On the relevance and accountability of dialect: Conversation analysis and dialect contact

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The present study seeks to illustrate how the theory and method of conversation analysis (CA) can be used to begin to unpack the notion of ‘contact’ in contact linguistics research. After reviewing language and dialect contact as they are traditionally conceptualized, we describe an additional set of questions inspired by CA’s fundamental concern with relevance and accountability. It is argued that, by analyzing the structure and design of turn-by-turn talk in situations of dialect contact, we are able to investigate how co-participants themselves go about carving out the boundaries of their respective dialects, how they can link those dialects to social identities, and how those social identities can become ‘procedurally consequential’ for the design of subsequent talk between the interlocutors. It is ultimately hypothesized that relevance and accountability at the micro-interactional level may provide new insight into the moment-by-moment mechanisms that bring about the comparatively more macro-level outcomes of dialect contact (e.g. leveling, koineization, etc.) that have been previously identified in contact linguistics research.

El presente estudio pretende demostrar las maneras en que la teoría y la metodología del análisis de la conversación (AC) se pueden utilizar para empezar a profundizar el concepto de ‘contacto’ en las investigaciones de contacto lingüístico. Después de revisar algunos de los fundamentos del contacto de lenguas y de dialectos, se describe otra serie de preguntas inspiradas por el interés central de AC en la relevancia y la fundamentación (ing., accountability). Se postula que, a través del análisis de la estructura y del diseño de habla en situaciones de contacto dialectal, se puede investigar cómo es que los participantes establecen los límites de sus dialectos, cómo pueden ellos vincular dichos dialectos a identidades sociales, y cómo dichas identidades sociales entonces pueden tener influencia en el diseño del habla subsiguiente entre los interlocutores. Se argumenta que la relevancia y la fundamentación al nivel micro-interaccional pueden iluminar los mecanismos involucrados en la producción de los macro-resultados del contacto dialectal ya identificados (e.g. nivelamiento, koineización, etc.).

[Spanish]
INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistic perspectives on language and dialect contact: Spanish in the United States

Contact linguistics aims to study the outcomes that obtain when speakers of different languages or dialects share a common geographical space (Trudgill 1986; Weinreich 1953). Changes have been shown to occur at various levels of language – from phonology, to the lexicon, to morphosyntax, semantics, and pragmatics – and across countless language combinations (for a concise overview, see Sankoff 2001).

With 48.6 million speakers of Spanish nationwide, the United States is home to one of the largest Spanish-speaking populations in the world, second only to Mexico (Escobar and Potowski 2015: 2). Given that upwards of 70 percent of these individuals also speak English ‘well’ or ‘very well’ (Ryan 2013), it comes as no surprise that various language contact phenomena have been documented in numerous varieties of U.S. Spanish. Scholars have examined, for instance, morphosyntactic convergence through the simplification/loss of verbal morphological forms like the subjunctive (e.g. Lynch 1999; Silva-Corvalán 1994), the redundant use of subject pronouns (e.g. Otheguy and Zentella 2012; Raymond 2015b; Silva-Corvalán 1994), varying degrees of gender/plurality agreement (e.g. Montrul and Potowski 2007), and numerous constraints and practices related to Spanish–English code-switching (e.g. Poplack 1980; Raymond 2012b, 2015b; Zentella 1997).

Nonetheless, grouping U.S. Spanish speakers only in this way – i.e. simply as ‘speakers of Spanish’ – masks the social, cultural, and dialectal diversity that permeates this heterogeneous speech community. As in situations of language contact, contact between dialects can produce changes at various levels of the language. Taking the example of speakers of Salvadoran origin in contact with speakers of Mexican Spanish in the U.S. Southwest, at the phonological level members of the former group significantly reduce or altogether cease (i) debuccalizing /s/ in word-final and coda position, (ii) velarizing /n/ in word-final position, (iii) weakening intervocalic /y/, and (iv) adding epenthetic [y] between two vowels in hiatus, in adapting to Mexican phonological norms (Aaron and Hernández 2007; Hernández 2002, 2009; Parodi 2003, 2011; Raymond 2012a). Similarly, at the morphosyntactic level, Salvadorans in this area have been shown to accommodate in various ways to the Mexican second-person singular pronominal norm tú (and its corresponding verbal morphology) in place of Salvadoran vos (Parodi 2003, 2009; Raymond 2012c, 2015a; see
also Woods and Rivera-Mills 2012). Even the semantic content and syntactic argument structure of a verb like *andar* – which can be used transitively in Salvadoran Spanish to mean ‘to carry’, in addition to intransitively to mean ‘to walk’ – has been shown to simplify to have only the intransitive possibility when in contact with Mexican Spanish (Hernández 2002).

**Shifting focus: New questions inspired by conversation analysis**

The vast majority of the outcomes just described, to which dialectological and sociolinguistic inquiries are routinely dedicated, occur ‘under the speakers’ radar’, so to speak. That is, it has traditionally been of little importance to sociolinguists whether or not speakers show a demonstrable orientation to the fact that their interlocutor debuccalizes /s/ while they themselves do not; or that they use *andar* transitively in addition to intransitively. What has been of crucial import is that the contact-induced change occurred – regardless of its relevance to the participants in moment-by-moment talk. But what about moments in which dialect divergence does reach the ‘interactional surface’ in some accountable fashion? What do such interactional orientations serve to accomplish in the ongoing situated interaction, and what linguistic and social outcomes might obtain over time from such ‘intercultural moments’ (Bolden 2014)?

This study explores how the theory and method of conversation analysis (CA) can be brought to bear on the analysis of dialect contact, taking dialects of Spanish in contact in the southwestern U.S. as a case-in-point. While nonetheless empirically grounded in excerpts taken from naturally-occurring language use, the present article is distinct in that it is not designed to offer a systematic analysis of any single linguistic phenomenon – either interactional or dialectal. Rather, the focus here is theoretical and methodological: I aim to pose a novel set of questions that may be asked in (and of) dialect contact environments, and describe a method of analysis that may begin to provide some answers to those questions. Such a focus is particularly relevant given Britain’s (2012) recent assessment of the methods used in dialect-contact research. He writes that ‘despite the maturity of the discipline now, methodological questions and difficulties remain’ (233), and yet it is ‘very unusual in dialect contact studies to reflect upon how research in this sub-discipline is carried out, the methods used to examine the consequences of this contact’ (220, my emphasis). As such, the more general aim of this endeavor, then, is to fortify the connection between sociolinguistic and conversation-analytic interests and inquiries, with the hope of inspiring future, more targeted and systematic research at the intersection of these fields, including greater reflection on the research methods brought to bear on phenomena of interest.

The paper is structured as follows: First, in an attempt to clarify and explicate CA’s interests and objectives, I offer a brief sketch of CA theory and method, underscoring their sociological origins. I then review how CA has been used previously to approach language contact in analyses of code-
switching in interaction. This discussion will allow us to further clarify the epistemological notion of ‘relevance’ in conversation-analytic investigations, including how it comes to bear on the analysis of dialect contact. The remainder of the article is then dedicated to the detailed examination of segments of naturally-occurring talk through which I aim to illustrate (i) that (and how) dialects can become oriented to by co-participants in real-time interaction, and (ii) what consequences this can have for the ‘shape’ of the ongoing linguistic production between the interlocutors. It will be argued that applying CA theory and method to moments of participant-oriented-to dialect divergence grants researchers profound insight into how interactants navigate and negotiate their respective identities at the ground level of turn-by-turn talk, while at the same time re-affirming which linguistic features index membership/non-membership in those identity categories, and potentially re-establishing a hierarchical relationship between the dialects in contact. That is, here we are interested in dialects, dialectal hierarchies, and group membership, not as pre-determined constructs, but rather at the moment of their (re-) production, in and through the details of social interaction. In the discussion section, I then present a hypothesis as to the potential long-term outcomes that might obtain from such moments of surface-level dialect divergence, and conclude by outlining some potential avenues for future research.

CONVERSATION ANALYSIS AND ITS SOCIOLOGICAL LINEAGE

Notwithstanding its long-established connection with linguistics, conversation analysis finds its origins in sociology, specifically in the subfield known as ethnomethodology, which aims to investigate the commonsense resources, practices, and procedures that members of society use to produce and recognize action with one another. The founder of ethnomethodology, Harold Garfinkel, argued that, as social beings, humans are constantly engaging in their own processes of ‘practical sociological reasoning’, performing ‘taken for granted’ sociology on a moment-by-moment basis as they go about achieving sense-making with one another (1967: 8). For instance, what methods do persons use to publically and accountably demonstrate that they are walking down the street as a pair, and not as two separate individuals, or vice-versa (Ryave and Schenkein 1974)? And how is this done such that other members of society (e.g. those walking down the street toward them) can recognize it and act accordingly (e.g. walk around the pair as opposed to in between them)? Ethnomethodologists were – and indeed are – interested in the ‘members’ methods’ (Garfinkel 1967) for collaboratively achieving such sense in social interaction.

Conversation analysis weaves together the sense-making perspective of Garfinkel with Erving Goffman’s (e.g. 1983) argument that social interaction is an institutionalized domain in its own right which can thus be studied systematically as such (see Heritage 1984b). In the opening paragraph of ‘On...
Face-Work’ (1967: 5), Goffman lays the theoretical groundwork for how talk is attached to real-world situations:

Every person lives in a world of social encounters, involving him either in face-to-face or mediated contact with other participants. In each of these contacts, he tends to act out what is sometimes called a line – that is, a pattern of verbal and nonverbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself. Regardless of whether a person intends to take a line, he will find that he has done so in effect. The other participants will assume that he has more or less willfully taken a stand, so that if he is to deal with their response to him he must take into consideration the impression they have possibly formed of him (my emphasis; generic masculines as in original).

Goffman thus effectively places us in a world in which there is no ‘time out’. Because our conduct positions us socially vis-à-vis one another, without exception, others are constantly forming interpretations and understandings of our selves (e.g. Goffman 1959), our identities, and our actions – whether we want them to or not. We live our lives ‘in the eye of the beholder’, and we are thus held accountable by those beholders – i.e. our co-participants in interaction.

The lineages of both Garfinkel and Goffman are evident in Heritage’s (1984b: 241) synthesis of the conversation-analytic approach as follows:

The basic outlook of conversation analysis can be briefly summarized in terms of three fundamental assumptions: (1) interaction is structurally organized; (2) contributions to interaction are contextually oriented; and (3) these two properties inhere in the details of interaction so that no order of detail can be dismissed, a priori, as disorderly, accidental or irrelevant.

As a method, CA repeatedly asks: Why that now? (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). What is the relevance of each detail produced in the collaborative construction of talk – not only in terms of what a speaker said, but also how they said it? And crucially, we ask this question because it is the very question that co-participants are asking themselves as they formulate and interpret actions in interaction, actively holding one another accountable not only for the actions themselves, but also for the designs used to implement them.

Fundamental to conversation-analytic inquiry is the notion of ‘relevance’. 4 As Schegloff (1987: 209) puts it:

It is precisely the parties’ relevancies, orientations, and thereby-informed action which it is our interest to describe, and to describe under the control of the details of the interaction in which they are realized. It is what the action, interaction, field of action are to the parties that poses our task of analysis (emphasis in original).

Accordingly, much of how we approach data seeks to safeguard against analyst-imposed interpretations that may or may not align with participants’ understandings of the unfolding interaction (on which, see Clift and Raymond
2018; G. Raymond 2018). Nonetheless, it is crucial to emphasize that a CA approach does not preclude researchers from categorizing interactional phenomena — e.g. actions, identities, contexts, or, as we will see in the next section, languages and dialects — as part of an analysis; what CA takes issue with is when such categorizations are assumed by the analyst to have a priori import to the participants, with no attention to the relevance thereof for them, and without entertaining the possibility of other, more micro-level explanations of conduct-in-interaction. After all, conversation analysts are not interested in an overhearing analyst’s ‘interpretation’ (Schegloff 1997: 502) of what is happening and why; our interest, following from the ethnomethodological origins described above, is in uncovering the ‘members’ methods’ (Garfinkel 1967) for their production and recognition of action — how their actions, ‘which Members do in such a way as to be recognizable as such to Members, are done, and done recognizably’ in talk-in-interaction (Sacks 1992: 236).

**EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS: CATEGORIZING LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS**

The theoretical principles of conversation analysis, just described, have indeed been brought to bear on language-contact phenomena in the past, most notably in the investigation of code-switching in bilingual conversation, pioneered by Peter Auer (1984) in his book by the same name. As Auer (1984: 3) puts it, in adopting a CA perspective:

> There is an analytic interest in members’ methods (or procedures), as opposed to an interest in external procedures derived from a scientific theory. In short, our purpose is to analyze members’ procedures to arrive at local interpretations of language alternation (emphasis in original; see also Mondada 2007).

Álvarez-Cáccamo (1990) draws on Gumperz (1982) in characterizing language choice as a ‘contextualization cue’: Switching from one language to another carries meaning in interaction just as do shifts in prosody, gaze, and the like. As Li Wei (2002: 177) describes, then, it is the switch itself which ‘triggers an interpretation first and foremost by the interactants themselves, and secondarily by the analyst’.

Mention of ‘switches’ necessarily topicalizes a more basic epistemological consideration, namely the issue of categorizing the ‘codes’ being ‘switched’ in ‘code-switched’ conversation. Gafaranga and Torras (2002), for example, maintain that the participants themselves must orient to a switch if analysts are to categorize it as such. They reference their own written transcripts and contend that ‘some stretches of talk are categorized as French while some others are categorized as Kinyarwanda’, but that ‘participants themselves do not make this distinction’ (11), concluding therefore that such shifts should not be analyzed as code-switches. A similar claim is put forth in Gafaranga (2005: 290) where the author warns against analyst-imposed conceptualizations of language as being
‘idealized and “ideologized” abstraction[s] with a name’, contending that ‘the alternate use of two languages itself may be the code the participants are using’ (see also Maschler 1998; Meeuwis and Bloommaert 1998).

This line of argumentation rightly asserts that researchers working within a conversation-analytic framework should not label the languages within an interaction a priori from a monolingually-biased perspective (see also Auer 1984: 28) – e.g. this turn is English, that turn is Spanish. However, it is equally problematic to presuppose that multiple linguistic realities (e.g. ‘English’ and ‘Spanish’) are produced ‘unnoticeably’ in the service of ‘locally doing being bilingual’ (Gafaranga 2001: 1922), as it is for analysts to presuppose that switches are inherently noticeable. A truly ethnomethodologically-grounded approach to bilingual conversation would allow the interactants themselves to ‘draw lines in the sand’ – or not – between languages, without imposing presuppositions in either direction.

The same epistemological argument can be made with regard to the presence of multiple dialects in conversation – either produced by the same bidialectal participant (e.g. Blom and Gumperz 1972), or by two participants who each speak a distinct dialect of a given language, as will be our primary focus in the cases that follow. That is, if ‘English’ and ‘Spanish’ can be argued to be nothing more than ideologized, analysts’ labels that are irrelevant to participants, is the same true about, say, ‘Mexican Spanish’ vs. ‘Argentine Spanish’? Again, a conversation-analytic perspective does not presume that such a distinction is altogether relevant or irrelevant to the participants. Rather, as with any other categorization, we ask: Is it oriented to by the participants? That is, can what a linguist understands to be dialect divergence be shown to be demonstrably relevant and procedurally consequential (Schegloff 1987) for how the interactants themselves are making sense with one another?

DATA COLLECTION

In order to tackle these questions, data excerpts were culled from a large corpus of naturally-occurring social interaction amongst Spanish speakers in the United States, including both everyday conversation (e.g. between friends and family), as well as institutional talk (Drew and Heritage 1992), such as radio call-in interactions, emergency service calls, and medical visits. In the case of everyday conversation, the author and research assistants set up video cameras to record routine settings such as family dinners and informal chats between friends, with participants recruited primarily through snowball sampling. These interactions were collected in an unmotivated fashion, meaning that they were not designed to be used for any specific purpose other than for research on the discourse of Spanish speakers in the U.S. (i.e. they were not collected for this particular study, nor to test any particular hypotheses). Moreover, all that participants knew at the time of the recordings was that the data would be used for research on ‘daily life in Southern
In the case of institutional recordings, data were collected either for institution-internal purposes or by the researcher for studies topically unrelated to the present analysis (e.g. Raymond 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, forthcoming). From this larger corpus of nearly 200 hours of audio- and/or videotaped interaction from over 300 Spanish speakers living in the southwestern U.S., dialectally divergent participants (e.g. a Peruvian chatting with her Mexican friend) were selected for the present investigation.

Given that this study seeks to inspire future research in this area, it is important to be clear about this particular data-collection method, as it may initially appear to be at variance with the just-highlighted distinction between participants’ vs. analysts’ orientations.

First, these interactions were naturally-occurring, meaning that the analyst did not create a false, elicited, or experiment-like context in which, for example, dialectally-divergent speakers were put together and told to converse. Rather, these individuals would have been interacting with one another even if it were not for this study, and in most cases (i.e. non-institutional interactions) were close friends or family members who were already familiar with one another and conversed regularly.

Second, and crucially, this data-collection method does not engender an *a priori* claim that dialect divergence will turn out to be relevant to the participants at all. Rather, this initial, analyst-imposed categorization of two distinct dialects being present in the interaction serves only to target interactions in which the relevance of dialect contact *might* arise, so as to allow for investigation of how that might unfold, if indeed it does. Conversation analysts routinely collect data in this manner when the potential interactional relevance of some category is being explored: Just as a researcher interested in the possible relevance of the categorizations ‘parent’ and ‘child’ will collect data involving parents interacting with children (e.g. Kidwell and Zimmerman 2006), and a researcher interested in the possible relevance of the categorizations ‘French’ and ‘Kinyarwanda’ will examine data involving speakers of those languages (Gafaranga 2005), so too must a conversation analyst interested in the potential relevance of dialect contact target interactions in which the participants might understand there to be dialects in contact. And indeed, previous dialectological research can help identify such interactions. However, utilizing such previous research and targeting such interactions to launch one’s investigation is not synonymous with a claim that the categorizations of ‘parent’ and ‘child’, ‘Language A’ and ‘Language B’, or ‘Dialect A’ and ‘Dialect B’ are omnirelevant to the participants, or that such categorizations explain all that is happening in the interaction (on which, see Schegloff 1992). Rather, such data merely provide analysts with opportunities to discover what demonstrable relevance, if any, such categorizations might have.

In what follows, I illustrate some of the ways in which interactants can be seen to hold one another (and themselves) accountable for dialectal differences in and through their ongoing talk with one another. We are interested in how
dialect contact can affect what turns-at-talk are produced, how those turns are designed, and what ramifications this has for the identities of and developing social relationship between the interactants. It will be argued that such discursive orientations to dialect not only serve to secure shared understanding between speaker and hearer, but they also perform crucial interpersonal and identity-based work by allowing interactants to ‘index who they take themselves and the other to be, and who they take it they are to one another’ (Kitzinger and Mandelbaum 2013: 178).

**ORIENTING TO DIALECT DIVERGENCE**

Given that there is no guarantee that what an analyst deems to be dialect divergence will be oriented to as such by the participants, our first step must be

(1) **Morning call to ‘Latino 96.3’**

01 **HOS:** Cómo te llamas mamita.  
how yourself call.2s mom.DIM  
*What’s your name beautiful.*

02 **CLR:** Yvonne!

03 **HOS:** Cómo estás mi reina?  
how are.2s my queen  
*How are you doing my queen?*

04 Apenas te estás levantando verdad?  
just yourself are.2s rising true  
*You are just now getting up right?*

05 **CLR:** NO: Ya estoy manejando desde las seis de la mañana.  
[ch'jo] [de'nde] [sej]  
no already am.1s driving since the six of the morning  
*NO: I’ve been driving since six this morning.*

06 **HOS:** -> Y usted de dónde es Yvonne.  
and you from where are.2s Y  
*And you where are you from Yvonne.*

07 -> Que yo le escucho un acentito.  
that I from-you hear.1s an accent.DIM  
*Cuz I’m hearing a little accent from you.*

08 **CLR:** De Panamá!  
from P  
*From Panama!*

09 **HOS:** Panamá? Qué rico!!  
P how rich  
*Panama? How aweso:me!*

10 **CLR:** Sí!  
Yeah!

11 **HOS:** Qué canción te puedo poner mamita?  
what song to-you can.1s put.INF mom.DIM  
*What song can I play for you beautiful?*
to demonstrate how speakers can hold themselves and their interlocutors accountable for dialectal differences as socio-interactionally relevant categorizations. In case (1)\(^7\), taken from a call to a Los Angeles radio station to request that a song be played, we see one example of how this can happen. Here, the caller is Panamanian, and the host speaks Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish (LAVS) (Parodi 2003, 2009, 2011). In this case, as in Maria Egbert’s (2004: 1476–1478) example from German, it is the caller’s phonology that evidently provides the impetus for the host to ask the caller’s place of origin.

When the caller produces her first syntactically complex turn-at-talk in line 5, it becomes clear that she speaks a dialect that debuccalizes /s/ in coda position. As this is not the norm for the Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish community of practice, which maintains /s/ as [s] (Parodi 2003, 2011; Raymond 2012b), the host orients to this dialectal divergence in her immediately subsequent turn by asking the caller’s place of origin, thereby sequentially connecting dialect with a feature of the caller’s identity. Indeed, the and-prefacing on the host’s request for information links this question to a ‘missing’ element of the caller’s preceding turn (line 6) (Bolden 2010), with the host even going on to account for the question with direct reference to the caller’s dialect: ‘Que yo le escucho un acentito’ / Cuz I’m hearing a little accent from you (line 7). Thus, to reinvoke Goffman’s (1967: 5) theoretical point mentioned above, ‘Regardless of whether a person intends to take a line, [one] will find that [one] has done so in effect’: Whether or not this caller meant to demonstrate her non-LAVS identity in line 5, she is nonetheless categorized as such and held accountable for it by her interlocutor in the subsequent turn. If language ideologies are, as Irvine and Gal (2000: 35) define them, ‘the ideas with which participants and observers frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them’, here we can see such ideologies being ‘put to work’ in turn-by-turn talk, as one participant linguistically and socially categorizes the other (and thereby simultaneously categorizes herself). That the host casts the caller as the one with the ‘accent’ not only re-establishes the boundaries between the two dialects in question at the ground level of the ongoing talk, but also invokes the stance that the LAVS dialect is the ‘norm’ of this speech community, with the caller’s non-LAVS variety constituting a divergence that needs to be accounted for. In this sense, dialect and dialect divergence – including the norms and identities associated with those dialects – are rendered interactional achievements, re-created ‘for another first time’ (Garfinkel 1967: 9) in and through the conduct of the participants themselves.

What is particularly salient about this example (and many others like it) is the postponement of the business of the call – i.e. requesting a song – in order to accomplish this work of dialectally situating the co-participants. Sequences such as this thus illustrate one overt or ‘on record’ way in which, at the level of
the production of action, co-participants can be seen to actively hold one another accountable for dialect, as well as the sheer import of that accountability for the interactants such that it can be prioritized over other interactional business.

The relevance of dialect is not always brought to the surface of talk in such an overt way as in the above excerpt (1). It can also be demonstrated more subtly through the production of other actions, such as an initiation of repair (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). Repair is a particularly powerful tool that conversation analysts often use to detect normative associations, as participants are willing to halt the progressivity of the interaction – that is, the forward-moving trajectory of the talk (Schegloff 2007) – in order to ‘fix’ something that they deem relevantly fixable (see, e.g., Jefferson 1974). This allows the analyst to form a hypothesis as to why the participant(s) considered such a fix to be relevant, a hypothesis that is then empirically testable by situating the particular case within a collection of cases (Clift and Raymond 2018).

In the following example (2), the participants are friends who are already familiar with one another’s background (one Costa Rican, the other Mexican). Here they are engaged in a discussion about course requirements for graduation. Relevant to the understanding of this excerpt is that different dialects of Spanish provide divergent arrays of options for the second-person singular pronoun ‘you’, including tú, vos, and usted (for an overview, see Hummel, Kluge and Vázquez Laslop 2010). Note how the norms of use for these two speakers immediately becomes oriented to below:

(2) Course requirements

01 CR: Pero qué clases estaba tomando though:. Like—but what classes were.usted taking
But what classes were you.usted taking though:. Like-

02 Yo le entiendo que sus clases [son-
I you.usted understand that your.usted classes are
I understand from you.usted that your.usted classes are

03 MEX: -> [Usted?

04 CR: -> Oká:y.

05 -> Qué clase has estado tomando.
what class have.TÚ been taking
What class have you.tu been taking.

Some varieties of Costa Rican Spanish use usted with all interlocutors regardless of deferential status (similar to English you), while others pattern more closely with other Central American dialects in maintaining a distinction between vos and usted as non-deferential and deferential forms of address, respectively (Lipski 1994: 224; Quesada Pacheco 1996). The traditional contact linguist might thus wonder whether the Costa Rican speaker in this
exchange is simply using her default familiar reference form, or whether her use of *usted* reflects a (potentially contact-induced) avoidance of the often stigmatized form *vos* (Parodi 2003, 2009, 2011; Quesada Pacheco 1996: 107; Raymond 2012a). What we are interested in here, though, is that, regardless of the Costa Rican speaker’s particular motivation for using *usted*, her Mexican interlocutor, whose dialect unambiguously maintains a pragmatic distinction between *tú* and *usted*, specifically orients to and problematizes this reference form in line 3. Note also that the *ustedeo* (or ‘*usted*-ness’) of lines 1 and 2 is conveyed via the verbal conjugation ‘estaba’ (cf. *tú*: ‘estabas’), an indirect object pronoun ‘le’ (cf. *tú*: ‘te’), and a possessive adjective ‘sus’ (cf. *tú*: ‘tus’) – not the overt use of ‘usted’. Conversationalists can therefore be seen to be actively orienting to divergences in morphological repertoire, in addition to phonological differences as seen in the prior example. In response, the Costa Rican speaker re-delivers her question in line 5, this time addressing her interlocutor as *tú*.

Sequences such as this reveal the salience of dialectal features for interactants who live in contexts of dialect contact. That the speaker of Mexican origin here is able to initiate repair on a feature of the Costa Rican speaker’s dialect – and that the Costa Rican subsequently defers to the preferred Mexican-based pronoun – re-creates within the interaction the prestige of the Mexican dialect in this particular social context over the other variety in question. This sequence also highlights the salience of dialect divergence with regard to pronominal forms for the Costa Rican speaker, as she is immediately able to recognize what the initiation of repair is targeting, accepts the classification of her previous turn as a trouble source that has been brought about by dialect divergence, and immediately provides a repair solution that concedes to the Mexican speaker’s pragmatic norm. Moreover, as in the previous excerpt, the initiation of repair illustrates the sequential import that dialectal accountability can have for interactants: Here, the Mexican speaker is willing to sacrifice the progressivity of the interaction (i.e. providing an answer to the question) in order to deal with this issue, even despite the fact that the Costa Rican’s original turn-at-talk was unambiguously intelligible with the original *usted* reference form. Such repair sequences thus provide an additional method through which to examine the linguistic features that both reflect as well as continually re-establish the composition and organization of a given speech community (on which, see also Bolden 2012, 2014; Egbert 2004).

One final example of how dialectal features can become oriented to within interaction is seen in example (3) below in which a speaker initiates repair on his own talk. Just as with instances of other-initiated repair, as in (2) above, in cases of self-initiated repair, speakers can demonstrate the relevance of dialectal features by electing to halt the progressivity of their own turn in favor of producing what they themselves deem a ‘better’ version thereof. In case (3), a Salvadoran-born mother and father are sitting at the dinner table with their two, Southern California-born teenage sons. Mom and Dad are engaged in a
dyadic interaction, as are the two sons. At a certain point during the meal, Dad breaks away from speaking to Mom, gets the attention of the elder of his two sons, and produces the turns below. Observe how he cuts off and restarts his utterance, replacing the Salvadoran vos imperative ‘escuchame’ (with stress on the penultimate syllable: /es.ku’tʃa.me/) with the LAVS tú imperative ‘escúchame’ (with stress on the antepenultimate syllable: /es’ku.tʃa.me/), both meaning ‘Listen to me’.

(3) Listen to me

01 DAD: Escuchame Jua- Digo escúchame Juan.
        Listen.VOS-to-me J say.1s Listen.TÚ-to-me J
        Listen to me (vos) Jua- I mean listen to me (tú) Juan.

02 Esta noche me vas a revisar los biles. = verdad?
        this night me go.TÚ to review.INF the bills right
        Tonight you’re (tú) going to go over the bills for me, right?

In this case, as in the prior example (2), the initiation of repair is not to correct who is being selected by the turn: As vos and tú both refer to a singular interlocutor, the recipient is Juan in either case based on Dad and Juan’s mutual gaze (not to mention the vocative ‘Juan’). Nonetheless, Dad’s reformulation of his turn illustrates the relevance of the dialectally divergent pronominal forms for the interactants themselves: Despite the fact that Salvadoran-born parents often maintain Salvadoran norms when speaking amongst themselves, their Southern California-born children overwhelmingly speak only LAVS, including use of tú over vos, and parents use only tú when addressing their children (Raymond 2012a, 2012c). Dad’s repair allows us to see that, from his perspective, vos is ‘problematic as a person reference form for this particular interlocutor, for whom tú is offered up as a more appropriate option’ (Raymond 2012c: 683). When situated within a larger collection of the reference forms used by members of this speech community in everyday conversation, it becomes evident that such an interactional move constitutes an orientation to the divergence of dialects within the home, as well as to the ‘Salvadoran-born’ and ‘non-Salvadoran-born’ identities indexed by those dialectal features (ibid.).

THE PROCEDURAL CONSEQUENTIALITY OF DIALECT DIVERGENCE

Thus far we have dealt with the initial concern of interactants demonstrating an orientation to the contact of dialects within a situated interaction. But a conversation-analytic approach does not stop there. Next we ask: Can such orientations be seen to be relevant for the design of subsequent turns-at-talk between the co-participants, and if so, how? Consider, for example, Schegloff’s (1972: 89) discussion of the formulation of references to places:
One who asks in New York City how to get to the ‘Long Island Train Terminal’ (instead of ‘Penn Station’ or ‘Pennsylvania Station’) will...be recognizable to New Yorkers (a class of members) as a non-New Yorker, a stranger (a non-class member). And although this is merely one membership identification of many that is correct for such a person (he being perhaps also a male, white, a father, a soldier, etc.), it is one that has relevance to the response, providing a sense of the sorts of locational formulations that can be used (emphasis added).

That is, the issue is not simply that interactants categorize one another based on their linguistic production, but also that those identity categorizations can become ‘procedurally consequential’ (Schegloff 1987) for how subsequent actions are formulated and understood. It is in this way that we can see that the very structure of the talk is being shaped by co-participants’ orientations to dialect divergence within the interaction.

With this new set of questions in mind, let us return to the first example we analyzed in the previous section, repeated below as (4) with additional glossing and highlighting. Recall that we discussed earlier how the radio host’s request for information (and dialect-based account for it) was occasioned by the caller’s immediately prior, dialectally divergent (phonologically) turn-at-talk. However, insertion of this specific action at this particular point is not the only feature of the talk that merits elucidation. In addition to noting that this request for information was produced, we must also observe how it was designed to achieve the action in question. Specifically, observe the reference forms (bolded) that the host uses to refer to the caller over the course of the excerpt.

The host’s first three questions (lines 1, 3–4) are produced with the LAVS person reference norm of familiar tú, in addition to the informal term of endearment ‘mamita’ / beautiful (lit. ‘little mom’). After production of the caller’s first dialectally divergent turn, though, the host shifts her reference form to the unfamiliar usted form. This switch is emphasized through the overt use of the pronoun, syntactically fronted within the turn, combined now with the address term ‘Yvonne’ (line 6). Together, these elements of the design of the request for information reflect and embody a newly relevant unfamiliarity or social distance between speaker and hearer that has been occasioned by the surfacing of dialectal divergence.

The contact of dialects between these two interactants has thus motivated not only a particular action (i.e. the request for information itself) and sequence, but also a particular turn design through which that action would be achieved (i.e. a change in relevant, respective identities, realized through a shift in person reference; see Raymond 2016). Observe also that, following the caller’s response to the question, once the identity-based ambiguity brought about by the dialectal divergence has been resolved through the sequence in lines 6–10, the caller switches back to the familiar tú pronominal form in line 11, thereby re-establishing the social familiarity initially presumed at the onset of the interaction. Here, then, we can see the procedural consequentiality of
dialect to the moment-by-moment negotiation of identity, with these elements affecting how interactants go about formulating their turns-at-talk for one another across sequences of action.

The negotiation of identity through dialect can become relevant even amongst friends who are engaged in the most mundane of conversations. In the following case (5), a Peruvian woman is telling her Mexican friend about a billboard she recently saw. The advertisement featured some individuals that the Peruvian teller wishes to topicalize for subsequent commentary, but she noticeably finds it difficult to select the appropriate reference form for her interlocutor. She is therefore struggling with a problem of recipient design which she specifically orients to as such – first using the term ‘serranos’ / mountain-dwellers in line 1, only to subsequently revise this to ‘cholos’ in line 2.
(5) Cholo

01 PER: -> Son=son serranos. =obviamente.<Pero (.)
are are mountain-dwellers obviously but
They're=they're serranos.=obviously.<But (.)

02 -> Nosotros- (.) la gente les dice, chulos.
we the people to-them say chulos
We- (.) people call them, chulos.

03 MEX: O[h;:,

04 PER: -> [Cholos- Acá yo sé que- ((gesture toward MEX))
cholos here I know that
Cholos- Here I know that-

05 PER: -> =por ejemplo con una persona mexicana un cholo es,
for example with a person Mexican a cholo is,
=for example for a Mexican person a cholo is,

06 MEX: una::
a::

07 PER: u- como [un-
a- like a-

08 MEX: [Un vagabundo,=
A vagabond,=

09 MEX: =Una persona que no:: ( ),
a person who no
=A person who doesn't ( ),

10 MEX: [Una persona que::
a person who
A person who::

11 PER: ['Yeah']

12 PER: Mhm algo así.
mhm something like that.

13 MEX: Mhm.

14 PER: -> En cambio en el Perú es- es una persona que .hh
in change in the Peru is is a person who
On the other hand in Peru it's- it's a person who .hh

15 um s- que usa el chullo: no?=
um who uses the woolen-hat no
um s- who uses a woolen hat you know?=

16 PER: ={Y que .hh es es e- su su piel es más este <morena:>,
and who is their skin is more um brown
=And who .hh is is e- their skin is more um <brown>,

17 MEX: =[Oh.

18 PER: X hey ... un hombre que está en frente de ellos ...
and there's a man that is in front of them
And there's a man who is in front of them ...
Following the production of this second term, we see the reason for her hesitation in using it: In addition to its potential pejorative connotation in Peruvian Spanish, there is the added complication that the term has an entirely different meaning in Mexican Spanish, referring not to the sort of individual she wants to reference but rather to a gangster or, as her interlocutor puts it, ‘a vagabond’ (line 8).

Immediately after producing the ‘cholos’ reference in line 2, the Peruvian speaker interdicts the Mexican speaker’s change-of-state token ‘Oh::,’ (Heritage 1984a) to clarify that this term is not being used in the way a Mexican speaker would use it. That is, she immediately holds herself and her recipient accountable for the dialectally divergent meanings of the term in a way that proves consequential for the design of subsequent talk. Here, this moment of ‘on-the-ground dialectology’ launches a collaboratively constructed, multi-turn sequence (lines 3–17) to negotiate the meaning of the term in the service telling a story.

Moreover, it is within this sequence that dialect-based identities are ‘talked into being’ (Heritage 1984b) as relevant for the formulation of the ongoing talk. First, in lines 4–5, the Peruvian speaker actively demonstrates her access to the surrounding, Mexican-based speech community of Southern California by announcing her knowledge of the term’s divergent meaning in Mexican Spanish (i.e. her interlocutor’s dialect; note the gesture toward MEX across lines 4–5). Her recipient immediately comes in to claim primary access to this knowledge by collaboratively completing the definition of ‘cholo’ in lines 6/8–10 (Lerner 2004). In line 14, the Peruvian speaker then contrasts this Mexican definition with the Peruvian one, thereby embodying her connection to that speech community.9 Finally, once this lexical significance is clarified and sufficient common ground is established (note the ‘Oh.’ in line 17), the Peruvian speaker immediately resumes her telling about the billboard advertisement (line 18).

Thus, in cases such as this, we can see that the sequential structure of the ongoing interaction – here, specifically, a story-telling – has been modified based on the interlocutors’ orientation to the presence of divergent dialects in the interaction. Furthermore, within this modified sequential structure, significant identity work is being accomplished as interactants draw dialectal lines in the sand: Here, a lexical item that diverges in meaning between two dialects effectively becomes the mechanism through which speech community membership is implicitly co-constructed within the ongoing interaction – all in the service of launching a story-telling. Thus by analyzing the structure and design of turn-by-turn talk in situations of dialect contact, we are able to investigate how co-participants themselves go about carving out the boundaries of their respective dialects, how they link those dialects to social identities, and how those social identities can become consequential for the linguistic design of subsequent talk between the interlocutors.
DISCUSSION: INTERACTIONAL PHENOMENA AS MECHANISMS OF LANGUAGE CHANGE

In his 1982 Presidential Address to the American Sociological Association, Goffman commented that none of the members of his audience – that is, no sociologist – would find it odd to study the ‘behavioral settings that sustain interaction’ in ‘factories, airports, hospitals, and public thoroughfares’, focusing on ‘social structures such as relationships, informal groups, age grades, gender, ethnic minorities, social classes and the like’ (1983: 2). And yet, microanalysis of the day-in, day-out accomplishment of routine, everyday interaction was somehow presumed to not be ‘analytically viable’, and thus it remained ‘ill-explored’ – or, as he had described it in earlier (1964) work, ‘neglected’.

It might be argued that much research on dialect contact – particularly within ‘first’ and ‘second wave’ Variationist sociolinguistics (Eckert 2012) – has followed similar theoretical and methodological perspectives to the sociologists of Goffman’s day. This is of course not to say that the interactional branch of sociolinguistics, pioneered by scholars such as Gumperz, has not topicalized issues similar to those raised by Goffman – indeed it has. The analogy drawn here is therefore not intended to erase or discount that foundational work, but rather reinvigorate interest in it by bringing CA into the discussion.

Notwithstanding the influence of Gumperz and colleagues, as a contemporary field of substantive inquiry, contact linguistics seems to focus overwhelmingly on the eventual outcomes of contact, such as those discussed in the introduction to this paper (e.g. lexical and structural borrowing, leveling, simplification, reallocation, koineization, creolization, etc.; e.g. Britain 2002, 2012; Kerswill 2002; Siegel 1985; Thomason and Kaufman 1988; Trudgill 1986). However, we know relatively little about the day-in, day-out mechanisms that bring about such outcomes. Labov (1990: 207), for instance, writes of the ‘automatic and mechanical influence’ of contact, claiming that ‘each act of communication between speakers is accompanied by a transfer of linguistic influence that makes their speech patterns more alike’, and that this is one of the most important motivations for language change (2001: 20). In much the same way, Giles’s Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) includes the notion of convergence – defined as ‘a strategy whereby dissimilarities between interlocutors’ speech styles or codes come to be reduced’ (Coupland and Giles 1988: 176) – which Niedzielski and Giles (1996: 338) maintain ‘should be one of the major frameworks to which researchers in language change should turn’. Indeed, Trudgill (1986: 39) applies this theory specifically to situations of dialect contact and similarly states that ‘in face-to-face interaction…speakers accommodate to each other linguistically by reducing the dissimilarities between their speech patterns and adopting features from each other’s speech’.
Nonetheless, as Auer and Hinskens (2005: 337) point out, ‘there is some ambiguity in the model concerning the driving forces behind’ certain forms of accommodation. Conversation analysis challenges us to focus our attention on that more micro-level question of how: How exactly do these ‘acts of communication’ unfold in real time, how do ‘transfers’ take place, how do ‘dissimilarities’ become ‘reduced’ – at the ground level of moment-by-moment talk between interactants?

I posit that the concepts of relevance and accountability may provide an additional lens through which to conceptualize more long-term language/dialect changes in situations of contact. That is, it may be that some of the outcomes of contact are, in fact, interpersonally and interactionally motivated by the contingencies of moment-by-moment talk. This is because the co-constructed structures of talk-in-interaction (such as those discussed in this paper) constitute one concrete means through which certain linguistic features are rendered more salient (see Auer, Barden and Grosskopf 1998; Kerswill and Williams 2002; Trudgill 1986) and thus more likely candidates for what Yaeger-Dror (1993) calls ‘conscious accommodation’. Indeed, we saw this in excerpts (2) and (3) above in which the action of repair made interactionally salient the use of pronominal options by replacing ‘non-normative’ (in the Los Angeles speech community) forms with the LAVS norm of tú. In this way, the very micro-interactional practices that we have analyzed here might fit within – and thereby potentially offer a contribution to – more macro-level processes of interest to the larger theoretical frameworks of traditional sociolinguistics and contact linguistics.

In light of this proposal, consider an additional case of repair in example (6) below. Here a Peruvian woman is telling her Guatemalan friend about a dress that she recently had to wear for a wedding. She recalls, as part of a comedic telling that is coming to an end in line 1, how she used to hear the now-married couple talking via Skype through the thin walls of the apartment complex where they used to live. The recipient of the story then tries to see if this individual is a friend whom the two interactants share in common. As the name alone, offered up in line 5, does not appear to establish recognition, the Peruvian teller begins to provide a physical description of Elizabeth: ‘Unos ojitos <verdes>,’ / Green <eyes>, (line 7). In overlap, her Guatemalan interlocutor enquires about another physical attribute, namely hair that is ‘colocho’, a specifically Central American term used to describe curly hair (line 8). This causes a problem of intersubjectivity as the Peruvian speaker does not understand the meaning of this adjective (lines 9–10). The Peruvian speaker subsequently overlaps with her interlocutor’s turn to offer a candidate understanding with ‘rizado’ / curly (line 12), which is emphatically accepted in lines 11 and 13.
(6) Pelo colocho vs. rizado

01 PER: Sí por eSkype hablaban.
yes by Skype talked.3p
Yeah on Skype they used to talk.

02 GUA: Aw::[.; Yo no creo que la conozca.â€”
I no think that her know.is
Aw::[.; I don’t think I know ‘her.’â€”

03 PER: [Y este:]â€”
and um
And um:â€”

04 GUA: Cómo se llama tu amiga.
how self calls.3s your friend
What’s your friend’s name?

05 PER: Elizabeth.

06 GUA: “Elizabeth,” ((looking upward))

07 PER: Unos ojitos <ver[ides]>,
some eyes green
Green <e:yes>,

08 GUA: -> [.hhh Pelo:: um (.) colocho? ((squeezes hair)]

hair curly

.hhh Hair:: that’s um (.) colocho?

09 (0.2)

10 PER: -> Qué es eso.
what is that
What is that.

11 GUA: -> Pelo: (.) no s[e] > o sea< rizado?= 

hair no know.is or is curly
Hair: (.) I don’t know >like< rizado?

12 PER: -> [.e: h rizado.

13 GUA: -> =[E:h <riza::do.>

14 PER: -> =[Sí::: Sí sí [sí.
Ye:::s. Yes yes yes

15 GUA: [Creo que sí la conozco.=
think.is that yes her know.is
I think I do know her.=

16 GUA: =No sé de dónde la [conozco.
no know.is from where her know.is
=I don’t know where I know her from.

17 PER: [Sí: Elí[zabeth.
Ye:s Elizabeth.

18 GUA: [Creo que una vez . . .
think.is that one time
I think that one time . . .

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As seen in the other segments analyzed in this study, here we again observe the insertion of an entire sequence (lines 10–14) to deal with the dialectal divergence present in the interaction. That ‘rizado’ is offered up and is unequivocally accepted as the more understandable adjective during this sequence re-creates its status as the preferred, more intelligible option over its Central American synonym – within this particular speech community. What I wish to underscore with this additional example is that this moment of divergence, in which dialectal hierarchies are implicitly negotiated, was occasioned by the basic interactional need to identify a referent – that is, to secure common ground so that the co-participants could continue with the conversational project they were engaged in. Nonetheless, in so doing, the Guatemalan speaker has effectively ‘waive[d her] previous allegiances and social divisions’ which Kerswill (2002: 673) describes as one of the basic requisites for koiné formation to occur. Segments of talk such as this therefore suggest that the contingencies inherently involved in moment-by-moment interaction can make relevant dialectal negotiations through which leveling, koineization, etc. might initially be motivated. That is, with regard to this case, how many times might such a sequence occur before this Guatemalan speaker adopts or borrows rizado as her default adjective for ‘curly hair’ – at least when speaking with non-Central Americans? And how many times do other Central Americans in the southwestern U.S. participate in these same sorts of sequences before the community as a whole would be characterized by linguists as having reached the contact-induced outcome of speaking, for example, a ‘leveled’ dialect?

Although significant further research is needed to provide concrete answers to these questions, it appears that such ‘intercultural moments’ (Bolden 2014) in the lives of these individuals can serve as ‘micro-lessons’ in dialectal normativity, with deviations from the norm being oriented to in interaction as accountable. As such, we find empirical support for Hermann Paul’s (1920[1886]: §22-25) early theoretical claim that ‘each change in language use is the product of the spontaneous behavior of single individuals on the one hand, and the nature of interaction on the other’ (translation by Hinskens, Auer and Kerswill 2005: 3; my emphasis), with the fundamental conversation-analytic notions of relevance and accountability offering novel insight into the concrete mechanisms that link these in dialect-contact environments.

CONCLUSIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As speakers actively hold one another accountable for various features of dialect, they are effectively performing their own ‘taken for granted’ dialectology (cf. Garfinkel’s 1967 ‘taken for granted sociology’). The overarching objective of the present theoretical and methodological investigation has therefore been to begin to explore the ‘practical sociological reasoning’ (ibid.) in which interactants engage through the use of language in situations of dialect
contact, as well as the consequences that can be brought about by such reasoning.

Here I have proposed that, in taking an ethnomethodologically grounded approach to the analysis of conversation, we are able to observe how dialect can become demonstrably relevant and procedurally consequential for the co-construction of turn-by-turn talk in environments of dialect contact, emphasizing the connections that dialects have with identity. Crucially, it was argued that it is the co-participants themselves who are making these connections, as they can be seen to launch new (sequences of) actions, and design those actions in particular ways, as they orient to an interlocutor’s dialect. The present approach therefore finds common ground with Eckert’s (2012) description of a contemporary ‘third wave’ in variation studies which views speakers as actively creating their identity with language – ‘…not as passive and stable carriers of dialect, but as stylistic agents, tailoring linguistic styles in ongoing and lifelong projects of self-construction…’ (97–98).

As was stated in the Introduction, the aim of this paper has not been to offer a systematic analysis of a particular level of linguistic structure (e.g. phonology), nor of a particular interactional practice (e.g. self-initiated, self-repair). Rather, our focus was theoretical and methodological in nature, with the objective of illustrating how a range of interactional phenomena of interest to conversation analysts (e.g. self-initiated repair, other-initiated repair, person reference, word selection, etc.) can grant new insight into phenomena that exist at a range of levels of linguistic structure (e.g. phonological, morphological, lexical) in dialect-contact situations. Given this foundation, future research may target certain interactional practices or levels of language in a more systematic fashion (e.g. self-initiated, self-repair of lexical items that diverge in meaning between dialects; other-initiated repair following phonologically divergent turns; other-initiated repair following morphologically divergent turns, etc.). This, in turn, will allow us to pose new questions comparing, for instance, participant orientations to the phonological vs. the morphological levels: Do they unfold in the same way, or are they oriented to differently? And do they accomplish the same identity work for the interactants, or are they perhaps different ‘types’ of identity work? Moreover, while the cases explored here were argued to reconstitute dialectal hierarchies and group (non-)membership, what about instances in which participants resist those categorizations, or resist such categorizations as being accountable? What are the concrete practices routinely used to engage in such resistance, and what consequences does their deployment have – both for the participants in the situated interaction, as well as for the speech community more generally?

In sum, then, this study has aimed to promote the in-depth examination of moment-by-moment interactions that, when combined together, constitute what sociolinguists refer to as an environment of ‘dialect contact’. Dialects and
the speech communities and identities they reflect and constitute are not abstract notions, devoid of ground-level social significance; rather, they can be seen to be oriented to as interactants produce language with and for one another. Indeed, as Coupland (2008: 268) concisely reminds us: ‘It is people, not merely dialects, that are in contact.’ And crucially, as we have demonstrated here, because the ways in which moments of dialect divergence can come about and be subsequently navigated, negotiated, and resolved can be seen to be relevant to the interactants themselves, so too must they be relevant to researchers if we are to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the ‘contact’ in ‘contact linguistics’.

NOTES

1. My thanks to Claudia Parodi (QEPD) and John Heritage for their early support of this project. The final version offered here benefitted immensely from the encouragement and guidance of Allan Bell and Natalie Schilling, in addition to feedback from three anonymous reviewers. My thinking on the issues presented here has been greatly influenced by discussions with, and recommendations from, Emma Betz, Holly Cashman, Barbara Fox, and Andrew Lynch.

2. Another way to conceptualize this distinction might be that much previous research has focused on the status of dialectal identities, dedicating less attention to the stances that participants take to make those identities relevant in talk (Raymond 2016).

3. ‘From early on it seemed clear that some parts of the enterprise of understanding conversation would rest heavily on the contribution of linguists’ (Schegloff 1996: 53; see also Clift 2016; Clift and Raymond 2018).

4. Note that this notion of ‘relevance’ is distinct from, though not completely unrelated to, the notion of ‘relevance’ in Sperber and Wilson’s (1986) Relevance Theory of cognitive processing.

5. Readers unfamiliar with debates in the literature regarding conversation analysis and, for example, (critical) discourse analysis are invited to consult them directly, as it would be impossible to convey the intricacies of their arguments here (see, e.g., Billig and Schegloff 1999).

6. This is what CA, specifically, is interested in examining. Other research agendas have different interests and questions, and thus other methods will necessarily be brought to bear in order to tackle those interests and answer those questions. Research methodologies need not be conceived of as necessarily in competition with one another, nor as one being wholesale ‘better’ than another, but simply as more or less equipped to tackle particular sorts of research questions (see Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Eckert 2012; Raymond 2015a).


8. Participants in non-institutional interactions were initially labeled as simply ‘A’ and ‘B’ during first-stage transcription. IDs have been changed to reflect dialectal identities in the excerpts reproduced here so as to facilitate
understanding of the claims being made about these particular moments in the interactions. However, in line with our earlier discussion, this should not be taken as a claim of the a priori omnirelevance of such dialectal characterizations at all points in the talk between the participants.

9. A reviewer notes the self-repair from ‘nosotros’ / we- to ‘la gente’ / people in line 2, suggesting that this seems to distance the speaker from a Peruvian identity. However, that the speaker offers up this knowledge about Peru, and is oriented to by her interlocutor as possessing epistemic and experiential primacy over this topic/terminology (see Kitzinger and Mandelbaum 2013) – combined with the fact that a repaired reformulation cannot completely erase the original design (Jefferson 1974) – nonetheless indexes some connection to a Peruvian identity (see especially line 14). Moreover, using a ‘we’ form here could be interpreted by the hearer as establishing a dichotomy between ‘we Peruvian speakers’ vs. ‘you LAVS speakers’, a dichotomy which would undermine this particular speaker’s claim to have access to the norms of both of these speech communities. The repair may additionally serve to invoke distance from those Peruvians who routinely use such derogatory terms in their speech, rather than from a Peruvian identity as a whole. On some of the myriad impetuses for repairing such references in conversation, see Lerner and Kitzinger (2012).

10. Note, for instance, the drawn-out repetition of the term by the Guatemalan speaker (line 13), which thereby enacts a registration of information (Goldberg 1975).

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