Widdicombe (1998: 191) as "something that people do which is embedded in some other social activity, and not something that they 'are'." This, inevitably, relates to the link between social structure and conversational structure, the theme of this special issue. I attempt to demonstrate, following Gafaranga (2005), how conversational structure is a type of social structure by analyzing how speakers 'do' social identities using language alternation and language preference as a resource.

2. Data and method

2.1. The data collection

The data were collected at a senior citizens' program at an urban social service agency in Southwest Detroit, Michigan, an area with a diverse Latino population (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central and South American) and an Anglo[1] population (Italian, Polish, German, Irish) as well as a significant African-American population. Approximately eight hours of spontaneous interaction was recorded using a Marantz recorder and either a table top microphone or a wireless lapel microphone (alternatively worn by two participants, Yesenia and Ednita). The fieldworker was present during the recording sessions and participated in the activities while also recording information about non-verbal activity (such as seating arrangements, gesture, and gaze, as well as game-related activities such as passing around money and placing disks on cards). In addition to participating in the recorded sessions, the fieldworker also observed play on other occasions. It is recognized that the account of non-verbal actions is unfortunately incomplete, as the researcher was unable to notice or record the subtleties of gaze and gesture as a participant observer (or even as an observer alone). However, as video-recording was not possible, the researcher was forced to rely on the audio record supplemented with observations.

The playing of *lotería* and other activities recorded were part of the normal program and not convened especially for the purpose of data collection. The participants knew each other and had been attending the program, which met three days a week, for anywhere from several months to several years. Some participants associated with each other outside of the program (e.g. Manuel and Ynez live together, and Jane and Glenda are sisters), while others did not. In addition to playing *lotería*, participants in the program ate lunch together, made arts and crafts, went on field trips, and were visited weekly by a nurse, although *lotería* was their favorite activity.

2.2. The participants

The participants in the talk-in-interaction to be examined below are all involved in some way with the senior citizens' day program. Yesenia, who was the researcher's initial contact, is the program's coordinator. As such, she plans activities, decides when to start and stop playing, and controls the 'financial' end of the game, telling players how much to contribute to the pot, deciding if a player has won, and doling out the winnings. In addition to Yesenia (and the researcher), the participants include: Ednita, who takes turns leading or 'calling' the game with Yesenia, Ynez, Manuel, Chela, Laura, Élida, Marcy, Zoila, Jane, and Glenda. An external observer might group the participants into two broad categories: Latina/o and Anglo. However, in the analysis that follows, we will examine how participants group themselves, constructing, maintaining and crossing ethnic boundaries in their linguistic and social practices.

[1] Anglo here is used in the U.S. sense of 'non-Hispanic white' (to use the U.S. Census category).

2.3. The game

The interactions that will be examined in this paper center around a game called *lotería*, which, Yesenia explained, is ''basically Mexican bingo''. To play *lotería* at the senior citizens' program, players pay a dime each for a set of three cards, each of which contains sixteen pictures arranged in a grid (four across and four down). The money paid by the players for their cards is divided evenly into two cups. The caller of the game (in this adapted version) has a large plastic jar that contains the caps of two-liter soda bottles, each with a small *lotería* picture pasted inside. The caller shakes the plastic jar to mix up the bottle caps, and then picks one, announcing the picture it contains to the players. The players then search their cards (some have as many as twelve cards) for that picture. They place a round plastic disk on every square that contains that corresponding picture. In the most common variety of the game, the player calls out ''bingo'' when he or she has achieved a line of four plastic disk-covered squares horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, although they also play a longer 'cover all' version in which the winner is the first one to have all sixteen squares of one card covered. Three winners are sought for each round. The first winner gets one cup of dimes, and second and third winners split the second cup. Most of the talk in the seniors' program centers on the game: calling pictures, claiming bingo, collecting and dividing money, noting which pictures are 'hot' (i.e. being called frequently), and noting which pictures have not been seen (i.e. have not been called during any game that day).

2.4. The analysis

I approach the conversational data described above from a conversation analytic (CA) perspective. The CA approach to language alternation, pioneered by Auer (1984) and developed in subsequent research (Li, 1994; Auer, 1998), examines conversational structure autonomously from the macro-social structure presumed to be relevant by previous analysts (Blom and Gumperz, 1972; Gumperz, 1982; Fishman et al., 1971). The CA approach to bilingual conversation examines the use of codeswitching as a resource - a contextualization cue - for the organization of on-going talk (cf. Li, 2002 for an excellent overview of CA and bilingual conversation). Gafaranga (2005) argues that conversational structure coexists with social structure in a reciprocal relationship: social structure occasions conversational structure and conversational structure constitutes and changes social structure. That is, it is through conversational structure (e.g. codeswitching and language preference) that social structure (e.g. group membership and ethnic identities) is constituted, manipulated, ascribed, contested, and accepted. Therefore, adopting a CA approach in the analysis that follows, I explore group membership and ethnic identity through a detailed analysis of talk-in-interaction, demonstrating how participants *do* 'being members of groups' rather than examining how Mexicans and Anglos talk in interaction (i.e. from an intercultural communication perspective).

3. Examples and analysis

As Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) explain, the analysis of group membership has been central to research in the CA tradition since Sacks' early lectures in the mid-1960s and

early 1970s. In this research tradition, the focus has been on how speakers 'do' group membership and social identities, not who speakers 'are'. Social identities here are achieved; they are what speakers 'bring about' in interaction rather than what analysts 'bring along' to the analysis (Auer, 1998: 261). As Day's (1998) analysis of the ascription and contestation of ethnic identity in the workplace makes clear, explicit mention of ethnic categories is not necessary in order to ascribe ethnic identities to oneself or others in conversation (cf. also Schegloff, 1997: 182). Rather, participants in talk-in-interaction use a variety of resources, sometimes quite subtly, to ascribe and resist group membership and ethnic identities.

Consider example 1:[2]

(1) ''El Mundo'': Yesenia (Y) and Ednita (E) call a game of lotería.

1	E:	*el mundo*
2	Y:	the world
3		(1.0)
4	Y:	the man with the world
5		(3.0)
6	Y:	*el mundo es el mundo con un hombre abajo (.) deteniéndolo*
7	E:	*la bola*
8	Y:	the ball

1	E:	*the world*
2	Y:	the world
3		(1.0)
4	Y:	the man with the world
5		(3.0)
6	Y:	*the world is the world with a man below (.) holding it*
7	E:	*the ball*
8	Y:	the ball

[2] Transcription conventions used in this paper include:

plain text	English original
italics	Spanish original
[text	overlapping talk
[text	
(hhh)	laughter
(1.0)	gap in talk, by seconds
text	markedly increased volume compared to surrounding talk
(text)	parenthese indicate analyst's best attempt to render inaudible talk

In this interaction, Yesenia and Ednita exhibit different language choices, resulting in several switches between Spanish and English. Ednita calls the game, shaking the jar of bottlecaps and withdrawing one, announcing the picture in Spanish, although she is bilingual. Yesenia, follows Ednita's call in turn 1 (and in 7), translating her announcement into English in turn 2 (and in 8) even though the English monolingual players had already begun placing their disks on their cards. The relevant questions here are: Why does Ednita choose to call the game in Spanish when there are three (four counting the researcher) Anglos participating in the game? Why does Yesenia translate Ednita's announcement when the Anglo players have already begun placing their disks, evidencing an understanding of the Spanish announcement? And, finally, what purpose does Yesenia's switch from English in line 4 to Spanish in line 6 serve? A traditional analysis based on the 'we/they code' dichotomy might claim that Ednita uses Spanish as a 'we code', talking to the Latino players, while Yesenia, addressing the Anglo players, uses English as a 'they code'. However, based on observation and a close analysis of this and other interactions (some of which will be examined below), I will argue that this approach does not tell us anything new about language use; moreover, a focus on social structure can obscure the details of conversational structure that speakers co-construct locally (Schegloff, 1991). I contend that through the language choices in example (1) speakers are actively 'doing' social identity, or 'talking into being' social structure (Li, 2002) by claiming group membership.

To answer the first question posed above, we need to turn to the question of language preference.[3] Auer (1984) distinguishes between discourse-related language alternation and participant-related language alternation. While discourse-related language alternation serves to organize the on-going talk (e.g. turn-taking, sequence organization, etc.), participant-related language alternation involves the juxtaposition of two language varieties in talk-in-interaction in order to communicate something to the co-participants about the speaker's or other participants' language preference (preference-related switching) or linguistic competence (competence-related switching). These categories proposed by Auer are further explored by Shin and Milroy (2000). Unlike competence-related codeswitching, preference-related codeswitching is not necessarily related to a speaker's communicative ability in the language varieties in the community's linguistic repertoire. While a speaker might prefer to speak her or his dominant language, or his or her interlocutor's dominant language, trans-episodic preference may be affected by political and ideological considerations as well. In addition, speakers may have episodically based preferences related to their interlocutor's 'roles' or age (Auer, 1984: 47). Ednita's trans-episodic language preference is for Spanish, although based on my observations she is able to speak and understand English. Whenever Ednita takes a turn at calling *lotería* (and she is the only person to do so besides Yesenia) she uses Spanish. This would indicate that, although she is competent in English, her preferred language (in this context) is Spanish. Gafaranga (2001) argues that language preference in bilingual interaction serves as a very important resource. He explains that ''in order to talk, bilingual

[3] The language preference discussed here is distinct from the use of the term preference in the CA tradition. See Bilmes (1988) for a discussion of the term preference.

speakers categorize themselves and one another either as monolingual or as bilingual and in which language(s)'' (219). In this way, language preference is a membership categorization device; it is a resource used by speakers to ascribe and accept or reject membership in groups, or 'collections of things', the negotiation of which constitutes practical social action. Ednita's preference to use Spanish categorizes her as Spanish-dominant or Spanish monolingual and serves to group her together with the other Spanish-speaking participants in the game.

Turning to the second and third questions posed above, in turn 2, Yesenia follows up Ednita's announcement with an English translation ('the world'). This turn, I would argue, serves to dis-affiliate Yesenia with the group Ednita has talked into being ('Spanish-dominant speakers' or 'monolingual speakers of Spanish'). Yesenia's use of both Spanish and English categorizes her as a member of both groups (Spanish speakers and English speakers), or as a member of one group ('senior citizens' program member') to which all the participants belong. Thus, her language choice here, and her trans-episodic preference for both Spanish and English talks into being the category 'senior citizens' program members' and her social identity as 'facilitator'. As the coordinator of the program, it is Yesenia's responsibility to maintain a different group boundary that includes all members regardless of ethnicity, language competence or language preference. This 'facilitator' identity is constructed by Yesenia in this sequence both by the language alternation described above and by her explanation in lines 4 and 6 of the relevant picture ('the world') in a more detailed way—first in English for the researcher and then in Spanish for another participant, Zoila, both inexperienced players. Her language choices in turns 4 and 6 could be described as what Auer calls an 'ascription of incompetence' (1984: 49). Just as language preference serves as a device with which speakers may categorize themselves, it also serves as a device with which speakers may categorize others, ascribing group membership. Just as Ednita categorizes herself as a Spanish-dominant or Spanish monolingual participant in turns 1 and 7, Yesenia categorizes the researcher as English-dominant or English-monolingual (turn 4) and Zoila as Spanish-dominant or Spanish-monolingual (turn 6). Such ascriptions of incompetence, as we will see in subsequent examples, are not always accepted by interactancts (cf. Day, 1998 for a discussion of resisting ascriptions of ethnic identities).

Consider example 2:

(2) *Arbor Tree*: Ednita (E), Yesenia (Y), Glenda (G), Marcy (M), and Ynez, among others, play *lotería.*

1	E:	*las jarras*
2	Y:	the arrows
3	G:	bingo
4		(1.0)
5	Y:	[what?
6	G:	[the arrows the drums the crown and the tree
7	Y:	Glenda don't start okay? but somebody has to start (0.5) that's a good bingo

8		(2.0)
9	M:	with the arrows I got the bingo too
10	Y:	okay
11	M:	the arrows? (.) the drum? (.) the:: *garza* and the *arbor*
12	Y:	*árbol*
13	M:	arbor
14	Y:	*árb[ol*
15	Yn:	*[árbol* (hhh)
16	M:	arbor tree
17	Yn:	(hhh)
18	E:	(*árbol* tree)
19	Y:	okay two for the first one go to the second one

1	E:	*the arrows*
2	Y:	the arrows
3	G:	bingo
4		(1.0)
5	Y:	[what?
6	G:	[the arrows the drums the crown and the tree
7	Y:	Glenda don't start okay? but somebody has to start (0.5) that's a good bingo
8		(2.0)
9	M:	with the arrows I got the bingo too
10	Y:	okay
11	M:	the arrows? (.) the drum? (.) the:: *stork* and the *tree*
12	Y:	*tree*
13	M:	*tree*
14	Y:	*tre[e*
15	Yn:	*[tree* (hhh)
16	M:	arbor tree
17	Yn:	(hhh)
18	E:	(*tree* tree)
19	Y:	okay two for the first one go to the second one

In this interaction, Marcy claims a bingo in turn 9. Yesenia requests that she substantiate her claim (turn 10). In turn 11, Marcy does so, reading back the pictures which make up her bingo. Rather than using the corresponding English words for the *lotería* pictures as Glenda did in turn 6, Marcy mixes two English names with two Spanish ones. The evaluation of her use of Spanish is mixed. Her use of *garza* for stork seems to completely escape notice. However, her use (and specifically her pronunciation) of *árbol*/ arbor becomes a trouble source for repair over the next several turns. First Yesenia performs an other-initiated other-repair in turn 12, but Marcy repeats the same trouble

source again in turn 13. In turn 14, Yesenia initiates a second repair attempt, and Ynez overlaps, performing an other-initiated other-repair followed by laughter. In turn 16, Marcy seems to justify her pronunciation, relating the Spanish word *árbol* to the English word *arbor*. This draws more laughter from Ynez, and a final other-initiated other-repair from Ednita. Finally, in turn 19, Yesenia introduces a shift out of the side sequence (repair) to the main sequence, away from Marcy's use/misuse of Spanish to a report on the standing of the game.

What is the consequence of language alternation in example 2? In mainstream, Anglo U.S. society, Spanish is generally held in low esteem; it is considered a relatively simple language, easy to learn, and not particularly serious (cf. Hill, 1993, 1995a, 1995b for a discussion of this point). Marcy's mixture of Spanish and English talks into being this categorization of Spanish. Marcy's use of the two languages categorizes herself as a 'user of two languages'. However, this candidate linguistic identity is swiftly rejected by her co-participants. Yesenia (in turns 12 and 14), Ynez (in turn 15) and Ednita (in turn 18) all perform repairs on a trouble source they identify in Marcy's turns 11 and 13. Here, their common use of Spanish and their collaborative repairs serve to group Yesenia, Ynez, and Ednita, bringing about a linguistic identity, 'competent speakers of Spanish' and categorize themselves as 'arbiters of Spanish usage'. In contrast, they ascribe to Marcy, 'incompetent speaker of Spanish'—in so doing, talking into being a boundary between Marcy and themselves as 'competent speakers of Spanish'. Marcy's non-membership in this group is ascribed through other-initiated, other-repair of three speakers, and by the treatment of her use of Spanish not only as a trouble source but also as a source of humor (see Ynez's laughter in turns 15 and 17).

Finally, in turn 19, Yesenia initiates a return to the main sequence from the side sequence of repair, accompanied by a switch to English. As has been demonstrated (cf. Auer, 1984, 1998; Li, 1994), language alternation can serve as a contextualization cue, a resource for sequence organization in on-going talk. But Yesenia's use of English here cannot be explained merely as discourse-related language alternation. Here she also re-orients to her 'facilitator' identity, moving away from her 'competent speaker of Spanish' identity which categorized her as a member of a group that included only some of the game's participants. In re-categorizing herself as a member of the whole group, Yesenia identifies with herself characteristics associated with a 'facilitator': neutrality, fairness, and objectivity (cf. Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998: 3–4 about characteristics and group membership).

Consider example 3:

(3) ''Muchos rustos'': Yesenia (Y), Ednita (E), and Marcy (M), among others, play *lotería*.

1	Y:	*el gallo* the rooster
2	E:	*ay ay ay ay ay ay ay*
3		(1.0)
4	E:	*tengo muchos* roosters
5	Y:	*muchos rustos*?

6	E:	(3.0)
7	Y:	*esa es una palabra nueva? rustos?* roosters
8	E:	*cómo se dice* rooster? rooster?
9	Y:	rooster
10	M:	*gallo*
11	E:	rooster
12	Y:	yeah
13	M:	yeah

1	Y:	*the rooster* the rooster
2	E:	*oh my oh my oh my oh my*
3		(1.0)
4	E:	*I have a lot of* roosters
5	Y:	*a lot of* '*rustos*'?
6	E:	(3.0)
7	Y:	*is that a new word? rustos?* roosters
8	E:	*how do you say* rooster? rooster?
9	Y:	rooster
10	M:	*rooster*
11	E:	rooster
12	Y:	yeah
13	M:	yeah

As this sequence begins, Yesenia is calling the game, announcing the pictures in both Spanish and English (turn 1). Ednita responds to Yesenia's announcement with an enthusiastic cry. Ednita's turn is followed by a gap in which none of her co-participants self-selects to take up her cry. So, in turn 4, Ednita self-selects to continue as speaker and offers an explanation of her turn 2 utterance. Rather than take up Ednita's assessment of her holdings, however, Yesenia initiates a repair on a trouble source in Ednita's turn 4. In turn 5, Yesenia exaggerates Ednita's pronunciation of the word 'rooster', integrating it phonetically into Spanish. Ednita does not orient to Yesenia's turn as a repair initiator, as turn 5 is followed by a long silence during which Ednita does not attempt to repair the trouble source identified by Yesenia. In turn 7, Yesenia continues to treat Ednita's turn 4 as a trouble source, but leaves no doubt this time that her turn is a repair initiator. In turn 8, Ednita orients to Yesenia's previous turn as a repair initiator, but rather than self-repair, she introduces a side sequence, asking Yesenia a question. While Yesenia offers a second pair part to Ednita's question, providing the 'answer', the correct pronunciation of 'rooster', Marcy orients to Ednita's question in turn 8 as a challenge and provides the translation of 'rooster' into Spanish *gallo*. In turn 11, Ednita does not take up Marcy's contribution and instead submits a new pronunciation of rooster for Yesenia's approval, which she grants in turn 12. Finally, in turn 13, Marcy self-selects and also offers her approval of Ednita's pronunciation.

As in example 2 above, in example 3 co-participants treat a discourse-related transfer[4] in one participant's talk as a trouble source. In using Spanish while repairing Ednita's pronunciation of an English word, Yesenia both ascribes bilingual proficiency to herself and ascribes a lack of competence in English to Ednita. Here Yesenia again categorizes herself as an 'arbiter of proper usage', this time of English. As Ednita and Ynez joined in in example 2, Marcy joins in here, switching to Spanish in turn 10 to simultaneously categorize herself as competent in Spanish (in contrast to Ednita's ascribed incompetence in English) and as a fellow 'arbiter of proper usage' with Yesenia. In mainstream, Anglo U.S. society, it is a widely held belief, despite sociolinguistic evidence to the contrary, that Chicanos and Latinos refuse to learn English or speak it properly (cf. Zentella, 1997 and Valdés, 1997 for a discussion of this point and its political consequences). This categorization of Chicanos and Latinos is talked into being by Yesenia in example 3, although Yesenia herself immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico at age 12 and Ednita was born in the Río Grande Valley of Texas in the U.S. In this example, 'bringing along' a received notion of social structure would obscure how Yesenia and Ednita locally construct social and linguistic identities different from each other, though they might both be referred to by an external observer as 'Mexican American'.

Ednita resists the ascription of incompetence in several ways. First, she refuses to orient to Yesenia's turn 5 as a repair initiator. Then, she challenges Yesenia in turns 8 and 11, demonstrating twice that her pronunciation is as correct as Yesenia's. Finally, she ignores Marcy's contribution in turn 10, still addressing Yesenia in turn 11. After Marcy's 'yeah' in turn 13, Ednita moves her chair, turning her back to both Yesenia and Mary. While examples 2 and 3 are very similar in that they both involve co-participants treating a discourse-related transfer in the speaker's talk as a trouble source, they are different in one important way: Ednita *is* a competent speaker of English, but Marcy is not a competent speaker of Spanish. However, they are both ascribed incompetence by their co-participants, and they both (somewhat successfully) resist that ascription. What does it mean that a native bilingual speaker such as Ednita is ascribed incompetence in English just as an English monolingual speaker such as Marcy is in Spanish? I would argue that this means that regardless of who speakers 'are' in some broader sense, the identities that they 'do' in interaction rely on the social structures that have been talked into being. In the case of the previous examples, the superiority of English and the denigration of Spanish have been talked into being. As a result, despite the fact that Ednita is a competent native bilingual speaker, she is constrained in her ability to 'bring about' this identity in the context of the senior citizens' program.

Finally, consider example 4:

(4) ''Mira. . .good?'': Ednita (E), Yesenia (Y), Marcy (M) and others.

1	E:	*la dama*
2	Y:	the lady

[4] 'Transfer' here is used in the sense described in Auer (1984: 26): ''any language alternation for a certain unit with a structurally provided point of return into the first language with that unit's completion''. In Auer's model, both transfer and code-switching are types of language alternation, with the difference that code-switching does not have a ''structurally determined. . .return into the first language.''

3	E:	*(ya) mi bingo*
4	Y:	(1.5)
5	E:	*mira*
6		(0.5)
7		*dama, pera, pino, sirena*
8	Y:	(1.0)
9	E:	good?
10	M:	yeah you're good
11	E:	ah:::

1	E:	*the lady*
2	Y:	the lady
3	E:	*already my bingo*
4	Y:	(1.5)
5	E:	*look*
6	Y:	(0.5)
7	E:	*lady, pear, pine tree, mermaid*
8	Y:	(1.0)
9	E:	good?
10	M:	yeah you're good
11	E:	ah:::

In turn 1, Ednita announces a picture, which Yesenia translates in turn 2. In turn 3, Ednita self-selects as next speaker, making a claim that she has bingo. This claim is the first turn in a four-turn sequence of two nested adjacency pairs. The first pair part claim sets up the expectation of the second pair part—certification or rejection—in the final turn. Inserted within this adjacency pair is a second adjacency pair, consisting of a request for verification and a verification (see lines 3–7 in example 2).

The normal *bingo claiming pattern* is:

A: bingo claim
B: request for verification
A: verification
B: bingo certification or rejection

While Ednita makes a bingo claim in turn 3 of example 4, Yesenia makes no request for verification in turn 4, leaving a long, attributable gap. In turn 5, Ednita self-selects as next speaker and addresses Yesenia, issuing a request/order for her to check Ednita's bingo. This request (*mira*), as it is the first pair part of an adjacency pair, serves to establish an expectation for a second pair part. But silence again follows Ednita's turn, which creates another gap attributable to Yesenia. Ednita orients to this gap, by providing in turn 7 the second pair part (verification) even though the first pair part (request for verification) is absent. Ednita's verification sets up the expectation of a certification or rejection, but it is

followed by another silence, which is again attributable to Yesenia. In turn 9, Ednita explicitly requests a certification of her bingo claim, switching to English to do so ('good?'). Instead of Yesenia, Marcy self-selects and certifies Ednita's bingo.

Unlike as in examples 2 and 3, Ednita's switch to English in turn 9 here is not treated as a trouble source by her co-participants; rather, it is an unremarkable feature of an orderly interaction (as in example 1). The switched turn is one of a series of unsuccessful attempts to engage Yesenia in a bingo claiming sequence. Ednita uses several strategies to manage the on-going interaction in the face of an uncooperative, unresponsive interlocutor: She waits for a response (turns 4 and 8), leaving a long silence; she chooses the next speaker, by addressing Yesenia directly and requesting that she look at her bingo card (turn 5); and she explicitly requests a certification of the bingo (turn 9). The last, most direct strategy is further marked by a switch to English.

In addition to the discourse-related function of Ednita's switch described above, Ednita also talks into being a new linguistic identity (as compared to example 3) as a 'competent bilingual speaker' able to use Spanish and English effectively in conversation. In this way she contests the incompetence previously ascribed to her. Through this rejection of Anglo and Mexican linguistic purism, Ednita categorizes herself as 'Chicana', bringing about a bilingual, oppositional social identity, and rejecting the social structures previously talked into being.

4. Concluding remarks

Considering language preference as a membership categorization device in the *lotería* game examined above, we see that participants 'talked into being' social structures (such as 'superiority of English', 'Spanish's lack of power and prestige'), social identities (such as 'facilitator', 'Anglo' and 'Chicana') and linguistic identities (such as 'competent bilingual', 'user of two languages'). We have seen in the data examined above that it would be a mistake to import categories such as 'Chicano/Latino' and 'Anglo', presuming group memberships that are not always there at the local level. This in-group/out-group dichotomy would obscure the complex linguistic and social identities talked into being by Yesenia, Marcy, and Ednita. Yesenia, for example, alternatively constructs competence (and expertise) in Spanish and English, aligns at different times with Anglo and Latino participants, and categorizes herself alternatively as 'participant' and 'facilitator' through language alternation, sequence organization, and repair organization. Ednita consistently rejects ascriptions of incompetence and brings about a 'competent bilingual' and 'Chicana' identity through language alternation, turn-taking organization, and repair organization. At the local level of talk-in-interaction, we can observe how the social categories that play such an important part in peoples' lives are constructed, ascribed, accepted, and rejected. In this way, language alternation in conversation may be seen as constituting and changing, not merely reflecting, social structure.

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Holly Cashman is an Assistant Professor of Spanish linguistics at Arizona State University. She received her PhD in Spanish Linguistics from the University of Michigan, 2001. Her dissertation examines bilingual language practices in a Chicano/Latino community in Detroit, Michigan. Her current research centers on Mexican and Chicano language practices in Phoenix, Arizona. Research interests include codeswitching, talk-in-interaction, and language practices in the news and entertainment media.