Facebook as Transnational Space: Language and Identity among 1.5 and Second Generation Mexicans in Chicago

Dissertation

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By

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Abstract

This dissertation documents a two-year ethnographic study of a Mexican-origin transnational network members’ engagement with each other via Facebook. By focusing on four emic criteria – language, skin color, transnationalism, and culture display and practice – this project examines the ways in which network members’ participation on Facebook supports and complicates two major practices – displaying of identity, and displaying of a new social order (of centralization and marginalization). Using an ethnography of communication and indexicality framework, the analysis of Facebook data shows that, through language use, members of this transnational social network use multiple varieties of English and Spanish to invoke language ideologies of purism, standardization, and bilingualism. Simultaneously, members also index three fluid and complex identities: transnational U.S. Mexican identity, ranchero identity, and indigenous Mexican identity. In constructing and negotiating these three multivalent identities, members are shifting their social order from a traditional hierarchy based on age and gender, to one of centrality and marginalization, contingent upon members’ perceived levels of Mexicanness and degree bilingualism. Members’ level of Spanish proficiency alone is not as important as the ability to switch back and forth between different varieties of English and Spanish (codeswitching). The more bilingual a member is, the more central he or she is placed within the network.
Facebook has allowed members to construct a transnational discourse in which their language becomes localized, causing members to feel they are in the same place. As members of the network engage in Facebook conversations with others in both Mexico and in the U.S., Facebook becomes a multimodal platform where members can share pictures and events, thus creating the sense that they are experiencing the same event at the same time. Facebook used as an imagined space allows members to keep in touch with their growing family in an organized way, to fulfill their family roles (such as monitoring youth behavior), and strengthen ties and relationships with other members. Additionally, members of the network also use Facebook’s transnational space to construct identities and experiences together, or contest presentations of self that exaggerate or romanticize an identity or do not reflect the identity that others see in them.

While members of the network leverage social network sites to engage in common practices, the participation by family members in the U.S. and in Mexico forces all users to grapple with the dynamics of display of identity and social order. Often, in doing so, members rework their notions of what it means to be Mexican. As members of the network engage in Facebook conversations, they constantly reconstruct their identities, and they indirectly index a centralized placed in their network on the basis of being more Mexican than others in the network, and as an authentic Mexican in the larger U.S. Mexican-origin society. The study of language ideologies and identities is paramount to understanding the linguistic and academic choices that second language learners and bilingual students such as the Mexican-origin individuals in this study could make.
Para Eric.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Studies of identity run the risk of essentializing the people on whom they are focused, assigning labels that do not reflect the pluralism within a group or the fluid and changing nature of people’s representations. In terms of identities and language, studies have also run the risk of labeling speakers with names that index negative characteristics (Harklau et al., 1999, Harklau, 2000; Oropeza et al., 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). Whether these categories and identity labels are self-chosen, imposed or negotiated and co-constructed, their study has mostly been limited to communities of practice such as classrooms, school settings, and work environments. Fewer studies include social groups such as all people whose origins are from another country (e.g. Puerto Ricans living in New York), but those tend to be broad and do not always focus on language use and how it shapes identity per se (an exception is Zentella, 1997).

In the last decade, studies of second-generation communities have begun to integrate the notion of transnationalism as it affects the lives of not only the first generation, but also the second and third generations in terms of education, religion, and identity (Cornelius et al., 2009; Levitt, 2001; Kasinitz et al., 2010; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Louie, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010; Smith, 2006). As scholars begin to delve into diversity among all children of immigrants, they have realized that understanding where they come from and their current practices is
paramount to understanding how these individuals see themselves and are seen by others, perceive and interpret the world around them, and make choices, especially concerning education. Much of the research on transnationalism can be found in anthropological and sociological studies. Many utilize census data and are descriptive in nature. Each one of them provides a different angle; together these angles form a more complete profile of the children of immigrants.

One of the commonalities of such studies is that they are carried out in a physical environment (classroom, school, a city). However, research has started to turn its attention to online social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook and Twitter (e.g. boyd, 2008; Eisenstein et al., 2010; Ellison et al., 2007; Grasmuck et al., 2009; Pempek et al., 2009). The ubiquitous use of computer mediated communication (CMC) through personal computers, hand or portable devices has extended individuals’ relationships to the virtual world. The studies of SNS have also included identity in terms of representation, mainly in photos and on profile pages, but most have focused on privacy issues, frequency and manner of use, and types of relationships with friends. However, little has been done with language and linguistic identity, and those which have been done only encompass one language. Although research has been shifting in the direction of computer mediated discourse in online social networks, it has not fully explored the context of Facebook nor the language use, ideologies, and identities people display, construct, and negotiate in those settings. The present research thus explores how members of a transnational Mexican social network (comprised mainly of several families) engage with Facebook and negotiate their identities through language, and how through discourse they index language ideologies that help them shape those identities.
This study aims to provide an ethnographic portrait that informs others on the engagement of generation 1.5 and second-generation transnational Mexican bilinguals with SNS, in particular on Facebook.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As of August 2012, a poll by the Pew Research Center showed that 69% of adult Internet users participate in a social network site (SNS), and 66% of them use Facebook (Brenner, 2012). Latinos have the highest percent of relative usage, slightly above the 68% of whites and blacks, in their overall population surveyed. Latinos or Hispanics are two labels used interchangeably in Pew Research Center reports. Both labels are defined as “Americans who trace their roots to Spanish-speaking countries” (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 4). However, most studies of SNS in the U.S., specifically of Facebook, only include college freshman in category groups such as males, females, or a mixture of minorities (with special attention to white and black populations). These studies have focused on Facebook frequency usage, patterns, and activity. If studies include identity, they focus on gender and ethnic identity in relation to school. In general, studies are concerned with how users present themselves on the site (e.g. pictures, types of comments). Not many studies have engaged in the study of Mexican-origin students or individuals in general, their language varieties, their ideologies and their identities. Knowing how individuals outside of school settings engage in their social networks provides an understanding of the construction of their identities and how these identities may affect some educational choices they make for themselves and/or their children. Thus, the study of Mexican-origin individuals in Facebook is necessary, since Facebook is a multimodal platform that
allows them to use their available linguistic resources to project and construct anything they want, with whatever linguistic resources they wish.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Although there is much research yielding a better understanding of people’s general participation on SNS, there little information about how people interact and construct their identities based on this participation. Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap in the literature by exploring how second generation Mexicans of transnational background engage with each other on Facebook in order to understand what identities they construct on this SNS, how they construct these identities in relation to those with whom they participate, what are the available linguistic resources they use, what role do these linguistic resources play, and what does the construction of these identities accomplish. The focus here is on second-generation Mexican transnational individuals of ranchero background. The emphasis on second generation instead of immigrants is because two thirds of U.S. Latinos between the ages of 16-25 are U.S. born, and not only are they the largest minority group in the U.S., but they are also the youngest, predicted to surpass 30% of the overall population in the U.S. in the next two decades (Pew, 2009). Additionally, the focus on Mexican-origin individuals is because at least 63% of the Latino population traces their origins to Mexico (Ennis et al., 2011). Finally, the focus on rancheros, a subpopulation of Mexican peasants who live in villages and are characterized by their stance of toughness and independence, is because even though they only account for 20% of the overall Mexican population, they are the largest group of Mexicans to migrate to the U.S. (Farr, 2006).
Another reason to focus on Mexican transnational individuals is their language patterns. The rapid increase in the U.S. born Mexican-origin population has not caused a mere shift from Spanish to English; it has caused a shift in patterns of bilingualism. For example, even though the English proficiency level across immigrant and generation 1.5 populations rises to 98% in the second and third generations, 78% of the second and 38% of the third generation still report being proficient in Spanish. What is more, 41% of the second generation reports maintaining bilingualism, and 23% even report being Spanish dominant (Pew, 2009). Most importantly, 70% individuals surveyed reported that they often codeswitch, or use “Spanglish,” to communicate with family members (Pew, 2009).

More specifically, this study has three objectives: a) to describe the identities Mexican-origin transnationals primarily construct on Facebook, b) to investigate how they construct these identities, including the available linguistic resources they use to do so, and c) to understand what they accomplish by constructing those identities. In order to complete these three objectives, the present study employs an Ethnography of Communication framework, supplemented with the concept of language ideology (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin et al., 1998; Woolard, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and indexicality (Ochs, 1992; Silverstein, 1976; 2003; 2006). That is, discourse analysis of Facebook interactions will focus on language ideologies and the construction of indexical meanings.

Although this study focuses on second generation transnational Mexicans of ranchero background in Chicago, its implications may not be limited to Mexican-origin U.S. residents. Given the plurilingual nature of the U.S., this portrait may provide insights into the practices of bilinguals of any background, including Latinos of non-
Mexican origin and non-Latinos. Although culture does play a role in how individuals construct their identities, the constant is that many Latinos and non-Latinos alike command a language other than English and live in the U.S. context often parallel to their family context or in touch with societies abroad. Therefore, this study can provide a window into the engagement that such individuals have with Facebook in terms of identity construction and language use.

1.4 Conceptual Framework and Review of the Literature

Most research on the children of immigrants has dealt with their varying integration into U.S. society with assimilation (Alba & Nee, 2003), acculturation (Giles & Johnson, 1987), and segmented assimilation (Portes & Zhou, 1993) theories. More current views have begun to add their transnational experiences and identities (Cornelius et al., 2009; Kasinitz et al., 2010; Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Louie, 2004; Smith, 2006). Such approaches have begun studying relationships between societies, including issues of gender, race/ethnicity, and class, as well as institutions both within and across societies, salient factors in transnational communities. Thus, in these recent studies of transnational communities the concept and framework of transnationalism has been adapted and extended in some cases to even include those members of a society who never migrate and exclude those who merely visit the parent’s country of origin and whose visit is branded ‘symbolic’ (Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Waters, 2006). It is this expansion and growth of the concept that has led other scholars who studied communities of immigrants and the new generations to doubt the concept as a framework and believe it to be less useful when talking about subsequent generations (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006;
Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010). Despite the growth of research in this area, however, there are still aspects that have been underemphasized, such as individual variation within the community studied, language variation and change, and how language is an intricate part of identity formation. Additionally, the ubiquitous use of online social network sites such as Facebook also offers a window for the study of how members of a particular transnational society interact with one another.

It is particularly important to understand identity construction, especially as it occurs in language, since children and grandchildren of immigrants in transnational communities are raised simultaneously with parents’ “home country” and U.S. identities and ideologies, and often with two or more languages and diverse varieties of those languages. The various combinations of these identities are embedded in oral language and in informal literacy such as that found on Facebook. Studying language is a window to study such identities, which deeply impact educational choices, experiences, and achievements. Therefore, the next sections explore relevant work on identity and on language and literacy ideologies, computer mediated discourse (writing in the internet), and social networks.

1.4.1 Identity

The study of identity has gained importance in the past few decades as research approaches changed from structuralist and positivist positions to constructivist and sociocultural perspectives, especially in the field of language study. For example, language variation studies have traditionally focused on the study of dialects, but not so much on the speakers themselves. With the study of speakers being the agents and
making language choices, greater focus has been given to the identities they index with
their language use. The study of identity is paradoxically the study of uniqueness or
differences among individuals and of similarities or relationships the individual has with
the larger society (Buckingham, 2008). This is why one can talk about particular
identities (such as the “school kid” or “street kid” in Flores-González, 2002) or national
identity, for example. However, the study of identity in language has not come without
problems. As scholars identified participants’ identities in their studies, they ran the risk
of essentializing those groups (Mendoza-Denton, 2008), even when the recognized
categories arose from an emic perspective (e.g. the meanings girls gave to Norte –north
and Sur –south in Mendoza-Denton, 2008).

The notion of identity itself has also been contested. Recent work defines it as a
“set of conventions” that position an individual in relation to other individuals, groups, or
cultural systems they interact with and to which they belong (boyd, 2008; Hall, 1996;
Mendoza-Denton, 2008). Identity is the place an individual constantly negotiates within a
group, and it is ever changing depending on the agentive power and axes of difference,
such as race/ethnicity, age, or economic status. This leads some scholars to conclude that
a single notion or study of identity is untenable (Mendoza-Denton, 2008), since
individuals may not have a fixed, permanent identity (see also Hall, 1996). However, the
study of multiple ‘identities’ has resulted in a “crisis of identity” as individuals are de-
centered from themselves and their places in the larger society (Hall, 1996). Such crisis
has been the subject of many studies and views of identity.

Rather than focusing on identity, then, scholars have begun to focus on the
process of “identification” (Buckingham, 2008, p. 1; Hall, 1996, p. 600), an on-going
process of indexing a sense of self in relation to others, which only exists when it is performed (boyd, 2008). This idea is developed in Goffman’s theory of self-presentation, which explains that in the presence of others, “there will usually be some reason for him [an individual] to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interest to convey” (Goffman, 1959, p. 4). This is called impression management. Identities are then the “symbolic performances generated by individual choices of practices in fluid societal and situational contexts” (Schecter & Bayley, 1997, p. 513). Impression management relates to how a person attempts to control information in an interaction in order to control how others perceive them. Information can be communicated via language (spoken, signaled) and gestures. Thus in a given interaction, symbolic actors can take into account the social situation in order to convey an impression and can signal a change in footing (Goffman, 1959) or in direction of interaction (Hall, 1996) by a change in gestures and language. Given the importance of language in the study of identity, this study focuses on Mendoza-Denton’s (2008) definition of identity as the “active negotiation of an individual’s relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signaled through language and other semiotic means” (p. 475). As boyd (2008) explains, to study individuals’ identities in mediated contexts, which has not been previously studied in any of the studies cited so far, individuals must “engage in explicit acts to write themselves into being” [emphasis added], creating a social network profile and interacting in the site as an act of “self-presentation” (p. 121). Before discussing writing in social network sites (SNS) in relation to identity, it is first necessary to define ethnic identity, since that is central to this study.
1.4.1.1 National and Ethnic Identity

In the 2012 summer Olympics, Leonel “Leo” Manzano, a Mexican-born U.S. citizen who is a middle distance Track and Field athlete runner, won a bronze medal in the 1500-meters final representing the U.S.A. This was the first time a U.S. athlete won a medal in this competition in 44 years. In his victory lap, he waved both the U.S. and Mexican flags (although when receiving the medal he only wore U.S. attire and flag). This action resulted in both praise and condemnation from the U.S. public and media, including prominent Mexican-American journalists such as Ruben Navarrete who asked Manzano to show some respect to his new country and not to have left his heart behind in Mexico (Navarrete, 2012).

One of the main sources of cultural identity are national cultures (Hall, 1996). It is very common to hear people identifying themselves with institutions, symbols, and representations of nations. For instance, at the Olympic games, names of nations, their flags, and national anthems create symbolic communities which “generate a sense of allegiance” (Hall, 1996), making the nation a system of cultural representations. As Gellner (1983), quoted in Hall (1996), explains, “Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity, but it has now come to appear as such” (p. 6). However, national culture is just a discourse that constructs identities with what we can identify. It is not something that is inherent to an individual at birth; rather, it is formed and constructed in relation to various national representations. Thus, national cultures are only “imagined communities” that are usually seen as homogeneous.

In the case of Mr. Manzano, who decided to display both flags, his affiliation and identification was with two countries, something that Mr. Navarrete deemed as wrong.
For Mr. Navarrete, the fact that one lives in a country, seizes its opportunities, and wears its uniform means that one should identify as a member of that country. However, no country is monolithic; in fact, “modern nations are all cultural hybrids” (Hall, 1996, p. 297). Each country includes different groups of people who associate themselves together and perceive themselves to belong to the same category of “ethnic group” (Giles, 1979, p. 253). In the case of Mr. Manzano, the American flag displayed his national identity (or affiliation or representation), and the Mexican flag showed his ethnic identity and affiliation. As Schecter and Bayley (1997) expressed, “ethnicity is not about what one is, but rather about what one does” (p. 444). In his opinion column, Mr. Navarrete reminded Mr. Manzano of his American citizenship; however, did Mr. Manzano stop being Mexican and acting Mexican just by gaining citizenship? Therefore, for this study the notion of ethnic identity will be used, for it is a more emic perspective, where consideration is given to how members group themselves and each other and what they do similarly and how they interact with each other, rather than simply by what many have in common which is American citizenship.

Focusing on a discussion of ethnic identity does not finalize the argument for studying identity. Studies that have focused on “acts of identity” have shown the complex interaction between race and ethnicity. Both race and ethnicity are constructed categories that are based in social realities (Fought, 2006). They are often defined together; however, if “race and ethnicity are separated by some criterion, the most frequent one [is] elements related to physical appearance” (Fought, 2006, p. 10). Fought (2006) provides several definitions that explain the terms race and ethnicity together; an example is the following definition by Bobo (2001).
Common usage tends to associate “race” with biologically based differences between human groups, differences typically observable in skin color, hair texture, eye shape, and other physical attributes. “Ethnicity” tends to be associated with culture, pertaining to such factors as language, religion, and nationality. (Bobo, 2001 p. 267, as quoted in Fought, 2006, p. 10)

In a statement about “race” the American Anthropological Association (AAA) explains that the idea of “race” has “carried more meanings than mere physical differences” (AAA, 1998, para. 3). The idea of “race” evolved as a worldview, which is “a body of prejudgments that distorts our ideas about human differences and group behavior” (AAA, 1998, para. 9). Therefore, AAA encourages phasing out the term "race," and instead appropriately replacing it with more correct terms related to ethnicity. AAA defines “ethnicity” as

The identification with population groups characterized by common ancestry, language and custom. Because of common origins and intermarriage, ethnic groups often share physical characteristics which also then become a part of their identification--by themselves and/or by others. However, populations with similar physical appearance may have different ethnic identities, and populations with different physical appearances may have a common ethnic identity. (AAA, 1997, para. 18)

Despite the inter-ethnic contact and interdependence, there are still cultural differences between ethnic groups (Barth, 1969). Thus, ethnic group is defined in the anthropological literature as a population which “is largely biologically self-perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms, makes up a field of communication and interaction, has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order” (Barth, 1969, p. 18). This definition is taken as a heuristic because the boundaries of ethnic groups are problematic and are interrelated with racial and cultural
difference, separation, and language barriers. However, the new identities are a product of globalization and represent what members of a group have in common, which is not necessarily cultural, linguistic or physical. Instead they are viewed and treated simply as being different from the dominant culture (Hall, 1996). For example, outside groups or institutions that provide official labels for groups (e.g. census documents) give certain labels to specific groups (Barth, 1969; Schecter & Bayley, 1997) simply from acting different from the dominant group.

Among the ways to study identity, there are approaches that have used language as a way of signaling which ethnic identity individuals have. Language has been a “powerful tool in the display of the ethnic self” (Hall & Bucholtz, 1995, p. 357). However, language does not simply signal a particular ethnic identity, since it also includes what linguistic features are borrowed from other minority ethnic groups with which members of a group interact (Fought, 2004). For instance, studies of Puerto Rican speakers in New York have revealed that males adopt African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) features in their speech (Zentella, 1997), since they have contact with AAVE speaking friends and acquaintances. Fought (2004) labels individuals from one ethnic group who borrow linguistic features and take them back to their group for others to adopt “dialect brokers”, and there are not many studies of them. This is the case of much of the hip-hop language that has transcended boundaries, even for individuals who do not have any contact with AAVE speakers. Although this is also the case in this study, the focus is not on this aspect, and the brief discussion here is only to point out the fluidity among ethnic groups. The study of identity and language has focused on language variation (i.e. what linguistic features belong to particular groups), but not many
of these studies have focused on linguistic change (Fought, 2004). Among those studies that have is Milroy and Wei (1995), who constructed an “ethnic index” that helped explain language choice, especially codeswitching. Choice of language and codeswitching thus is not only based on age and generation, but also on ethnic affiliation and network (Fought, 2004; Milroy & Wei, 1995; Zentella, 1997). However, in other cases, the choice of codeswitching was defined more as “crossing” – the use of a language feature which is not generally thought to belong to the person who is using it (Rampton, 1995). Although crossing may be a form of codeswitching, Rampton’s study does not analyze codeswitching as do traditional linguistic studies. In Rampton’s study, some people in a group reject the use of the other language by fellow group members; by doing so, they also reject the validity of the ethnicity of these fellow members (Fought, 2004). Additionally, other group members learn the heritage language in order to gain more ethnic authenticity (Hall & Bucholtz, 1995, p. 362) and gain membership among their peers.

Language choice, whether it is regarded as codeswitching or crossing, raises important issues about membership in an ethnic group and the role individuals play in validating each other’s membership and ethnicity (Fought, 2004). If after interacting with different ethnic groups members of a particular group maintain their own original identity, then it is necessary to find out what members think constitutes membership. That is, emic understandings are needed for determining what constitutes membership for the particular group and what can signal exclusion (Barth, 1969). This aspect will be called centralization and marginalization in this study (explained in section 1.4.3.1 in this chapter). In the social network of focus in this study members do not fully exclude others
in the group. Likewise, some of the marginalized members constantly claim membership and refuse to be excluded. As Barth (1969) states, “the identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a sharing of criteria for evaluation and judgment” (p. 15). Thus, it is the focus of this research to find out how participants define their ethnic group, what the criteria are for membership in the group, and what the practices are for centralizing and marginalizing themselves and others. These dynamics will be explained in the following chapters.

1.4.1.2 Identity Labels

Ethnic identities are signaled with labels used to distinguish one group from another, especially when the two groups are in contact. Thus, in a pluralistic society such as the U.S., many times affiliations to different groups are made in relation to ethnic background, geographical location, or even a school one attends. For example, there are Italian-Americans, Hoosiers (residents in the state of Indiana), or Spartans (students from Michigan State). What complicates labels is that some are self-ascribed and others are prescribed, as well as the meaning each label carries for the members of the group and for the community at large. Among the labels used for people with origins from predominantly Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas, one can find generic terms such as Hispanic or Latino, and in some cases even the term ‘Mexican’ being applied as a synonym for these generic labels. However, numerous surveys and studies have shown that people who affiliate with these groups reject such broad labels. For instance, the label ‘Hispanic’ is commonly rejected because it was prescribed by the U.S. Census Bureau and other governmental organizations over the last 20 years to categorize all
people who speak Spanish, have a Spanish last name, or have ancestry from a predominately Spanish speaking country; it was also first used to identify people primarily in Texas (Fought, 2004). In the case of the label ‘Latino’, which was popularized in the 1940s by a movement called *Pachuco* in Los Angeles, it has been better received by popular culture and academia as an umbrella term, but it has been used more to define people from Cuba and Puerto Rico than Mexicans or people from other Latin American countries.

In the specific case of Mexican-origin individuals, they have often rejected both labels, Hispanic or Latino, as they are both prescribed and fail to reflect an indigenous heritage (Kells, 2002). Many have stated they prefer to be called ‘Mexican’ (Elías-Olivares & Farr, 1991; Taylor et al., 2012). The label ‘Mexican-American’ appeared in the mid 1940s as symbol of patriotism during World War II, and it served the dual purpose of affiliating with the U.S. while at the same time indexing a Mexican origin (ethnic group), thus distinguishing between U.S. Mexicans and Mexican nationals (Fought, 2004). Unlike other groups, labels for Mexican-origin individuals have emerged from different geographical points and transformed across time. The labels *Mexicano*/*Mexicana* have been used primarily in Texas. These labels not only signal their ancestors’ origins but they also show political and cultural ties to Mexico. According to Fought (2004), the label became popular after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), and signaled solidarity with people in both countries. During the 1960s, the label *Chicano*/*Chicana* was used in the southwest by civil rights activists and other intellectuals, and it was chosen to mark more Mexican solidarity and a stronger indigenous background. Fought (2004) explains that since then, *Chicano*/*Chicana* have
become stigmatized terms and considered a militant label used in politics (Elias-Olivares & Farr, 1991). Many middle-class Mexican-Americans have now opted to use the term Hispanic, as it is perceived as being more neutral and less politically charged (Fought, 2004), but this is mainly the case for those monolingual in English. This shift, Kells (2002) argues, represents an ideological splitting that many are not aware of, and it is a reflection of acquiring not only the dominant language but its discourse as well. In this study, participants are called ‘Mexican’ and ‘Mexican-origin’ since it is the label they prefer to use and with which they identify the most. As two members persistently explained in separate occasions, they are all “U.S. born Mexicans.” In Facebook, members of the studied social network do not usually state that they are “Mexican” as they said during interviews or informal conversations they do. Instead, because other Mexicans comprise their social network, they show pride in their Mexican state of origin (e.g. Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato). What is more, in the case of the studied social network, they pair their affiliation with their parents’ state of origin, Michoacán, indexing also their cultural ranchero background. Thus, different contexts yield different affiliations. For instance, one of the young male members posted on Facebook: “Nací en Chicago pero soy de rancho” (I was born in Chicago but I’m a rancho guy [a rancho in Mexico]).

1.4.1.3 Language and Identity

In this study, identity is defined as a sociolinguistic construct (Mendoza-Denton, 2004), built through interactions with others either within or outside one’s own group, whether one aspires to connect with or distinguish oneself from those others (Barth,
Identity construction, then, mainly occurs through language, a core symbolic system and feature of identity with a particular group (Zentella, 1997). One of the main characteristics of ethnic pride is the linguistic pride members of a group have in their language varieties. In studies regarding bilingual communities, bilingualism is viewed as a positive trait (Schecter & Bayley, 1997; Zentella, 1997), but maintaining the heritage language (at any level) is paramount in the formation of cultural identity and membership. Speakers enact different identities through their use of available linguistic varieties (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004), and through language also help construct social, and ethnic, categories (Benor, 2010).

Thus, in the study of identities it is important to note how speakers use those language varieties in terms of markedness (Hume, 2011), that is, when speakers use a certain variety which does not cause any nuanced meaning or special message (unmarked = sameness), as opposed to using a variety in a way that conveys more than the assertion of what has been said (marked = difference). Markedness is the hierarchical structuring of difference that individuals create when they organize themselves into a group in a given social context (Benor, 2010; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). The notions of markedness and unmarkedness are “phenomenological processes that emerge from social interaction” (p. 369) that allow us to discern (non-literal meaning). That is, it is the speaker who gives a language variety a meaning, but communication would fail if the hearer does not know or understand that particular meaning. To capture the use of language varieties in an ethnic group, Benor (2010) has revived the term “ethnolinguistic repertoire” (proposed by Hymes and others), defined as a “fluid set of linguistic resources that members of an ethnic group may use variably as they index their ethnic identities” (p. 159). There may
be a contradiction in discussing ethnic ways of speaking without fixating them and applying them to all members of a group. Focusing on ethnic ways of speaking may also prevent documenting the variation and fluidity inherent in the use. In both Bucholtz and Hall (2004) and Benor (2010), there seems to be a consistent call to move from generalizations that describe the ethnic group as established users of a particular variety and belonging to a particular social category, rather than seeing its members as agents of their ethnolinguistic repertoire. Considering members as agents would permit the study of intra-group variation, intra-speaker variation, out-group use, and of how members delineate their ethnic group. Unlike previous research in which identities were assigned or imposed by others and seen as fixed social categories, more recent studies explain that identity, the study of sameness, is defined by how individuals see themselves as similar to or in juxtaposition to others (Barth, 1969), either consciously or subconsciously (Benor, 2010); thus identities are chosen by individuals themselves and maintained through language use and other social practices (Bucholtz, 1999a). These identities are fluid and the links to social groups are not predetermined, but are in constant negotiation and construction through the hierarchical organization of social structure and individual agency; thus, it is not possible to assume that individuals will have only one single identity, or even one identity at a single time; instead, they engage in “multiple identity practices simultaneously” (Bucholtz, 1999a, p. 209). However, Bucholtz also argues that identities should be seen as attributes of situations rather than of individuals or groups, and that language varieties should be seen as constitutive of social identities and not as reflective of such identities (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). In order to avoid essentializing the term ‘identity’ or using ‘strategic essentialism’ without studying it more deeply, language
as a semiotic action in the construction of identity has to take a more agentive perspective (Benor, 2010; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Language is key to understanding the construction of identities since it has both social (pragmatic or contextual) and referential (semantic) meaning. Given the understanding of how identities are formed and how semiotic processes are used to construct them, various models of identity have emerged. Among them there are accommodation theory (Giles, 1979), audience design (Bell, 1984), and acts of identity (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985). However, these models do not address issues of power and agency as much as is needed for current studies (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). As a response to this gap, Bucholtz and Hall (2004) developed the framework of “tactics of intersubjectivity” to study the relations that are created through enacting identities by highlighting the agency and negotiation used in the formation of identities. Since interactions often convey ambiguity, “the same linguistic act may be understood by different participants as being motivated by different tactics, and the outcome will be negotiated during the interaction rather than being established in advance” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 384). By utilizing a framework of semiotic identification called “tactics of intersubjectivity” it is possible to explain how the semiotic processes of practice, indexicality, ideology and performance account for how social identities are constructed through language use (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 370). In the following four sections, each of these semiotic processes will be discussed.
Practice.

Bucholtz and Hall (2004) explain that the social world is better understood as a set of practices. Practice theory encompasses both social structure and personal agency. Among the theories used to study language and practice are those put forth by Bourdieu (1977) and de Certeau (1984), who view language as a social construct in relation to other social practices. Although de Certeau views the individual as more agentive, and not merely as a product of social structure (Bucholtz, 1999a), it is Bourdieu’s idea of practice being ‘habitus’ that helps us understand language as embedded in the individual through socialization practices. Habitus is then a “set of dispositions to act (e.g. speak, walk, read) and in doing so the individual becomes locatable to observers in the society” (Bucholtz, 1999a); it is the social actor’s way of “being in the world” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Habitus then includes characteristic ways of speaking, although social identities such as gender, social class, age and ethnicity affect each individual occurrence.

Indexicality.

Indexicality is considered a property of speech and a semiotic operation of juxtaposition through which social identities, activities and events point to particular stances and acts (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Duranti & Goodwin, 1992). Developed by Charles Peirce (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004), some signs called indices co-occur to point to something, and not in an accidental way. For instance, smoke is an index of fire; in the case of linguistic features, these can signal or index other dimensions of the specific context (e.g. a tag question may index uncertainty but also an act of requesting clarification) (Duranti & Goodwin, 1992). Another example is that one word can have
two different phonological representations (e.g. the word ‘something’ as ‘səmθɪŋ’ or ‘səmθɪn’), and each of these representations conveys a different social meaning regardless of sharing the same referential meaning (Ochs, 1992). Indexicality can be direct or indirect (Ochs, 1990) and referential or non-referential (Silverstein, 1976). For instance, the use of Mock Spanish racializes its objects covertly and negatively (Hill, 1998), an example of indirect, referential indexicality. Ochs (1992) explains that there are very few linguistic features that directly index social dimensions, in her case, gender. However, direct indexicality associates linguistic structures with social categories through a chain of semiotic associations (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). For example, the authors explain that a linguistic particle associated with a particular stance is a style (e.g., rising intonation at the end of a phrase). Certain styles have specific connotations (e.g. the rising intonation at the end of a phrase can denote insecurity). If mostly women use this specific particle, then the linguistic particle is indirectly associated with women (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004; Ochs, 1992), so that rising intonation denoting insecurity is associated with women. Thus, social categories are associated indirectly with linguistic structures and so can be used to establish and justify power inequities between groups (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004).

Language Ideology.

Linguistic anthropology has utilized the concept of language ideology (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Woolard, 1998; Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998; Kroskrity, 2000) to understand how identities are constructed in relation to social and linguistic practice. The study of language ideologies pays attention to the semiotic processes that
make the language enter into power relations (Kroskry, 2004; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskry, 1998). Irvine and Gal (2000) developed a model to study language ideologies by explaining how language can attain power and sociopolitical meaning. In their model they include iconization, erasure, and fractal recursivity. Iconization and indexicality are related processes of identity formation but operate differently, and whereas indexicality produces ideology through practice, iconization represents practice through ideology (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). For example, in the U.S. there are ideologies underlying “English only” policies, where the use of some languages is only maintained in private situations among friends and family. If a language such as Spanish is used publically by speakers of English, it is usually to ‘mock’ the language or mock the situation through the language. Thus non-English languages become icons of unintelligent, ignorant, and laid-back personas such as in the case of “mock Spanish” (Hill, 1998). This iconicity of Spanish, for example, makes its use (like the use of other non-English languages) undesirable at school or work (Schechter & Bayley, 2002), leading to its loss in the younger generations.

According to Fought (2004), attitudes about language are indexical. When speakers evaluate speech and ways of speaking, they are evaluating all the social dimensions related to the speaker (e.g. ethnicity, gender), but also other aspects such as intelligence, social status, and education. These evaluations determine the level of engagement an individual takes when learning a language and also can predict success or failure in learning it (Schechter & Bayley, 1997; Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). Language ideologies are also the source of common misconceptions about languages and language varieties. Language attitudes of institutional contexts create environment and policies that
would undervalue or minimize certain varieties. Thus, in the case of Mexican-American bilinguals for example, such attitudes and misconceptions may subvert the success of individuals, especially in writing, as they do not always use the standard norms (Kells, 2002).

*Performance.*

While practice is habitual and largely unconscious, performance is highly intentional. Performance, “a mode of language use, a way of speaking” (Bauman, 1975, p. 293), is the awareness of social display (Buchultz & Hall, 2004). Performance allows individuals to display style and exaggerate their ideological associations and identities in a subversive or resistant way (e.g. Bauman & Briggs, 1990). Goffman (1959) defines performance as all the activity of an individual, which occurs during a particular period by which they attempt to persuade an audience to evaluate or judge him or her in a particular way by presenting a “personal front” or “expressive equipment” with which others will identify the performer (p. 24). The personal fronts may include social dimensions (e.g. gender, age, and ethnicity) and other characteristics such as posture, looks, speech patterns, and facial expressions. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) explain that ideology is the level at which practice enters the field of representation, and indexicality mediates between ideology and practice, and performance brings out ideology through practice. Therefore, performance becomes “constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication” (Bauman, 1975, p. 293). That is, performance is emergent in discourse.
Cultural ideology is not the same as a social practice; identity is not the source of culture, but the outcome or effect of it (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004, p. 382); and language is a fundamental resource for cultural production, hence identity production. Language is not merely a mirror reflecting culture and identity. Identity is an outcome of cultural semiotics produced contextually in relation to four tactics. The practices that produce identities can be positive or negative, and individuals exert agency and decide which ones to construct through language and when. Language cannot be viewed independently from social practice. As Anzaldúa (1987) concluded, “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept as legitimate Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex-Mex and all the other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself” (p. 59). Language and identity are intricately interrelated, but institutions influence this relationship through language ideologies.

1.4.2 Writing and Labels

Labels are problematic because they do not reflect variation within a group (Harklau et al. 1999). They can also be misleading and can be used to exclude people. Labels may only reflect how an individual or a group is viewed by others in a particular context and through the lens of certain values (e.g. ELL immigrants branded as “good kids” compared to U.S. born students in high school vs. “worst students, rebels and underachievers” compared to international students in college, Harklau et al., 1999, Harklau, 2000). Additionally, labels used for minorities in the U.S. usually connote deficiencies, and depending which labels a student has at a certain time, it may open or
restrict certain types of services, thus providing a form of social capital (Oropeza et al., 2010). In some cases, labels do not carry any capital (e.g. “commuter student”); other labels are mutually-exclusive, and while having one label opens access to some resources, another may hinder it; still others reflect what students think or how they view themselves (a student with a physical disability). This last scenario taps into identity, which can be assigned (through a label) or enacted. In the field of second language, however, the problem is that linguistic identity and linguistic ability are in conflict (Chiang & Schmida, 1999), making the use of labels arbitrary and subjective. For instance, labels imposed can differ from the way students see themselves (e.g. a person may see him/herself as bilingual even if their command of English is minimal). However, their affiliation with a label or a group is the result of positioning themselves socioculturally (e.g. Bruna, 2007, Kells, 2002).

Another issue with labels to describe the children of immigrants is that labels such as generation 1.5 or English as a second language (ESL) students are more than just descriptors. They can function as stigmatized institutional markers (Ortmeier-Hoper, 2008) which index a deficiency of the student (e.g. the need to receive additional services, including linguistic help). Such labels create a tendency to place students into a fixed category when in fact this category may not suit them (Blanton, 1999; Costino & Hyon, 2007). In many cases, students’ identity labels are chosen solely according to their linguistic ability, and fail to account for other factors important to their identities (e.g. the label of ESL on a student whose home language is not English but who has had all his or her schooling in English). Many times, students are willing to take on the label in order to receive the services, but do not like the negativity that comes with it.
Labels, therefore, can be both exclusive and restrictive. Labels do not aid in seeing the plurality of identities and backgrounds students have. While they may sometimes be politically expedient, when studying people, such labels may just be a way to impose an identity upon another person, and often may not serve as an accurate descriptor. Also, labels have negative connotations when they do not describe the “mainstream” norm (which usually does not have a label because it is an unmarked category); thus ESL, bilingual, bicultural are not seen as positive markers, because diversity is not typically considered a positive attribute in school contexts by teachers and students alike (Ortmeier-Hoper, 2008). Even when a person was inappropriately labeled ESL, as is the case of many second generation Latinos or Latino immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as babies, and their command of English surpasses any other language they may have been taught, they frequently experience difficulties with their linguistic identity. On the one hand, they are not comfortable using their heritage language; on the other hand, although they speak English, they are not part of the culture of the mainstream or of academic English (i.e. the students in Kells’ms, 2002, study). One of the main reasons for this disparity is the use of the label linguistic minority (Ortmeier-Hoper, 2008). Linguistic minorities are not always judged to need linguistic services; however, they can still be stigmatized simply because their first language is not English or because they speak two or more languages and/or dialects of those languages. In some cases, these students are simply labeled ESL, based on having the status of immigrants or racial minorities and coming from low-income backgrounds (Oropeza et al. 2010).

Recently, scholars have argued for the avoidance of ESL-related labels altogether (Matsuda et al., 2003). They explain that one of the common mistakes is to label a
student’s writing as ESL which causes the rater to overlook the overall content due to the focus on marking every variation from standard English norms. Additionally, labeling students as ESL or bilingual may negatively represent students as “perpetual foreigners” and in need of “constant remediation” (p. 155). Labeling may fail to recognize students’ needs, for instance, if students are constructed only as either ESL, who need linguistic help, or monolingual English speakers (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008). Therefore, many students who do not fit neatly into either category, and who have needs other than those defined by the two macro-groups, are at a disadvantage because their access to English language development opportunities and resources is limited. There are a few cases in which the recognition of all levels of English and Spanish, for example, afforded an environment that fostered the fluidity of students’ identities between experts and novices, and did not lock them into a single ESL label (Kibler, 2010) but they are not many. The issue also exists beyond classrooms and second language writing teachers at elementary, middle, and high school education. Students have commented on how the pervasive use of English had affected part of their identities. It is not until students are in college that they sometimes regain what the English-only system had caused them to lose (Callahan, 2010).

1.4.2.1 Writing and Identity

Writing, especially in all the available languages, is a powerful tool that not only grants users more abilities but an option to freely explore their identities, especially when it is not attached to any labels. Discourse in both its spoken and written form is the “mediating mechanism in the social construction of identity” and the “site in which
identity is manifested” (Ivanič, 1998, p. 17, 18). Since identity is socially constructed and culturally situated, individuals are aware of their own identities and that of others. For Ivanič (1998), writing is an act of identity since people follow socio-cultural possibilities of representation, reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and values and beliefs which they embody (p. 32). Following Bourdieu (1977) and Goffman (1969), Ivanič (1988) proposes three different writer identities: the autobiographical self, the discoursal self, and self as author. The autobiographical self is what constitutes the way of being at the moment or a ‘habitus’ and the discoursal self the ‘performer,’ hence the importance of studying written language and identity in writing, especially in computer mediated communication (CMC) and social network sites (SNS), which have become much more central to contemporary U.S. life.

An increasing number of studies of language focus on writing. With advances in technology, researchers began integrating the study of language in computer networks (Herring, 1996). Although the focus on computer networks has broadened, the focus on language in CMC is still in its initial stages. One of the places where it has taken a greater focus is within second language writing research and in writing classrooms in general, where computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been used for feedback, peer review activities, tutorials, discussion sessions, and writing exercises. Much of the research is on the usefulness or effectiveness of using some CMC methods, mistakenly seen as impersonal, anonymous, egalitarian, fragmented and spoken like, which prompted other researchers to begin distinguishing among CMC types and uses (Herring, 1996).

The problem with second language writing research and composition studies in general is that they have essentialized the notion of L2, bilingual, linguistic minorities
under the single label “second language writer,” which does not allow studying the multiple identities individuals construct as they interact with others (Cox et al., 2010). Additionally, such research has focused primarily on academic literacies and how students write their identities into academic settings. One of the common frameworks is the “acts of identity” of Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985), but the focus has not deepened concerning the linguistic resources these writers use along with behaviors that identify them with a particular group. Cox et al. (2010) explain that identity is “often obscured by educational institutions’ intent to ascribe fixed entholinguistic identities to students” (p. 195).

There is debate on whether the language used in CMC or social network sites (SNS) is literacy or is a written representation of spoken language. However, the use of CMC and other computer technologies in the area of literacy research has sometimes been regarded simply as literacy in the digital age – the coding and decoding of information using the available means, in this case a computer. However, if one takes the sociocultural approach and sees that there is no single literacy, but an array of different literacies people practice, it is evident that when focused on the digital arena, there will also be an array of digital literacies that go beyond “mastering keystrokes” (Badwen 2008) to include functional skills. These digital literacies “involve the use of digital technologies for encoding and accessing texts by which we generate, communicate and negotiate meanings in socially recognizable ways” (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p. 258). Digital technologies are not restricted to text and colors (as is print), but are also shaped by sounds, images, skills dealing with hardware and software, and the use of a variety of digital codification systems (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008). Digital technologies include
platforms such as blogs, vlogs, video games, text messages, online social network pages (e.g. Facebook), discussion forums, internet memes, online search results, wikis, digital storytelling sites, among other platforms and features, each taking on its own multiple forms (e.g. a personal blog or a clothing review blog). A main characteristic of participating in these sites is that each requires a user to be “skilled at deciphering complex images and sounds as well as the syntactic subtleties of words” (Lanham, 1995, p. 200). It requires that the person using any site(s) applies the knowledge they have of the platform “for specific purposes in specific contexts of use” (Scribner & Cole, 1981, p. 236). Knowledge and skills to use the platform are necessary as users are constantly moving from one medium to another and tailoring their practices to a specific format and audience. Yet research on writing done using digital technologies is an area that is hardly explored.

However, some teachers and language purists are concerned with the language used in computer-mediated communication and other digital forms of communication, such as instant messaging (IM) and texting (txt). Their concern is primarily with the fact that the language used in digital forms of communication has different conventions from academic literacies. Teachers and purists would argue that the language with which individuals communicate digitally is writing; others would say it is a written version of spoken language. Scholars have referred to such communication as textese (use of abbreviations of the English language in order to speed communication in mobile and internet messaging), ‘netspeak’ (the language that is commonly used in CMC and that does not follow the standard conventions of orthography and grammar), computed mediated discourse, and e-grammar, among other labels (see Herring, 2011). While some
of the textese and netspeak forms of communication have certainly changed some
conditions of writing (at least in CMC, which is perceived as being used in informal
settings), not all short forms and untraditional spellings are merely reductions of the
standard spelled world, and in many cases they do follow phonemic conventions of
particular language varieties or dialects. For example, Kells (2002) studied college age
bilinguals in Texas and found idiosyncratic evidence of Spanish phonological
“interference”, that is, orthographic errors that can be traced to confusion between
English fricatives (e.g. /f/ for /v/) and vowels (e.g., leaving for living) as well as the loss
of inflectional morphemes (e.g. use- to for used to). A closer look at these issues is
provided in the following chapter.

Sometimes individuals are aware of these orthographic differences and what it
means for people who understand the source of the alternative spelling. In some cases
alternative spellings have been taken up by an ethnic group in order to define their
collective identity in artifacts such as a t-shirt (Johnstone, 2013). Johnstone (2013)
suggests that “metonymic relationships between linguistic variation, class, and place are
both evoked and created by juxtaposition in discourse or artifacts like this shirt and in
many other genres and exemplars of texts and talk” (para. 2). Whether individuals make
those conscious choices when writing in metonymic or short forms, the fact is that
textese, netspeak, e-grammar, and other computer communicated discourse can be used
to reflect people’s language varieties. In a study by Eisenstein et al., (2010), researchers
found that regional slang and dialects are evident in tweets just as they are in everyday
conversations (for example, while something is written ‘suttin’ in New York City, it is
abbreviated differently in other cities). The automated method Eisenstein et al. developed
to collect geotagged data from Twitter, a social network site, revealed that regional dialects also evolve in the use of social media. What is more interesting is that the model can accurately predict the location of the tweeter within 300 miles. This study is one of the first to study regional dialects which, in Sociolinguistics, have been traditionally based on oral interviews or recordings, and since this type of writing in SNS is not as formal or homogeneous as other forms of writing (e.g. in academic settings), SNS offers an alternative way to study informal and conversational language. The same could be said for other sites such as Facebook, or as in the case of the study by Jarbou and al-Share (2012), of other CMC sites which demonstrate the use of consonants by males and females in Jordanian chats. Despite the interconnectivity and internationality of online social networks, specific regional varieties can be maintained and developed. Online social networks resemble their physical networks. However, as many scholars point out, the use of social network sites (SNS) are 1) geographically focused, 2) focused on people with similar interests, and 3) focused on people a person already knows such as friends, family, and acquaintances (boyd, 2008; boyd & Ellison, 2007; Eisenstein et al., 2010).

There is great importance in studying written language in SNS, for the words displayed in such sites are not merely linguistic artifacts but visual ones too, and the non-standard spellings and other metonymic ways to write words are highly “interactional,” since their meanings depend on the mutual understanding of both interlocutors (Johnstone, 2013). Written representations of oral pronunciations, perceptions of people about their own language varieties and registers, and perceptions of others’ language and language varieties are needed for what Becker calls a “linguistics of particularity” ((1984)
as cited in Johnstone (2013). According to Becker, texts take particular shapes in part because:

- “Texts are adapted to the structural conventions of the language or languages they draw on, and they reshape these conventions.
- Texts evoke prior language and reshape the possibilities for future language.
- Texts evoke and reshape interpersonal relations.
- Texts adapt to their media and reshape the possibilities of their media.
- Texts reflect and reshape the worlds they are in and the worlds they are about, worlds that are made of things and ideas about things.
- Texts are loud about some things and silent about others; they evoke and reshape conventions about the sayable and the unsayable”.

Johnstone (2013) gives three examples of words that were spelled in nonstandard ways: and is spelled <‘N>, town is spelled <TAHN>, and wash is spelled <WORSH>. She argues that the existence of different spellings for words presupposes not only that each spelling has a different meaning, but also that each spelling reflects different pronunciations, which are themselves partial and ideological (Johnstone, 2013). Johnstone’s (2013) and Eisenstein’s et al., (2010) research on written dialects on Twitter has opened a window to the study of dialectology in writing.

1.4.2.2 Technology and Identity

There has been a recent increase in the study of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and social network sites (SNS). In the area of language and CMC, researchers have developed new ways of studying language variation (e.g. Eisenstein et al., 2010) to the point that Zimmer (2011) has declared Twitterology as an emerging science. Studies on discourse in Web 2.0 platforms (sites for social interaction and user-generated contexts; Herring, 2013) such as blogs, videos on YouTube, Wikipedia, and use of SNS such as Facebook or Twitter) have become more attractive for
the study of society, human interaction and language (Tannen & Trester, 2013). In the area of technology (CMC and SNS) and identity, studies as early as 1984 (e.g. Turkle, 1985, 1997) focused on the psychology of youth and their engagement with technology, including how it shapes identity and its development. In certain ways, Turkle (1997) explores the creations and fragmentations of individual identities and argues that an individual’s engagement with technology practices fosters an identity crisis (Hall, 1996). Since much of the studies focused on the construction of identities in anonymous environments the study of identity needs to be carried at new levels (Grasmuck, et al., 2009). This notion is not shared by boyd (2008), who believes teens’ engagement with SNS is in fact a presentation of such identity/ies. Teens’ presentation of identities should be seen as solely based in the context in which such identity is created. Presentation of identities should also be seen in studies of other anonymous sites such as Internet dating sites or SNS (e.g. Ellison et al., 2007).

The study of identity and technology surpasses the study of just texts and includes the “juxtaposition of carefully selected aspects” of “fragmented, associative collages of popular culture texts” (Williams, 2008, p. xii). The aspects include memes (ideas that are spread via internet in multimodal form – e.g. pictures, music, and images that can be mutated, adapted, and used elsewhere – see example in Appendix A: Codes), webpages, videos, hyperlinks, and anything used by the individual to create varying identities in an online platform. Due to a highly interactive and multimodal platform, the social network site Facebook has provided individuals the opportunity to display their varying identities. According to Pempek et al., (2009), who conducted statistical research among college age individuals, participants on Facebook included the topics of religion, politics, work,
media preferences (music, movies, and videos), and books as well as personal photos on their walls and indicated that they all were important in conveying their identities. Due to its frequent and ubiquitous use, Facebook has emerged as an important platform for identity research, similar to what Twitter has become for language variation research. However, few studies yet focus on language use on Facebook or identity on Twitter. On Twitter this may be due to the constraints of its platform which does not allow postings of more than 140 characters, as well as to the fact that the audience is wider and arguably more impersonal, depending on how the user is interacting with the web.

Studies of ethnic populations using Facebook have also proliferated. Initially, at the beginning of widespread use of SNS, boyd (2008) claimed that its use created an ethno-racial divide. In an early study, boyd (2008) showed that more whites were using Facebook, unlike Latinos and African Americans, who were using MySpace. Additionally, other research showed that African Americans used Twitter in higher numbers (Hargittai & Litt, 2011), while Asians and Asian-Americans were more likely to use Xanga and Friendster (Grasmuck, et al. 2009). More recent research shows this trend changing. An example is the research of Grasmuck et al. (2009), which concluded that ethno-racial identities are highly elaborated on the Facebook, as minorities are invested in presenting narratives of self-reflection. Grasmuck, et al. (2009) argue that if minorities were in networks where they were a small proportion (for instance in a school network), they would not be as inclined to invest in ethnic or racial identity performance, and instead they would limit their use to specific forums.

boyd’s (2008) study of youth engagement with SNS helped undermine a common assumption that internet sites create a tendency to invent fictional characters who did not
particularly match reality (Turkle, 1997). boyd’s (2008) study suggested that youth’s self-representation was only a facet of their identities, which were co-constructed with those around them. Teens’s self-representation on SNS was selective (often exaggerated) in an attempt to represent themselves in the best possible way to others (Goffman, 1959). Grasmuck et al., (2009) concur with this assertion, as they found that the various dimensions of identities are indeed grounded in offline realities, and individuals seek to de-emphasize negative or undesirable characteristics and emphasize what would make them popular among friends. The fact that individuals interact intensely with their friends, or people in their offline networks, made individuals more “realistic and honest” in their presentations of self (Grasmuck et al., 2009; Ellison et al., 2007). What seems to be salient from all these studies is that identities are co-constructed, leading individuals to perform who they are in relation to those with whom they interact in the SNS.

Barth (1969) suggests that self-representations are framed by others’ opinions; and boyd (2008) contends that self-representations can also be framed by the relationship people have with their audience. Both Goffman (1959) and Bauman (1975) distinguish between “front stage” performances (where impression management occurs), and “backstage” performances (where only interactions with audience occur). In Facebook, performances can be framed freely (but not without consequences), as they are done in “front stage.”

Performances occur frequently on Facebook, where participants are interacting with their audiences, although not face-to-face and often in asynchronous communication. However, the concept of audience has shifted with the use of SNS platforms because individuals cannot see their audiences face to face; rather, they
imagine and interact with them. These audiences can be global, and these technologies have changed the way the popular culture evolves (Williams, 2008). For instance, music videos, along with comments on them in YouTube Vimeo sites, can be shared by an individual, but the video, its dissemination, and its accompanying comments are from individuals all around the world. Comments do not use the same language or even the same alphabet. Thus youth, even in remote locations, are exposed to different languages, language varieties, and ways of speaking that can be adapted to make local ways of speaking more global. Therefore, the global and local contexts that can be found in online social networks affect the way youth interact with others, creating new narratives of self (Hull et al., 2010).

Individuals sometimes maintain their privacy through intentionally providing false information (boyd, 2008). Falsifying information, however, was not detected in the data collected for this study. On the contrary, people frequently constructed their identities by providing as much information about the self as possible. In fact, even though both private group interactions and private exchanges are possible in SNS, much activity is still carried out in open public interactions, as evidenced by the amount of activity that can be seen publicly on those sites. Perhaps users do not consider more private activity because individuals interact primarily with those they are close to in offline networks (Pempek et al., 2009). Nevertheless, individuals using Facebook do have to perform and self-present an aspect of themselves to an imagined audience, and it is what they present and how they do so that is the object of this study.

In recent studies, it is a common assertion that individuals on SNS, especially on Facebook, interact with others they see on a regular basis or with whom they already
have established relationships offline (boyd, 2008; Grasmuck et al., 2009; Pempek et al., 2009). Such interactions go back and forth from online to offline with fluidity (boyd, 2008). The identity construction in SNS is then with and for individuals with whom they already engage offline, which presupposes knowledge of the context in which those identities are constructed (boyd, 2008). Individuals are not creating a new identity, but merely presenting a digital identity or one or more of their identities in a digital form. Those identities presented digitally are influenced by ethno-racial characteristics and social positions (Grasmuck et al., 2009). People position themselves, then, in relation to others whom with they interact in their offline and online social networks.

1.4.3 Social Networks

In the previous section on identity, there is common ground between the idea of the social construction of identities and the influence that the environment and expectations of others have on individuals’ behaviors, especially as they represent themselves. According to Boissevain (1974) it is a person’s social network that particularly influences a member’s presentations of self. A social network is defined as “a boundless web of ties which reaches out through a whole society, linking people to one another, however remotely” (Milroy, 2002, p. 550). A network can have “strong” and “weak” ties (i.e., ties that connect kin and friends and ties that connect acquaintances). The more ties members of the network share with one another (e.g., as kin, friends, coworkers, and sport teammates) the more close-knit the network is (Milroy & Milroy, 1992, p. 5). The structure of social networks can also be described in terms of orders. Members with the closest ties and affiliation are classified as first order and members
who have contact with those first members through their friends (‘friend of a friend’) are second order (Milroy, 2002, p. 553).

Every individual is embedded in social relations, which are not static. Members of social networks are agents through whom the network is always changing (Boissevain, 1974). These ever changing social networks are also self-regulating systems in which the exchange of people is continuous and in which power relations are in constant negotiation (Boissevain, 1974). One of the characteristics of social networks is that they can be divided into clusters, or “segments or compartments of networks which have a relatively high density” (Boissevain, 1974, p. 43). I call these clusters or segments of larger networks ‘subnetworks.’ People in these clusters have stronger connections with one another than with those in the rest of the network, and members can simultaneously belong to different clusters within a network depending on their activity field. Milroy and Milroy (1992) used social networks to examine linguistic varieties and change. They argue that close-knit, dense and multiplex networks were important in their study for the comparison of language variation and change between networks, and that social networks are “mechanisms enabling speakers to maintain vernacular codes, support minority languages, resist institutional pressures to language shift, but when these networks weaken, language shift is likely to take place” (Milroy, 2002, p. 558). As a continuation of the study of younger generations of the dense and multiplex group of rancheros studied by Farr (2006), the same methodology, that is, a social network approach will be used this study.
1.4.3.1 Membership: Centralization and Marginalization

Because power is always part of the relationships between members of a social network, a social structure exists in which individuals negotiate to find a place in the network. This social structure is explained in terms of first and second order relations (Milroy & Milroy, 1992) and centrality (Boissevain, 1974; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Centrality is an index of persons’ prestige, activity, importance, accessibility and communication paths, and lateral links between and in relation to the members of the network (Boissevain, 1974; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Lateral links refers to the most direct ties a person has to another person. Centrality is “where the action is in the network” (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 179). Since the concept of centrality is based on social relations, members of the network itself give centrality or take it away. People who are central in the network are the most influential.

A closer look at the social relationships between people in the network reveals that it is possible to identify multiple centers. The framework of communities of practice explains the idea of multiple levels by assigning people to the categories of “central members” and “legitimate peripheral members” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). However, the concept of legitimate peripheral participation does not necessarily work in situations in a society which is hierarchical, where “not all peripheral participants may be judged to be legitimate and, conversely, some (legitimate) participants are more central and powerful than others” (Haneda, 2006, p. 813). In this study, the social network of transnational Mexicans is structured in a way that allows different people to be multiple centers. Thus for the purpose of this study, membership will be discussed in terms of centrality and marginalization so that it can be understood that these two are not fixed categories of
people, but indications of the fluid movement of members in and out of these categories dynamically according to the ongoing negotiation of power relations within the network.

For this study, centrality and marginalization must not be understood as static categories that are caused by specific criteria constructed by members of the network. Instead, centrality and marginalization are positions that members give and assign to themselves and others based on an array of factors such as personality, influence in the network, economic status, schooling, and the four emic criteria of Mexicanness. Having these factors, especially the emic criteria, do not cause centrality or marginalization. Rather, the language members use indexes language ideologies and, in particular, the language varieties they use index degrees of Mexicanness. By indexing degrees of Mexicanness, members indirectly position themselves and others in a more central and/or marginal position within the network. Thus members use various language varieties and ideologies to invoke emic criteria according to degrees of Mexicanness, which helps them position themselves and/or others as more central (important, influential) members, simultaneously placing others as more marginal within the network. This study focuses on how members use their available linguistic resources to index degrees of Mexicanness linked to the four emic criteria, indirectly and constantly positioning themselves and others as central or marginal in their network. However, this is not to say other factors such as personality or level of education is not important. This process of positioning themselves and others as central or marginal is constantly negotiated. Thus no member can always be at the very center or at the periphery.
### 1.4.3.2 Online Social Network Sites

Similar to physical social networks, online social networks are bounded systems that allow individuals to share connections and co-construct information. Even though the goal of online social network sites was for ‘networking,’ that is to meet new people and form new connections where none previously existed, boyd and Ellison (2007) contest this idea and argue that social network sites (SNS) are “web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 211).

Members of these sites do not usually engage in meeting strangers, although this function is possible, but they enable individuals to make visible those connections they previously have offline such as in familiar sites at school, church, sport sites, and other local activities (Ito, 2010). Thus the use of the name social network sites, instead of social networking sites. In a way, many of the social networks are reflecting those networks that individuals already have offline.

The prevalence of SNS as part of youth culture has increased over the past decade, with Web 2.0 sites that are more interactive and participatory (Herring, 2013). Research projects such as the ones found in Ito’s (2010) edited book have begun to explore the roles, tensions, and conflicts that emerge among individual members of social networks such as those on Facebook. Other projects have explored learning on social networks or gaming communities (e.g. Gee, 2009). The studies found in Ito’s (2010) edited book focus on the ways individuals “hang around, geek out and mess around” as a way to meet both their individual and collective needs (Ito, 2010). These studies offer an
exploration of the new dynamic between global and local contexts, as has been
documented in offline communities (e.g. in the transnational studies of Levitt, 2001 and
Smith, 2006), which also poses new questions for studying the formulation of identities
and ideologies.

The networks in SNS have been labeled “virtual communities.” Virtual
communities have been studied in at least two ways, depending on whether it is social
science or humanities. According to Herring (2008), in the social sciences, ‘virtual
community’ defines a group of people who gather for a period of time in a computer-
mediated environment; the study of these virtual communities generally focuses on social
behavior such as friending practices. In the humanities, the study of virtual communities
has focused on how the online group formation occurs, with attention paid to the
theoretical implications of ‘virtual’ and ‘community’. Technology-focused research
defines “virtual community” as the technological environment in which the community
engages in conversation, which facilitates and shapes relationships among individuals.
Regardless of definition, virtual communities are found in SNS and video-sharing sites,
online games, and online applications (commonly referred to as apps) in mobile devices
(e.g. free networking apps such as “What’s ap?, ‘KakaoTalk,’ or the mobile version of
Facebook, Twitter, and Skype). Virtual communities are now fixed features of youth
culture, since most of the time youth are ‘on’ and in constant contact with each other,
either privately through IM or publicly via SNS (Ito, 2010). Other goals of virtual
communities in SNS are to allow individuals to ‘hang out’ and extend already formed
friendships, keep in touch with family and ex-classmates, explore interests, find
information about knowledge not provided in institutions or the local community, as well
as disseminate their own information, publicize their work to online audiences, and build a different form of visibility and reputation (Ito, 2010).

Not all studies, however, have shed a positive light upon SNS. Although much of the research on Facebook has focused on students, the same could be applied to non-student populations. Lewis and West (2009) found that SNS allow students to create social ties with others, but conclude that SNS such as Facebook “promotes mainly weak, low-commitment ties” especially if the individual is young or college age (Lewis & West, 2009, p. 1209). These weak ties may also be initially made and fostered in workplace situations, or after a night outing. While this may be true for college students and their primarily college-related social networks, it is not necessarily negative, for some individuals simply use SNS to “geek out” and explore, grow, and exploit a topic or a talent (Ito, 2010) and also to perform for specific and chosen audiences (Goffman, 1959); or they “mess around” with new forms of media and in doing so acquire technical and media literacy (Ito, 2010). Thus the study of SNS and other virtual communities has yielded findings in the areas of psychology, sociology, and education, for example. One of the increasing areas of study is that of social capital in SNS (e.g. Ellison et al., 2011) to find the benefits of online interactions and social relations and to find out how much emotional or academic support is garnered by users; a focus on social capital also allows researchers to explore the extent of users’ exposure to diverse ideas and access to non-redundant information.

Whether the research has focused on positive or negative aspects of SNS and virtual communities, the fact is that they are now an intricate part of individual social interactions. Thus their study is paramount in the understanding of social practices. While
researchers have focused on different sites such as Twitter (i.e. Eisenstein et al, 2010), online gaming (Gee, 2009), Friendster, Xanga, (Grasmuck, et al. 2009), Flickr, YouTube, and other media sharing sites such as MySpace (boyd & Ellison, 2007), research on Facebook in terms of social relations and identity is popular, perhaps because it is also one of the most popular sites. A brief review is provided in the next section.

1.4.3.3 Facebook: A Social Network Site (SNS)

Facebook (www.facebook.com) was founded in February 2004 as a social network site for students at Harvard, and shortly after for students at other Ivy League schools and then other colleges and universities. By October 2005, it was launched in other countries and in September 2006 it was opened to anyone over the age of 13 (Facebook, 2012b). As of October 2010, Facebook had over one billion active users, 81% of whom are outside of the U.S. and Canada; 584 million people are daily active users, and 604 million people use Facebook on a mobile device (Facebook, 2012a). Facebook is a free platform for communication in which users can create personal profiles and add other users in a process that has been called ‘friending’ (boyd, 2006). In Facebook the concept of ‘friends’ refers to people with whom individuals can share messages, pictures, video, and converse. Contact among individuals can be via either synchronous or asynchronous methods using IM or video chat. A very common way to be in touch with Facebook ‘friends’ is by updating one’s own profile and receiving updates as ‘friends’ update theirs. As Facebook developed, it allowed users to control privacy settings, form common-interest groups, join or ‘like’ organizations and businesses, categorize friends into groups, and block particular users from seeing their profiles without deleting these
users completely from their friends list. Facebook also has a system of notifications whenever a change is made or someone tags someone else’s name in a publication (e.g. updating a status, posting a comment on a wall, tagging someone’s name on a comment or photo) or if there is a request to ‘add a friend.’ Additionally, Facebook has apps, games, and services that can be purchased through the site in exchange for virtual or physical goods (e.g. iTunes cards to purchase music).

As of August 2012, 69% of the adult population surveyed in the U.S. used SNS, and 66% of them reported using Facebook (Brenner, 2012). Of the people surveyed, 75% of the females engaged in an SNS, in contrast to only 63% of the males, and 72% of Latinos did so in contrast to 68% of whites and 68% of black participants; these statistics are similar to those related to the use of mobile devices to engage in SNS (Brenner, 2012). The group that most used SNS (92%) was between 18-29 years of age. The use of SNS by individuals between 30-49 years of age was the second highest (73%). Fifty-seven percent of people aged 50-64 use SNS, and those 65 and above used SNS only 38%. According to the Pew Research Center survey (Brenner, 2012), most Facebook users receive more from their friends than they themselves give due to a small group of people called “power users,” who participate and contribute much more than the average Facebook user. Thus, in a given month most people would make a friend request, but more would receive friend requests; users would “like” a publication an average of 14 times while receiving a “like” 20 times; a user would provide 9 personal messages while receiving 12; and 12% tagged a friend in a photo, while 35% were tagged by others (Brenner, 2012). A study of a freshman class in the United Kingdom reported that 58% of the students used Facebook and had an average of 358 friends (women 401 and men
and 22% used the site several times a day (Pempek et al., 2009). In the U.S. another study reported that college students have an average of 297 Facebook ‘friends’ (Hew, 2011) and use Facebook an average of 30 minutes daily (Ellison, et al., 2007), and these times are expected increase.

Facebook’s growing popularity and usage has spurred much research in the past five years. However, even though Facebook is open to all age brackets and to the public, the majority of studies on Facebook in the U.S. are on undergraduate college students (Ellison et al., 2011), and even those conducted abroad usually include only college students (Ryan & Xenos, 2011 in Australia; Lewis & West, 2009; Pempek et al, 2009 and Selwyn, 2009 in the United Kingdom). Such studies have focused on a variety of topics. For instance, there has been research on student and teacher use of Facebook (Hew, 2011), on culture and self-expression (DeAndrea, et al., 2011); on students’ school-related uses of Facebook (Selwyn, 2009); and on students’ SNS experiences on Facebook (Pempek et al., 2009). Much of the current research has focused on connection strategies and social capital (e.g. Ellison et al, 2011; Ryan & Xenos, 2011), while other research has focused on identity presentation and privacy concerns (Ellison et al., 2007), as well as on Facebook as a social memory (archiving one’s life) (Richardson & Hessey, 2009).

Most research on Facebook has established that the SNS serves to maintain and develop existing relationships and offline networks. Thus, Grasmuck et al. (2009) explains that there are three types of relationship development on Facebook: 1) enhancement, 2) facilitation, and 3) creation or “connection strategies” (Ellison, et al., 2011, p. 874). The first type deepens pre-existing relationships. The second type expands relationships by becoming the friend of a friend. Lewis and West (2009) explain (quoting
McCarty, 2002) that there are six clusters which explain what it means to be the ‘friend’ of a ‘friend,’ and these are family, neighbors, co-workers, ex-coworkers, classmates and ex-classmates, and networks from other persons. In Facebook, people in all of these clusters are simply called “friends” without distinction (boyd, 2006). The third type of relationship development forges new relationships, which, according to most researchers, is the least utilized function of SNS. Thus boyd (2008) drops the –ing from network[ing], for she considers it to be an almost non-existent activity. In the case of individuals who have made friends with ‘strangers’, they typically did so only to drop them shortly after the friendship was established on Facebook (Richardson & Hessey, 2009).

Facebook research has been conducted primarily in college or school settings and only by looking at individuals’ interactions with the site. Facebook research has not focused on looking offline at people’s interactions as a network. The lack of research of the relationship of individual’s interactions on Facebook and offline has prompted some to claim that the ties created on Facebook are weak, not serious, and low-commitment (Lewis & West, 2009). Additionally, some have even asserted that if one studies the relationships online between people with close ties already existent offline, Facebook is considered unlikely to represent a critical communication channel for those relationships, since it is not the only way close friends communicate (Ellison et al., 2011). Additionally, it may not help individuals gain any more social capital than they already have. However, as Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012) argue, Facebook creates avenues of communication and participation within social networks in relational lives (e.g. with family members). Stephenson-Abetz (2012) argue that at least 20% of individuals can gain some level of social capital on Facebook. They also argue that relationships cannot
be strengthened because relationships are between already-close friends with strong ties. Such types of friendships usually already have multiple, redundant communication channels (Stephenson-Abetz, 2012). The present study found the opposite, that relationships can be strengthened. An explication of this is in chapter 7 on transnational discourse.

Because all use of Facebook depends on the individual’s characteristics, Ryan and Xenos (2011) argue that Facebook gratifies its users in different ways, and not only in terms of social capital. Lewis and West (2011) differ and catalogue Facebook as a “cheap entertainment” (p. 1225). They explain that students usually engage in “passive stalking” (the constant view of friends’ posts and pictures without making a post or comment) and state that not many users have “active” engagement (e.g. making posts, comments, or uploading videos). These assertions are corroborated by Carr et al. (2012) who concluded that Facebook users produced mainly “funny” or humorous messages. However, Facebook has been considered a necessary tool people use to keep in touch, enabling broad low pressure and low commitment communication with “friends” and supplementing other forms of communication (p. 1223). With the present study, I argue that Facebook’s role among the network I studied goes beyond issues of social capital, maintaining low commitment ties, or making humorous messages without a purpose.

1.5 Research Questions

The studies of Facebook focusing on college students and their school networks only offer an important glimpse into their lives. However, just as with the study of language and social networks (as in the case of Milroy & Milroy, 1992; Farr, 2006),
many identities and language practices are negotiated in a persons’ family (Hazen, 2003). These changes and identity formation are even more pronounced when the family and members of the extended family are also members of individuals’ other networks. In this case, the participant social network for this research is comprised of multi-generational immigrant families, which are all part of a close-knit network that originated from San Juanico, Michoacán (studied by Farr, 2006). They have strong and multiple (e.g., kinship, friendship, etc.) ties with each other and thus comprise what Milroy and Milroy (1992) call a dense and multiplex network. To understand the dynamics and identity formation of the participants of this network, it is necessary to understand how close their social network of families is as well as the importance of what they think and say about each other regarding the construction of ethnic identity. The purpose of this study, then, is threefold: a) to describe the ethnic identity/ies they primarily construct on Facebook, b) to investigate how they construct these identities and what available linguistic resources they use to do so, and c) to understand what they accomplish by constructing these identities.

The following research questions further our understandings about the use of social network sites by transnationals with a focus on their use of available linguistic resources, as well as on their engagement with the site and with other members of their online network. This study expands our knowledge of how transnational networks engage in communicative practices in their engagement with online SNS. The study focuses on language use by generations 1.5 and 2 in three major areas: bilingualism and identity, language varieties and language ideologies, and transnational space.
• How do members of the 1.5 and 2nd generations use English and/or Spanish to construct varying social (e.g. ethnic/racial) identities in written language use, particularly on Facebook?

• How do members’ vernacular (oral) varieties of Spanish and English relate to their social identities (e.g. Mexican, American) on Facebook? How does their use of these vernacular (oral) varieties index language ideologies?

• What do members accomplish by constructing those identities?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Research on how second generation transnational Mexicans in Chicago use their available linguistic resources to construct their identities on Facebook can have several contributions, not only for the area of language variation and sociolinguistics, but for bilingualism and second language acquisition, and education.

Concerning language variation, this study benefits the field of sociolinguistics in three regards: it describes what language varieties Mexicans between the ages of 18-35 use in Chicago on a daily basis. This study adds knowledge to how a bilingual community uses its two languages.

Regarding the field of bilingualism and second language acquisition, the present research examines how individuals use their two languages and their available varieties of those languages to communicate, challenge, and position themselves and others in a larger society. It sheds light on the language ideologies that may pressure members to
keep using a language or language variety, to acquire new ones, or to discard languages or varieties depending on their centralization and/or marginalization within a network.

Additionally, in terms of education, the study presents the challenges members of a second-generation linguistic minority face in terms of their languages, their representations, and their identities, and how these are perceived by themselves. The study sheds light on how transnational Mexicans’ educational choices, such as type of school (bilingual or immersion programs), may be affected by their language ideologies, the language ideologies of the broader society, and their language practices.

Finally, the present study serves as yet another window into the phenomena of transnationalism and proposes that transnationalism is also manifested in online social network sites, as they increasingly represent a place where offline networks gather and interact without borders.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

This study shares an assumption with much current literacy research that understands writing as a social practice and writers as active members of various cultural and social spaces (Enright, 2011; Gutiérrez et al., 1999; Paris, 2010; Villalva, 2006). The present study assumes that the idea that students form of ‘correct’ writing, or ‘print’, is not based merely on the guidelines and rules that teachers provide to them. Instead, the context and contact with society also contribute to students’ notions and attitudes towards ‘correct’ writing and their engagement with writing. These assumptions provide a foundation for the belief that if one is able to understand the background, context and experience of second generation transnational Mexicans with writing, it may be possible
to draw implications for the academic context and understand whether or not a particular policy or practice is effective, or whether there are ways to improve.

Another assumption in the present study is that these students’ transnational experience has afforded them opportunities to develop both of their languages, and although the two languages may not be developed to the same level, both languages are used in their daily lives for particular purposes. This assumption underlies this study’s need to explore how these transnational students use writing in Facebook in two languages.

A final assumption is that the participants in this project will voluntarily share their views and attitudes about writing both face-to-face and online. Part of their voluntary engagement is due to their own interest in finding out more about their culture and identity, as they have expressed to the researcher who conducted 15 years of ethnographic research with the first generation (Farr, 2006).

1.8 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that the participants for this study belong to a single network of transnational Mexicans in Chicago. As such, one must keep in mind that every family in this network had somewhat different immigration patterns, circumstances and transnational practices; thus, one cannot generalize to all transnational Mexicans. However, this limitation does not threaten the study because this network is reflective of the background and immigrant history of the majority of Mexican-origin immigrants living in Chicago (Farr, 2006). Thus although the study cannot be generalized to all Mexicans, it may be fairly representative of many similar social networks.
A second limitation is the time allowed for observations in private contexts. Due to privacy issues at work, for instance, it was not always possible to be a participant observer in that context. Additionally, it was not always possible to obtain copies of their private online material, such as private IM communications on Facebook or Skype, emails, or their texting messages/conversations from their mobile devices.

A third limitation is concerned with the problem of self-reported data and data shared in online public spaces. Because social network sites were analyzed, it is important to keep in mind that writing is a social practice, and it may be adapted to the needs of both the writer and the readers (it is co-constructed). Thus, first, what the participants said and posted in their comments was taken at face value, and second, if the participation was online it was assumed that it was the participants’ work and not that of someone else. Finally, it is also assumed that such posts were socially-constructed, meaning that the writer had an audience in mind and that this influenced what was posted.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The synthesis of literature above offers a conceptual framework for examining language use in the construction of identity in online social networks among a transnational social network of Mexican-origin families living in Chicago. The chapters in this dissertation build from the three theoretical frameworks of the ethnography of communication, language ideologies, and indexicality to highlight different aspects of identity construction though the use of language in Facebook conversations.
Given that this dissertation is to some degree a continuation of the study of rancheros initiated by Farr (2006), Chapter 2 explains how this study differs from Farr’s work; in this methodology chapter I introduce the research background, site, participants, and corpus of data. I discuss in detail how traditional ethnography (face-to-face in the same time and space) and online ethnography was conducted. I also describe the data collection and data analysis process in detail. Online ethnography is a recent field of study. Consequently, I also discuss validity and ethical concerns when observing participants’ online spaces.

Chapters 3 and 4 lay a foundation for the discussion of the role of language in the online identity construction of network members. Chapter 3 includes a comprehensive discussion of the language varieties members of the network use. It describes each variety, provides examples, and discusses the patterns in which these varieties appeared in Facebook conversations. The goal of chapter 3 is to describe these varieties and exemplify them to provide background knowledge necessary to understand the discussions in subsequent chapters without having to explain what each variety means or consists of. Chapter 3 also contains some analysis of these varieties and concludes by providing some patterns of use according to age, gender, and membership to the network.

Chapter 4 also serves as a backbone for analysis in later chapters. In this chapter, I analyze the social network dynamics offline in order to explain why studying the network was important (they are a dense, multiplex social network). I also explain what it means to be a “Mexican” in the U.S. for members of the network, but also that their Mexican identities are multivalent and complex. Members utilize their discursive resources to grapple with their transnationalism, their ranchero background, and an institutionally
imposed indigenous background, depending on the context in which each interaction occurs. Additionally, the descriptions in chapter 4 also situate the common patterns observed on Facebook. The main focus of chapter 4 is to establish the new social order of this transnational community, which has changed from a hierarchy based on age and gender to a social order explained by centralization or marginalization. Centrality is the position a person takes and/or is assigned in the network, in terms of prestige, activity, importance, and ties held in relation to other members of the network. Additionally, centrality refers to how influential a member is to the others. If some individuals place themselves and others at the center of the network, there are others who are marginalized. Marginalization does not simply mean being at the periphery until they are accepted, or until they learn and become part of the center, as in a community of practice model (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Rather, marginalization means positioning outside of the center.

Centralization and marginalization are fluid and constantly negotiated by all members using their language varietiers to index four emic criteria of Mexicanness: language, skin color, transnationality, and display of Mexican culture. While the four emic criteria are important for a member to position him or herself or another member as central, meeting the criteria at a given time does not cause the member to be automatically central (and not meeting the criteria does not cause the member to be marginal automatically); instead, members use language to index the four emic criteria in order to negotiate and contest someone’s position as more central. Centralization and marginalization are not fixed categories; instead these two concepts represent the fluid and constant negotiation members engage in to centralize and/or marginalize themselves and/or others within the network.
Chapter 5 focuses on how, through the use of language, members display language ideologies of purism and standardization. Through these ideologies, members use language in ways that index their own centrality in the network as they display their knowledge of different varieties of Spanish and English. At the same time, members marginalize others within the network as they apply ideologies of purism and standardization to each other’s use of languages. The pure and standard use of language is only an ideology that members hold, but it is one that, paradoxically, they do not necessarily follow in their own posts. This chapter also describes how a particular feature of a language does not necessarily index the identity associated with that particular variety. That is, members sometimes use a particular variety to index a different identity (e.g. use of ranchero Spanish to index a transnational U.S. Mexican identity, but not to index a ranchero identity).

Chapter 6 continues the topics of language varieties and language ideologies as they relate to the three identities members construct on Facebook posts: transnational U.S. Mexican, ranchero Mexican, and indigenous Mexican. The difference between chapter 5 and chapter 6 is that in Chapter 6 members not only invoke language knowledge but also skin color to centralize themselves or marginalize others. Chapter 6 discusses the different contexts in which the dynamics of centralization and marginalization occur. When communicating in a Mexican context (that is, with Mexicans from Mexico regardless of present location), members use language features of Spanish to index authenticity as Mexicans, but also use English to index their transnational identities. In contrast, when communicating in a U.S. context (that is, with other transnational Mexicans or with non-Mexican-origin individuals regardless of
present location), members index a higher degree of Mexicanness with their use of Spanish. Thus since both Spanish and English are important for central positioning, bilingualism is a core characteristic that indexes centrality within the transnational network.

Chapter 7 discusses transnationalism and Facebook as a new “imagined” space where members can change discourse patterns from language that indexes that the interlocutors are in different countries, to language that indexes that they are all in the same place (usually in Mexico). This Facebook has become a platform that can erase time and space boundaries. Facebook additionally grants members some opportunities to continue fulfilling their offline roles in the network, to maintain contact with others, or to continue their normal interaction patterns to strengthen the already dense network ties. Finally, Chapter 8 contains a summary and discussion of the findings, as well as the limitations, of this research and suggests implications both for education and for further research.
Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Introduction

In order to obtain a comprehensive idea of identity relationships among members of a transnational network, an ethnographic framework and methodology were used. So as to capture the relationships between language and identity and how these relationships are constructed in the social network space of Facebook, Ethnography of Communication (Hymes, 1974; Saville-Troike, 2003) and Discourse-Centered Online Ethnography DCOE (Androutsopoulos, 2008) were employed. One of the advantages of ethnography is the attention to detail and description of individuals’ and social groups’ language and practices that other large-scale quantitative methods could not allow. To connect language practices to larger understandings of society, it is necessary to utilize theories of indexicality (Ochs, 1992; Silverstein, 1976; 2003; 2006) and the concept of language ideology (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin et al., 1998; Woolard, 1998; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). These concepts are useful for discourse analysis (spoken and written). Indexicality is an inherent property of language (Silverstein, 1976, 2003, 2006). Thus all discourse, whether it is spoken or written, contains indexical forms or ways to “point to” meanings in the contexts in which they are used. Indexicals are linguistic forms that connect language to context (Farr, 2006); and language ideologies are “representations whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings.
in a social world…” (Woolard, 1998, p. 3), connecting linguistic forms with meanings in context. Theories of indexicality and language ideology thus connect the detail for which ethnography is known to broader social and cultural contexts. In particular, these conceptions allow us to connect micro-level linguistic patterns with macro-level meanings, and discourse-level features to ethnographic contexts.

The present study relies on ethnographic methodology, which places emphasis on the social and cultural context of language use. The analysis is holistic and emphasizes “emic” perspectives, the perspectives of the participants, rather than limiting the analysis simply to an “etic” perspective, that of the researcher. The methodology includes long-term participant observation of the community studied, ethnographic (open-ended and informal) interviewing, audio-recording of naturalistic daily speech, researcher fieldnotes, and collection of written artifacts (soft and hard copies). The focus of the study is on a social network comprised of different families, which are the generation 1.5 and second generation (third is too young to be studied) part of a larger network studied in Farr (2006). With succeeding generations, the number of members of the community has dramatically increased, and they currently form several somewhat separate clusters (Boissevain, 1974); that is, sub-networks within which regular communication is intense. This particular cluster or subnetwork of the one originally studied by Farr (2006), which I call the “Cárabez social network,” share ties of kinship and friendship, most of them live in contiguous Chicago neighborhoods, and many of them work, study, and do business together.

Given that the generation of focal participants is comfortable with technology, a substantial amount of the data collection took place in virtual public spaces; thus,
participant observation of the community includes network sites such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter using the Discourse-Centered Online Ethnography (DCOE) framework as proposed by Androutsopoulos (2008). This methodology is heavily based on “online ethnography” research (see Androutsopoulos, 2008), but it is linked conceptually to Hymes (1974) and Saville-Troike (2003). Androustsopoulos (2008) proposed this methodology as a response to the first two waves of online discourse analysis, which focused solely on linguistic features, detaching them from their discursive and social contexts (i.e., they merely looked at the logs or written data without examining the users’ lives or participation in other contexts).

2.2 Research Site

Because the present study is an ethnographic portrait, it is necessary to conduct research in different sites where participants in the family network interact with each other, both in the Chicago area and in their rancho in Michoacán (e.g. home, school, work, social places, and sites such as libraries and community outreach locations in both countries). Due to the ubiquitous use of technology (computers and smart phones), it is necessary to observe participants’ practices when using instant messaging, texting, or social network sites (SNS). The main online site to observe network practices is Facebook, due to its popular use among members of the social network.

The focus on second-generation Mexican transnational students, instead of Latinos as a whole, is based on a recognition that, despite the fact that 65% of Latinos are of Mexican-origin, it is Cuban-origin Latinos who have the highest rate of college attendance among Latinos (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Among the Mexican-
origin Latinos who attend college, the highest percentage attends community colleges (Fry, 2002), and does not necessarily graduate. Additionally, Mexican immigrants now comprise 32% of the U.S. population, a number that is projected to double in two decades (Pew, 2009). Chicago, IL is now the fifth largest Latino metropolitan area in the U.S. with 21% of its population of Latino origin (Motel & Patten, 2012), but 24% of the overall population in Cook County, IL (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). 80% of the Latinos in Chicago are of Mexican origin (Motel & Patten, 2012).

In terms of technology and a reason to study Facebook, Hispanics (a term used in the Pew report) are the largest group that uses social media in the U.S.; that is, 72% of the Hispanic population uses CMC compared to 68% of both the white and black populations (Brenner, 2012). The largest number of users of CMC is between the ages of 18 – 49 (Brenner, 2012), which include generation 1.5 and second-generation individuals in the focal network studied here.

2.3 The Old Project, the New Project, and My Project

This research project is part of a larger study being directed by Dr. Marcia Farr that explores language, literacy and education among multi-generational transnational Mexicans within a large social network of families whose first generation she previously studied (Farr, 2006). Farr’s new research specifically explores 1) bilingualism and identity among 1.5, 2nd and 3rd generation members of the families in order to understand how they use language(s) to construct their identities, 2) their (bi)literacy practices and ideologies, including how they manage their uses of Spanish and English in academic and non-academic contexts, as well as in both face-to-face and electronic
communication contexts; and 3) their (bi-national) educational ideologies and experiences. Its specific objectives include understanding: how the younger generations in this social network of families construct their identities in daily uses of Spanish and English; how they view bilingualism and code-switching; how they use literacy in both Spanish and English; what their views of such biliteracy are; and how schooling experiences in both the U.S. and Mexico (and their transnational experiences in general) have influenced their identities, as well as their language and literacy practices.

This dissertation research draws from the first and second components of Farr’s current research. However, the key difference is that the focus for this research is to understand bilingualism, identity, biliteracy, and language ideologies from the perspective of Facebook. Therefore, attention is focused on (bi)literacy practices and ideologies, including how the younger generations manage their uses of Spanish and English in non-academic contexts as well as in both face-to-face and electronic communication contexts, what their patterns of engagement are with virtual social networks; how computer-mediated communication affects their literacy practices; and how computer-mediated communication impacts their family (especially transnational) relationships. Because the methodology for this research project is ethnographic, all other data collected was used to support and understand Facebook data in context, as suggested for online ethnographic research (Androutsopoulos, 2008).

As a graduate research assistant to Marcia Farr, I was in charge of much of the process of data collection, not only for this dissertation but also for the overall project, as well as data entry, transcription, and initial analysis. Although there are three separate topics and two approaches (Farr’s research is primarily offline and mine is primarily
focused online), there is some overlap; however, the involvement that I have had in Marcia Farr’s research only allowed overall data to inform my part of the research, but did not undermine the fact that I conducted all the research required to complete this dissertation. In turn, Marcia Farr only directed my research and was not directly involved in the data collection, analysis, or discussion of this part beyond her role as my advisor. Her larger research project data collection and analysis is still taking place and is separate from this project.

2.4 Recruitment of Participants

Even though the participants of this network were not selected randomly nor met blindly, my introduction to the Cárabez social network was similar to the “friend of a friend” approach used in the social network framework (Milroy & Milroy, 1992) at two levels. At the first level, Marcia Farr, who has maintained close relationships and steady contact with the network since her initial study, first introduced me informally to the large social network during a graduation party in June 2011. I attended this party with her, where she introduced me casually and informally as her new research assistant, my role at the time, and as someone who would be visiting them for her new project. She had told members of the younger generations that she was interested in studying them just as she had done their parents. All had agreed enthusiastically and briefly welcomed me in the party and told me to stop by their houses. However, one night was not enough for me to just show up and begin observing and interviewing. Later that month, one of the central members of the network, whom I call Licha (all names in this dissertation are pseudonyms), visited the OSU campus as a guest speaker for a class for in-service
teachers. As part of my duties, I took her on a tour of campus and supper with Marcia Farr. I quickly built very good rapport and talked for hours about life, Mexico, and Chicago and she did not hesitate to invite me to visit or stay at her home as often or as much as I wanted.

At the second level, my quick friendship with Licha was another way I started meeting other family members. Shortly after I moved to Chicago to start my fieldwork, I realized that many members of the network I met at the initial party only vaguely remembered me and the project, were not returning my calls, or were saying they would meet me but never did (setting specific appointment times was a failure, which I had anticipated). However, as time went by, I attended other family gatherings where Licha introduced me personally to the others. Therefore, I also began my research with Licha, who gradually introduced me to her relatives and their families (parallel to “friend of a friend”). Later, members who got to know me, began receiving me in their homes and calling or taking me to their relatives’ houses during dinner or just as unannounced visits, an activity I could not do in the first months of my ethnographic fieldwork.

2.5 Participants

In the network of families studied here, members of the younger generations (primarily 1.5 and 2) were either brought to the U.S. as children or were born and raised here. A salient characteristic of this network, unlike many migrant populations examined in other studies, is their transnationality, which means that, to varying extents, members of this family network were raised and socialized in both a small village in Michoacán, México and Chicago. Connections between the two sites have remained strong due to the
economic activities around the avocado orchards purchased in Mexico by the first generation of migrants studied by Farr (2006); now some younger generation members are undertaking and expanding the harvest and nascent exporting business.

Since the present study attempts to draw an ethnographic portrait, the intent was to study all members of the Cárabez social network. The reason all members are important is that in a network like this one, it is possible to find members who construct identities differently from others due to their diverse characteristics and experiences. Some of these experiences are due to members’ varying senses of biculturalism, and their levels of bilingualism and biliteracy; that is, some are both bilingual and biliterate, some bilingual but literate only in English, some have native proficiency in English but exhibit foreign language traits in their English (especially their written English, a characteristic of generation 1.5), some grew up and studied in both countries, some lived in both countries, but only studied in one of them, some are labeled linguistic minorities in their schools, while others are not characterized by their teachers in terms of their language proficiency but by their race/ethnicity (i.e. color of their skin).

All adult members have working class to middle class occupations (construction and demolition work for many men; teachers’ aides for a number of the women; white collar work for those with college degrees). Participants have educational backgrounds ranging from middle school graduation, to high school graduation, to college attendance, to college graduation; these levels of education contrast with those of their parents, the immigrant generation studied in Farr (2006). Figure 2 has the participants arranged according to household. Many of the families reside primarily in Chicago but travel regularly to pay visits lasting no fewer than two weeks. One family moves regularly back
and forth between Chicago and the rancho in Michoacán, living alternately in Chicago and in Mexico; some members of this network of families have permanently returned to Mexico to manage their avocado business. Thus, some of the interviews began in Chicago but finished in Mexico, as the participant was temporarily in the U.S. but returned to Mexico for an extended period of time. Appendix B: *Participants’ information* contains three tables with the all participants in the Cárabez social network, their educational levels, and the country where they are currently living (which has changed in some cases). Most participants travel to Mexico from Chicago, with visits ranging from a week to two months at a time, and a few rarely visited the rancho as adults, but did so as children.
Figure 1 Cárabez social network of families
Adult members from at least 13 households agreed to participate in the study and signed written consent forms to be observed, interviewed, and followed on Facebook as a “friend.” Many of the adult participants who agreed to participate in the study are on Facebook; observations on Facebook practices were only focused on those who interact regularly in the site. Some heads of households had a Facebook page, but this was both monitored and updated by a younger member of their family, thus the site was not considered to be that person’s participation. Some participants who belong to generation 1.5 and older 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation members are the heads of households, younger second generation members are the children of generation 1.5 members, and generation 3 members are their children (all of whom were under 3 years old and therefore too young to participate in this study). Table 1 contains the names and ages of members whose Facebook pages were focal for this study. They are divided into three categories: generation 1.5, older second-generation members, and younger second-generation members. I decided to divide the second generation because their experiences, as they recounted, were very different from each other. Additionally, the separation was also made due to the relationships members have with each other. Older second-generation members gather together and hang out with each other and generation 1.5 because they are cousins. All younger second-generation members are either children or nieces and nephews of generation 1.5 or younger first-generation members. It is important to note that the generation 1.5 members and older second-generation members are cousins, even though they differ in age by more than 10 years. Older generation and younger generation members are closer in age; however, it is important to make this distinction as they take
up roles such as socializing or keeping an eye on younger members, despite hanging out and partying together.

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</table>

Table 1 Focal participants (14) whose Facebook data was gathered

2.6 Data Collection

This section describes each component of ethnographic methodology used to collect data, including the online ethnography needed for this study.

2.6.1 Participant-Observation.

For ethnographic research, the most valuable instrument for collecting data is the researcher him or herself, as it is this person who can immerse in a society in order to observe, understand, and test rules or patterns of engagement and communication. Additionally, it is the researcher, who by participation and observation, is able to notice or elicit reactions to such patterns (Saville-Troike, 2003) and modify an understanding or hypothesis observed. The participation of the researcher in a community is also a key
instrument for data collection because the researcher experiences “naturalistic experimental variation of conditions or interaction[s]” that allows for the testing of patterns of occurrences in different contexts (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 98). What is most important is that much of the data collection is based on situations in which the researcher is an active participant, documenting how others react to his or her behaviors and those of others (Saville-Troike, 2003). Participant-observation is the overarching instrument of data collection for this study.

2.6.2 Observations (Audio and Video Recorded)

Due to the nature of this project, some instances of observation (observation without direct participation) were necessary to avoid being perceived as intrusive. This is the case for observations in school or work settings, as well as some private gatherings (fiestas in which a larger part of the network, with whom the researcher is not acquainted, were present). Saville-Troike (2003) explains that passive observations are usually not desirable; however, she also states that sometimes such observations are better than participant observation and that audio and video recordings may be “useful adjuncts” (p. 98) in such contexts, since they can be accessed later for microanalysis, although recording devices must be placed strategically. If the data collection instrument is passive observations alone, the researcher runs the risk of limiting observations to a single context (i.e. classroom setting), without taking into account the larger social context of communication. Thus observations cannot replace, but do complement, the larger instrument of participant observation.
Audio and video recordings were made using Apple products (e.g. iPhone, iPod touch) due to their excellent sound quality, diminutive size, and the researcher’s familiarity with those products (which did not cause any distraction). Their portability and microphone size are non-intrusive, and a cloud service made it possible to transfer data immediately to a secure online storage site. Additionally, many of the younger participants carry similar devices at all times, making it easier for the researcher’s devices to go practically unnoticed.

2.6.3 Interviews

In order to understand participants’ individual perspectives on how they view their own identities, family dynamics or other opinions, the present study included ethnographic interviews, which were sometimes individual, sometimes in small groups, or as dinner conversation with an entire family. These interviews took place in households and restaurants both in Mexico and Chicago, as well as in online spaces.

2.6.3.1 Ethnographic Interviews.

The importance of interviewing is to elicit information from the participants to capture their interpretations and perceptual and inferential processes, instead of relying solely on the researcher’s interpretations of events. Ethnography of communication does not take interpretive assumptions and inferences for granted, especially of recorded naturally occurring interactions. Instead, the aim is to understand the participants’ own interpretations, how these interpretations were arrived at, and how they relate to what was literally said or done at the moment of interaction (Gumperz, 2001). To ensure
understanding of the participants’ perspectives, the present study conducted ethnographic interviews as needed.

This type of interview allows the researcher to engage in informal conversations with the participants in contexts in which the participants are engaging with the focus of the research. Unlike formal and semi-formal interviews, ethnographic interviews do not follow a prescribed protocol. In other words, there is no date and time set for a one-on-one interview. Instead, because the researcher is immersed in the context in which participants act, the time of interview depends on the activity itself. This is why many interviews were more like conversations, where interviewer and participant started with a question or topic, but the rest was co-constructed and not necessarily dictated by the interview form. Appendix C *Sociolinguistic interview topics and guiding questions* contains a list of topics and questions discussed with participants, which were not necessarily used in the order presented in the appendix. Most of this information was garnered during informal meetings, talks, or over family dinner conversations.

### 2.6.3.2 Informal Small Group Interviews (Face-to-face and Virtual)

Individual interviews are a great asset for learning what a particular member of the network perceives, infers, and thinks of his or her own patterns of engagement with Facebook or identity. However, small group interviews are also an asset, as they allow for the analysis of how a perception or opinion is shaped by an individual’s interaction with other members of the network. These small group interviews are ethnographic in nature; that is, they can take place as the context and situation allows, and they are not necessarily bound to a specific date, time or set of questions. Additionally, due to the use
of social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook or Internet based communication such as Skype, informal small group interviews also sometimes took a digital format. Section 1.2 in Appendix C Sociolinguistic interview topics and guiding questions also contains the guiding topics for informal interviews.

2.6.3.3 Naturalistic Conversations.

Members of the social network are not usually by themselves. They spend time at each other’s houses, work at same or close by places and commute together, or they just decide to pay an unannounced visit. Therefore, in many participant-observation visits, there were spontaneous conversations in which many of the topics I had for interview arose. Other times, members were busy cooking, conducting household maintenance, or simply eating supper; thus, I assumed my role of participant observer but recorded naturalistic conversations. In Facebook, something similar happened. Discussions simply happened on a Facebook wall in which two or more participants commented on a wall post. Many times as a participant observer I “liked” such posts or posted my own reply comment. Other times, members would even tag me to include me in a specific conversation. I tried to be careful and selective by participating only when I deemed it appropriate. Likewise, members would “like” photos or status updates on my own wall, or make comments. The longer I participated and visited members, the more posts I received; thus, I also participated in their walls. Facebook participation from both sides augmented on my wall the periods I went to Mexico or went back to Ohio as members would comment on my pictures or information on when I would return to Chicago, for example.
2.6.4 Fieldnotes (of Participant and Site Observations, Interview/Group Meetings, Other Activities)

Fieldnotes serve as a place for the researcher to practice introspection, the knowledge that everyone has a culture and one must learn to differentiate beliefs, values, and behaviors that are part of enculturation (Saville-Troike, 2003). They record initial generalizations, objective observations (that may not be captured by audio or video recording), individual experiences of members or the researcher, and the researcher’s interactions with members and the perceived reactions to such interactions (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). I wrote fieldnotes daily and after major events, such as an ethnographic interview, or about comments made during a family gathering. In many cases I “dictated” thoughts into an iPhone, which were later transcribed into Word format to ease their analysis. In other cases, they were handwritten and later transcribed into Word as well.

2.6.5 Facebook Data

I followed the Discourse Center Online Ethnography (DCOE) methodology as proposed by Androustsopoulos (2008). I began gathering data from Facebook as participants “accepted” a “friend request” using a profile I created with the pseudonym ‘Newbook.’ I nicknamed this profile ‘Newbook’ since many of these participants’ parents were the participants in Farr’s (2006) study, and many of them understood the larger research project and my dissertation as a new book. As I became friends with some people from the network, others started sending me friend invitations, both to the Newbook page and my personal page. The Newbook page that was created for research purposes contains more than 30 friend requests from members of the larger family.
network whom I have never met, but who became interested in participating in the study as they heard about it from their cousins. None of them were included for this study, which is exclusively focused on the Cárabez social network.

What follows is the data gathering process in DCOE methodology. Note that the second dimension below is the traditional ethnographic methodology.

1. First dimension: Systematic observation of the data

   “Practice-derived guidelines for systematic observation:
   1) Examine relationships and processes rather than isolated artifacts
   2) Move from core to periphery of a field
   3) Repeat observation
   4) Maintain openness
   5) Use all available technology
   6) Use observation insights as guidance for further sampling”
   (Androustopoulos, 2008, p. 6)

   a. “Systematic observation forms a backdrop against which to select text samples for fine-grained linguistic analyses or participants for interview contacts” (Androustopoulos, p. 7)

   b. Beginning sampling: both random/systematic and non-random/purposive

2. Second dimension: contact with participants

   a. Observations and logs
   b. Interviews
   c. Present them with their own writing
   d. Questionnaire (or member checks – e.g. video playback)
I carried out DCOE’s first dimension online, engaging multiple times daily, mainly through Facebook, but also including Blogspot and Twitter (in the beginning, only two members used these platforms). I randomly entered or revised new posts from the Facebook app for iPhone to see what the participants’ activities were and what the topics of such activities were. In Facebook it was possible to see members’ pages as isolated page events (on their wall now Timeline), or in the ‘News Feed’ of the home page within the pseudonym profile. In any case, it is possible to see all of the members’ activity in chronological order. This allowed me to observe their pages in a systematic way, as a pattern of their network activities, rather than in isolation. I began observing what members wrote and how they interacted. As recurrent themes or topics emerged (e.g. missing their rancho in Michoacán), I began a list for future analysis. In some cases, I photographed a screen shot of an important dialogue. This helped me identify foci of attention and develop my research questions. Facebook stores all data on a person’s “Wall” (now called Timeline); thus, at the end of the data collection, I went back to each page and downloaded all of each member’s participation on Facebook for a year, before their accounts changed to the Timeline format, which makes it very hard to see how conversations develop. I used an app called Social Fixer for Firefox, which allowed me to mechanically open multiple “old posts” simultaneously without having to click every time the page refreshed with previous posts. I saved each one of the pages in multiple formats (.pdf, and .html) and used them for data analysis. Due to members’ levels of engagement on Facebook, I ultimately focused on 14 participants’ Facebook pages. These participants vary in age and positionality regarding membership in the network (more central, more marginal). This allowed me to compare their activities with each
other, as well as their interactions, not with the social media itself, but with members of
their network using social media.

2.7 Data Analysis

Because the data collected includes recordings, fieldnotes, and webpages, two
computer programs (Dedoose and Atlas.ti) were used to facilitate the indexing and cross-
analysis of the content from each data set (text, audio, websites, and other documents).
The same methods of data analysis used in the study of the first generation in these
families (see Farr, 2006) were used in this study as well. All recorded data was first
transcribed and then coded inductively with keywords developed by the researcher in
interaction with the offline and online observation of the data. Coding was a recursive
process. Following this process, discourse segments that were coded with the same
keyword were generated from particular databases and examined for subcategories within
the overall keyword category. Keywords were also used to identify and analyze instances
across data sets, e.g., connecting fieldnotes with audio recordings and transcriptions.
Once coding was complete, discourse analysis of selected segments of conversations on
Facebook, which mirror the general way offline conversations were carried out, took
place in order to connect linguistic patterns to social ones (Farr, 2006), by using theories
of indexicality and language ideology in order to infer more implicit meanings from the
discourse. These patterns must be related to patterns identified through participant
observation (and in other types of data collected), ensuring the holistic emphasis of
ethnography. Initially, a set of keywords generated by Farr’s (2006) study of the first
generation was used and then revised as new keywords emerged in order to ensure that my interpretations were grounded in empirically collected data.

2.7.1 Ethnographic Data

All ethnographic data outside of Facebook was utilized to contextualize Facebook activities and analysis of the data. Thus, to facilitate the analysis of the data, the transcripts from 40 out of 130 recordings were coded utilizing the software Atlas.ti in order to identify the instances in which the speakers explicitly talk about or index something related to social dialects. Forty transcripts were used because they belonged to the focal members of the network whose Facebook pages I followed closely. The audios from naturalistic conversations or interviews were not the main source of data for this project. They only served to contextualize Facebook activity. Later, using indexicality as explained by Ahearn (2011), segments were analyzed to identify 1) what people said about social dialects, and 2) what people indexed or “pointed to” in their conversation about dialects. That is, each segment coded was read in order to identify the words that carry different connotative meanings. Special attention was placed on contextualization cues such as intonation, laughter, and codeswitching, for they indicate/index some views of the dialect. For this project, language was seen as the “tool through which our social and cultural world is constantly described, evaluated and reproduced” (Duranti, 1997 as quoted in Ahearn, 2011), and it was analyzed to see which “social alignments” (Johnstone, 2008) the speakers make relevant at the moment of interaction. Thus, the meanings of words were not (always) taken literally, but attention was given to their
“social” meanings, which were being constructed according to context and at the moment of interaction.

2.7.2 Facebook Data Analysis

The methodology for analyzing data from Facebook was as follows. By using the Social Fixer for Firefox app, I retrieved all of the postings the participants in the network had posted since I started the ethnographic fieldwork. This app presents every single posting and activity a person makes from the beginning through the current date. It does not expand the comments if there are more than three, so I manually expanded them and saved the pages as PDF files in order to maintain the original formatting and sequence. I stopped retrieving data when a participant changed to the Timeline view, which works differently and does not allow easy access to or storage of archived conversations. However, I continued taking screen shots of relevant posts. Once all the pages from the central participants were downloaded and saved, I divided the data into two sets to ease the analysis. In the first data set, I decided to focus on the linguistic and function analysis of the data. That is, each single post was coded for language variety used, language function, type of post (e.g. wall post, response post), and genre if any (e.g. letter form, prayer). Coding each post of 14 participants for one month resulted in more than 1,200 codes. Thus, I decided that two months would be enough to obtain an idea of participants’ use and frequency. The first set of data contains all Facebook activity from all 14 focal participants that happened in two months, one in the summer where there was high transnational activity (there are many trips to Mexico), and the other in February when some started changing to Timeline view. In the second data set, I decided to focus
on broader aspects such as language ideologies and identities, which means that single posts were not coded individually. Instead, entire conversations were coded for later analysis. The second set of data includes all of the pages from all 14 focal participants from the time we friended on Facebook until a year later or their change to Timeline view (some started changing to Timeline as early as February 2012, but others didn’t until all profiles were forced to change later that year).

In order to ease the analysis of these two sets of data, I entered it into two analytical software programs: Dedoose and Atlas.ti. The first data set was entered into Dedoose, an online-based software program that allows for quantitative research features, something Atlas.ti does not do. Dedoose enabled me to code (e.g. ethnicity/race, Ranchero Spanish, type of post, function of post) in order to run descriptive statistics of frequency of use attached to a single person or specific group of people (e.g. all females, members between 25-30 years old). The analysis focused on descriptive categories such as language variety, codeswitching, language function (based on six functions by Jackobson, 1960,), genre of post if any (e.g. a prayer), earlier or later month, and type of post (e.g. status update wall post, response post). For a complete list of codes used to analyze data in Dedoose, see Appendix D. The codes emerged from the data. As I identified a feature, or a genre, I would create a code (with the exception of Jakobson’s six language functions). A feature of Dedoose that Atlas.ti does not share is that there is no need to tag every coded excerpt with participants’ names, ages, gender, schooling, or other personal descriptive categories. It is possible to code an entire document with all these categories; thus, everything coded in it was automatically assigned to a particular person. Once all pages from the two months were coded, it was possible to run analysis
on a particular category and divide the results according to personal descriptive categories. For example, I could run a frequency count on all uses of AAVE features coded, and then the program would easily divide these counts according to gender, age, or schooling. This analysis was done in order to examine the language varieties members used and the way in which they were using Facebook from a quantitative point of view. This initial analysis only informs the larger and more important qualitative analysis performed using Atlas.ti. Figure 2 Sample Facebook scheme and coding in Dedoose shows how Facebook content was coded using Dedoose. Keep in mind that each page added to Dedoose can be tagged with the participant’s name, age, gender, schooling, generation, and residence. The following example is from a post made by Fanny.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of post</td>
<td>Wall post – Status update (SWP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of post</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textese (word abbr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emoticon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language function</td>
<td>Emotive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Non-vernacular English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 Sample Facebook scheme and coding in Dedoose

Note: This entire post was already tagged with the descriptors: Fanny, female, 22, community college, generation 2, Chicago, first month. For this reason, the response posts below cannot be coded in Dedoose. While Dedoose eased the analysis of use and
frequency, it did not allow me to draw connections between codes, posts, and participants. However, Atlas.ti, a qualitative-only software program allowed me to draw complex connections between posts and between participants (e.g., contradictions, supporting examples, similarities, etc.). These initial codings served as the foundation for further analysis for different purposes. The coding of my data was partially based on the coding scheme used by Farr (2006), but I also coded inductively as other codes and topics emerged from the data. Once all data was coded I used the Atlas.ti software to sort the data into different categories, identifying patterns and connections (e.g., I sorted all instances of use of African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) features and ran analysis if they correlated with any coded excerpts of display of Mexican identity). The average participant had no fewer than 200 occurrences (this includes posts, replies, social strokes such as “like,” uploads of music/video, etc.) during the year of observation.

Thus, I conducted both a small quantitative and larger qualitative analysis of my data. By using these two software programs, I was able to run descriptive statistical analyses (e.g., how many times a particular language variety, such as Ranchero Spanish, appeared), categorized according to participant, gender, generation, location, language used, etc. in order to explore potential meaningful connections. Once the data were categorized (according to several variables and relationships), I analyzed the type of language used in relation to the type of posting, and the social identities (e.g. female) of the participant who posted. To analyze varieties of languages, I drew on literature that describes assorted language varieties, particularly when referring to multiple languages/dialects used at a given time (see Chapter 3). I also used the concept of language ideologies to identify which ideologies surfaced in the data regarding varieties
of English and Spanish. I analyzed some instances of posts and responses (coded) in
discourse analysis, using the concept of indexicality (as used by Farr, 2006) to support
my interpretations with naturally occurring communication on Facebook.

Any examples I show in the dissertation are verbatim copies of Facebook posts. Thus, I did not change spelling, punctuation, or grammar. I formatted them to be represented in 4 columns. The first column contains the line numbers in the order of appearance. The second column contains the conversation from Facebook in the order taken from the wall. The third is the translation into English, if needed. The fourth corresponds to the turn taking or the responses to the posts made. Therefore, column 1 and 4 are related.

In general, the approach to data analysis was inductive, as it is with all ethnography. All sources of data informed any analysis, including transcriptions from recorded interviews, sample pieces of writing from participants’ schoolwork, and fieldnotes from participant-observation. All of these data were entered in computer files in Word format. Data from outside of Facebook frame the Facebook data in context, a key feature of DCOE analysis. This allowed for validity through triangulation. As with all qualitative research, the process was highly recursive.

2.8 Validity and Ethical Concerns

As a core trait of ethnographic research, one of the processes that ensures the validity of this methodology is the fieldwork carried out by being a participant observer, because data collection depends greatly on how well the researcher knows and is accepted by the group (Scollon & Scollon, 2001). Participatory research allows for the
capture of data, neutral or objective observations from the researcher, accounts of individual members’ experiences in the group, and the interactions of the researcher with different members of the group.

As core traits of ethnographic research, interpretation and reflexivity are important, since the identity of the researcher affects the type of data collected and how it is analyzed. While I share many characteristics with the participants in this study, giving me an ethnic “insider” perspective, my background and other facets of my identity also place me as an “outsider”, who nonetheless shares in a different way the national or ethnic background of the participants. I am a Mexican-born U.S. citizen, who lived in of capital city of the state of Veracruz, Mexico, until the age of 23, when I moved to the U.S. and shortly after started my graduate studies. I travel back and forth between the two countries, spending at least one and a half months in my native state either doing research, studying or traveling.

My background is not that of an immigrant family, although I do consider myself an individual immigrant, neither am I ranchera, although my mother is from that background. For example, rancheros characterize themselves by their franqueza (candid speech) (Farr, 2006), while in urban settings, franqueza is often mistaken as rudeness. In my case, while my mother is often called out for her candor, I was socialized into more indirect speech to show politeness. Thus, all facets of my identity provide varying degrees and combinations of “insider” and “outsider” stances, and affected the collection and analysis of data, contributing to the validity of the research.

In terms of Facebook data, I had to deal with the notion of privacy. Even though all the participants gave me written authorization to see their “public” posts (posts that
anyone could see even if they were not ‘friended’), I had to ask whether they even perceived that as a public space. How much was I really allowed to browse? This problem was partially solved by creating a profile that was exclusively for research purposes, and at the time of “friending” it was made clear that this constituted ‘agreeing to being studied’.

There were not many problems in gaining participants, since many members were interested in the project. Only a few explicitly said they would not like to be “followed,” even though they still later sent me a friend invite, not only to my personal Facebook account, but also to the research account, where a status update indicated “This is a site that will be used for research, by friending this page you are reiterating your authorization for the researcher to observe your Facebook activity.” At times, some members even tagged this research profile to provide me evidence of what was happening on their walls. Other times, I received phone calls or texts at odd times (such as 11 p.m.) from members who wanted me to see some of their posts or conversations, including family feuds or disputes.

2.9 Conclusion

Even though this project started as part of a larger study of the Cáratez social network, the new approach to study the social network via Facebook makes it unique. Not only because it is different from the larger project but because research on online networks is scarce and has tended to focus primarily on college students or on school. Studies of transnationalism have also been conducted in two geographical settings, but have not done so via a newly created online site such as Facebook. With the more
prominent use of technology, the combination of offline and online ethnography is now necessary to complete the portrait of social network practices. In the following chapter, I will explain the strength of this social network of families in order to understand why the main dynamics of centralization and marginalization are of utmost importance for the identity formation of members of this transnational network.
Chapter 3: Language Varieties Exhibited on Facebook

3.1 Introduction

The study of language varieties used on the Internet is essential if one wants to understand how language is a marker of in-group identity in regional or migrant groups (Paolillo, 1999) and how the internet is contributing to language change. Studies of language variation have focused on privileged “vernacular speech in relatively closed, homogeneous communities like traditional working-class neighborhoods, with their dense, multiplex social networks, and in the relatively self-contained symbolic economies” (such as schools) (Johnstone, 2013). With the surge of online social network sites (SNS), people’s daily interactions often go beyond their neighborhoods and schools, and can include people other than those whom they interact on a regular basis. In many cases, even if the interactions are among members of a particular group, the fact that they are displaying a persona affects the way they use language. Audience in SNS is complex. It does not include only those interlocutors in a conversation; it includes everyone in the list of “friends.” In this way, SNS are not self-contained economies or homogeneous communities. Thus, studying language varieties in SNS allows the study of what counts as an authentic linguistic feature in a particular group but also other features that are commonly used or are being picked up by members of that group.
Even though the families studied in this social network interact mostly with each other on a regular basis, the social network is not studied in isolation, as its members are not isolated from contact with other linguistic groups. As expected, the language varieties observed being used by network members are not restricted to English varieties associated with Mexican-Americans, yet neither do they regularly use standard Mexican Spanish. Table 2 contains the languages and language varieties found in the Facebook posts of the family network members. The table also displays other uses of languages such as codeswitching and netspeak (register used by internet users).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard varieties</td>
<td>Standard varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal/Oral-like</td>
<td>Informal/Oral-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular varieties</td>
<td>Vernacular varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American Vernacular</td>
<td>Michoacán Regional Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (AAVE)</td>
<td>Ranchero Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European American Vernacular</td>
<td>Mexican Spanish in the U.S. / American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish (in Chicago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino / Chicano English</td>
<td>Other varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codeswitching (“Spanglish”),</td>
<td>Other languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>netspeak</td>
<td>(used sporadically)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French, Portuguese, Mandarin</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Language and varieties found in Facebook data

In the following sections, each of these varieties will be described and exemplified with Facebook posts from the participants in the Cárabez social network. While there is abundant research on AAVE, there is little research on most of the other U.S. language varieties (e.g. American Spanish (in Chicago), Chicago European American Vernacular English). Additionally, studies of Mexican Spanish varieties are
plentiful but not conclusive despite their systematic study over several decades (Martín Butragueño, 2009). Studies of Mexican Spanish varieties focus on regional dialects, with particular attention to the “Mexico City dialect” (e.g. Lope Blanch, 1970, 2004; Marden, 1896). Fewer studies have tried to identify other varieties of Mexican Spanish outside Mexico City, especially varieties that can be linked to a particular group in Mexico (e.g. linked to Mexicans of ranchero background). Two studies of interest for this research are those of Santa-Ana & Parodi (1998) and Farr (2006). Although such studies did not offer an extensive examination of dialects, they identify features found in the Michoacán region, especially around San Juanico, where members of the social network are from. What is more important is that both studies identify stigmatized features (deviant from the standard form) that Farr (2006) describes as a Ranchero Spanish variety. Thus, this chapter relies on those descriptions for lack of a consensus view on Mexican Spanish dialects. A description of a Spanish variety used by rancheros is necessary to be able to explain how certain varieties of language index participant’s identities.

3.2 Varieties of English

Before any discussion of the role that languages play in the construction of identities and in the contention of language ideologies among members of the Cárabez social network (see chapters 5 and 6), it is first necessary to determine what features of which language varieties members used when engaging with Facebook. Vernacular varieties of a language often refer to oral language, but they also occur in computer-mediated communication, especially in social network sites, which are consensual informal platforms for oral-like written language. Equally important it is to know where
on Facebook members used those features (e.g. status update/wall post), and for which language function (Jakobson, 1960). This section first presents an overview of these language varieties, followed by a table containing examples of the language varieties found in the data. Finally, a summary explains in what contexts members of the network used these varieties and for what apparent purposes.

### 3.2.1 Standard Language, Dialect, and Language Variety

Irvine and Gal (2000) quote a familiar comment in sociolinguistics: “a language is simply a dialect that has an army and a navy” (p. 35). There is contention in the field of language studies about the use the term *dialect*, since it is often associated with derogatory connotations, and used for language systems not spoken by an elite or powerful group in a given geographical region. That is, even when there are two mutually unintelligible languages, institutions and individuals would often classify the linguistic code of the society in power as *language*, while that of the unprivileged society would be referred to as a *dialect*. For this reason the label *language variety* was well received and became popular among researchers to refer to a way of speaking different from one’s own, and to refer to a language system whose features are widely recognized whether positively or negatively (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006). A romanticized idea of “pure” language is associated with standard varieties of languages. However, even standard varieties change, as is evidenced by journalistic and academic reports alike. For example, there are studies of The Queen’s English changing through the years (Dent, 2012), and AAVE features changing to allow for more meanings (Alim, 2006).
Despite the illusive idea of a uniform, unchanging language, or a standard variety of a language void of any stigmatized features (Farr, 2011), language is forever varying, leaving the concept of standard variety as no more than a construct serving as a heuristic for classification of varieties of language. As such, the term language variety has gained preference among language researches and will be used in this dissertation, as it is considered to be neutral and non-judgmental. However, what do people mean when they say there is a standard variety of language? According to Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006), ideas of formal standard or prescriptive standard languages emanate from the ideas taken from written language which are not always maintained in naturalistic communication, except in the most formal spoken language situations. Ideas of a standard forms are often based on the written language used by established writers and grammar texts or dictionaries used by authorities and institutions. There is always a “conservative outlook on language forms” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 16) that values the idea of a standard language.

3.2.2 Informal Standard, Vernacular, and Levels of Dialects

Unlike the definition for standard language (absence of stigmatized features), there is no easy definition for informal standard language. Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006) explain that informal standard language is defined based on the judgment of a speaker’s standardness when these speakers judge others. They argue, “if a person’s speech is free of socially disfavored structures, then it is considered standard” (p. 13). These judgments are what determine what is acceptable and the norms by which to judge speakers. Informal varieties are those socially acceptable norms that can be used in non-formal
situations, but that also avoid “socially stigmatized linguistic structures” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 16).

Vernacular varieties of a language are associated with working class speakers and therefore considered unacceptable to those with more political and social power, who generally use a more standard variety. Listeners judge the presence of these stigmatized linguistic structures and in doing so classify a variety as vernacular (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 16). Among the vernacular varieties in English, for instance, one may find African American Vernacular English (AAVE), European American Vernacular English, and Latino English. One of the reasons it is difficult to define informal language is that constant lexical shifts quickly change the meaning of a word originally used by one group of speakers and later adopted by other groups. Slang words, for example, “are simply common lexical items that are recycled with new meanings; for example, terms like cool, sweet, ill, fresh, and tight… slang is vocabulary with attitude” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 71). What may explain some of the crossover of vernacular features, especially AAVE features, into other language varieties is that “the vocabulary from non-mainstream cultures often strikes members of mainstream culture as novel, rich, and imaginative,” containing a “deliberate sense of irreverence or defiance of proper behavior” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 72-73). Thus, the use of slang words is often attributed to young people of a particular group. Colloquial language, in contrast, is not stigmatized as slang and is often not associated with any particular in-group identity (e.g. the use of great rather than the stigmatized word dope for excellent).
3.2.3 AAVE Features

AAVE is the best-known and controversial variety of English. Studies devoted to explain its syntax and usage surpass by five times the number of those about other variety of English (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2003). AAVE speakers are not only from a particular region in the U.S., nor do they only belong to specific groups, such as gangs. AAVE is a system with specific features and linguistic rules. AAVE speakers are those who apply all the features and rules systematically into their language use; however, not all speakers who apply and use some features are legitimate AAVE speakers. Appendix D AAVE Features synthesizes AAVE features and linguistic rules identified by extensive research (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006; Rickford & Rickford, 1998). Despite the extensive list and features specifically from AAVE, there are features that are not unique to AAVE, and that are shared with other language varieties. Table 3 Features shared by multiple varieties of English contains commonly used features that cannot be directly linked to AAVE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Language varieties that share it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syntactic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Copula deletion / absence of *be* | *You ugly*  
*She gonna do it* | AAVE (in higher frequency)  
European American Vernacular English  
Latino English |
| Habitual *be* | *I be there every day*  
*They usually be acting silly* | AAVE  
European American Vernacular English |
| *ain’t* used for negative forms and constructions (except *ain’t* for *didn’t*) | *She ain’t been there for a while* | AAVE (using *ain’t* for *didn’t* is an unique feature)  
European American Vernacular English |
| **Phonetic** | | |
| produce th of words like *think* and then as stops | *ten for then*  
*tink for think* | AAVE  
European American Vernacular English  
Latino English |
| Reduction of consonant clusters at the end of words | *West end as wes’en’* | European American Vernacular English  
Latino English |

Table 3 Features shared by multiple varieties of English (based on Fought, 2003; Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006)

AAVE and European American Vernacular English varieties share many features, which explains why users such as those members of the network who have widely appropriated some of these features believe they only use AAVE when in fact this is not the case (Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Features of AAVE are also used as slang terms, which are fashionable among teenagers in general in informal settings, but which are not likely to represent a long-term change in the way someone speaks. Acquired features of a variety differ by region and social class, and are used and adapted according to the age,
gender, status, and life-style of a person (Rickford & Rickford, 2000, p. 96). “Slang is the
most rebellious and dynamic aspect of any language” (Rickford & Rickford, 2000 p. 96 –
emphasis by author). Thus some words used by AAVE speakers have crossed over into
general U.S. usage and are seen as fashionable. Rap and hip-hop have also made it
possible for AAVE features and slang to be used not only by AAVE speakers, but also by
the community at large. In early studies (e.g. Wolfram, 1969), it was pointed out that
AAVE features were part of the style in male pre-adolescents and teenagers in Detroit
who used these features more often than did adults or women. Similarly, young men in
this social network used more AAVE features than adults and women; however,
women’s participation in this study was salient for their frequent (still less than men) use
of AAVE features not only with men, but also among themselves.

Thus, while the data analyzed of 14 focal participants Facebook pages for two
months does show some lexical items and attempts to use syntactic patterns and features
from AAVE, these members do not show syntactic competence of AAVE. Instead,
features of AAVE and those shared with other vernacular varieties are an attempt to
‘crossing’ (Rampton, 1995) into these linguistic varieties. Although a close study of the
use of AAVE features was not conducted and it is not possible to determine the extent to
which participants in this study use AAVE, data on Facebook demonstrates that members
try to incorporate some features but they do not have syntactic competence. Many times a
vernacular feature was used but not correctly. In Table 4 Incorrect use of AAVE ‘be’ in
Facebook data, there are some examples of a vernacular feature that members of the
Cárabez social network use incorrectly. The first column shows the feature rule; the
second column shows a correct example. The last column provides examples of incorrect
use of ‘be’ feature from Facebook corpus. Note that none of the examples seen on Facebook data corpus had a correct use of this particular feature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature rule</th>
<th>Example from Wolfram &amp; Schilling-Estes (2003) explaining AAVE feature ‘be’</th>
<th>Incorrect use of ‘be’ vernacular feature from Facebook corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Habitual be for habitual or intermittent activity | Sometimes my ears be itching  
She don’t usually be there                                                   | [Younger gen. male] “I be loving this free food!”  
---  
[Younger gen. female to female] “truth iss:D... yur funny – we be having fun in mexico:))!!”  
---  
[Younger gen. Male to female] “hes on his period.... :) he hungry he need be feed” |

Table 4 Incorrect use of AAVE 'be' in Facebook data

None of the three examples shown from Facebook (nor any of the others in the Facebook corpus) indicate a habitual or intermittent activity; thus, members’ use of be is grammatically incorrect. In many instances found on Facebook, participants’ use of be seems to be random (see third example) and does not follow a syntactic rule, which indicates their lack of linguistic competency in AAVE or other variety of English.

Not all vernacular features, especially of AAVE, used by members of the network are always wrong. Some are used correctly. However, a thorough study of spoken language would be necessary to determine whether such features are indeed part of members’ linguistic competence or are mere borrowings. Table 5 Correctly used features of AAVE as seen in Facebook has examples from Facebook data where the correct use of
a particular feature is shown. The first column shows the AAVE feature description. The second column shows an example. The last column shows an example found in the Facebook corpus using the AAVE feature correctly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAVE feature</th>
<th>Example from Wolfram &amp; Schilling-Estes (2003) or Rickford &amp; Rickford (2001)</th>
<th>AAVE feature as shown on Facebook corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Absence of copula for contracted forms of <em>is</em> and <em>are</em></td>
<td>She nice. They acting all strange</td>
<td>[Younger gen. Male to female] “hes on his period.... :) he hungry he need be feed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Deletion of voiced stops (b, d, or g) when any one of them is the first consonant in tense-aspect markers or auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>d of don’t (Ah ’on’ know – I don’t know and He ain’t do it – He didn’t do it”) G of gonna (“Ah ma do it – I’m gonna do it”)</td>
<td>[yg Male to yg male] “no ima drink till i forget this conversation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. r and l – deletion after vowels</td>
<td>he’p for help afta for after yo for you</td>
<td>[Older Male to younger gen. male] “yo playa”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Correctly used features of AAVE as seen in Facebook data

In the first feature, the example from Facebook corpus shows that a member of the network can use the feature well. Many other examples where there was absence of copula for contracted forms were correct. Even though this AAVE feature shows often, it is not possible to determine whether it is part of the members’ varieties of English. In the second and third features, even though the use is correct, it seems that the use is borrowing a lexical item rather than following the rules of AAVE features. The particle *ima* and the words *yo* and *playa* can also be found as part of slang terms, which leaves open the possibility that the use of these features may be borrowing instead of knowledge.
of syntactical rules and use of phonetic rules. Deletion in other words ending in \( r \), for example, was not found in the Facebook corpus.

Most other features used by members of the social network cannot be traced directly to AAVE. Table 6 *Shared vernacular features found in Facebook data* contains examples of members’ use of certain features which are not unique to AAVE, but that could also belong to other varieties of English. This presents a problem since it is not possible to determine how members are acquiring such features. The first column has the language feature; the second presents an example of correct use of the feature; and the third shows an example as found on Facebook data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared feature with AAVE and other vernacular English varieties</th>
<th>Example from Wolfram &amp; Schilling-Estes (2003)</th>
<th>Incorrect use of AAVE from Facebook corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>ain’t</em> used for negative forms and constructions</td>
<td><em>I ain’t lyin’</em> [ = am not]. <em>He ain’t never</em> [ = hasn’t ever] <em>had a job in his life.</em></td>
<td>[Younger gen. Female] “If this <em>ain’t</em> love, I don’t know what is” ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Younger gen. Male] “Dope Ass Sounding Parties And <em>I AInt</em> There WTF”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRONUNCIATION</strong> (vowels and intonation) but also syllables and stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>n</em>-type of velar nasal at the end of words replaced by alveolar nasal η</td>
<td><em>walkin’</em> <em>singin’</em> <em>thin</em></td>
<td>Representing absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Younger gen. Male to male] “<em>Yea Wat you doin</em> over there”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Younger gen. Male 2] “<em>Nothin</em>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement of –th by t, f, d, or v (depending on voiced/voiceless clusters)</td>
<td><em>Tin for thin Rufe for Ruth Dem for them Bave for bathe</em></td>
<td>[Older gen. Male1] “<em>what yu doin</em> for this fourth of july ho.!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiceless th by voiceless t or f</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Younger gen. Male2] “[a place]”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voiced th by voiced d or v</td>
<td></td>
<td>[Older gen. Male1] “<em>where ta fukk is dat ha</em>” ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[Younger gen. Male to female] “<em>Pues Vamos!!!</em>... thank you jen she <em>da lame</em>”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Shared English vernacular features found in Facebook data

All of the features in this table can be found in different language varieties of English. While members’ use is grammatically correct, there is still the possibility that they are mere borrowings and not an indication of syntactic competence. One reason is the frequency that the same words appear in the data. For instance, in the third feature,
the replacement of -th by t,f,d, or v, it is the same words that members use (e.g. dat, da, ta), but nowhere it was found a word like dem for them or bave for bathe. Thus, it is not possible to say whether members of the network are using AAVE, European American Vernacular English, or Latino English. Nor is it possible to assert whether they are becoming linguistically competent in any of those varieties of English. However, in interviews some members stated that they have been criticized for speaking ghetto, which they interpret as ‘black.’ For example, Margo, a young second generation female explained:

“when they see my skin color they're gonna say oh well not just American like you're something else. Cause I even get that right now like, ‘oh are you half black?’ I'm like no, and I don't think I sound like half black…”

Part of people’s perception of Margo was her skin color. She is very dark skin. Her complexion prompts people to think that she is half African-American; and after hearing an accent from a non-standard variety of English, people, especially middle class white European American, immediately classify her as a speaker of AAVE. Margo further explains where this confusion occurs:

“Yeah at work... they thought oh that I was ghetto. And they would kind of like associated that with me being from the south side, cause most of them were from the north side and I guess they are really preppy in the north side and I don't really say much... the north side is like the yuppies so... I mean when you go over there its like really quiet. So even if you were to go and like if you bump somebody over there, something over there oh you know excuse me or something like that, they're nicer but if you try to bump somebody here they're gonna be like oh watch were you are going. Like they are more hostile over here. So that's why I guess cause I've seen the other more hostile or like more... mean a lot of-I mean there's bad things do happen in our side but I guess you hear more about it from the south side, so people are more cautious I guess.”
Margo explains that on the north side of Chicago, where she works, there is a higher concentration of white people, whom she referred to as *yuppies*. She also explained that they viewed her speech as being from the south side, a side of Chicago that is predominantly black. She also referred to the south side as “our side”. Wolfram (1969) study found out that the use of AAVE fostered racial isolation (blacks would use it more often with other blacks), and Margo here shows that this is still the case as those ‘whites’ grouped her with black Americans. Additionally, while she did not directly affiliate herself with black speech, she affiliated herself with “this side” (the south side), thus indexing a non-white, non-yuppie identity. Eduardo, a younger second-generation male, however, not only sees a distinction between vernacular and non-vernacular varieties of English, but he also sanctions correctness in a setting he considers *hood* (see post 8 in Excerpt 20 *English 101* in chapter 5).

Rickford and Rickford (1998) explain that the choice of features adopted or borrowed is influenced by gender, which corroborates Wolfram’s (1969) Detroit study of black men who deleted copulas more than half of the time he recorded. Earlier studies concluded that black vernacular speech is associated with maleness and toughness; however, these studies were conducted by men and have been carried out in similar contexts, and by similar interviewers. As Rickford and Rickford (1998) point out, “speakers deploy it [AAVE] to greater or lesser extents to delineate identity, to mark differences of social class, gender, and age, and to express how comfortable they are with their audiences and topics” (p. 128). Therefore, depending on who was conducting the interviews, the place, and style they chose, participants in those studies may have chosen what to portray. What makes Facebook data such a valuable source of information for
this study is that the participants’ communication is relatively free of such influences. It is necessary to point out, though, that the use of AAVE features and other vernacular features by members of the network is not seen as a direct index of Mexican identity but as part of a *cool* identity or as part of an non-white identity. This is demonstrated by Margo and Eduardo’s attitudes towards sounding *ghetto, our side of the city, or staying hood*.

Thus, some of the youth’s participation on Facebook contained certain vernacular features that cannot be directly linked to AAVE as they are shared by other vernacular varieties of English. In many cases, what the members appear to have done is to appropriate some phrases or quotes from hip-hop songs and use them to engage in their own conversations. Some AAVE grammar is used in their posts (often incorrectly) and sometimes in their speech (as evidenced by participant-observations). AAVE features are rhetorically used by members to display a *cool* persona or to distinguish themselves from white groups. What it is most interesting is that members of this network have very little or no contact with AAVE speakers, and even though they share some community spaces such as schools, parks, or streets, they generally stay segregated and do not befriend each other (especially in areas with a gang presence).

None of the members reported being part of an organized group, gang or even a club, and many said they had never been recruited and had no desire to join. However, it was apparent by their smirks that it is not an unfamiliar topic and those members who went to school were willing to show me some signs, imitate speech, and describe the clothes that a gangbanger would wear. Members’ knowledge was greater describing the Latino-origin gangs than African-American gangs, but they claimed to know linguistic
features used by both. During my observations, if young members caught each other speaking informally in English, they often would tell each other they were speaking *ghetto*. They also frequently told me that they did not want to speak like that in front of me (except when they forgot that a researcher was there), and that they could only do it if they were with other Mexican or African-American friends. However, young members would slip and I was able to hear what I thought was more a European American Vernacular English vernacular variety with occasional use of some AAVE features. Somehow for these young participants, though, being able to “speak *ghetto*” with AAVE features and certain intonations was regarded as desirable, even if they often complained that once they were out of their neighborhoods they would be criticized for the way they spoke. Such complaints, however, were also made with a tone of pride.

### 3.2.4 Latino/Chicano English

Carmen Fought (2003) defines Chicano English as “a non-standard variety of English, influenced by contact with Spanish, and spoken as a native dialect by both bilingual and monolingual speakers” (p. 1). Latino English is not dependent on bilingualism per se (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006). Some people have given the term Spanglish to a mixture of lexical and syntactical items of both English and Spanish; however, Latino/Chicano English is not the same as Spanglish, which is an informal term used for codeswitching. Because the use of the term Spanglish is contested and is still being studied, it will not be included in this dissertation, primarily because the way in which members use English and Spanish follows the use of standard (formal or informal) forms, vernaculars, and dialectal forms, with clear quantifiable codeswitches that can be
classified in Meyer-Scotton’s (1993) codeswitching types (i.e. intrasentential
codeswitching, intersentential codeswitching). Latino/Chicano English “encompasses a
continuum of styles and semantic features from less to more standard” which cannot be
directly linked to certain groups, like gang members, as it is spoken by people from a
wide range of socioeconomic and educational backgrounds (Fought, 2003, p. 7). Some of
the features of Latino/Chicano English discovered in empirical research by scholars have
been phonetic and include but are not limited to the following list by Wolfram and
Schilling-Estes (2006):

- Non-reduced vowel closer to [i] or [u] rather than schwa
- Some vowels may not be as glided
- Merger of vowels into a single sound that falls somewhere between them like a
  sound between [i] and [i]
- –ing sometimes as –eeng
- Syllable-timed prosody (Fought, 2003, shows the possible influence of Nahuatl
  into Spanish and transferred to English)

The following two features are shared with AAVE and European American Vernacular
English (see Table 3 *Features shared by multiple varieties of English* for a more
extensive list of features).

- produce *th* of words like *then* and *think* as stops
- Consonant clusters are reduced more frequently (*wes’en* for west end)

Regarding the grammar of Latino/Chicano English, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes
(2006) explain that it is comprised of “a combination of features that includes general
structures shared by a wide range of vernacular English varieties, structures resulting from the Spanish-English contact situation, and items shared with neighboring regional and social dialects” (p. 199), including the following features:

- Leveling of past tense be as in “We was there.”
- Multiple negation as in “She ain’t been nowhere.”
- Irregular past forms as in “Yesterday he come to visit.”
- Traced directly from Spanish: preposition on in “She’s on fifth grade” or for in “She told the truth for she won’t feel guilty.”

Carmen Fought (2003) further explains that some grammatical and syntactical features are not just transfer but a blend of Spanish words and their meanings with English, as is the case with the use of the word ‘barely’ from apenas. In the example she provides “Don’t leave yet, you barely got here” or “I barely broke my leg” the meaning of ‘barely’ is not ‘it almost happened’ but ‘it just happened’ which is the meaning of apenas. Additionally, there are features of Latino English traced directly from AAVE such as the habitual ‘be’ among young people and the ‘be like’ and ‘be’ associated with Southern California Valley girl talk (European Americans), both found in Fought’s (2003) study but not in this study. Chicano or Latino English is the English spoken by many English monolingual speakers who do not necessarily know any Spanish. As demonstrated, this variety is the result of language varieties in contact with one another and not solely the product of Spanish to English transfer.

The corpus data gathered for the linguistic analysis (two months of Facebook activity on 14 members of the family network) did not exhibit use of Chicano/Latino English, a variety of English often associated with Mexican-origin populations living in
the southwest and southern states. The only possible example is a status update by Margo where she wrote “On paisa mode. Fuck it. #Mexicanproblems.” Her use of the preposition on for in to indicate a mood may be influence of Spanish. Another example is the word “barely,” which I heard during participant observations. However, a phonetic analysis was not conducted; thus, it cannot be said with certainty that members of the network do not possess any of the features.

3.3 Varieties of Spanish

Definition of standard, informal standard and vernacular varieties of language can be applied equally well to Spanish as it is to English. However, unlike English, studies of Mexican Spanish varieties have not been conclusive (Martín Butragueño, 2009). Most taxonomies focus on regional varieties, starting from wide regions such as a specific country (e.g. Mexican Spanish, Cuban Spanish) to divisions based on states (e.g. Spanish of Mexico City). For decades, each Latin American country has established a branch of the Royal Academy of Spanish Language (Real Academia Española). For instance, in Mexico, there is the Royal Academy of Mexican Spanish. These branches are affiliates with the main or central academy in Spain. Despite the differences in pronunciation and vocabulary found across Spanish-speaking societies, the academies deal more with orthography, morphology, and syntax of Spanish than with phonetics and phonology (Hualde, 2005, p. 35).

3.3.1 Mexican Spanish

According to Hualde (2005), Mexican Spanish is characterized by the pronunciation of word and syllable final –s and all final consonants (except in some
coastal regions such as the state of Veracruz). However, there are also some characteristics that are linked to a more formal variety and some more informal, as is described in the following list (information taken from Hualde, 2005; Santa-Ana & Parodi, 1998):

- **Formal Standard Spanish**
  
  - Characterized by the pronunciation of word and syllable final –s and all final consonants (except in Veracruz and some coastal areas)
  
  - Non-simplification of syllable final consonant clusters such as texto

   /teksto/

  - Great amount of loan words from Náhuatl – especially with the tl- cluster

  - Value of letter x is ambiguous; the letter could sound as /s/ /ks/ /ch/ /j/

- **Informal Standard Spanish**

  - Some vowel sequences are pronounced as diphthongs, and differences in meaning have emerged (e.g. cohete /koête/ -3 syllables and cohete /kuete/ - 2 syllables to mean space rocket and firecracker respectively. Or maestro /maestro/ and maestro /maistro/ (the latter used in informal situations for their more formal equivalent would be preferred in formal situation – e.g. calling the head of mason or construction worker maestro when they do not usually hold a highschool diploma but they apprentice new mason or construction workers).

  - Unstressed vowels tend to be reduced before –s (such as in p’s [pues] and noch’s [noches])
3.3.2 Vernacular Spanish (Michoacán and Ranchero Spanish)

Most studies of language varieties in Mexico have resulted in regional categories (e.g. Lope Blanch, 1970, 2004; Martín Butragueño, 2009). There have been some studies on the varieties of Spanish found in Mexico from central regions, such as the capital city (de la Mota, et al., 2010) to northern, southern and western states (e.g. Santa Ana & Parodi, 1998); however, none of these studies has definitive results. Studies have focused on the prosodic, morphosyntactic, or semantic aspects of the language especially when Mexican Spanish is in contact with other languages such as English or the indigenous languages of Mexico. The region of Mexico from which members of the network come is the highlands of the central-western state of Michoacán. However, due to their ranchero background, members of the network speak a rural vernacular variety that Farr (2006) refers to as Ranchero Spanish. The regional variety of Spanish in the region of Zamora, Michoacán (studied by Santa Ana & Parodi, 1998) and the features recognized for Ranchero Spanish share some characteristics; however, Ranchero Spanish features are all stigmatized. Ranchero Spanish features identified Farr (2006) differ significantly from the national standard both morphologically and phonologically in the words that have been identified. Nevertheless, there have not been any rigorous studies to identify a variety of Spanish as Ranchero Spanish, in the manner AAVE has been identified as English spoken mainly by African-American communities.

Despite the lack of rigorous study, it is necessary to identify from the available scholarly work those stigmatized features used in the rancho and by older members of the network. Appendix E synthesizes all the stigmatized features that Santa Ana & Parodi’s (1998) survey study found in the micro-region of Michoacán and those listed in Farr
(2006), which derived from dozens of recordings of speakers from San Juanico. Santa Ana and Parodi only distinguished stigmatized features from regional and standard Mexican Spanish forms, but did not give an indication that the stigmatized features belonged to a specific variety of Spanish nor to a specific group. In contrast, Farr (2006) study found evidence of use of those stigmatized features by members of the ranchero network she studied. Farr (2006) quickly notes that there are no rigorous studies on social variation in the region to account for ranchero or indigenous (P’urhépecha) varieties of Spanish. As a step into that direction, she presented a list of Ranchero dialect features that rancheros in her study used in the recordings and observations she made. However, Farr’s Ranchero dialect features list does not comprise a formal Ranchero Spanish variety because some features can be traced to archaic colonial Spanish; other features may have been the result from local indigenous influence, or are simply regional markers (Farr, 2006). Therefore, for the purposes of this research, those instances in which members utilized this stigmatized features will be coded as Ranchero Spanish, even though Ranchero Spanish is not the name of a variety of Spanish that has been studied and identified as much as AAVE has, for instance. Ranchero Spanish has stigmatized features, which deviate from Mexican standard Spanish forms and have been found to be widely used by ranchero background Mexican speakers (such as those studied by Farr, 2006). Table 7 Ranchero Spanish features found in Facebook data contains a list of features exhibited in members’ posts (the list only contains features listed Farr’s study since they are specific to ranchero speakers). The first column presents the stigmatized feature exhibited on Facebook. The second column shows the standard spelling of the word. The third column contains the translation into English. The table is divided into
three parts: the lexical items, verb conjugations, and phonology, just as Farr (2006) did in her study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stigmatized</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ái</td>
<td>ahí</td>
<td>over there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pos, pue, pus</td>
<td>pues</td>
<td>well, well then</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lexical items**

**Verb conjugations**

| haiga (subjunctive mood) | haya    | there is |
| on (as in on tá)         | dónde (as in dónde está) | where is |
| queren                  | quieren | they want |

- -tes

  | dijites | dijiste | you said |
  | trajites| trajiste| you brought |

| venemos | venimos (present tense) | we come |

**Phonology**

| - a’o     | ara’o  | arado | plough (noun) or ploughed (past participle) |
| - i       | pior   | peor  | worse |
|           | lechi  | leche | milk |
| - u       | sapu   | sapo  | toad |

Table 7 Ranchero Spanish features found in Facebook data adapted from Farr (2006)

Each one of the features mentioned in this table can be found in the Facebook data. However, not all of the features provided by Farr (2006) or Santa Ana & Parodi (1998) appeared in any of the posts in the Facebook corpus. This absence does not mean that members of the network do not use the other features; it just means that they were not on Facebook at the time data was collected. Although there are available audio recordings with naturalistic data from which examples can also be taken, these will not be
included in this discussion, as the focus is on the members’ engagement with Facebook. Some of the features found in Facebook data do not correspond exactly to the example given by Farr (2006). That is, a feature such as a verb conjugation would keep the same changes that make that feature stigmatized, although the verb may not be the one given by Farr. This is the case of the following two examples:

Example #1:
(younger gen) Female 2: I love you too!!! Yes you can! A donde me vas a invitarrss?? (: [where are you going to invite me?]
(younger gen) Female1: A ondi queras! [wherever you want - subjunctive]

In this first example, the verb querer (to want) is irregular. When conjugated, the root of the word changes to quier- for indicative and subjunctive except for first person singular indicative which remains queremos (we want). However, in Example #1, this rule is not applied, and the verb is left with the same root as the one presented in Farr’s example queren (they want) and conjugated in second person singular subjunctive (queras for quieras). Additionally, notice the deletion of the first letter in the word ondi whose standard is donde. Farr provides the feature on, which deletes the initial d and the last syllable. Thus there are two features happening, deletion of initial d and switch from suffix –e to –i in the verb querer. There is another example:

Example #2:
An older generation Male to Female: "what como k hícites uchepos" (what, how so did you make uchepos [sweet tamal made of freshly grinded corn]"

In this example, the word hícites (you made) follows the changes explained in the example Farr (2006) provided with the verb conjugation –tes, whose standard form is
hiciste. Similarly, there are examples from Facebook data that also correspond to examples given by Farr such as venemos (salemos < salimos [we go out]) or sapu (ranchu < rancho [rural dwelling]).

Members of the network frequently use features from Ranchero Spanish in their Facebook posts. They also use some regional features that are not stigmatized or found as part of Ranchero variety. It is important to keep in mind that most members of the network studied are second generation, and many of them have not spent much time in Mexico (i.e., years at a time). Nevertheless, these language varieties are prominent in their speech and in their postings. This is not surprising, as other social network studies have demonstrated that close-knit networks are more resistant to linguistic innovations than networks with infrequent or looser ties among members (Milroy, 1987). Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006) explain that language forms are distributed within a network, and members of one group have their own preferences and use one linguistic form over another in various contexts. Some uses may represent “inherent variability” (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes, 2006, p. 174) and other uses may be influences from other language varieties (in this case English, see below). Among the patterns found here in the use of ranchero Spanish is that women use it more with one another. Males tend to use AAVE features among themselves. However, when men talk to women, they tend to use more Ranchero Spanish features, as I discuss in section 3.5.3.1 of this chapter. These claims need to be taken with caution for this study did not focus solely on language variety and use, and the two months analyzed for this type of data are not sufficient to make strong claims of this nature.
3.3.3 Mexican Spanish in the U.S. / American Spanish

The Spanish spoken in the U.S. by non-immigrant Mexican-origin individuals has been considered in a negative light by native speakers of Mexican Spanish, reflected in labels such as ‘pocho’ (choppy and sloppy), ‘Spanglish’, and ‘Tex-Mex.’ These terms usually indicate a deficiency of the language, as it does not conform to the rules of standard Mexican Spanish, or even regional varieties of Mexican Spanish. There are some labels for Spanish speakers in generation 1.5, second, and third generation U.S. born Mexicans, including ‘heritage language speakers’ or ‘semi-speakers’. The Spanish of those speakers to whom these labels are applied is often seen as a deviant of standard forms (Lipski, 2008). Even though there are numerous scholars investigating varieties of Mexican Spanish in the U.S./American Spanish, there is no consensus on how to define the variety, primarily because language contact speakers codeswitch, borrow, or change languages with no apparent purpose (Fought, 2003). Lipski (2008) discusses this topic and provides a brief history of who has coined terms such as “Spanglish”; however, the book only reports this information without arriving at any specific conclusions.

Among the characteristics of the varieties of Spanish found in the U.S. are the use of linguistic borrowings (from English), calques, and codeswitches. Calques are “the very close, but not necessarily word-for-word, translation into a target language (TL) using TL forms, of forms in a source language” (Sewell, 2001, p. 608). In the case of codeswitches, calques cannot simply be traced to situational, metaphorical, or topical reasons, and do not necessarily conform to the syntactic rules of either language all the time. Appendix F contains a table that summarizes the syntactic characteristics of Mexican Spanish in the U.S. described by Lipski (2008). As Lipski (2008) noted, only varieties such as Chicano
Spanish or Texas Spanish have been studied. However, his compilation is a summary of the shared characteristics of the Mexican-origin Spanish varieties spoken in the U.S. Since the present study was done in Chicago and not in the southwest U.S. it is more helpful to contrast Lipski’s identified characteristics to the language used by the members of the network I studied. Thus, Table 8 *Syntactic Characteristics of Mexican Spanish in the U.S. from Lipski (2008) found in Facebook Data* contains examples from the Facebook data set. The first column has the characteristic described in Lipski (2008); the second column presents the example from Facebook data; and the third column contains a translation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features and examples (if provided) by Lipski (2008)</th>
<th>Use on Facebook</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shift from subjunctive to indicative</td>
<td>Lack of subjunctive “pues hacer lo que se <strong>puede</strong>” for “pueda”</td>
<td>well, let’s do what we can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in use of prepositions</td>
<td>Feliz cumpleaños a mi abuelo Javier!!! Aunque abecés sea un poco corajudo ...lo quiero muchísimo y gracias por todo lo que ha hecho <strong>para</strong> su familia! for “por”</td>
<td>Happy birthday to my grandfather Javier!!! Although he is sometimes a little grumpy ...I love him so much and thanks for all he has done for his family!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence of ser/estar</td>
<td>“<strong>tas bien mensa</strong>” for <strong>eres</strong></td>
<td>You are so dumb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan translations (disputed as true Anglicisms sometimes)</td>
<td>La <strong>troka</strong> esta chida pero prefiero que un conocido se la lleve que alguien que no conozco [for conozca – note here the lack of subjunctive]</td>
<td>The truck is cool but I would prefer that a person I know take it than one I don’t.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calques</td>
<td>“trátalo” for “pruébalo”</td>
<td>try it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. use of “back” (<strong>para atrás</strong>) as in call you back, think back, bring back</td>
<td>“Callate los ojos!!! OMG! Me hizo mi día....” for “No me digas/No inventes!!. Dios mío. Me alegró el día.”</td>
<td>Shut your eyes!!! OMG! He made my day....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“te llamo patrás” for “te regreso la llamada” [I call you back]</td>
<td>“pri” for “primo”</td>
<td>cuz (cousin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“dar para atrás” for “devolver” [bring back]</td>
<td>“pagar para atrás” for “repay a loan” [pay back]</td>
<td>“pensar para atrás” for “refleccionar” [reflect]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 Syntactic Characteristics of Mexican Spanish in the U.S. from Lipski (2008)

Loan words and calques are the characteristics that can create an arguable position. Loan words are sometimes disputed as true Anglicism. Anglicisms are borrowed words and their meanings used to substitute a term that does not exist in the
other language. An example of an Anglicism is the use of “Bluetooth” in Spanish, which would be translated as *dispositivo de comunicación de datos sin algún uso de cables* (communication device to import data without use of any cables). Anglicisms are neologisms from English to substitute ideas that do not exist before, such as many technology words. On the other hand, loan words are words that already exist in the language but with a different meaning or use, such as the use of *aplicación* (as in application of foundation and mascara) for *solicitud* (as in application form for a job). The argument begins if the person using the loan word considers it a neologism rather than a loan word because he or she is not knowledgeable of the standard form.

The case of calques is that their explanation is not clear all the time. For instance, in one of the example from Table 8 *Syntactic Characteristics of Mexican Spanish in the U.S. from Lipski (2008)*, the word *pri* is used for *primo*. This is parallel to the shortening of the word ‘cousin’, informally written as ‘cuz.’ However, the use of *pri* is a calque, because the word *pri* cannot be linked to any of the varieties of Spanish studied to mean ‘cousin’. The word *pri* resembles the shortening process that the word ‘cousin’ has in English (cuz), making the use of the word *pri* a calque.

### 3.4 Codeswitching

One of the salient characteristics of bilingual communities is their frequent use of two or more varieties of their languages by shifting back and forth between them (Fought, 2004; Gumperz, 1982; Rampton, 1995; Zentella, 1997). When the switch is between varieties of the same language, it is called “style-shifting” as they mark a way of speaking (Gumperz, 1982). If the switch is between varieties of the same language or
between languages that are in contact, it is called “crossing” (Rampton, 1995) or “codeswitching,” as individuals change languages within the same speech event (Saville-Troike, 2003). However, the term crossing has generated controversy since it fails to define which of those varieties is the variety owned by the individual (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006).

Different taxonomies have been used to classify types of codeswitching. For example, Blom and Gumperz (1972) distinguished two types of shifting (for style and codes): situational codeswitching and metaphorical codeswitching. When an individual changes languages as he or she changes topics, interlocutors, or situations, the codeswitching is situational. If the speaker changes the language due to a change in the role-relationship between that person and other participants of the communicative event, the switch is metaphorical. Fought (2004) explains that in some bilingual groups, conversations with codeswitching are more like “crossing,” as both languages are part of a person’s repertoire and are used indiscriminately regardless of situation or role; in other words, Fought argues that codeswitching is sometimes more a stylistic tool than a way to index membership or ethnicity, etc. This idea is similar to Gumperz’s (1982) notion of conversational codeswitching, which suggests that codeswitching is a characteristic of a bilingual conversation (Paolillo, 2001). Saville-Troike (2003) explains that situational codeswitching can mark a shift in “footing” (Goffman, 1959), when the speaker is trying to create a new participation framework. Likewise, Gumperz (1982) explains that a switch in codes can be a contextualization cue, a marker in the conversation to key for the interlocutors to understand a piece of information in a particular way.
Bailey (2000) suggests a third dimension of the Blom and Gumperz’ taxonomy called *discourse contextualization switching*. He defines discourse contextualization switching as switches that “do not co-occur with external changes in the context or significant shifts in sociocultural framework” (p. 242). Bailey assigns switches to conversational strategies, which he explains as different from pre-existing categories that are independent from actual interactions and do not account for interactionally emergent functions. He argues that codeswitching can be understood in terms of the sequential, conversational management activities constructed in conversation. An example is when speakers quote others. In this case, the switch is not motivated by a change of interlocutors, situations, or roles, but by the needs of the conversation.

A different taxonomy is that of Myers-Scotton (1993a), who defines codeswitching as the “alternations of linguistic varieties within the same conversation” (p. 1). She explains that if features of two languages are present in a single sentence, they are joined prosodically. In this taxonomy, there are two types of codeswitches: intersentential and intrasentential. *Intersentential* codeswitching occurs when there is a change between sentences (Myers-Scotton, 1993a) or speech acts (Saville-Troike, 2003). *Intrasentential* codeswitching occurs when there is a change within the same sentence. The change can range from a single-morpheme to a clause. Sociolinguists have called this type of change “code-mixing,” but neither Myers-Scotton nor Saville-Troike employ this term because its negative connotation presupposes that the combination of languages is random or without principles. Another layer in Myers-Scotton’s taxonomy is lexical borrowings, which belong to intrasentential codeswitching and occur in two forms: *cultural borrowings* and *core borrowings*. Cultural borrowings are those words used for
objects or concepts new to the borrower’s culture. Core borrowings are those words borrowed despite the pre-existence of words in the borrowing language to name particular objects or concepts.

The aforementioned taxonomies discuss the linguistic choices of bilinguals, but they do not explore in detail proficiency levels or levels of fluency. Bilingualism is not the equivalent of two monolinguals in a single brain (Grosjean, 1998). Different levels of fluency, proficiency, and literacy exist in the languages and varieties of those languages within a bilingual society. Thus, Lipski (2008) further classifies lexical borrowing and codeswitching according to the speaker’s level of expertise. He explains that the first type of switch, lexical borrowing, is used most by bilinguals with minimal fluency in the second language; when terms are borrowed, they are adapted to the phonetics of the borrowing language. Lexical borrowing includes both cultural and core borrowings, although individuals may not be aware of their difference due to individuals’ low proficiency levels. The second type of switch is the use of calques (literally translated idiomatic expressions). Calques are words and phrases which do not violate syntactical forms of either languages and which simply follow the rules of one language using the words of the other. These first two types of switch show what some have called patterns of “minimal bilingualism,” that is, the use of specific phrases or formulaic routines, greetings, interjections and discourse organizers inserted into the person’s stronger language (Androutsopoulos, 2011, p. 11).

The third type of switch, that of codeswitching, is performed by the most bilingual and bicultural individuals (as described above in the first types of switches). Lipski (2008) asserts that it is this last type of switch that surprises non-bilinguals, who
often have very negative views on switching between languages. The author explains that the first two types of switches are found in foreign/second language learners as well as members of a bilingual society who are not fully bilingual and are constantly learning their heritage language. The third type of switch is found in bilingual societies only. These three types of switches are classified as *Spanglish* by non-bilingual or foreign or second language learners; a label which contains the derogatory connotation that bilinguals are deficient communicators who do not know either language well and that is why they resort to “mixing” the languages to communicate (hence Myers-Scotton and Saville-Troike refusal to use the term “code mixing” as well).

The negative association with codeswitching as a deficient form of communication is not shared with members of bilingual communities, who see their codeswitching practices as an indicator of membership (Auer, 2005; Zentella, 1997). In the case of Mexican-origin individuals, codeswitching practices may distinguish a Mexican in the U.S. from a Mexican living in Mexico (Fought, 2004). Members of the network focal to this study have also made their distinction by asserting that, “we speak bilingual.” This view of codeswitching may index a social identity and different types of social membership, since the switching between languages is a style in itself (Auer, 2005) and a type of ‘crossing’ Rampton’s (1995). However, as mentioned above, a problem still lies with the notion of ownership of the varieties and, as will be demonstrated below, a particular language variety cannot always index a single ethnicity. Table 9 *Types of codeswitching based on Myer-Scotton (1993a,b) found in Facebook data* shows the classification used to code Facebook data and examples from Facebook.
Classification of codeswitching | Example from Facebook | Translation
--- | --- | ---
**Intersentential CS** - “involves switches from one language to the other between sentences” (p. 3) | “Lol! I’m only staying for a few weeks lol. *Simon gringo tengo muchas ganas de verte cabron...*” | Lol! I’m only staying for a few weeks lol. Yes gringo I very much want to see you smart ass…

**Intrasentential CS** - “occurs within the same sentence or sentence fragment” (p. 4) | “En la frontera with my new toy. One down ONE MORE TO GO que LLA ME KIERO IRR haha” | In the border with my new toy. One down one more to go cause I’d like to go already haha

| “Nop, no worko !” | Nope, I don’t work! |

Table 9 Types of codeswitching based on Myer-Scotton (1993b) found in Facebook data

I coded all Facebook data following Myers-Scotton’s (1993a,b) two definitions of codeswitching (CS). Intrasentential CS includes both singly occurring CS lexemes and single lexical borrowings. Myers-Scotton (1993b) argues that while they are different, these two sub-types of CS resemble each other. Furthermore, she explains that it is unproductive to try to distinguish them “from the standpoint of the morphosyntactic processes which they undergo” (Myers-Scotton, 1993b, p. 5, emphasis by author). Thus, when coding Facebook data, I placed both lexical sub-types under intrasentential CS.

On many occasions, members of the network updated their status messages on Facebook by writing a statement in one language, immediately followed by its translation in the other language. If the participant did not change the content, meaning of its parts, or syntactic structures of the original message in his or her translation, I classified it as translation. I define ‘translation’ as a switch in languages in order to indicate a complete shift of audiences to convey the exact same message to speakers of different languages.

On the other hand, if the participant changed some of the content of the message, the meaning of its parts, its syntactic structure in the other language, then it was classified as
intersentential codeswitching. An example of a post I classified as translation is the following:

Speaker 1: “Should I stay in Chicago or go to México??? Me quedo en Chicago o me voy a Mexico???”
Speaker 2: “Stay in California…. quédate en California”

In this example, the second sentence in each post is a translation of the preceding sentence. On the contrary, in the following post the translated message would not be classified as translation but as intersentential codeswitching.

Speaker 1: “Feliz cumpleanios… Hippy Birthday!”

In this post, the speaker is conveying roughly the same message to the interlocutor; that is, to wish them a happy birthday. However, the translation from feliz to ‘hippy’ is a play on words common to Spanish speakers. Instead of ‘happy’, speakers change the a for an i to express the double meaning of ‘happy’ but also ‘hippie,’ which is a way to wish the birthday to be fun or different. By changing the letter, some of the content was altered, thus I classify it as intersentential codeswitching.

While the interlocutors in the original conversation are both bilingual, the post itself has more than a bilingual audience. A translation may have been necessary to include monolingual English and Spanish speakers as well as bilinguals. However, there
are other motivations and functions for codeswitching. Androutsopoulos (2011) summarizes the discourse functions widely accepted in studies of codeswitching:

“a) switching for formulaic discourse purposes, including greetings, farewells, and good wishes;
b) switching in order to perform culturally-specific genres such as poetry or joke-telling;
c) switching to convey reported speech (as opposed to the writer’s own speech);
d) switching with repetition of an utterance for emphatic purposes;
e) switching to index one particular addressee, to respond to language choices by preceding contributions, or to challenge other participants’ language choices;
f) switching to contextualize a shift of topic or perspective, to distinguish between facts and opinion, information and affect, and so on;
g) switching to mark what is being said as jocular or serious, and to mitigate potential face-threatening acts, for example through humorous CS in a dispreferred response or a request;
h) switching to or from the interlocutor’s code to index consent or dissent, agreement and conflict, alignment and distancing, and so on.” (p. 13).

Thus, a code switch or a translated sentence may have different functions. The purpose of such functions may not be known. Sometimes the context for a Facebook conversation is not explicit, thus it is not possible to deduce from data itself. Choices may happen quickly, and questioning the member in interviews about his or her purpose has not been productive as many times they cannot remember or just answered “I felt like doing it that way” or “I don’t know”.

3.5 Language on Facebook: Orthography, Grammar, and Phonology

Although the orthographic, morphosyntactic, and phonological rules of English and Spanish are different, what they have in common is that users of both languages suffer from strong criticism by language purists, including grammar and composition teachers. It is already common to hear teachers of language arts classes (Spanish and
English, in and outside of the U.S.) complain that students are not learning well because they are careless or do not make the effort to observe the rules. Parents, teachers, and some classmates complain that many students do not speak, spell, or write well, even after graduating from high school. Previously, the blame for this was assigned to poor teaching methods, students’ lack of interest and practice, or parents’ illiteracy or insufficient involvement. However, the blame is now more commonly placed on computer-mediated communication (CMC), brought on by advances in technology and the easy access students have to communicative activities via computer networks (Herring, 1996), as well as the use of smart phones for texting, and instant messaging in social network sites such as Twitter, Blogger, and Facebook. Many researchers have mistakenly perceived CMC as “anonymous, impersonal, egalitarian, fragmented and spoken like” and begun drawing distinctions among CMC types and uses of computer-mediated discourse (Herring, 1996). David Crystal (2006) provides some names for languages used on the internet, explaining that “Netspeak’ is an alternative to ‘Netlish’, ‘Weblish’, ‘Internet language’, ‘cyberspeak’, ‘electronic discourse’, ‘electronic language’, ‘interactive written discourse’, ‘computer mediated communication’ (CMC), and other more cumbersome locutions” (p. 19). However, Herring (2011) argues that using the word ‘netspeak’ may imply that there is a single set of characteristics or rules when the contrary has been proven in many studies. Due to lack of consensus, these terms will be used interchangeably in this research.

While there are no formalized rules or a specific list of characteristics, there are patterns identified in netspeak, as summarized by Herring (2011). Table 10 Computer mediated communication (CMC) language described by Herring (2011) found on
Facebook contains the characteristics of netspeak used on Facebook by members of the family network in my study. The first column has the described feature and a description taken from Herring (2011). The second column presents an example from Facebook. The fourth column shows the standard usage or meaning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature Description from Herring (2011)</th>
<th>Example from Facebook</th>
<th>Standard Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typography</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>use of non-alphabetic keyboard symbols (e.g. numbers, @,#)</td>
<td>“no porque cuesta mu$$ho”</td>
<td>“no porque cuesta mucho” (no because it costs a lot)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonstandard capitalization (all caps, no caps, ‘camel case’, compound words)</td>
<td>“enOJon”</td>
<td>“enojón” (grumpy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emoticons (sequences of keyboard characters that prototypically imitate facial expressions)</td>
<td>😊, ;) , &lt;$&gt;</td>
<td>Smiley face, winking face, frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>repeated punctuation and letters to show affect</td>
<td>“whaaaaaat?!?!?!”</td>
<td>“what?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substitution of numbers or letters for words or parts of words</td>
<td>“2morro”</td>
<td>“tomorrow”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drawings composed of keyboard characters</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>[heart]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orthography</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abbreviation</td>
<td>“thnx”</td>
<td>“thanks”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonetically-motivated letter substitutions</td>
<td>“cuz”</td>
<td>“cousin”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spellings that imitate casual or dialect pronunciations</td>
<td>“wasssup?” “ague” for abue (grandma) “pliiiiiis”</td>
<td>‘what’s up?’ abuela (grandma) please [with Spanish speaker pronunciation]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eye dialect (e.g. ‘sez’ for ‘says’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spellings that represent prosody or nonlinguistic sounds</td>
<td>‘oyeeeee!’ “jajajaja’</td>
<td>“¡oye!” with a rising intonation hahahaha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Computer mediated communication (CMC) language (also known as ‘netspeak’) adapted from Herring (2011) found on Facebook
Table 10 continued

**Morphology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Formatives (e.g., e-, cyber-, hyper-)</th>
<th>‘imboxeo’ (does not occur in Spanish lexicon)</th>
<th>inbox (v.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word formation processes such as clipping, blending, acronyms</th>
<th>‘jk’</th>
<th>‘lol’</th>
<th>‘OMG’</th>
<th>‘wtf’</th>
<th>‘smh’</th>
<th>‘que’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>just kidding</td>
<td>laughing out loud</td>
<td>oh my god/gosh</td>
<td>what the fuck</td>
<td>shaking my head</td>
<td>what or that</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Shift</th>
<th>Spam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversion from one part of speech to another</th>
<th>‘text me’</th>
<th>‘friend me’</th>
<th>send me a text (noun)</th>
<th>accept my request to be a Facebook friend (noun)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neologisms</th>
<th>‘newbie’</th>
<th>Neophyte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conventionalization of frequently-occurring typographical errors</th>
<th>‘teh’</th>
<th>‘pwn’</th>
<th>The own</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Syntax (described as telegraphic and fragmented)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fragments, incomplete sentences</th>
<th>“When someone takes your seat in class -_”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd person singular present tense performative utterances, also called ‘emotes.’ And predications that can function alone as complete performative utterances</th>
<th><em>sigh</em></th>
<th>lololol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

These netspeak features of writing in computer-mediated discourse (CMD) appear in English but some are also prevalent in other languages at different frequencies and proportions of the total written message (Herring, 2011). For instance, members use these characteristics in Spanish, such as the words *mu$$ho* for *mucho* (much, a lot of) and *enOJon* for *enojón* (grumpy). The manner in which words are written with netspeak suggests that they may have a different meaning, but also a different pronunciation.
(Eisenstein et al., 2010; Johnstone, 2013). For example, the use of “enOJon” has different meaning than just ‘grumpy’. The word has strategically placed two capital letters in the middle, dividing the word into two: enojón means ‘grumpy’ and ojón means ‘big-eyed.’ Not coincidentally, this word was used as a response post to a baby picture. Thus, words displayed in such sites are not merely linguistic artifacts but visual ones as well. Non-standard spellings and other metonymic ways to write the word are highly “interactional” since their meaning and its existence depends on the mutual understanding of both the producer and the interlocutor (Johnstone, 2013). Written representation of oral pronunciations and the perceptions of those writing and reading these representations provide data for studying dialectology in writing.

A major concern with computer-mediated communication and other digital forms of communication, such as instant messaging (IM), texting (txt), and computer-mediated discourse (CMD) such as ‘netspeak,’ is that they have conventions that differ from academic literacies. Some educators worry that the now ubiquitous use of textese (use of abbreviations of the English language in order to speed communication in mobile and internet messaging), ‘netspeak,’ or CMD will hinder the learning of these school-based skills. The fear is particularly of spelling, as there are documented examples in which young people use e-grammar in their offline writing in academic contexts (see Herring, 2011). The same is true for Spanish language societies. Frequent newspaper articles, blogs, and informal discussions decry how youth are “corrupting”, “distorting”, “disgracing”, and changing the Spanish language, to the point that critics fear its orthography and grammar will disappear (e.g. see Espino, 2010). However, some studies have shown that not only is the use of CMD not detrimental to the learning of academic
conventions (Kemp, 2011), but it is associated with higher word reading, vocabulary, and phonological awareness measures (Herring, 2011). In some cases, scholars see new language features in CMC as “grammatical innovations” (Herring, 2011).

As seen with the example “mu$$$$ho”, people may choose to break orthographic rules on purpose as stylistic choices; others may simply not know the rules due to lack of formal literacy in the language or perhaps forgetfulness (e.g. asias for hacías, to make – preterit, second person singular). What is important to keep in mind is that even for literate monolingual speakers of a language, orthographic rules are not always followed. Even educated literate people make mistakes and/or stylistic choices, use CMD, and change patterns in txt, IM, and CMC; thus, holding bilingual speakers or learners of another language to different standards may not be fair. Therefore, for this study, I chose not to focus in depth on participants’ orthography, except as it relates to ideology or is used to mark identity. For example, if the participant writes “Buenos dias!” (good morning) and lacks an accent mark in días, an exclamation point at the beginning of the phrase /¡/, and no one took exception of it, I do not make note of the orthography and grammar. However, if a post contains a word whose spelling does not reflect simply a lack of literate knowledge, but instead represents a stigmatized pronunciation, I do note it. For example, in the expression “Saludos a tu ague” (say hi to your grandma), the short word for grandmother (abuela) is /abue/; however, because there is a strengthening of the sound (Hualde, 2005) /γ/ becomes /β/ which lead the participant to spell it with gu and not bu. This shows a lack of standard oral forms, not a lack of knowledge of spelling. Thus I noted it as showing not a lack of literacy knowledge, but as an index of their dialect.
Considering that many members of the network have limited literacy in Spanish, but have had some courses or someone in their family has informally taught them, their command of the Spanish language is surprising. Interviews reveal that members often ask each other for the ‘correct’ spelling of words, ways to say a sentence, and even the use of accent marks. Others say they like to read and that they learn spelling and syntax from reading books, newspapers, or magazines in Spanish. A couple of young members suggested that it was their Facebook engagement that had taught them much of what they know, whether it was because they realized some correct spellings or new expressions on their own, after someone made fun of them for making a spelling or syntactic mistake.

Additionally, holding members of the network to different standards than native, literate speakers of Mexican Spanish would not be fair. If one is to look at the way members of their network born and being raised in Mexico write, one will not always find language that follows all the spelling and grammatical rules. Many writers on Facebook follow a growing trend to personalize ways of writing arranging language using different orthography, characters and emoticons. One of these examples is in Table 11 Fabian’s IM conversation on Facebook with a Spanish-speaking friend from Mexico.

During a home visit over dinner, some network members and I began discussing language use by young people. Some members of the network were making claims that youth did not learn anything or did not learn well anymore, and the choices of spelling and language on Facebook was unacceptable. These members claimed that youth wrote that way because Facebook cannot be monitored. Fabián, who is 16, immediately interjected and stated that he did not like it either, but that all his classmates and friends wrote very ‘weird.’ He brought his iPod and showed me an example that he said made
him very upset (the example is of a chat conversation he was having while we were
talking). He even encouraged me to “take a picture” with my phone so that I had “the
evidence”. This is what he shared. The first column contains the verbatim conversation
from Facebook chat in Fabián’s account. The second column shows the standard version
of the conversation. The third column is a translation into English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook chat</th>
<th>Standard Spanish</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1** Friend  | … a markado sta
mnzo si cree resiviir un
msj mio jajaja | … ha marcado. Está
menso si cree recibir un
mensaje mio jajaja | … has dialed he’s dumb
if he expects to get a
message from me
hahaha |
| **2** Fabián | Jaja no no pobre
Jaja ntc …. No seas tan
enojona!!! | Jaja no no pobre Jaja [no
te creas]… No seas tan
enojona!!! | Haha no no poor him jk
(just kidding)… Don’t
be such a grinch !!! |
| **3** Friend  | ai si no le gzt
como soe ia sbe qe aser
qe se nzke otra no baiia
aser qe le roege | Ay, si no le gusta cómo
soy, ya sabe qué hacer;
que se busque otra, no
vaya a ser que le ruegue | Urgh, if he does not like
how I am, he knows
what to do; he can look
for another [woman], I
hope I don’t have to beg
him to do it |
| **4** Fabián | Jaja pero pus
chanados te deja ir no es
nada de menso | Jaja pero pues Chanados
te deja ir no es nada de
menso | Haha but well Chanados
lets you go he’s not
dumb at all |
| **5** Friend  | cm | ¿cómo? | What was that? |
| **6** Fabián | No te dejaría ir
no anda mal
acompañado | No te dejaría ir. No anda
mal acompañado. | He wouldn’t let you go.
He has good company. |

Table 11 Fabian’s IM conversation on Facebook with a Spanish-speaking friend from
Mexico

The language used by Fabián’s friend is a combination of ‘netspeak’ (computer
mediated language) in Spanish and stylistic choices such as 1) repeating vowels
apparently randomly (her Facebook name is written as Mariaa Osorio Rodriguez); 2)
omitting the /u/ in /que/; or 3) spelling the words to imitate casual or dialect

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pronunciations such as in post 3 *baiia* for the standard word *vaya* (go) and *roegue* for the standard word *rugue* (beg). Thus, distinguishing between stylistic choices that writers make and mistakes based on lack of literacy skills becomes difficult. What is interesting is that in this exchange, the U.S. born Mexican, Fabián, is the one writing in more standard Spanish due to personal choice, and his non-standard forms are only due to lack of formal education in Spanish.

3.5.1 Language Varieties Found on Facebook

The previous sections provided an overview of language varieties and the features from those varieties used on Facebook by members of this network. In English, members of the network use features from Standard English, AAVE, and European American Vernacular English. In Spanish, members use features from standard Spanish, Ranchero Spanish, and Mexican Spanish in the U.S. Members of the network also exhibited codeswitching, as many bilingual communities do (Fought, 2003; Gumperz, 1982; Rampton, 1995; Zentella, 1999). All members recognize their use of codeswitching and consider codeswitching to be a marker of their identity (Fought, 2003). Only a handful of participants refer to it as “Spanglish.” In interviews and informal conversations, members indicated that the term Spanglish has negative connotations for them, and considered people who use Spanglish to lack a high level of proficiency in both languages. One of the participant’s boyfriend was described this way: “poor guy he can’t keep his languages straight.” The participant asserted that, if her boyfriend were ever in an interaction with purely monolingual people of either language, he may understand what they said but he would not be able to respond.
Table 2 Language and varieties found in Facebook data, located at the beginning of this chapter, lists all the languages and varieties participants used in their Facebook posts. In order to have an idea of the frequency in which participants used each language, variety, and form (codeswitching or netspeak), I coded every post and ran descriptive statistics and cross-code frequency counts (e.g. a language variety such as AAVE and gender). A frequency count of participants’ use of English, Spanish, a third language, and codeswitching in posts revealed that overall, 61.16% (n = 1581) of posts (e.g. status updates, responses, comments on pictures) were in English (any variety); 28.27% were in Spanish (any variety); 10.18% were in any type of codeswitching; and 0.38% were in languages other than English or Spanish. These numbers only provide a general count, without exploring differences between the older and younger generations and perceived levels of bilingualism. Additionally, they do not account for differences in language use over time. For example, an older member had only recently opened her Facebook account when the study first began. At first, her Facebook account was no more than postings of photos of her newly born son and a brief description of the photos in English. These posts were accompanied by articles and other links to internet information on parenting; thus, it can be inferred that her primary use for Facebook was to interact with those online groups, in English. However, as time progressed and she began making Facebook “friends,” this member became more engaged and almost completely changed her Facebook use to resemble a family album, especially to keep in touch with her brothers who live in Mexico. Notably, she increasingly used more Spanish. Her use of Spanish, however, was not captured in the quantitative analysis, since her use increased with time...
and fell outside of the two months of data analysis. Therefore these numbers need to be taken with caution.

Table 12 *Percentages of Use of Spanish, English and Codeswitching According to Age* breaks down the frequency of use by members who are from an older generation (including generation 1.5 and 2), and younger members of the second generation. The top of the table indicates the overall percentage of use for each type of language or codeswitching. Then, the numbers are divided according to generation. These percentages are the frequency with which members of these generations use one language or another, or codeswitch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All varieties</th>
<th>English (61.16%)</th>
<th>Spanish (28.27%)</th>
<th>Other (0.38%)</th>
<th>Codeswitching (10.18%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old gen</td>
<td>43.45%</td>
<td>45.63%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young gen</td>
<td>80.45%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>0.79%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 Percentages of Use of Spanish, English and Codeswitching According to Age

As can be seen in Table 12 *Percentages of Use of Spanish, English and Codeswitching According to Age*, the two age groups differ greatly from each other. While older generation members (generation 1.5 or 2) use English and Spanish with roughly the same frequency, younger generation members use English the vast majority of the time (over 80%). Nevertheless, it is interesting that both generational groups codeswitch at similar frequencies. Another difference between generations is that the younger generation not only uses all language varieties of English and Spanish, but they also use other languages that 1) they have either learned or are learning at school (e.g. French or Mandarin Chinese), 2) are interested in learning (e.g. Japanese due to an
interest in anime), or 3) have heard in mock language (e.g. French phrases such as ‘moi’) or the mass media (e.g. Portuguese in the popular song “Ai Se Eu Te Pego” played on Spanish radio stations). These latter languages are not used as frequently as Spanish or English, but they do use them occasionally with each other and among friends and classmates.

These numbers seem to paint a bleak picture of what is happening to the Spanish language from older to younger generations. Research on immigrant groups in the U.S. shows that the immigrant generation retains their home language, while generation 1.5 and 2 are bilingual (Pew, 2009). By the second generation, members tend to have lost their parent’s language and are only “passive bilinguals” (Lipski, 2008), with very limited skills in their parents’ language. By the third generation, the immigrant generation’s language has waned, and the third generation speaks English. However, a deeper look reveals that this pattern is not reflected in the language use of these social network participants. Although there is a decline in the use of Spanish, the decline of Spanish use does not completely correlate with the generation or age bracket. Rather, it seems to depend mostly on network dynamics, transnationalism, and personal goals (more on this topic in Chapter Four).

3.5.2 Language, Language Functions, and Type of Facebook Post

As explained in Chapter 2, every single post in two selected months from the 14 focal members of the family network was coded with the languages and language varieties used for that post, as well as for the type of post (e.g. wall post) (see Appendix A for a complete list of codes). A frequency count of the type of post and the language
use (English, Spanish, Other and codeswitching activity) indicates that there are certain patterns in the use of a specific language or language variety on Facebook. Before describing these patterns, it is important to say that although the members vary in language use regarding their level of bilingualism and not in their age (generation they belong to), these numbers must not be taken as generalizations of what members do. Instead, these figures offer a portrait of what most members are exposed to when participating in the Facebook network they belong to. In other words, when any member of the network logs into Facebook, he or she is exposed to the following amount of English, Spanish, codeswitching and other languages, even though their own posts may not follow exactly the same pattern.

The first pattern of language, language functions and type of posts is on wall posts. Wall posts are the onset of engagement with Facebook because they open a channel for communication (to receive feedback or interaction). Wall post include status updates (SWP), posts written on a person’s own wall; and posts on a friend’s wall (WPF), posts members write on a friend’s wall. Table 13 Languages (all varieties) found in wall posts shows the percentages in which each language appeared on Facebook wall posts of either kind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Status update (SWP)</th>
<th>On friend's wall (WPF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>60.18%</td>
<td>37.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>39.82%</td>
<td>62.42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 Languages (all varieties) found in wall posts
The use of English and Spanish differs depending on whether the person is writing on his or her own wall or a friend’s wall. The data shows that when members write a status update post, they write it in English about 40% more frequently than in Spanish. On the contrary, when members reach out to friends and write a wall post on their friend’s walls, they do so more often in Spanish than in English. Table 13 Languages (all varieties) found in wall posts shows that Spanish is used almost 40% more often than English when the post is on a friend’s wall. However, compared to the overall use of languages (not only in posts but also responses), English is still dominant.

A frequency count on language functions (based on Jakobson’s 1960 taxonomy) provides an explanation. Table 14 Jakobson’s (1960) language functions on wall posts shows each language function and the percentage of the overall count on each of the two types of wall posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language function</th>
<th>Status update (SWP)</th>
<th>On friend's wall (WPF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotive</td>
<td>45.23%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phatic</td>
<td>9.55%</td>
<td>59.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14 Jakobson's (1969) language functions on wall posts

The language function that appeared the most in wall post status updates was an emotive function. Jakobson (1960) explains that emotive function is the expressive or affective function of the addressee. Emotive function includes interjections such as ‘oh!’ and can cause modifications of linguistic sounds that add information about a stance or an attitude (e.g. pliiis! for a pleading please!). Thus, when participants write their status
updates, they express their emotions in English more often than in Spanish. *Phatic* function is the function of contact with addressee. It establishes, prolongs, or discontinues communication. It includes greetings such as ‘hello!’ or ‘good morning’, or direct questions such as ‘do you agree?’ A characteristic of phatic function is that content is not the main purpose, but to keep in touch is. As a reminder, the word “friend” refers to the connection they have on Facebook, but it does not necessarily reflect kinship. However, most of the Facebook “friends” that members have are part of their family network. Members of this network register to have phatic function mostly on friend’s walls. Thus, it can be also implied that most of the time, members keep in touch using Spanish. Since a formal study of statistical correlation was not conducted, these statements should be interpreted with caution.

The second pattern of language, language functions and type of posts is on response posts. Response posts include 1) response post - to friend's post on writer’s wall (RWP), 2) response post - to friend’s post on friend’s own wall (RWF), and 3) response post on conversation (RC). The last code, response post on conversation, is a category that can overlap with 1 and 2 response posts, and it was used to also code those instances in which the response was part of an exchange of more than two turns. Figure 3 *Language and response posts* shows the percentages in which each language appeared on each type of response post.
The pattern of language use in response posts is similar to the pattern in wall posts. That is, the use of English was more frequent in a writer’s own wall than on the wall of their friends. Similarly, members’ use of Spanish was higher when posting on friends’ walls than on their own walls. In the third category, that of responses in conversation, there use of English and Spanish has similar frequency. When members update their status, English has a slight advantage over Spanish, but when members respond to comments made on their status updates, Spanish has a clear advantage over English. The most salient pattern is in the responses to posts that friends made on participants’ walls, where English (66.33%) appears almost twice as frequently as Spanish (33.67%) as shown in the first column of Figure 3 Language and response posts.

Just as with wall posts, a frequency count of Jakobson’s language functions provides an explanation of the language use in certain types of responses. Figure 4 Language functions and response posts shows the language function percentages in which each function appeared in the type of post.
The language functions for response posts follow a different pattern than for wall posts. While it was apparent that in status updates the language function was emotive and in posts to friends’ walls it was phatic, there was not much contrast in response posts. Those response posts to posts made to a participant’s wall contained equal amounts of emotive and phatic functions (see RWP and RC columns). Thus, a relationship between the function and the language choice cannot be made. On the contrary, in response posts to posts made by friends on their walls (see RWF), in which writers use more Spanish, the frequency count on emotive (26.90%) and phatic function (40.49%) shows that there is a higher percentage of phatic function. Thus, it can be inferred that Spanish is the language members used more for phatic functions. Once more, since a study of correlation was not made, these assertions have to be taken with caution.

Compared to the use of English and Spanish on Facebook, codeswitching was not used as frequently. As Table 10 Languages, codeswitching, and age (in section 5.3.1) shows, codeswitching is only used 10.18% of the posts. Thus, the level of codeswitching is low compared to the use of English or Spanish alone, but it is slightly more frequent in status updates as opposed to the responses (by 2%). At first glance this may seem to
indicate that members choose a language in which to participate on Facebook and that they generally avoid codeswitching. However, it is important to note that members do not choose one language and simply keep the conversation in that same language. Members of this network may not codeswitch within a single post, but they may change the language code in their next post (e.g. a response to a friend’s response to one’s status update). For instance, in Excerpt 1 “Playa”, Vania is posting a quote from her nephew in her status update, to which her brother (her nephew’s father) responds. The post is about how Vania’s nephew cares about his hair at only 3 years old. Vania and her respondents then argue whether the child will be a “playa” as his father calls him. ‘Playa’ is a slang term to describe a person with a flirtatious or seductive nature that uses his skills to earn often sexual or material favors (see various definitions for this term in Urban Dictionary.com).
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Vania’s wall post.  
   “Vani u think my hair is flat”  
   Chepiz… Lmao!!!!” |   |
| 2 | 8 people like this. | 1 |
| 3 | Marcos  lol | 1 |
| 4 | Brother  His a Playa | 1 |
| 5 | Vania  He’s no playa! Stupid!!!  
   He’s a sweet, sweet boy, with jokes!  
   LOL | 4 |
| 6 | Brother  Pero sta bien chulo si va ser  
   es Padilla lol | But he is very handsome. He will be.  
   He is a Padilla. lol | 5 |
| 7 | Vania  Menso! | Stupid! | 6 |
| 8 | Brother  When did you see him and  
   why didn’t you call me |   | 7 |
| 9 | Vania  Fue el lunes en la tarde y se  
   quedaron a dormír. Pensé k avias  
   hablado con ma y la señora fue por  
   ellos ayer Como a la 1 | It was Monday afternoon and they  
   slept over. I thought that you’d talked  
   to mom and the woman picked them  
   up around 1 | 8 |
| 10 | Brother  Oh ok thanks |   | 9 |

Excerpt 1"Playa"

In this excerpt, both siblings change codes at least once. First Vania posts in English (post 1) and her brother posts a response also in English (post 4), to which she also responds in English (post 5). Then, her brother switches to Spanish in post 6 and frames (Goffman, 1974) the conversation as ‘relajo’ mode or joking stance. In post 7, Vania switches to Spanish for the duration of the exchanges, even when (post 9) her brother switches back to English in post 8 and 10 (perhaps to key a change from the joking frame to a serious frame). While the brother frames parts of conversation as joking or serious, Vania does not make such changes with the same goals in mind. She seems to switch languages as she pleases, accommodating (Giles, 1979) to her interlocutor’s keying or cues first in post 7, but continuing her language of choice in post 9. Thus, this
example shows that members of the network switch between English and Spanish frequently, but they do not always codeswitch within a turn. Therefore the codeswitch in the conversation does not fall into the Myers-Scotton (1993a,b) three categories, which resulted in low percentages of codeswitching frequency use. English was the dominant language in members’ posts on their own walls, but Spanish was the dominant language for phatic functions or reaching out to other Facebook friends who speak Spanish. For instance, the example above is a common practice; the participants start the conversation in one language and then switch to the other. Members of the network tend to change codes and varieties frequently, but not necessarily within the same sentence or post. It is not that members of the network do not codeswitch, but it appears that the codeswitching practices occur more from post to post (turn by turn) than within sentences or utterances (intersentential or intrasentential codeswitching). What this Facebook data indicates is that, at least on Facebook written conversations, members of the network often wait for another post to switch to another language, and if they switch within a post it occurs more often from sentence to sentence or clauses (intersentential codeswitching). That is, members will normally choose English to post something and depending on the interlocutor(s), they will either keep the conversation in English, switch to Spanish, or flip back and forth. Sometimes it is because one of the participants in the conversation only knows one of the languages, but what is important here is that the participants in the study all use both English and Spanish. Members seem to follow conversations in English and Spanish because, even though they may not have the production skills (writing) on one of the languages, they may understand it when reading, ask someone to translate for
them (as was observed during home visits), or use Google Translate (as Lety reported doing).

The use of languages is relative to the Facebook activity types and location. Table 15 Facebook Activity Types According to Location (wall post vs. response) represents where the activity resides on Facebook. Of all the “posts” participants made (e.g. status updates, responses, shares, posts of any kind), 34% (n = 1295) were posts participants made on a wall. These are posts that state something, and perhaps begin a conversation. Those wall posts that were published in direct response to a friend’s post, link, or previous conversation, but were not placed as a thread or as a comment underneath what the members are responding to, numbered only 10 (less than 1% of the total count). Most activity happened in response posts (e.g. other wall posts, links, photos, people’s comments in conversations, etc.). Out of the total number of posts that were a response to a previous post, 65% (n = 833), 491 or 36% were posts that replied directly to another post without engaging in a longer conversation. For example, in the Excerpt 1 “Playa”, Marcos in post 3 only responded to the original post, but did not engage in a conversation. In contrast, Vania’s brother in post 4 began with a response post that was not intended to be part of a conversation, but due to Vania’s disagreement in post 5, ended up being a conversation. Thus, response posts that were part of a conversation represent 29% (n = 833) of the response posts of any kind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wall Post (any kind)</th>
<th>Response post (any kind)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of conversation</td>
<td>0.007%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15 Facebook activity types according to location (wall post vs. response)
Since posts always assume a reader, and an invitation for dialogue, they are
dialogical nature. Once a post is made, there is already an audience in mind, and an
invitation for open dialogue, even if it is just an acknowledgement to the post (e.g.
clicking the “like” button). Members of this network usually engage in extended written
conversations on Facebook to respond to a post or to acknowledge something. They do
not simply click the “like” button. These practices corroborate the findings of survey
research that claim that individuals who use Facebook receive more from their friends
than they post (Brenner, 2012). The greatest amount of activity is registered as responses
to posts as part of conversations.

3.5.2.1 Varieties of English on Facebook

There are three distinct varieties of English found among the Facebook wall
postings of the network’s focal participants. These include Standard informal English
(unmarked English), AAVE, and shared vernacular varieties not exclusive to AAVE.
Additionally, there are two other categories that include features that were catalogued as
Standard informal English, AAVE, or White Vernacular English, which were also
classified separately for being part of an idiomatic expression or a word that serves as a
contextualization cue. The first such feature is intentional misspelling, as the writer seems
to have intended the word to be taken a certain way (e.g. “gimme [give me] some cuz,
pliiis [please]”). The word “pliiis” is an example of intrasentential codeswitching at the
lexeme level and serves as a contextualization cue (Gumperz, 1982) than a feature of a
particularly variety of English. The words “gimme” and “cuz” are examples of words
coded as slang terms, the second feature. Slang is part of informal language, but it
contains features of other vernacular varieties. In this case gimmi (give me) is an example of deletion of voiced consonants as explained in Table 5 Correctly used features of AAVE as seen in Facebook data earlier in this chapter in section 3.2.3. This is why it is placed separately; slang could have included AAVE and European American Vernacular English features. Usually, slang is a word or phrase that a person adopts and uses without acquiring the syntactic rules of the feature. The person may add the slang word or phrase to their lexicon, but the feature from which the slang term derives does not become part of their linguistic repertoire. Table 16 Percentage of use of varieties of English shows the frequency with which each variety of English appeared in the corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked English</td>
<td>79.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAVE</td>
<td>8.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vernacular features (non-exclusive to AAVE)</td>
<td>11.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16 Percentage of use of varieties of English

The last section explored in what types of postings any variety of English appeared. This section describes some trends that were observed about each variety of English and where it was found. While the statistical data may not have significance due to the very small sample (e.g. taken from just two months instead of an entire year), it provides an example of how participants use features from different varieties of English.

Among all the varieties and forms the posts take (e.g. complete words, textese, emoticons, or a combination of these) participants communicate in Standard informal English with non-marked features most of the time (79.44%, n = 895). Among the
vernacular categories, shared vernacular features (which include European American Vernacular and Latino English) was used 11.73% of the time (e.g. *yous* were so tall), compared to AAVE features, which appeared slightly less frequently at 8.83% of the time.

Facebook posts exhibit a wider variety of shared vernacular features (5 different features) than AAVE features (3 different features) (see Tables 3.1 and 3.3 at the beginning of this chapter). Other non-standard features occurred, the most prevalent being the use of ‘yous’ and the /s/ suffix added to first person singular verbs (e.g. I ‘likes’ it). Additionally, there were cases of slang. Not all slang included AAVE features; many of the words in the slang category are neologisms or new connotations with compound words (e.g. *pugly* – a term used to describe or call “someone who has a face like a pug (breed of dog) and is extremely ugly in personality and physical appearance [or it] can also be used to describe someone you really dislike”, see urbandictionary.com for more definitions of this word), which are considered slang. Slang words or phrases were used 7.93% of the time. Netspeak (non-typos) were used 9.39% of the time.

Vernacular varieties appear more frequently in response posts than than in wall posts. Vernacular varieties occur more frequently in conversation than when people initially post a feeling, a status, or an opinion. Table 17 *English varieties according Facebook post* below shows these percentages and the differences between them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Wall Post (any)</th>
<th>Response (any)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked Standard English</td>
<td>83.27%</td>
<td>77.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAVE</td>
<td>6.61%</td>
<td>9.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vernacular features</td>
<td>10.12%</td>
<td>12.38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17 English varieties according to type of Facebook post
The focus of this research is not to find out what triggers the use of a vernacular variety or what the patterns are when a person posts using one variety of language and what follows after that. It is important, however, to note that participants overwhelmingly use standard varieties in their wall posts, but switch to vernacular varieties more frequently during response posts. Perhaps the switch from standard to a vernacular variety frames the conversation differently.

Despite the use of vernacular features, most participants use unmarked English to communicate on Facebook. Frequent use of unmarked English in this network does not support claims that youth and young adults engage in CMC mostly using netspeak and textese. Participants only used netspeak 5.85% in wall posts and 10.82% in response posts. Slang appeared in only 5.84% of wall posts and 8.78% of response posts. With such small percentages, fears that netspeak and slang would degenerate the language (see Herring, 2011; Kemp, 2011) may not always be warranted among participants in this network.

### 3.5.2.2 Varieties of Spanish on Facebook

There are three varieties of Spanish that participants used in their Facebook posts: Standard Mexican Spanish which I call unmarked Spanish, Ranchero Spanish, and Mexican Spanish features in the U.S. often referred to as ‘American Spanish’ (Lipski, 2008; Fought, 2004). Examples of American Spanish features include calques (e.g. *dar para atrás* for *devolver* – pay back). Table 18 *Percentage of use of varieties of Spanish* shows the frequency with which each variety appeared on Facebook data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarked Spanish</td>
<td>78.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchero Spanish</td>
<td>12.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Spanish</td>
<td>8.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18 Percentage of use of varieties of Spanish

Participants’ uses of English and Spanish varieties have some similarities. As in English, unmarked Spanish was used overwhelmingly. However, there is a slight difference in the use of vernacular features. Ranchero Spanish was even more frequent (12.42%) when Spanish was used. Yet, unlike English vernacular features, the features of Ranchero Spanish were more varied (11 different features in Spanish as opposed to 5 or 3 in English). Despite the fact that most members of the network have not had formal training in Spanish literacy, they have a moderate command of spelling, as evidenced by the fact that only 38.78% of the time were there problems with orthography. This number might have been higher if, as many members said during interviews, they did not worry so much about their Spanish on Facebook and therefore make corrections. Numerous generation 1.5 members reported that they frequently asked each other whether a sentence was correct, whether they spelled words correctly, and whether their accent marks were in the right place. Some older second-generation members see it as their duty to maintain the language so that the younger generations can learn “correct” or good Spanish from their example (see Chapter 4 for a discussion of these language ideologies). Younger second generation members reported that they ask older generation members, if they are available, before they post something in Spanish. Some of them, those with a lower level of bilingualism, confessed that they even use Google Translate to check their posts. This may be the reason non-standard orthography in standard Spanish occurred
less than 40% of the time. When asked whether members did the same in English, they reported not caring about correctness in English. When asked why it was important for their Spanish to be correct, reasons varied from a sense of personal duty to maintain Spanish to the desire to be perceived as more Mexican (more on this topic in Chapter 4).

With regard to language varieties and their location on Facebook posts, participants in this study overwhelmingly used unmarked features of English and Spanish. Vernacular varieties of English were used more frequently in response posts than in wall posts, and they also carried both an emotive function and a connotative function (Jakobson, 1960). As said before, emotive functions includes expressions of affect or mood (e.g. “Oh! What a day!”). Connative function is also known as the vocative function. It includes imperatives and ordering/requesting something from addressee (e.g. “gimmi some cuz, pliis”). In contrast, members use vernacular varieties of Spanish mostly for phatic functions (e.g. to be in touch, to let someone know the participant is reading their posts).

As in English, two more categories of Spanish were added since they offer knowledge of another aspect of the data. The first one is non-orthographic rules of accents and spellings, which includes words and sentences that do not conform to the spelling rules of Standard Spanish, but that otherwise follow the syntactic and phonological rules of Standard language. For example, in the Excerpt 1 “Playa”, in post 9 Vania wrote “Fue el lunes en la tarde y se quedaron a dormir. Pensé k avias hablado con ma y la señora fue por ellos ayer Como a la 1” (It was Monday afternoon and they slept over. I thought that you’d talked to mom and the woman picked them up around 1) and the standard Spanish version of this would be “Fue el lunes en la tarde y se quedaron a
dormir. Pensé que habías hablado con mamá. Y la señora fue por ellos ayer como a la I”. Words such as dormir (for the standard dormir/sleep) and avias (for the standard habías/you had) do not follow the orthographic rules of accents and spelling. However, the majority of members have not studied Spanish literacy formally. Those who do have some Spanish literacy were exposed to it as children (more than 20 years ago). Some members took basic Spanish in a foreign language class, or Spanish as a heritage language class, but not to a very advanced level. Non-orthographic rules of accents and spellings are not exclusive to unmarked Spanish. Even in the Mexican Spanish used in the U.S., there can be misuse of accents (e.g. Llamame para atras” instead of “llámame para atrás” – call me back); however, it was not marked when the variety was Ranchero Spanish, unless it contained other Standard words with misspellings (e.g. “Llamame pa tras” instead of “llámame pa atrás”). In this example, there is both a misuse of accents and Ranchero Spanish use. However, if the post had been “llamame pa tras”, it was coded as both non-orthographic rules of accents and spellings and vernacular. This example did not follow orthographic rules of accents since “tras” (back) and llamame (call me) is deviant of the standard form due to the lack of correct spelling in the former and accent mark in both words. The standard forms should be “atrás” and “llámame”. This example is coded as vernacular because the spelling of the word “pa” precisely marks the vernacular variety as para (preposition) is the standard. The second category added is slang. All slang is part of informal Standard Spanish, but not all informal Spanish is slang. Additionally, some slang is rooted in Ranchero or American Spanish (just as some English slang is rooted in AAVE, for instance) so it is not a category on its
own. The category of non-standard orthography frequency is 38.78%, and the slang category is 8.26%.

3.5.3 Language Varieties, Age and Gender

According to Wolfram & Schilling-Estes (2006), females use and maintain standard features in general more than males, while males keep more vernacular forms. A close study of oral data would be required to determine whether this claim is true for the social network of focus. However, the language varieties found on participants’ Facebook posts do offer a glimpse at what may be happening in their face-to-face communication. While language choice varies significantly from one member to another regardless of age or gender, it is still possible to discuss some patterns found in the data.

In general, males and females on average use English, Spanish, and codeswitching at the same frequencies. As indicated in Table 12 Percentages of Use of Spanish, English and Codeswitching According to Age in section 3.5.1 in this chapter, older participants use Spanish almost five times as often as younger ones. However, not every member of the older generation uses more Spanish on Facebook, and not all members of the younger generation use English 80% of the time (see Table 10). These results are deceiving. Each individual’s use of English and Spanish is dependent upon his or her level of bilingualism and transnationalism, and his or her choice. For example, Vania, an older second generation female whose level of bilingualism is high, chooses to write on Facebook in Spanish most of the time. She states that she feels more comfortable with Spanish, and she “like[s] it better.” Another example is Fabian, a 16-year-old male, who, despite his age, uses Spanish more frequently than any of the older members of the
younger second generation in his network. Both of these members have high levels of bilingualism and transnationality. Additionally, they both have a strong sense of ethnic identity (Mexicanness). Bilingualism and transnationality are then characteristics that identify a member as having centrality, a social location within the network. Centrality is important since it is an index of ethnic identity (Mexicanness). This concept will be explained fully in Chapter 4.

3.5.3.1 Masculinity, Power, and Gender Stereotypes.
Another significant pattern is the use of vernacular features among males and females. For instance, while older members of generations 1.5 and 2 use English frequently, only the male members in the older group use AAVE features; none of the older female members of generation 1.5 and 2 used AAVE features even once. This is unlike the younger generation in which all members, male and female, use AAVE features with varying degrees of frequency. Table 19 Use of vernacular features and codeswitching across genders in interactions presents the frequencies with which each gender used vernacular features of English and Spanish as well as codeswitching in their conversations. In the Facebook data, males of any age use English vernacular features more frequently than females do. When men talk to one another they most frequently use English, with low levels of codeswitching. Among vernacular features and slang, males use English overwhelmingly more (31.79%) in their posts than they used Spanish vernacular features (6.94%) and codeswitching (5%). In contrast, women talking to women use codeswitching at higher frequencies than do males (over 25% female use vs. 5% male use). Previously, it was shown that women in the network used equal amounts
of English and Spanish in their posts. Among Spanish vernacular varieties, women use Ranchero Spanish much more frequently than do men (compare 30% female use vs. 9% male use approx.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vernacular English</th>
<th>Vernacular Spanish</th>
<th>Codeswitch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman to woman</td>
<td>1.99%</td>
<td>23.61%</td>
<td>25.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman to Man</td>
<td>11.92%</td>
<td>13.19%</td>
<td>10.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man to man</td>
<td>31.79%</td>
<td>6.94%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man to Woman</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
<td>8.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19 Use of vernacular features and codeswitching across genders in interactions

In cross-gender conversations, males and females change their practices. When men engage in a Facebook conversation with women (when a man initiates the conversation), the man codeswitches slightly more frequently (8.46%) than when a man talks to another man (5%). Moreover, men interacting with women use more unmarked English and Spanish. Notice for instance that while in man-to-man interactions the English and vernacular features use is 31.79% and 6.94%, when men talk to women, the use of vernacular features in English and Spanish decreases to 5.30% and 2.78% respectively. Surprisingly, when women direct their comments to males (when women initiated the conversation), they use Spanish more frequently. When they use English when interacting with men, they increase their frequency of English vernacular features (if the female belonged to the younger generation), and their use of American Spanish features declines, but their use of Ranchero Spanish increases. Notice that the vernacular English and Spanish features usage between woman-to-woman interactions is 1.99% and 23.61% respectively, but when females engage in conversations with males, their use of
English vernacular features increases to 11.92% and their use of Spanish vernacular features decreases to 13.19%. It can be said that there is a slight degree of accommodation from both groups to their interlocutors.

This change of language variety features, especially in English, may be related to power dynamics. On the one hand, females are the ones maintaining the heritage language. Women use Spanish in higher frequencies than men do. Males, on the other hand, despite their very limited contact with speakers of other varieties of English, such as AAVE speakers, take up features of such language varieties, possibly from hip-hop lyrics. The use of AAVE features by non-AAVE male speakers has been linked to exerting their masculinity and dominance. Women, in contrast, use Spanish to assert their role as language keepers in the network. For example, Susana, an older second-generation female, explains her brother and nephew’s situation and her choice to be the one teaching Spanish.

“I used to make fun of my nana [mom] because my nephew, which is the son of my brother, the youngest one, he hardly speaks Spanish and I was like excuse me, you prohibited us to speak English and you are communicating with your grandson in English? Something is wrong with this picture, or I don’t know I really don’t know. But, I mean...Si, este, él dice ‘no a este niño hay que hablarle en español’ pero mi sobrino le habla en inglés y él le contesta en inglés entonces, este, es lo, yo soy la que bueno yo me encuentro a veces, este, repitiéndole las cosas en español para que él las vaya captando pero a mi hermano se le hace muy fácil comunicarse no más por el hecho de comodidad, yo creo…”

I used to make fun of my nana [mom] because my nephew, which is the son of my brother, the youngest one, he hardly speaks Spanish and I was like excuse me, you prohibited us to speak English and you are communicating with your grandson in English? Something is wrong with this picture, or I don’t know I really don’t know. But, I mean...If, uh, he [my brother] says ‘no, we have to speak Spanish to this kid’ but my
nephew speaks to him in English and he [my brother] and he answers him in English, then, uh, it is me who well I find myself sometimes, uh, repeating things in Spanish so he starts getting them but it’s easy for my brother to communicate [in English] simply out of commodity, I think…”

In this example, not only is Susana upset that her brother does not speak Spanish to his son, but she is also upset at her mother for not speaking Spanish to her grandson. Susana does not like that her nephew does not speak Spanish. Neither does she like that other adults who could are not. Thus, while she understands that her brother may switch to English for convenience, she feels she has to be the one trying to teach her nephew Spanish (note she says “I find myself”). Teaching her nephew Spanish is a task she has put on herself. Teaching Spanish to her nephew is only one example. Susana and her sister, Vania, are often the ones who speak Spanish the most to the children at family parties, as observed during my visits.

When younger generation 2 females interact with males, they use AAVE features more frequently than when they communicate with each other. Excerpt 2 “Answer your phone” shows AAVE feature use by females. The excerpt is a conversation between two cousins, a female cousin, Lola, and Eduardo. Lola had asked Eduardo for a favor. However, Eduardo had failed to provide the favor, thus Lola tried to call Eduardo by phone, but he did not answer. So Lola posted a message on Eduardo’s wall. In post 1, Lola is clearly upset with Eduardo for not answering his phone and uses strong language to express her strong, angry stance towards him. In post 3, Eduardo realizes Lola had tried to contact him two and a half hours earlier by writing a response to her post “no no!” Then Eduardo replies once again to Lola’s initial message after failing to reach her by phone. The evidence that Eduardo tried to reach Lola by phone is post 4 statement
“answer your phone”, and the emoticon `><` which usually means frustration in netspeak
(Urban Dictionary.com)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female cousin’s post on Eduardo’s wall. “Bitch asssssss nigga, te llame como cinco veces cabron! Why didn’t you pick up?”</th>
<th>Bitch ass nigga, I called you like five times dumbasss! Why didn’t you pick up?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Lola</strong> likes this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Eduardo</strong> no no! (11:36 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Eduardo</strong> answer your phone!!! <code>&gt;&lt;</code> (11:39 pm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 2 "Answer your phone"

Other uses of AAVE by both male and female speakers fulfill a poetic function (Jakobson, 1960). The poetic function is focused on how the message is written, manipulating its shape and sound. It also allows for verbal play; the function itself controls the form of content. Thus, male members use phrases from hip-hop lyrics to respond to friends, make their own conversations, or perhaps appear cooler or in line with the hip-hop culture (rather than just with their ranchero culture music, such as *banda music*). Other friends who are not part of the network and have incorporated AAVE features in their speech may influence the network males’ speech. Nevertheless, most of the AAVE use is in the context of play, fulfilling the poetic function. Additionally, by using AAVE features, members place the conversation in a joking frame. An example is the creation of conversations using hip-hop lyrics such as the following example. In Excerpt 3 “*Purple flowers*”, Eduardo posted a line from DJ Khaled - I'm On One Feat. Lil Wayne, Drake & Rick Ross lyrics. After that, he engaged in a *competition* of lyrics, as
Manolo and he were posting other lines from lyrics of other songs as part of a conversation they constructed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo’s wall post: “im burning purple flowers its burning my chest”</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DJ Khaled – “I’m On One (feat. Lil Wayne, Drake &amp; Rick Ross)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Manolo you ain't 'bout that life.</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Waka Flocka Flame – “U Ain't Bout That Life” (feat. Alley Boy &amp; Slim Thug)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo niggah you aint know no mo</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo real recognize real and mah nig you a straaangerrr</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kanye West - &quot;Looking For Trouble&quot; (Feat. Pusha T, Big Sean, Cyhi Da Prynce, J. Cole)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Manolo you always be calling her, she ain't never answering, you ain't figure out i am the reason why she cancellin'</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Made – “Big Sean” (feat. Drake)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo ?... worrying bout yo ole gurl tryin to see if shes mine... niggah shes with me when she tells you she needs some me time that our time</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kanye West – “All Of The Lights&quot; (feat. Lil Wayne, Big Sean, Drake)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Manolo i don't see how you can hate from outside of the club</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chris Brown – “Look At Me Now&quot; (feat. Lil Wayne, Busta Rhymes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo niggah backstage aint on stage</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lilly tat nit nit nit</th>
<th>Lyrics taken from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excerpt 3 "Purple flowers"

The relationship found between AAVE and males constructing masculinity is that in most of the instances in which AAVE was present, there were direct allusions to race (nigga), and homosexuality. Examples such as “niggah this is gay gay ass fuck suck dick
after you got out there gay as fuck gay... HOMOSEXUAL!!!!!!!... jk Q T pie” and its response “Niggah You The One WHo Got Caught IN the mens locker giving free hits” are common when men post whether they like a picture that a family member posted or say they liked a game, a movie, or a song, even if the latter is rap or hip-hop. None of the examples using vernacular features indexed an ethnic identity directly, but perhaps they were indicating a student, cool, party-goer identity. This latter topic, however, was not the focus of this study.

Franqueza, a candid way of speaking that characterizes Ranchero society (Farr, 2006), relates to self-assertiveness in speech. Franqueza contrasts with a more indirect way of talking (cortesía) which is considered polite by other Mexicans. The style of franqueza can be accompanied by the extensive use of cuss-words and descriptive adjectives to express opinions and feelings. For instance, if someone is considered smart, someone speaking with ranchero franqueza would call the person “intelligent” or “big brain” or “big-headed”; and if they consider the person to be or be acting clumsy, they would use words such as “idiot” “stupid” and even derogatory adjectives such as “retarded” or “moron.” For example, Excerpt 4 “Ir a montar” is a conversation between two siblings, Fabián and Fanny. Fabián updated his status with an ambiguous message, which Fanny picked up and called him on. Fanny made her brother lose some face by making his comments ‘dirty’ by pointing out the doble sentido (double meaning). The subsequent comments are by Fabián and their aunt criticizing Fanny as ‘dumb’ for spoiling a comment intended solely to express feelings of sadness for not being able to ride a horse. None of these exchanges are considered bad or inappropriate (because the
doble sentido is not made explicit), but the terminology members use with each other does express franqueza.

---

Excerpt 4 "Ir a montar"

Another ranchero way of speaking is carnivalesque talk, often used during relajo (Farr, 2006), which is talk framed as playful and many times having doble sentido (double meaning), the second meaning of which usually has a sexual connotation. In this example, Fanny interprets what her brother wrote as doble sentido by saying he wanted to “go riding”, which she framed as having sex in post 3. She also framed it as a joke because her brother is only 16, and Fanny made sure to indicate that her brother is not sexually active by saying “I just find this a little funny,” as if it were not possible due to his age. Fabian’s response ‘your dumb’ signals a discontent that his sister had ruined what Fabian wanted to portray on his wall: a longing to be in Mexico, in their rancho, riding his horse. Fanny only posted a sad emoticon to show her sympathy but did not remove the message, which is very easy to do by simply clicking an “X” on the upper right-hand corner of the comment. Vania enters the conversation recognizing Fanny’s
relajo. However, Vania simultaneously sanctions the fact that Fanny’s comment may not have been appropriate on Fabián’s wall by saying “pinche (fucking) Fanny”, but also expressing she liked the double meaning, as evidenced by all the exclamation marks. Fanny responds with a weaker laugh (jeje instead of jaja), stating that she loves her brother with words and an emoticon in post 8.

Farr (2006) explains that the first generation males and females both had the same speech styles, but females had to avoid using cuss words publicly or outside of relajo, which was mixed gender in family contexts. This pattern has changed, and some younger second-generation females noted during interviews that they “cussed because that is the way we talk,” and even though some family members do not deem this practice appropriate, they (the females) “have the same right as the guys.” This language ideology surfaces frequently on Facebook, where both males and females cuss frequently in their posts. This change over the generations does not mean that the ideology of what is appropriate for females to do has changed. On the one hand, younger-generation females use these cuss words and derogatory terms as older-generation females do, but they are often criticized for this by other women and by men. Unlike the immigrant generation rancheros, young second generation women acknowledge the criticism but do not cease this practice. Members of the younger generations tease each other for their language use, although they do it playfully, as if mocking the expectation of appropriateness. This can be seen in Excerpt 5 “Con esa boca comes”, in which Vania updated her status about a meal she was having with her two nieces.
In post 3, a female cousin complained that she had not been invited to the outing and called her cousin and her cousin’s cousins (Vania’s cousins on her mother’s side) “assholes” for this, to which Vania responded playfully, “you eat with that mouth?” meaning, her language was dirty and made her mouth dirty for saying it. Facebook posts are seen by these users more as oral records or orality in print, than as writing; thus references to speaking and hearing are often included in the discussions. In post 6, a male friend of the network also complains to Vania about not being invited, and he also used the word “pinche”, which in this case means “fucking” as in “fucking Vania”. As we can see in post 7, there was no offense taken by Vania, who continues the joke, but decides to use WTH (what the hell) instead of WTF (what the fuck) in her textese. The conversation between them continues and the theme changes into a discussion about work.

Another reason the younger females use cuss words is to exert some authority over language with the men. Younger men reported not liking that women use such
words and expressions, but they did not seem to attach the use of cussing or strong language to very negative ideologies. If anything, they think such usage constructs the woman as strong and wanting to be equal to men, at least among cousins of the same age. Young members’ ideologies about cussing differ from the ideologies of older generation members, male or female. Women’s use of strong language is seen as inappropriate and un-lady-like, but only when such use is in public (displayed on Facebook) and not because members think they should not use it at all. Tita, a young second generation female explained to me during an interview: “people have told me not to use bad words; they say a lady should not use them because she looks bad, but I was raised this way and I don’t have to change for them.” In most of the families I observed, there is always a parent who does not use strong language as much as the other, if at all. However, the families who do use cussing at home have certain rules for when it’s appropriate (e.g., during relajo). Thus, some of the girls from the younger generation explain that if they have learned anything about cortesía it is because of such rules. For example: Roberto, Nara and Margo’s father explained to me during a dinner conversation:

“Entre nosotros, olvídate… o sea que, entre ella [Nara], entre las hijas más grandes especialmente, hablamos como si fuéramos amigos [implying cussing] no como yo, papá, y ella, hija. Estamos cotorreando. No, pero hay veces que es peor, o sea, pero también cuando ya es, yo digo que está bien. Ya cuando es una cosa seria, ya saben cuando es una cosa seria, y entonces ya. Y también cuando se pasan con las otras, yo también les digo “ya, bájenle,” porque también tantas reglas, como que no.”

Among us, forget it… what I mean is that, between she [Nara], among the oldest [daughters] especially, we speak as if we were friends [implying cussing] not as me, the father, and she, the daughter. We are joking. No, but there are times that it gets worse, I mean, but also when it’s, I think it’s ok, no, but there are times when it is a serious matter, they know when it is a serious matter, and then that’s it. And also when they pass the post with
the others [sisters], I also tell them “tone it down” because so many rules no [it’s not ok].

Women of all ages use strong language with other women, as well as with men. Among women, they usually include vocatives such as “whore,” “witch,” “dumb-ass,” and Spanish equivalents such as “bruja,” “mensa,” “pinche” (please note the versatility of the word “pinche”, which in certain contexts can be interpreted as “fucker” or “fucking” and others just as “dumb-ass”). Interestingly, they do not use the Spanish equivalent of the word “whore” (puta), perhaps due to the stronger connotation it has in Spanish, but they do use the word “fuck” or “joder” and its derivatives (fucking, fucker, joderse, jódete, etc.). If older generation women use strong language with individuals who are not from a ranchero background or are not part of the family network, they are quick to apologize (as they did with me sometimes –while with others they did not), but they do not stop speaking this way. It is as if they acknowledge that apologizing for foul language is not the norm for most women, but it is for them. Younger generation women only apologize if they are in a formal situation, such as a school setting or an activity in an institution (as one of them did when we went to an art gallery).

Older generation females interact mostly with family and friends who are part of the network, and most of their posts and responses are to other females. This is not to say that males do not spend or use Facebook as much as women, but as Eduardo explained in an interview (see his full quote in Chapter 7, section 1.3.3 Synchronous communication), men only go there to see the gossip, to learn what is going on, and to chat. Males’ activities include sharing video links. More young members frequently update their status than older members in the network.
3.5.3.2 Interaction Inside and Outside the Network and Gender

The previous section discussed some of the differences related to age and gender in language use when members of the network interacted with each other. This section discusses the patterns of communication among members of the Cárabez social network and between Cárabez social network members and non-members. Figure 5 Interaction with members and non-members of the network shows the percentages with which members interacted with other members who are part of the Cárabez social network (blue), with close friends or coworkers who are not part of the Cárabez social network (red), and with acquaintances – classmates, coworkers, and other people they know but are not close to them (green). The figure is divided by gender, and by older and younger generation.

![Figure 5 Interaction with members and non-members of the network](image)

The patterns are different for younger females, who interact with family and friend members of the network slightly more than they do with individuals who are not part of the Cárabez social network (e.g. cousins who belong to other subnetworks, friends.
such as classmates or coworkers). Just as with older females, most of the younger females’ interactions are with other females, and only a third of their interactions are with men. Many times men post pictures but do not comment (on their own or other people’s pictures). Some men post responses more often than others, but this does not depend on age or whether they attend school. Both older and younger male members of the network interact more frequently (about 20% of the time) with other members of the network than with non-members. One pattern observed among young members who attend school is that while in school, these young members’ activity with others who are not part of the Cárabez social network increases, but when they graduate, or are on vacation, their activity with non-member friends decreases. For instance, at the beginning of the project Tita was still attending college. Thus, the first month for Facebook data collection, Tita had just finished school, had had her graduation party, and had gone to Mexico. During the second month of data collection, Tita was already working full time. Her Facebook engagement with classmates at college had dropped from 77% of the first month back in July to 22% in April.

Regarding patterns of interaction across gender, Table 20 *Cross-gender interaction activity* shows the frequencies of interaction across genders. Older generation males interact with the same gender slightly more (55.32%) than with females (44.68%). However, younger generation male members’ interaction with males (65.71%) is almost twice as high as that with females (34.29%). On the contrary, younger and older females alike have similar interaction frequencies. Female-female interactions in both old and young members’ frequencies are over 70%, while their frequency of interaction between females and males is lower than 30% for both older and younger generation females.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Same gender</th>
<th>Opposite gender</th>
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<tr>
<td>Old gen female</td>
<td>75.73%</td>
<td>24.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old gen male</td>
<td>55.32%</td>
<td>44.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young gen female</td>
<td>71.35%</td>
<td>28.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young gen male</td>
<td>65.71%</td>
<td>34.29%</td>
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Table 20 Cross-gender interaction activity

In terms of type of language use, patterns among members and non-members across gender exist. As can be seen in Table 21 *Language variety and interaction activity between members and non-members of the network*, Cárabez social network members codeswitched more when talking to other family members of the network (27.31%) than when talking to their close friends (18.46%) or non-close friends (4.62%). Additionally, members also use more vernacular features (e.g. Ranchero Spanish, AAVE) when interacting with other family members and friend members of the network than with non-members of the network. Thus, when interacting with non-network members, members’ language is more standard. Vernacular varieties in English are used more frequently with both family and friends members of the network than vernacular varieties in Spanish. That is, members use vernacular features of English in similar frequency with other members of the network as well as with friends (~23% in both cases). In contrast, members use vernacular features in Spanish about three times more with other network members (39.58%) than with their friends from other networks (12.50%) or their acquaintances (1.39%).
As shown elsewhere, interactions with non-network members are in Spanish, which could indicate that members’ other networks include mostly Spanish speakers. For example, younger members tend to use more English at school and with classmates. Some younger members codeswitch, and, sometimes, even try to carry on a conversation only in Spanish as Daria explained. If interlocutors are friends who are part of the network, the use of Ranchero Spanish features is more frequent, but the use of English is more standard. Interactions with family or friends who are not part of the network are conducted overwhelmingly in English. If Spanish is used, it is in intrasentential codeswitching with common words such as tía (aunt).

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, all the language varieties used as communicative resources by members of the family network were explained and exemplified. What remains constant is that each variety will have contexts in which it is valued in a society; however, younger generations are including more varieties into their repertoires due to their contact with some speakers and with music from other groups, and in this particular case, a transnational lifestyle.
Regarding the use of language varieties and languages, even though not all members of the family network use all varieties in their sociolinguistic repertoires in the same way and to the same extent, they are exposed to the broader network’s language varieties as they interact with other network members, either on Facebook or face to face. Thus, while members may not be proficient in a particular language or language variety, they are still familiar with these languages and varieties either from hearing them or from reading people’s posts. For example, members who do not have much productive competence in Spanish nevertheless hear and read it regularly, which possibly adds to their competence. Moreover, members of the Cárbez social network use features not only from the varieties in their sociolinguistic repertoire (those which they have in their communicative competence), but also features from varieties they are aware of but do not master (e.g. some AAVE features). Engaging in the use of such languages and varieties successfully plays a central role in the network dynamics of centralization and marginalization, as members jockey for position according to degrees of Mexicanness. This is discussed more fully in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Presentation of Self –
What it Means to Be “Mexican” and to Be a “Cárabez”

4.1 Introduction

Members of the social network engage in three common practices in both offline and online contexts: presentation of self (how they view and present their social identities), co-construction of these identities based on their relationships to others and the larger society, and group membership (how members claim centrality within their network and in terms of the larger Mexican-origin group in society). The purpose of this chapter is to summarize this social network’s perceived national/ethnic and family identities in order to understand how important it is to members to be recognized and seen as part of their social network. In order to understand such importance, the three dynamics of centralization, marginalization and members’ contention of identities are explored throughout the research.

Identities are rooted in networks of people who view each other in terms of similarities and differences. National and ethnic identity is a construct defined in the anthropological literature as a population which “is largely biologically self-perpetuating, shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms, makes up a field of communication and interaction, has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order” (Barth, 1969, p. 18). In this research, the focus is on a social network
comprised of a number of nuclear families related by kinship. As Milroy (2002) suggests, a social network is “always seen as contextualized within a macro-level social network, which is ‘bracketed-off’ for purely methodological reasons” (p. 550). In this study, the “personal social network” is a social network comprised of different families at the center of the larger social network. The subnetwork of 10 families (who identify strongly as Cárabez even though it is not the father’s name in every single unit) are at the center, but its study is contextualized in the larger social network of families which include other Cárabez family units as well as other families (e.g. Pulido, Carbajal, Navarro), all who come from the area of San Juanico, Michoacán. For the purpose of this research I will refer to this main subnetwork, which I refer to as the Cárabez social network, even though not all families have that last name. They do, however, affiliate or identify strongly with that last name. This is perhaps because in the early studies of this social network, Cárabez family unity was at the center. Because the children of daughters with the Cárabez last name have their father’s last name, but participate more in their mother’s family than in their father’s, they often hyphenate the Cárabez last name to theirs on Facebook or in informal situations, or wear the Cárabez t-shirt given at the annual picnic (see below). I will refer to the original social network studied by Farr (2006) as the larger social network.

According to Fought (2004) a study of language use and attitudes in a community may validate someone’s ethnicity and membership, which starts with his or her place in the social network. The following sections will explain the social network structure and strength of the Cárabez social network, members’ notions of ethnic identity and family identity and how they practice presentation of self. Based on members’ notions of ethnic
identity (Mexicanness or Mexicanidad) and their membership in the social network of families, two dynamics that are fundamental to their identity construction are explained: centralization and marginalization. The following sections explain the presentation of self and membership marking in order to later understand how members construct and negotiate their identities in offline and online spaces such as Facebook.

4.2 Strength of Cárbez Social Network

It was very apparent from the beginning of the field research in Chicago that the Cárbez social network continues to be a close-knit network (Milroy & Milroy, 1992). All members of the larger social network still gather on a regular basis to celebrate holidays, birthdays, accomplishments, or simply to convene. Farr (2006) described rancheros as being individualistic but with a strong sense of familism. This characteristic seems to remain intact with generations 1.5 and 2, which are the focus of this study. Despite the network growing, as most of the children of those nine siblings studied by Farr (2006) are now married and have children and grandchildren of their own, they are still close to each other and in close contact (something Facebook has made easier). Appendix G is an updated version of the larger social network and how it has grown.

Due to the number of descendants of these first nine siblings, the original network of families studied in Farr (2006) has subdivided into subnetworks or clusters (Boissevain, 1974). As Fanny and Tita, younger second-generation females, explained:

“So we have our little branches that we’re closer to...I mean, we talk to everyone though, but it’s funny because when it comes to, uhm and I think it’s just the way we were raised, and it’s – we see it as um...not necessarily saying that you know our branches were raised better, per se but we are [Tita: different] that”
Subnetworks, then, are not exclusive to each other. Family members often belong to multiple subnetworks. However, the ties among members of a single subnetwork are kept even closer. Members of the Cárabez social network (a subnetwork of the larger network studied by Farr, 2006) see each other on a daily basis, conduct religious and holiday activities together, and share everyday tasks that they do not routinely engage in with the larger network. This chapter describes these activities that keep the network unified. These descriptions will serve to ground the importance of family relationships among the members of this network and show how their identities are tightly connected to the ways they see themselves (presentation of self) and the ways they see each other. Additionally, members’ identities are connected to their positionality within the network in terms of centrality or marginalization.

4.2.1 The “Family Picnic”

One of the events that maintains the ties and closeness of the larger network of families, which includes the Cárabez social network, is the family picnic. The family picnic is an annual cookout organized for all the descendants of seven out of the original nine siblings, who have lived or are living in the U.S., and their friends (who are in turn part of specific subnetworks). It usually takes place in a city park closer to Chicago suburbs than to members’ homes near downtown. Due to the large number of people, food is catered instead of being brought potluck style, as it was in years past, but each family still brings drinks, its specialty dish, or a treat. Each household has to cooperar (pool funds/pitch in) $50. None of the members was able to give me an exact number of
attendees, as it often changes depending on whether they are in the US at that time or whether they have a work commitment that could not be changed.

The organizers of this event are mainly the women in generation 1.5 and older generation 2 women who are part of the Cárabez social network. It is usually scheduled at the end of August or early September, so the organizing committee starts convening as early as July. Communication via Facebook has now become a central part of the organization efforts. Meetings are arranged via posts and responses, as well as notifications. “Minutes” or progress reports are also posted via status updates, and “likes” are often considered a way to confirm a meeting schedule or to indicate that one was notified or agrees on an outcome. All of this activity is done in “public” as opposed to the network’s private (closed) family page (access to which is limited to family members), where members hardly post anything. Network members can monitor progress, provide ideas, or simply witness the development of plans for the picnic.

The family picnic lays out clearly the family roles. The picnic preparation activities also provide opportunities for the socialization of younger 2nd and 3rd generation members. Older members set dates, location, costs, and the schedule of activities. Single women who work at schools are usually in charge of games and activities specifically for adults (e.g., a short soccer game), for children (e.g. musical chairs), for families, and for only females, among other group divisions. Younger members are socialized into these organizing roles by shadowing older members. For instance, second generation girls as young as 16 are allowed to attend the meetings and are encouraged to post updates on Facebook (with occasional critiques from older members making posts such as “too much [information]” or “te pasas” [you crossed the line] on the walls of younger members);
other young women are asked to babysit younger children during these meetings. Such organizing roles are also assigned/given and taken according to a person’s perceived centrality within the network. Males are usually in charge of gathering tools or special equipment (canopies, grills, karaoke machines, tables, chairs), and are primarily, although not solely, responsible for carrying items and picking them up in the park.

4.2.2 The Family Calendar

The annual family picnic is not the only way the larger network of families keeps in touch with each other. The family calendar, which shows the name and picture of a family member on the day of his or her birthday, is another way they maintain communication with each other. If two family members have the same birthday, they try to take pictures of themselves together for the calendar. Just as with the picnic, each family has to pay for its own calendar, but only one member is in charge of its design, order, pick-up, and delivery of the calendars. Typically, a member of the generation 1.5 and old generation 2 of the same family (Susana and Vania) have been in charge of this project because they are familiarity with some technology and use of websites such as Costco photo center. However, as younger members acquire better photo equipment and become more knowledgeable of software skills (e.g. Photoshop), they are being socialized into family roles of increasing importance within the larger network such as making the family calendar.

Unlike the family picnic, the family calendar only includes the Cárabez social network and central members of other clusters with the strongest relationships to central members of the Cárabez social network. That is, all members in the grandparent
generation are in the family calendar, but not all their descendants are included. The family calendar in a way delimits the central subnetwork studied in this research, which I call the Cárabez social network. It includes both family and friends, as they all form part of the particular cluster I studied. As one of the young second generation members noted, friends lobby and argue their way into the calendar, as they see other non-family members included, and only then do they feel fully part of the network.

Facebook participation has slowly changed dependence on the calendar for remembering birthdays, and has eased the “trouble” (as some members said during interviews) of calling more distant family members to congratulate them on their birthday. Currently, with the reminder feature on the Facebook home page and apps such as “My calendar,” members can simply receive notifications of whose birthday it is within their pool of Facebook friends and quickly congratulate that person. However, being in the family calendar still constitutes an “official” membership more than what is seen online. Other family members have tried to create groups in Facebook and websites with online calendars (an online version of the family calendar); however, the most central members, those who are in charge of making the printed calendar, have not taken up this idea. The fact that they still produce the printed calendar offers a glimpse of a literacy ideology in which print is sometimes preferred to digital writing.

4.2.3 **Mexican Independence Day / College Graduation Parties**

Mexican Independence Day and college graduation celebrations have similar processes of invitation, organization, and attendance. Usually, a college student member of the Cárabez social network creates and edits a video (in which at least 10 other
members participate) inviting “anyone” in the larger social network to attend a party in someone’s back yard. The invitation is extended to friend members of the Cárabez social network, but not to friend members of other subnetworks in the larger social network of families. Some parties gather 70+ members of the larger social network. The video is posted on several members’ walls/timelines, across several subnetworks. In many cases, a verbal invitation is distributed by phone, Facebook chat or Facebook tagging (by linking a person’s Facebook name and page to the video), and by other mediums (e.g. text, email). Once the video is posted on Facebook, family and friends engage in Facebook conversations about the making of the video, the bloopers (deleted scenes or video takes that usually contain humorous mistakes), and the aspects of it that could have been done better; but most family and friends praise how good the video is and whether they are able to attend, or how they wish they were in that country to attend and beg for pictures on Facebook. Because Mexican Independence day is seen as a holiday that marks members’ identity as Mexican, members consider it to be of great importance and want to gather as many family members as they can. Also of great importance are college graduation parties, which are not common. Only two women in the network have graduated from a 4-year institution, and the party for the youngest was a huge celebration.

For these kinds of parties, the families of the Cárabez social network provide food. Members sometimes rent extra tables and chairs, and they usually put up a canopy in case of rain. Members open the garage doors to the alley were the party is held and place three to four coolers with alcoholic beverages (mainly beer and tequila, but sometimes other types of alcohol), sodas (mostly Coke and Squirt), and bottled water.
Depending on whether they cook *asada* (grilled beef), *carnitas* (shredded fried pork), or *quesadillas* (tortillas filled with cheese, mashed potatoes with Mexican sausage-*chorizo* or any meat) or *flautas* (deep fried rolled tacos) there is a grill, a *paila* (a very large pot used for deep frying large volumes of meat), or a frying stand. Generally, the men are in charge of the grilling (although women take over as soon as the men start drinking and eating), but the women are in charge of tortillas, restocking coolers and side dishes. There is always a table that has tortilla chips, beans, nachos, salsa, and guacamole to snack on. In some cases, they order catered food from a *taquiza*, a business where two or three men come with a stand to prepare tacos on demand. Such tacos are *de asada* (grilled beef), but in some occasions *al pastor* (marinated pork) will also be served, and this will be brought in a *trompo* (a large piece of meat cooked on a vertical spit, similar to the ones used to cook the lamb meat for middle-eastern shawarmas).

Seating is usually organized according to age and gender within the family. Women with children and babies (and some of their spouses) sit at central tables under the canopy or in the garage. Older members of the family (the grandparents) sit in a visible corner or away from heavily trafficked areas. For example, elder men often sit near the food preparation area, although they are not involved in the actual cooking. Younger men stand around the beer coolers, or the grill if they are cooking. They also prepare space for the *tamborazo* (a band playing heavily percussionist music, sometimes supplemented with a saxophone or other brass instrument) they hire for later in the evening. A celebration requires an entire day for the organizers, but the rest of the members arrive any time after 6 p.m. Children usually run around unsupervised or with
limited supervision by the pre-teens and their mothers. These children also gather around a flat screen TV to play videogames or watch movies.

In terms of language use, adults speak Spanish; younger people codeswitch between Spanish and English; and the youngest members use mostly English. Despite these family dynamics of segregating into groups according to age and language ability, there is a fair amount of fluidity among the groups. Children who have a fight, an accident, or are hungry come back to the adults, who mostly speak Spanish to them, carrying out their bilingual language socialization. Older members (whether it is grandparents, parents, or older cousins) take turns monitoring the children, and they usually codeswitch even though they could be speaking only English to them.

Facebook’s role in these kinds of parties is at the invitation stage and later at the debriefing stage, as during the party or soon after the event, members post their pictures, videos, and comments about the party. This promotes a sense of continuation that usually lasts for three days to a week, and that includes people who attended the party as well as those who are in a different country but that, in a way, participate in a digital form, creating a transnational discourse (see chapter 7 on transnationalism).

4.2.4 Birthday Parties

Birthday party celebrations are another indication of the strength of the Cárabez social network. Not only do these parties define this subnetwork in relation to the other subnetworks of the larger social network of families, but they also serve to illustrate the centrality and marginalization across members of the network. The size of the party depends on who the person is who is celebrated, and whether this person is a central
member or a marginalized member of the network. Depending on the size of the party, birthday parties are held at one of the households or at a local restaurant (usually Portillos, a favorite). There are no gifts involved (only among the closest members, if any), and celebrations range from 10 to 30 people. Children’s parties are always at a household. Invitations (which are initially printed at places such as Costco photo print) are usually extended at the last minute via Facebook, text messages, phone calls, or by seeing each other at work or while visiting. Organization for such events is rarely posted on Facebook, although sometimes members post their experiences, feelings, or challenges on their status updates as a way to vent.

While Facebook is not used to organize or discuss these events (only to drop a line on the person’s wall or timeline), Facebook is widely used to post pictures and comments during the event; very few are posted after the event. They also tag attendees as well as family members who did not attend (because they are in Mexico or in the U.S., depending where the party took place or because they had to work). In a way, they open dialogue and incite participation in an event, even though not all members are physically present in the same place, creating a transnational space (see more about transnational discourse in Chapter 7). Two members usually post these pictures on Facebook, and while their intention may be to simply inform, include friends and family in the other country or even to show off, other participants give these posts different functions as can be seen in the comments they post in response. For instance, one common function is to engage in relajo, a joking activity involving verbal art that Farr (2006) recognized as characteristic of ranchero society, with the people who could not attend, just as they would at a regular party. Facebook postings of these family birthday parties are also a
window into family social order and relations. The number of pictures, posts, and comments that follow, usually indicates the centrality that the person has in the network. This will be explained more in depth later in the section on centrality and marginalization.

4.2.5 Weekend Gatherings

Weekend gatherings are perhaps the reunions that most delimit members of the Cárabéz social network. Members gather every weekend for at least one day to eat, play, or talk, and this is in addition to the countless times they visit each other during the week. The Cárabéz social network, with which most observations were done, has two primary households where they hold these gatherings. They can usually be found in one or the other of these households, and members can enter and leave unannounced if they need to. Food and/or older women to prepare something are usually available. In some cases, members buy pizza. In these parties, a great number of old-fashioned traditional activities occur. For example, a common game that elders enjoy playing, and even the youngest of the members join, is Lotería, a Mexican version of Bingo. Additionally, they love karaoke singing, where individuals take the microphone to sing whole-heartedly ranchero music and typical regional Mexican songs, both classic and contemporary. The gender roles at these parties are blurrier than those at larger family reunions. Members can contest their usual roles by engaging in relajo, forging a network identity in doing so. For example, while playing Lotería, usually if a female member needs to do something such as preparing some food or attending a husband, a child, or a baby, the game stops until the person returns. However, if an interaction during the game is framed as relajo, the
female can ask the male member to take her place. During one of my visits when we were playing *Lotería*, a woman though she was winning and her husband, who was also playing, said he wanted to eat something. In other occasions, I have witnessed a woman stopping the game to quickly serve a meal for her husband or son. However, this time the woman said “*sírvete tú que estoy aquí haciendo negocio*” (help yourself [to food] as I am doing business here) followed by a guffaw and laughter from her and everyone at the table.

It is worth mentioning that, members’ participation in gatherings is not limited by physical proximity. On numerous occasions, during a birthday party or weekend family gathering while they are eating, a sibling or a cousin in Mexico will call or be called (using radio signals through cellphones) or put up on a Skype screen, and will participate digitally in the gathering. The younger generations often text other family members and friends providing them with details of what an uncle or aunt said or did, blurring the physical, spatial, and time boundaries of a face-to-face synchronous reunion. I remember knowing all the details of the 70th birthday celebration of the grandfather of the Cáratez social network, a central member of the larger social network studied by Farr, 2006, even before they were described on Facebook, and even one of my jokes during the texting between a teenage member and myself made it to the party. When I finally saw the pictures on Facebook, I was able to comment, and could understand everything they were referring to, as I already knew the details of that particular event as it was texted to me during the party by a young second-generation pre-teen. This experience gave me two insights: first, how this family is able to keep communicating and strengthening its links using computer mediated communication (CMC) and texting, and second, how
disengaged some of the younger members of the network seem to be in family activities, since they spend so much time texting and communicating with family and friends who are not at the party. In general, Facebook talk, although it is constructed in a public space, is an extension and expansion of talk and activity during reunions, with the secondary purpose of keeping the “other side” (people who are in the other country; that is, Mexico if the person posting is in the U.S. or it is the U.S. if the person posting is in Mexico) informed, as one of the members explained, thus blurring spatial and temporal space and creating a new transnational space (see chapter 7).

4.2.6 Family, Coworkers, and Friends

Another reason the larger network and its subnetworks keep a close relationship is related to their different roles with each other (e.g., as relatives, friends, co-workers). The Cárabez social network and the other subnetworks are still dense and multiplex (Milroy & Milroy, 1992; Milroy, 2002). Perhaps not as much as the extent to the initial social network studied by Farr (2006). However, members in the Cárabez social network have family ties (kinship); they also serve as godparents to each other children; some members act as baby sitters for other members’ children; young members’ circle of friends and classmates include other cousins in the network; and they also do business or work together. Many members of the Cárabez social network work in similar positions (if not within the same company), and help each other obtain positions too. For example, a woman in the network obtained a job as a teacher aide in the public school system. Shortly after, her sister also obtained a position as teacher aide in the same school. They have been there for years, and now the first woman’s daughter is a teacher’s aide in the
same school as her mother, and her baby’s father is also an aide. The second woman switched to an administrative position at a charter middle school and helped her daughter become an administrative assistant at the high school for which she used to work. The case of the male members of the network is similar. Most are in construction or working in the train yards, as their fathers (or fathers-in-law) did. Now, even though their male children (who are not many) are following in the steps of physical work as their parents, they are not necessarily doing construction, electricity or factory work, with the exception of two who have gone back to Mexico to work in the avocado orchards. Instead, they are working in factories doing assembly lines for kitchen cabinets, or working as waiters at restaurants downtown. Several younger generation members, both male and female, have attended college, but have not completed their degrees or are still pursuing the degree, in some cases choosing to defer it due to peer-pressure from their male family members to enter the labor force, due to cost of education, or simply in pursuit of better financial opportunities, such as working full time in their father’s avocado orchards in Mexico.

Business within the Cárabez social network is growing, especially around avocado orchards and exports; however, there are other issues not discussed here that contribute to rapid growth and success of such business.

Thus, the relationships among members of the network include kinship and as well as work. However, they also are due to marriage. Several family members have married friends from the larger network of families (see Figure and compare to Farr 2006). These marriages have made kinship more multiplex, as some cousins are related from both their mother’s and father’s sides of the family even if not all ties are along blood lines. As the family grows and more ties are formed (e.g. see Peña in Figure 1 in
Chapter 2), there is less opportunity to find a good partner to marry, as many of their social circles and friends are also family members, even though there are other families in their rancho in Mexico and friends, coworkers, and classmates in the US. However, this does not stop members of the younger generation from desiring to find a partner who will help keep those ties and closeness to their place of origin in Mexico. In fact, for a person to marry someone outside of the network, they usually must have some prior connection to the social network, such as having origins in a known family back in Mexico, or gaining acceptance in the network and becoming part of it before they marry.

4.2.7 Raising Each Other’s Kids

Gatherings and parties alone do not simply build the strength of any social network. In this particular case, as has been documented in Farr (2006), the strength of the larger social network lies in the history and manner of their migration starting in the 1960s, as well as in the fact that their families (and ancestors) have lived in the same micro-region in Mexico for several centuries. The migration processes early on forced members of family units of this network to come to the U.S. alone or in very small groups, and they arrived and lived with together and with other members of the larger network. Therefore, some women took care of and temporarily raised nieces and nephews whose mother was in the other country (either left to the U.S. or went back to Mexico). Nuclear families (mother, father, and children) were often apart, but members always lived with an aunt and uncle or an older cousin. This fluidity meant that many generation 1.5 and older second-generation members grew up together and bonded even more. Compadrazgo, the kinship relationship that members have when they become godparents
of a child was also part of such exchanges. A child sometimes stayed temporarily with his
or her godparents, who are usually family members. Similar practices continue today
with members leaving their children with a sibling or cousin in order to take care of
business in Mexico or work in the United States, although it is to a lesser extent (only
some members do it) than in their parents’ generation. While all Cárabez social network
members of generation 1.5 and older generation 2 travel to Mexico at least once a year,
not all of their children do. For example, in Licha’s case her eldest daughter Tita and her
youngest daughter Angie go to Mexico at least twice a year. In contrast, Daria, Licha’s
middle daughter has only gone 5 times in her lifetime. The same can be said for Eduardo
and his little brother Mateo. Eduardo goes to Mexico every summer and almost every
December, while Mateo has only been to Mexico twice. Some members of the network
attribute the closeness and density of this network to their ability to stay out of drugs and
gangs (as Eduardo explained). In contrast, others think that the network is living in its
own bubble, isolated from any other culture than that of their parents.

In Facebook, family ties among the larger network are evident when one sees the
number of old pictures they post on their walls/timelines as well as the numbers of
“likes” such pictures receive from members of the Cárabez social network and the larger
network. Additionally, members of the larger network express their gratitude to their
caregivers’ (members of the Cárabez social network) children on Facebook, so that these
children let the caregivers know. Members of any age very often post their thoughts
regarding the importance of family during a conversation or as response post to a picture
or comments on a wall (now Timeline). A common type of post is a statement of how
much they send each other love, regardless of whether they are in the same country. If a
member is in Mexico (whether it is for two weeks, two months, a year, or permanently), he or she will write on each other’s walls or pictures “missing you/ longing for” messages or status updates that express sadness for not being in the same place. However, none of the grandparent generation has a Facebook account, so when a grandparent leaves or arrives, Facebook is flooded with messages for that person ranging from simple acknowledgment, sending regards, or directly telling them something (which is later responded to by the owner of the wall who went to talk to the elder). Members of the network are usually suffering when they are not all in one place, and since they maintain a transnational lifestyle, there is always someone they long for. However, for the younger generation, U.S. is more “home” than Mexico, and they only go to Mexico for vacation. Thus when they spend longer than normal visits there, they send messages of missing home, but they refer to the family, rather than the place. A post describes this feeling: “doesn’t feel like Mexico without my people: I miss you guys” (as Itzel’s status update read), a feeling never expressed by her younger sister, who moved back to Mexico a year earlier.

The support that members give each other is financial and emotional. Financial because they can babysit (and raise) each other’s kids, provide shelter when needed, and sometimes lend money to each other. However, in Facebook the kind of support they show is emotional. If they have a problem of any kind, all they have to do is publish a wall post, and a plethora of positive messages, suggestions, and empathy statements from family and friends will follow. For instance when members of the network are sick, they receive support from network members from their and other subnetworks. Some of these messages are also transnational, as the parent may currently be in the other country, and
messages can be also sent by more distant relatives such as cousins and uncles from larger social network. Another example is messages expressing sad feelings due to a low grade in a school test or a problem with a friendship (in younger female cases, many posts are simply emoticons such as <3 if they are happy or </3 if they are unhappy). Members of both the subnetwork (the Cárabez social network) and the larger social network (originally studied by Farr, 2006) participate in lifting the person’s mood and giving suggestions. Likewise when members are happy and have something to celebrate, such as a vacation or a good grade, network support and comments are provided. In many occasions, one family member “educates” another, and this does not necessarily occur from older to younger members of the network. Due to age differences among the nine siblings, there are intergenerational pockets, that is, people who belong to different generations but who are the same age, which may give older members certain authority to monitor Facebook behavior and to educate, but without a parental tone, for they are not seen this way.

4.2.8 Family Ties Too Strong to “Make Us or Break Us” (Quote from Daria)

After giving an overview of the ways in which the Cárabez social network maintains strong bonds over time and over generations, it is important to explain that such closeness is also evident in the way members present themselves in their everyday lives and on Facebook. In their daily lives, members of the network all conform to the norms and rules of American society in terms of names. In U.S. societies, naming practices include a first name, a middle name (optional), and a last name (usually the father’s last name). So all members of the network adopt this naming practice. That is,
members use their first and last names at school, work, the doctor’s, or at the bank. When a woman gets married, she adopts her husband’s last name, leaving her own behind. However, in Mexican culture naming practices include two names (first and middle – e.g. María Dolores), which are equally important, and two last names (the first one is the father’s and the second one is the mother’s – e.g. Cárabez Pérez). If there is a need to shorten a name to call a person at a doctor’s office for example, only the first and middle names and the first last name are used (as the first last name is the father’s name – e.g. María Dolores Cárabez). In many cases, a persons’ middle name is more important than the first one, since the first name may only allude to Jesus, the Virgin Mary, a saint, or a grandparent (e.g. María Dolores can be known as Dolores). In these cases, the middle name is the one by which a person is known (or a short version of the name as Bill is to William for example). Thus, for instance, at school or work they may be known as “Maria,” but close friends and members of the network may call the person “Lolita, Lola or Lolis”, since her name is María Dolores and the apocorípico (short form) of Dolores is Lola, its diminutive form Lolita, and its informal form Lolis.

Many members of the network are also very proud of their grandfather’s last name: Cárabez, which is not a common Spanish name and which has a long history and can be directly tied to a small village in Spain (Farr, 2006). In the U.S. naming system, children maintain only the father’s name. In contrast, the Mexican naming system maintains both the father’s and the mother’s last names, putting the father’s (first) last name first, followed by the mother’s (first) last name.

Figure 4.1 *Sample of father’s last name through generations* is a tree that represents how last names are passed through three generations. Note that while the
example does not contain middle names, it is common to find middle names in Latin American culture. I omitted them to save space.

For example, in the name María Cárabez López, Cárabez is her father’s first last name (and the father’s father’s first last name) and López is the mother’s first last name (which is in turn her father’s father’s first last name). Therefore, many of network members (including the women), make a point to introduce themselves as Cárabez even though they don’t carry that name anymore in the case of grandchildren, children of women (as they adopt their father’s last name – See the case of Tere Luna Cárabez). At school, this is less evident, for they only use on school papers and with friends the legal American version of their first and last name, omitting their second last name. However,
on Facebook, many members of the Cárbez social network use both of their first names and last names (the father’s and the mother’s last names), which constitutes the members’ Mexican name. For example, a person whose name is José Damián Vela might go by José Vela at school and work, but on Facebook might use the name José Damián Vela Cárbez, his full Mexican name. This person is known as “Damián, Dami, or Mino” and not “José” within the network. Interestingly, generation 1.5 members usually present the American version of their names on Facebook, while some second-generation members use their Mexican names. Some of the young second generation girls, especially daughters of a Cárbez woman, have said that they would like to change their names to hyphenate their grandparents’ last name into their name so that their children can have that name too and to prevent it from being lost in subsequent generations. This would be the case of the example Tere Luna Cárbez’s son, which as can be seen in the diagram, his name is Pedro Ávila Luna. The mother’s last name gets lost completely on the third generation. This is not a sentiment expressed much by men or members of two or three other subnetworks, who are married or directly related to another grandfather with a last name that also has a presence or power in their place of origin. It seems to be unique to the Cárbez social network.

Regarding the place of origin, San Juanico, Michoacán is another source of pride for the network, even for the youngest members. The family hails from a small village in the high plains of the avocado producing state of Michoacán. Most of the second generation, both older and younger (even those born and raised mostly in Chicago), introduce themselves as being from San Juanico, Michoacán, and they even say that in their “About me” section on Facebook. Very few say they are from Chicago, although
many, if they note it at all, say they currently live in Chicago, IL. According to a young second generation boy, when people meet each other for the first time in his high school, they always ask for names and then where they are from, meaning where did your parents came from, and that is as important as the names themselves.

Understanding the network members’ links, their strength, their family pride, and their family identity is important for the next section, which explains how the members of the network establish their membership and position themselves within the network. Members positioning impacts their notions of self-identification, as well as the identity that is assigned to them. Therefore, in the next section I will explain how members construct membership, including both centrality and marginalization, in their interactions both inside and outside of the network as these individuals grapple with their place in the larger Mexican society as they imagine it. The section will also explain how members of the network centralize themselves and marginalize those who are not at the center of the network but are undoubtedly members of the Cárabez social network, and who in turn are fighting for recognition as legitimate Mexicans and to be part of the Mexican society in their place of origins. In the section covering membership centralization and marginalization, I will demonstrate how members present their multiple identities and how they construct both positive and negative versions of themselves, as well as how fluid and co-constructed these identities are.

4.3 Presentation of self – Notions of Mexicanidad and Network Membership

No one has a single static identity, not even single identities that people most imagine or like to display. Identities are always constructed around other peoples’
perceptions, societal rules and constraints, and the changing nature of the human being to whom the identity belongs. A person has fluid and dynamic identities that are often being co-constructed and challenged by other individuals, such that it would be very challenging to define the identity of a person independently of the time, the context, the state of mind of the individual, the community affairs, the language medium, and the way in which that identity was displayed. To understand a person’s fluid and dynamic identities it is necessary to look at two levels. The first level is the identity that person showcases or displays (having constructed these already in previous settings with other people or in interaction with the societies they live in); and second level is the identities a person co-constructs in conversation as a direct response to other people’s actions, challenges or assumptions. The purpose of this section is to describe how members of this network display their identities through direct statement, responses to interview questions, and by showcasing it on their Facebook walls. It is important to note that displaying/showcasing one identity at a given moment does not signify the rejection of another. In fact, display of identities is so complex and fluid that there may be two or three being expressed virtually simultaneously, although with primary emphasis being placed on one in particular. In this chapter the focus is on what individuals think these identities are and how they see them; I use the word “display” not to mean that the display of identities is not constructed. Rather it is simply a way to distinguish those identities that have been constructed in other situations and have already been processed or internalized and chosen as a banner for the individual, rather than those identities that emerge in conversation. The first section will summarize the members’ notions of what it means to be Mexican, and not Mexican-American or American. The next section will
explain how these identities are displayed on Facebook walls, which are magnified, highlighted, and even stereotyped. Finally, the last section explores how transnationalism has shaped the network members’ discourse on identity (especially as displayed) and how transnational discourse on Facebook is also used to contest those ideas. This last point will serve as a base from which to examine the dynamics of membership and marginalization, as well as the contestation of competing and conflicting identities.

4.3.1 Issues of National Identity – How Do They View Themselves?

4.3.1.1 Being Mexican in the US

There was no need to add a question in the ethnographic interview about what national identity members of the network consider themselves to be. Unanimously and repeatedly they state in everyday conversations, weekend parties, and every opportunity they have that they are Mexican, that they are from Mexico, or that they view themselves as Mexican and not as part of any other group (even Mexican-American, Latino, and Hispanic, despite government, school, and media labels). However, unlike generation 1.5 members, for many second-generation members, the label comes with a caveat; they are a “Mexican born in the U.S.” as Tita, Fanny, and other young second-generation females noted. Tita explained that “U.S. born Mexican” is a person who is of Mexican descent, who speaks Spanish, who knows, practices and respects Mexican culture, traditions, customs, and religion (meaning Roman Catholic), but who por azares del destino (by a twist of fate), was born in the U.S. and thus has learned to speak English simultaneously, or more predominantly than Spanish. This section discusses how members of the network explain this identity; however, members identify themselves differently according to their
level of bilingualism and transnationalism and not by age or generational gap (older vs. younger). Identifying themselves in such way affects individuals differently even if they are siblings who live in the same household. Due to their levels of bilingualism, I subdivided the members of the network in two groups. One group is the Bilingual/Spanish preferred group, and the other is the Bilingual/English dominant group. The first group stated preferring Spanish when speaking, used Spanish informally with their family and friends during my visits, and chose Spanish when responding to my questions. The second group stated preferring English to communicate with everyone, except those who were monolingual in Spanish. They also avoided long conversations when other members were speaking Spanish only. If members in this second group participated in primarily Spanish conversations, they would do so in English.

4.3.1.2 Bilingual/Spanish Preferred Group

The bilingual/Spanish preferred group encompasses those members from the second generation (old and young) who were born in the U.S., but that frequently travel to Mexico (at least twice a year for more than a month at a time). Members in this group have also lived in México for months or years at a time. Santa Ana and Parodi (1998) propose a model of speech community that derives from Labov’s model and is compatible with Milroy’s notion of speech usage in social networks. Milroy (1987) explained that social networks are the central mechanism for an individual speech usage to change depending on group cohesion or susceptibility to change. Santa Ana and Parodi’s (1998) proposed model includes a hierarchy of four speech community configurations, which they call nested fields. Individuals are placed into these fields
according to their demonstrated perception of the social value of a variable. These four fields include: the first local configuration (familiar) is the knowledge and use of stigmatized variables; the second local configuration (regional) is the awareness but not necessarily use of stigmatized variables; the third one is the awareness and use of regional variables; and finally the fourth one is the knowledge and use of standard variables over regional ones.

The members of the Cáratez social network are fluent in English as well as Spanish at two levels: the familiar, and community (regional) (Santa Ana & Parodi, 1998). However, some members of the Cáratez social network are even fluent at a third level (informal Spanish mostly free of stigmatized features but not of regional features), since they have studied Spanish in Mexico or Spanish in the U.S. at the college level (Santa Ana & Parodi, 1998). The childhood of these members is similar to those of generation 1.5. As children, they were raised in Spanish, for it was the language of their parents, who knew very little, if any, English. Many of these people as children served as cultural brokers for their parents, since they went to U.S. schools and commanded English to some degree (much better than their parents). Because they were taken to Mexico regularly, they have the cultural baggage and longing (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988) of their parents, always wanting to go back to Mexico and remembering what they left, as each time they visited, they also left memories, friendships, toys, and items of endearment. Thus, members of this group were usually placed in ESL classes in U.S. elementary schools because they had not been exposed to English first, or in the case of some members of the younger second generation, because they had completed kindergarten or some elementary school in Mexico. Their knowledge of and affinity to
Mexico and Spanish is such that, despite the fact that they have finished at least middle school, they like Spanish better, feel very comfortable if not more so with it, and often second guess themselves when doing something in English. For example, Maru, an older second-generation female, said that when writing papers for her university classes, she had to constantly check the dictionary and thesaurus to choose the right words in English. Susana, an older second-generation female, reported struggling to find the “right words” for her papers while she was at school. Maru, Susana and other female members of similar ages, seemed to agree that they could think faster and better in Spanish at school despite the fact that their spoken English is more fluent sometimes.

In informal conversation and interviews, members of this group explained that they are just Mexican, and nothing else, for the simple reason that when they were growing up, their parents did not let them have a typical American childhood. Their parents did not give them permission to go out of the house because of the gang problems in their neighborhoods of Pilsen, Little Village, and Gage Park. Thus, as children, these members interacted only with members of their larger family (aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, second cousins) and their neighbors who, if they were not family members, were other children of immigrants from the same geographical area in Mexico whose parents knew each other or each other’s parents. Thus, as one female explained “it was like living in a Mexican bubble.” Members of the network interact with other family members and friends, schoolteachers, classmates, co-workers and neighbors in a community where Mexican Spanish is widely spoken. Businesses and vacation trips were and are usually done within the confines of Mexican culture and with other Mexicans. They had very little exposure to non-Mexican immigrants and African-American classmates and
teachers. When they had exposure to other ethnic groups, it was often in the context of crime, gangs, or problems, the reason for much of their parents’ distrust of blacks. Integration with other communities was a concept they did not grow up with; it was more the notion of tolerance. If they interacted with other racial/ethnic groups it was because they had to at school or at work, but friendships were not normally forged. If one of their teachers were white or black, they would interact but would not ask for help. Instead, they would look for each other’s help and that of older members who had already gone through that grade (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Maru, an older second-generation member, explains that for them, the label Mexican-American does not make sense because that implies that they possess both cultures: Mexican and American. However, Maru says that their upbringing was only Mexican. That is, members of her family and her social network played Mexican games with other Mexican kids, went on trips to Mexico for vacation, and engaged in Mexican parties instead of after-school activities. She explains:

“el término “Mexico-Americana” es sólo una palabra, porque es el tener las dos culturas… en el corazón me siento Mexicana, y pues no sé no tengo todo lo Americano que quisiera tener, nomás poquito. Americana nada más soy porque hablo el idioma, porque conozco la cultura en cierta forma, más que nada pero de ahí en más no”.

the term Mexican-American is only a word, because it is to have both cultures… in my heart I feel I’m Mexican, and well I don’t know I don’t have all of the American [culture or knowledge] I would like to have, only a little. I’m American only because I speak the language [English] because I know the culture in a way, more than anything else but nothing apart from it none.

Maru makes the distinction of ‘having’ the two cultures versus knowing about the cultures in order to qualify as member of a particular group. In her view, she thinks that
speaking English does make her somewhat American, but in terms of being part of ‘having’ culture, she does not. She explains that much of the American culture she learned when she first went to college and realized how different her background was from that of her classmates. She did not go to Brownies or any other afterschool programs. She did not engage in any sports. She also explained that she did not have the same lifestyle as other Americans she met when she entered college. As an example, she said that what she and her family ate and shopped for was different from what their classmates ate and shopped for.

An older generation male, Marcos, explained that going to college, apart from “opening” his eyes to how they were living before compared to U.S. society, also presented challenges in terms of making sense of an identity. Marcos explained that at that time, he knew he was Mexican and did not even question the fact that he had been born in the U.S., for he had not learned to master either English or Spanish well; however, at school, he felt that he was labeled and was expected to accept this. He explained that at school he was often referred to as Mexican-American or Latino, ideas that did not suit him or make sense to him. Additionally, learning about Chicano and Tejano movements confused him even more, for he could see similarities in background (hard working low wage immigrants) with the members of those movements, and even considered adopting those identities while at school. However, those labels did not make sense to him or the rest of his network, since, while they all consider Chicago to be home, they continue to identify themselves as Mexican.
4.3.1.3  Bilingual/English Dominant Group

This group encompasses members of the second generation (old and young) who were born in the U.S. but whose travels to Mexico have been less frequent due to economic factors and immigration issues. They are usually, but not exclusively, the younger members in a family who grew up hearing (but not necessarily using) both languages, and who were often placed in ESL programs when they started elementary school. This group is diverse in degree of bilingualism. There are members who are fluent in both languages, but Spanish is always their weaker language. They may be able to maintain a conversation in Spanish when it is about familiar and very informal topics such as family parties, religious rituals, or what they did for vacation; however, if they want to converse in less common subjects, such as what they think of their school and whether they agree with their teachers, they usually switch to English. In some cases, their Spanish is limited to formulaic expressions common of greetings, praise, prayers, and relajo (joking around). Thus, anybody in this group could arrive at a family gathering, greet everyone in Spanish, respond to a few basic questions such as ‘how are you’ and ‘how is school going?’, but could not always elaborate on these topics. Their view of being Mexican is almost the same as the other group, with the exception of ability to speak Spanish. They contend that Spanish is important and necessary to keep strong cultural ties and mark membership in the larger social network, but it is not necessary to feel Mexican. They argue with members of the other group that what makes you Mexican is the feeling and not the actions, and they often criticize cousins who claim to be more Mexican but do not consistently follow Mexican religious teachings or other traditions. Members of this group recognize members of the other group as “central” to
their network, but they often challenge others and fight for their own centrality in their network and as “Mexican” in the society at large.

What defines a young member of the second generation as belonging to the first or second group is choice: the choice to learn the Spanish language well, the choice to learn about Mexico regardless of whether or not their parents take them there, and the choice to dress, act, listen to music, and use Ranchero Spanish. Members of this group no longer need Spanish to relate to others, make friends, and communicate at school, since these other people also primarily speak English. Thus, the choice to learn Spanish, or to learn about Mexico and its culture, is highly valued but not by everyone. It is valued only by those members who want to deem themselves to be more Mexican, and be considered in a more central membership role in the Cárabez social network. Rather than knowing Spanish and knowing about Mexico and its culture, in this group what matters is the feeling of being Mexican, and affiliating themselves with a Mexican-origin community rather than a Mexican-American group. Members in this group do not choose the Mexican-American label even though school, government and media rhetoric push them to use labels such as Latino or Hispanic. If any members of the Cárabez social network in this group use any of these labels, it is only in the contexts where they are asked to do so in order to follow institutionalized practices.

4.3.1.4 Being Mexican-American or American in US and Mexico

All members of the network understand the power of labels, and often see them as an imposition rather than a description of who they feel they are. However, a few members said that they use the label Mexican-American, not because they identify with
the label, feel or believe they are Mexican-American, but because of convenience. In some cases members’ place as a linguistic minority pushes them to use anything necessary to position themselves in the larger U.S. society: being a legitimate American but remaining Mexican (ethnically). However, as Fabián, a young second generation male, explained, adopting this label is only to make it clear to non-Mexican origin Americans that they are equals, but not the same, and that Fabián, as well as the rest of the younger generation 2 members in his network, are legal U.S. citizens, but that they are ethnically Mexican. Fanny, his older sister, agrees with him, saying that it is sometimes convenient to use that label in order to receive good treatment and judgment from non-Mexican origin Americans, such as with customs and immigration agents, where she contrasts the treatment she receives for being a U.S. citizen with the treatment some of her family members receive for being permanent residents or new undocumented and documented immigrants.

In other cases, due to some members’ of the network light complexion, Tita, a young second generation female, explains that they sometimes are “ethnic-closeted” at the beginning of a job or school, and they “come out” later, usually when someone offends Mexicans or Mexican culture, or more importantly, tries to assign her a white American identity. This ethnic-closeted concept should not be taken as if members want to be deceptive or secretive; sometimes when members of the second generation interact with mainstream Americans they assume others know they are Mexican, and only feel the need to “come out” once it becomes clear that this is not the case.

Apart of their Anglicized Spanish, what marks members of the Cárabey social network as American in Mexico is the fact that they conduct themselves somewhat
differently, with behaviors they learned while attending schools outside of their neighborhoods, being in contact with AAVE speakers or white European immigrants and their descendants, and working at jobs that required them to interact with diverse groups. Additionally, members also engage in practices such as going to *Portillo’s Hot Dog Restaurant* to celebrate a birthday (rather than preparing a more traditional taco or *carne asada* party at someone’s house), making chocolate-covered pretzels and decorated cupcakes for a baby shower, and singing to English language hip-hop, R&B and pop music. Maru reflected that members of the network have frequent interactions with non-Mexican origin individuals at school and work (e.g. teachers, principals, bosses), which has helped positioned them as ‘having’ an American culture, and not simply learning American culture through mere observation.

Not only do these acquired American practices create conflicts when members travel to Mexico and interact with non-transnational rancheros, but also their expectations for interactions on how to conduct meetings, how to obtain services, and how to negotiate with non-transnational Mexicans result in culture clash. That is, members of the network are perceived to be very American in Mexico, especially when they are straightforward at meetings (as opposed to waiting and having long social chat first before going into business), have a linear agenda with strict schedules (as opposed to going with no agenda and negotiating one, and taking the time for an appointment as a frame of reference rather than a precise time for the meeting to start), and direct requests (as opposed to suggestions for further action). Other differences in lifestyle also grant members of the network their status as Americans in Mexico, including the preference to use automobiles for tasks and trips that could be conducted on foot, the inclination for fast food and fast
ways to cook, and the outsourcing of activities that before were a source of community building, collaborations, and strengthening of the Cárbabez social network. For example, a few hours after some members of the Cárbabez social network had arrived to the rancho from Chicago, they began paying visits to the elder members of the larger social network who have gone back and retire in Mexico. In this particular occasion, they paid a visit to an aunt, who rarely goes back to Chicago since she retired in Mexico. Since the entire town was preparing for the big celebration of the patron Saint of San Juanico, it was not surprising that at the time members arrived to their aunt’s house, her youngest daughter (a non-transnational ranchera woman) was making ornaments that would decorate the street where the church is located. These traditional ornaments are made by hand, and as the daughter was doing, the ornaments are usually made by a group of young women (and occasionally men). Elder women usually prepare food or help intermittently. When the transnational members arrived, they immediately began helping this cousin; however, they also immediately began asking how many ornaments left they had to do and also why had the cousin decided to make them instead of having them made by other people, and insisted that they would help pay. In this occasion, the cousin thanked them and said that she had promised to help with the ornaments at a church meeting and that it was a fun practice that she enjoyed. When this cousin finished giving remarks, she said “y me gusta y qué” (and I like it, so what?). The contention did not last long as the transnational cousins agreed they also liked making the ornaments as it reminded them of the old days. Another common example is when transnational members visit a relative and stay for long periods of time talking, cooking, and eating, but will shortly after go to an establishment to eat out or take prepared food home. Most non-transnational rancheros
would prepare their own food and eat it, and only use special occasions to eat out at establishments or restaurants. Some of these characteristics that non-transnational rancheros see and classify as American are not always so foreign to Mexico. For example, urban Mexicans or rancheros in Mexico who to have more economic power due to their business eat out more often than eating food at home, although the frequency and the times they choose to go out are clearly different (non-transnational Mexicans with money will often have a person who assists with the cooking or cleaning, thus have no need to eat out).

As explained in this section, identities are fluid and dynamic and are also constructed in relation to context, interlocutor, and situations. They are also adopted and adapted from experiences, education, and in government and school contexts. Taking all of this into account, the next section will explain what and how those identities are displayed on member’s walls. The following section will also demonstrate how Facebook, as a transnational space, allows for transnational talk in which these identities are contested.

4.3.2 Identities on Display on Facebook

4.3.2.1 National (Mexican Identity)

Although members of the network have fluid and dynamic identities, not all of the variants of their identities are showcased or displayed on Facebook. Of course, no context or platform is capable of completely hiding or excluding a certain identity, even if the person sets out to do so. For instance, even though people have devoted blogs, myspace.com websites, or personal websites to a certain part of who they are (musician,
folk singer, knitting expert, etc.), no personal site is devoid of showing other aspects of that person’s identity, such as family roles (e.g. parent, child), academic status (e.g. college or high school student), or other cultural aspects (e.g. rock fan, Mexican food lover). However, online platforms such as Facebook allow people to showcase specifically what they want in order to present themselves in a desired way (e.g. as an intellectual, a party person, a cool person, etc.).

Much of the members’ time and attention in their daily lives and on Facebook is devoted to constructing in discourse and displaying with photos and links to music videos their national and ethnic identity as Mexican. This means, most of their photos, and to a lesser extent their posts, aim to display an identity as a traditional Mexican, a person who wears traditional folkloric outfits, wears typical dresses and shirts in Mexican Independence Day pictures, observes and practices Mexican holidays such as Día del Niño (Children’s Day), Mexican Independence Day, saint days, quinceañera cotillions (a special fifteenth birthday celebration that marks a girl’s passage to womanhood), and religious holidays and ceremonies. Not all the members’ Facebook posts focus on Mexico, but even eating food at restaurants and outings with the family in American settings will be flavored with a display of Mexican culture such as a piece of clothing, a piece of food or simply by striking a familiar pose from other settings, such as riding horses, which marks their ranchero identity.

Their Mexican identity is also sometimes displayed unintentionally. Sometimes such photos of food, music, and outings in American settings are accompanied with Mexican flare from the rancho. For example, in one photo a member took, there are three second-generation (one older, two younger) women shopping at TJ Maxx, a store known
for selling brand name items from past seasons. Three cousins took photos with different outfits and poses in the store. However, after the first few photos, they displayed a picture that contained the first outfits with accessories, but with a big beach hat added and a huge laugh (emulating the typical ranchero Mexican hat or sombrero) – and later they put on different hats that would indicate sexiness, which may have been the original purpose of the initial set of photos.

Men often display their horses, hats (purchased both in Mexico and US), and photos of groups of males holding beers or talking together. They frequently praise each other’s knowledge of cars, horses, and agriculture, and interact with the women as well – for whom they sometimes become judges as to whether a certain hat, pair of boots, or Mexican look is best or not suitable for the person posting the photo. If a certain date marks the saint day of a member of the family (the saint for whom that person is named), their walls are filled with congratulations and best wishes for the day, a practice that is common in Mexican society. Facebook is full of prayers, congratulations and announcements. Photos of members attending and participating (e.g. praying) in religious ceremonies are posted by different individuals, as well as by a member designated to be the photographer of the event. Since this is a transnational community, such photos and participation take place in both Mexico and the U.S.

Transnationalism aids their display of their ethnic identity (Mexican). In many cases, they tag other members of the network regardless whether they were actually present at the event, and there is also transnational discourse in which participants from both countries are referenced and engage in conversations (more on this in Chapter 7). This practice not only helps display an ethnic identity but constructs a transnational space
that transcends borders and erases time and space constraints (see last section of this chapter). From time to time, members post pictures of themselves as children riding a horse or wearing cowboy boots to claim that since childhood they have been Mexican cowboys, as one young second generation male said in an interview. This young male member posted a picture of himself wearing cowboy boots and hat belonging to his father when he was only four, to which one of his older second-generation cousins added the caption “ranchero de corazón” (ranchero in his heart).

4.3.2.2 Cárabez Family Identity – Last Name Pride

Being part of the Cárabez family makes most members of the network proud. As documented in the long-term ethnographic work by Farr (2006), Cárabez is only a common last name in the San Juanico area, but not in other parts in Mexico; and the Spanish origins of the family can be traced back to a specific town in the north of Spain called “Cárabes” (spelled with an s as families in Mexico spell it) (Farr, 2006). The composition of the name and family stories go back to the wars with Moors, pointing to the possibility that that town had Arabic inhabitants at one time. Elder members of the family knew some stories that had been passed down through generations about their Spanish ancestors. However, there have been some changes in the name Cárabez that have helped members of this social network to construct their identity as transnational rancheros.

Spelling changes are common among immigrants from ranchos to cities in Mexico and from ranchos to the U.S. due to a combination of inappropriate rule use and lack of schooled literacy. If a person makes a spelling mistake when registering a name
on a birth certificate or other legal registry, the name can only be changed in court. However, if the mistake is made with homophones (sounds that are the same) for example /s/, /z/, and /x/ or /b/, and /v/, or /c/ and /k/, at times the error is not changed or even noticed (e.g. Vásquez, Vázquez; Vaca, Baca; Kati, Cati). The same applies to the placement of accent marks. Sometimes it is at the discretion of a clerk in charge of filling out the forms at the city hall where babies are registered to choose the spelling. On these occasions, a clerk spells the name, guided only by how the name sounds, since parents cannot tell the clerk the appropriate spelling due to their lack of school literacy. Such changes are easy to track for they do not usually change the sounds in the names.

These scenarios are widely known in Mexico. In fact, newly arrived immigrants to the U.S. school system often experience these changes in their names and family names. Families sometimes cannot produce any type of government document from Mexico or from the U.S. to register their children at a U.S. school, especially if the child was born in Mexico and brought illegally into the U.S. In some cases, these parents leave school documentation or vaccinations in Mexico, and they do not carry their birth certificates with them as they travel with fake IDs or under other names. However, sometimes if parents have taken their children to a free vaccination site or if the child was born in the U.S., parents simply provide phonetic spellings, and the last name changes as a result. On other occasions, changes include the omission of crucial letters (such as ñ or h) and accents. The orthographic h does not represent any phoneme in Spanish, but is silent (Hualde, 1995). Such misspellings or omissions serve as indicators to educated people in Mexico that the person is from the U.S. For instance, names which have the letters ñ or h sometimes lose these letters when registered in the U.S. (e.g. Hurtado
becomes Urtado; Núñez becomes Nunes). Those names containing ñ lose this letter due to the lack of such a letter in the English alphabet. The loss of the letter also results in a change of sounds from /ɲ/ to /n/. In these cases, members of the network on Facebook informally substitute the sound of the letter ñ (/ɲ/ palatal nasal sound) by letter pairings such as gn, nh, ni. For example, these members write extranho or extranjo for extraño (I miss).

The Cárabez name underwent a legal spelling change in terms of the placement of accent mark, along with the final letter, which switched from s to z. Informally (but not consistently), members of the network use multiple spelling variations, including the use and placement of accent marks, and spelling with b or v and/or s or z. However, a clear distinction has emerged between the transnational side of the family and the non-transnational side: more central and more transnational members of the Cárabez social network spell their name with a z at the end (as in Cárabez), while their counterparts in Mexico (and members of other subnetworks of the larger social network, keep the ‘original’ spelling of the name ending with s (as in Cárabey). This is not to say that all members spell the name with a z. In fact, some members in the U.S. continue to spell their last names with s but fluctuate and sometimes change it to z. As already explained, in the U.S. naming system, children maintain only the father’s name. In contrast, the Mexican naming system maintains both the father’s and the mother’s last names, putting the father’s (first) last name first, followed by the mother’s (first) last name. In the example of the explanations for Mexican last names in section 4.2.8, in the name María Cárabez López, Cárabez is her father’s first last name (and the father’s father’s first last name) and López is the mother’s first last name (which is in turn her father’s father’s first
last name. Thus, those members whose mother is a Cárabez as her first last name have leeway to use their mother’s last name in an unofficial way (like in the Mexican system), and can choose the spelling (as there are no U.S. official documents containing that last name). However, on other occasions, even if the child was born in the United States but was taken to the consulate to be registered as a Mexican citizen (Mexico has allowed dual citizenship since 1998), the spelling of the child’s last name is often made to match the Mexican birth certificates of the parents, in which the original spelling of Cárabes is written. Because members do not use official Mexican documents (even when they travel to Mexico, they use U.S. passports and driver’s licenses as their cars have U.S. license plates), members do not always follow the spelling of the name in the Mexican official document, but the spelling that other members of the network use the most.

Another possible explanation for the change of spelling of the transnational members’ last name is that common Spanish names end with the suffix –ez (e.g. Fernández, Gómez, López, etc.), which means “child of,” comparable to the suffix –son (e.g. Anderson, Johnson, Jackson, etc.). Thus, perhaps due to a lack of formal schooling, some members may conclude that the same suffix applies to their last name, and that the /s/ is a mistake. During participant observations and interviews, nobody in the network was able to explain when, who, or what prompted the change from s to z; however, in the last Family Reunion (in September 2012) where they celebrated the 10th anniversary of annually gathering all the descendants of the first Cárabes family who immigrated to the U.S., there was a discussion of the family name, which resulted in a general consensus among the network members residing in Chicago to spell the name with a z on the t-shirt.

Excerpt 6 *Spelling the last name* is the conversation about the spelling of the family
name. Daria had previously asked Marcia Farr, the researcher of the immigrant generation, about the spelling of the last name. Farr explained to Claudia that her grandparents spelled the name Cárabes but that she could use either spelling (with s or z). Thus, Claudia made a sketch containing the last name spelled with an s as well as the family crest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Daria’s wall post – A picture of a t-shirt she will print for the family picnic. – with 31 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Daria’s wall post – A picture of a t-shirt she will print for the family picnic. – with 31 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 people like this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Daria</strong> choose which one you guys want out of the 4 coment one the one you like the MOST NOW!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Citlalli</strong> left side shirt!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Daria</strong> I its the same shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Citlalli</strong> Oh shit! &gt;.&lt; brain fart. ilike this one though ^-^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Chepe</strong> Thats awsome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Tita</strong> This one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Like · 1 (Vania)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Itzel</strong> I like this one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Like · 1 (Vania)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> Too cool!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Lety</strong> Isn't Cárabez with a &quot;z&quot;, our is it originally with a &quot;s&quot;? I'm confused!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Lety</strong> But one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Lety</strong> I like number 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 6 Spelling the last name

213
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Tita</td>
<td>It’s an s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Lety</td>
<td>Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>No honey dear, its a z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lety’s mom</td>
<td>WE WRITE IT WITH A Z LOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Lety’s mom</td>
<td>JOSE AND ME LIKE #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Citlally</td>
<td>I like number 2 tambien :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>I like number 2 too :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Daria</td>
<td>Marcia explained to me it was with an S but we can do Z</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Guys*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Daria</td>
<td>&amp;Gals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Fanny’s aunt</td>
<td>Hi I need two more, are you going to make kid’s sizes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Lety</td>
<td>Theres okay by me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Fanny</td>
<td>That's fine by me too! The Carabez last name is actually spelled with both a Z and an S in our family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Lmao!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Vania</td>
<td>Lets do the Z for Carabez!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Cosme</td>
<td>Ima get a Tattoo of that crest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No U.S. official documents, such as government or school ID cards, use two names, as in Mexico. Sometimes other Mexican-origin individuals hyphenate their father’s and mother’s names for their U.S. documents in order not to lose either of their last names; however, many members of this network choose to hyphenate their last
names only for non-government or Mexican-related functions. For instance, if members belong to Casa Michoacán (a non-profit organization that belongs to FEDECMI – Federation of Michoacán Clubs in Illinois) they often use their two family names in activities involving the club, especially if the mother’s family name has more status than the father’s last name, as is in the case of the last name Cárabez. Facebook is another platform that allows members to choose any name they want. For instance, there are people who choose names such as Mickey Miguel Mouse, while others use the name of a sports team or a funny sounding name. Many network members in the U.S. opt to use only their first name and their father’s last name, but others add the mother’s name (in the Mexican way); conversely, in Mexico, most members use the last names of both parents, although some opt to use just one (normally the father’s). Regardless of their official or legal names, this particular network keeps close to its family roots by displaying or saying the last name Cárabez as an expression of pride, quick-wittedness, ability to retort, and other characteristics that identify them as members of a ranchero family from Michoacán, but with a transnational twist. Photo 1 shows two photos of the final outcome of the 2012 Family Picnic t-shirt discussion above. Note that they ultimately decided to spell the last name Cárabez with Spanish spelling: an accent mark above the first letter á and using the letter z at the end. Interestingly, however, the word Mexico is written below the crest with the English spelling (the standard Spanish spelling is México).
Farr (2006) extensively explores the multivalent notions of the word ranchero within the larger Mexican society. On the one hand, rancheros are seen as uneducated, crude, not polite, and unschooled individuals. This negative association with the term ranchero is partially due to ranchero ideologies and ways of speaking, which differ from urban Mexicans. Ranchero ways of speaking include *franqueza* (candid, frank speech), *respeto* (respectful speech), and *relajo* (humorous disruptive language). Rancheros value upward mobility, ingenuity, autonomy (including anti-government attitudes), but because they lived in rural hamlets without access to school, rancheros relied on self-learning or expanding their skills through work. The urban Mexican elite often views rancheros as uncultured peasants, and give the word a pejorative use (Farr, 2006, p. 37). On the other hand, idealized images of rancheros are venerated and iconized in the larger Mexican society. This positive association with rancheros is due partially to ranchero sports such as rodeos, in which skills are associated with horsemanship and valor. Historically, due to their anti-government sentiments, rancheros are associated with abiding by their word (*la*...
*palabra*) and their own law (*su propia ley*). According to Farr (2006), the romanticization of rancheros as handsome heroes who sing classic ranchero songs, win beautiful women and represent men of honor, lead to a shared belief that they represent the “true” Mexicans, or the Mexicans from Mexico’s “authentic” agrarian past; an idea that is represented in movies. The idealization of rancheros still persists both in Mexico and the U.S. Therefore, the notion of the ranchero as authentic and true of the past is “juxtaposed quite paradoxically in the public mind with the disdainful attitude toward rancheros as uncultivated and uneducated peasants” (Farr, 2006, p. 39).

The case of members of the Cárabez social network is that they have been socialized in a ranchero culture, its ideologies and its ways of speaking. Members are familiar with the romanticized notion of the word ranchero and are proud to be part of it. However, members are also aware of the disdainful attitudes towards rancheros and the negative associations urban Mexicans have towards them (even if ranchos are not the same as 50 years ago). Thus, this section explores the unmarked (positive) ranchero identities that members display on Facebook. The following section 4.3.2.4 explores the marked ranchero identities that members display on Facebook.

By posting photos, music, comments, and videos, members are forging an idea of what it means to be Mexican to them. However, it is not so simple. During the course of the fieldwork, the topic of identity (being Mexican, too white, too American) was a recurrent theme that was present, if not explicitly as a topic of conversation, then tacitly as criteria for marking a Mexican identity. For instance, in family gatherings, someone always complains about the lack of Spanish skills of others. Similarly, if someone acts unexpectedly, he or she might be called ‘white’ or ‘ghetto’. In contrast, if someone
exhibits proudly Mexican clothes, music, or a tradition, he or she would be called ‘paisa’ (non-transnational Mexican countryman or compatriot – see discussion of uses of this word among members of this network in section 4.3.2.3 in this chapter), or the agent would say “I’m on [sic.] paisa mode”. This kind of identity construction is also displayed on Facebook in two ways. The first one is in an unmarked identity display of their ranchero heritage. Farr (2006) explains that one of the characteristics of rancheros is being frank, having candid speech, and being respectful. Additionally, she explained that rancheros use relajo (joking talk) to critique the social order among them. Thus, when members engage in unmarked identity construction, they are displaying the personal characteristics of ranchero identity explained by Farr (2006); they are also expressing Michoacán or rancho pride, as well as their identities as members of the Cárabez family. The second one is a marked identity display that exaggerates (and often either ridicules or justifies) the very same characteristics of their unmarked identity. Thus statements such as “I’m on [sic.] paisa mode” reflect both pride but also a justification for acting a certain way.

*Unmarked Ranchero Identity (from parents and history).*

Ranchero identity was shown explicitly and implicitly throughout the year of ethnographic fieldwork in reunions, family and religious parties, at school, and on-line in Facebook posts and conversations, pictures and video links. The explicit displays of ranchero identity are illustrated in pictures in which they tell each other what they are doing at a given moment with grandparents, older family members, or relatives from Mexico. For example, almost every week (as they gather at some of the central members’
houses) members post a picture of themselves playing Lotería (Mexican style bingo). Lotería is a very old and traditional game that involves bids with money (usually done with US quarters), quickness in responding to the called name of the cards, and skill in strategizing about how many and which types of cards to bid on. Some younger members engage in this traditional game, although they do so intermittently, as they alternate between playing and checking Facebook on their smart phones or computers. Intermittent participation of some members is the main reason that pictures of such game encounters are posted and documented in that space. Also, since this is a traditional game, the accounting they make on Facebook of who is winning and how, prompts members of the network in Mexico to participate, sometimes synchronically, with the events at the moment the posts are being made. Other explicit ways to display their identity is by periodically picking out quotes from regional Mexican music (banda, ranchera, tamborazo, and grupero genres) into their Facebook statuses, prompting comments by themselves and by others about how ranchero they are or feel at the moment. They call this being in “paisa mode” or feeling “paisa”, a term that they utilize to refer to the purest sense of being ranchero, meaning like those in Mexico or like their parents and grandparents have told them they were, or like the image of the musicians or singers in the videos they post. Along with music, quotes, and links to videos, the clothing and accessories they sometimes wear constitute explicit displays of a Mexican ranchero identity. That is, men in particular, display the hats they want to buy, belts, and even guns (although not to buy necessarily) and incite cousins or uncles and aunts to voice their opinion and help them with the choice. Additionally, both men and women post photos of ranchero boots, or accessories such as rings, bracelets and necklaces. This practice is
even more marked when they go to Mexico, where having and riding a horse outfitted with customized accessories allows them to fully exploit opportunities to create and post videos and photos to showcase their ranchero identity and culture. Even if the women do not normally use shawls, rebozos, earrings, boots, and other acquired accessories in Mexico, they do so as soon as they arrive in the States and attend a family gathering, or they do so at a community event in a horse ranch in Joliet. This use of clothing and accessories is not to be confused with the dressing up with “traditional” stereotypical Mexican outfits, such as the outfit of a Mariachi musician. The type of clothing and accessories are typical of cowboys who attend rodeos and sports alike.

Another explicit way in which they display their ranchero identity is by maintaining religious traditions involving compadrazgo (godparenting), bendición (blessings), and other practices, although they participate in these traditions in a different way than did their parents. Compadrazgo (strengthening the ties among family members through becoming a godparent of the child of a sibling or cousin) is welcomed and seen as an honor. Thus, even marginal members of the network who do not speak much Spanish rejoice and publish a status update to celebrate a new role as godparent, even if they are only becoming godparents for a friend’s children and not for a family member. When more bilingual members become godparents, they begin interacting with their godchildren and the godchildren’s parents differently on Facebook; they switch pronouns from tú to usted (informal you to formal) to indicate this new relationship. It should be noted that, even though the level of formality changes, this does not signify a diminishment of intimacy. On the contrary, the formal use of you is a way to show respect and commitment to the agreement of being godparent. In Facebook posts and
tags, members always use the title of godparent or godchild to address each other, keeping this vital characteristic of their ranchero background alive even in the second or third generation, and regardless of whether they are speaking Spanish or English.

Members also practice *la bendición* (the practice of blessing another person by signaling the cross with one hand on the other person’s forehead, chest, and head to torso – and variations of this- while saying a small prayer) on Facebook. It has not been possible to hand signal the cross on a post, and no one has come up with a video, photo, or meme (explained in Chapter 3, an example can be found in Appendix A) to exemplify and give *la bendición*. However, members usually signal the practice of *la bendición* on Facebook with a symbol such as @Bendiciones@, or they simply add the words *bendición* or *bendiciones* followed by a short prayer. The following sentence is a blessing that one cousin sent to another when traveling for an extended period of time: “*Que dios te siga bendiciendo mucho* on this trip and the rest of your life! <3 please come back soon” (May god keep blessing you a lot…) and in another post her aunt wrote: “*Que Diosito te bendiga hoy y siempre… >_<*” (May God bless you today and always). In none of the cases in which a person was giving *la bendición* to another was there an absence of emoticons, symbols or quotes.

The larger Mexican society assumes Catholic religion is a staple feature of ranchero societies. That is, ranchero societies practice the sacraments of baptism and communion with much pride, attending *doctrina* (catechism), *pláticas* (talks) for godparents, and mass every Sunday. Photos of churches, chapels, cathedrals, praying sites, religious statues and figures including household Baby Jesus (a ceramic figure of Baby Jesus used during Christmas *Posadas*, nine-day celebrations during which there are
enactments of Mary and Joseph asking for shelter, where Mary gives birth to Jesus),
crucifixes, and saint amulets frequently adorn Facebook walls and family photo albums.
Facebook is also filled with pictures of family members celebrating the sacraments, in
many cases in Mexico (they often make special trips for these events). Even though the
younger generation members of the network are not very religious, they participate
because they see it as their cultural heritage and as part of what constitutes being
Mexican. Thus, even though not all of them are practicing Catholics, and some even
explore other churches or self-identify as atheist, they do participate in a parade on the
day of the Lady of Guadalupe and dress in traditional Mexican clothes to celebrate the
virgin or go to Ash Wednesday or observe fasting during lent by not eating any meat,
other than seafood. If nothing else, their posts simply express that they may attend Mass
and what they will do the rest of the day. More religious members use Facebook to
remind the others of religious obligations and special days, which other religious
members (even the very young ones) approve of and are happy about, and less religious
members use to joke around with (*echar relajo*). The following excerpts (7 and 8) show
how some members of the younger generations are viewing religion. They are familiar
with it, but do not practice it with the same meaning and intensity as their parents and
grandparents did. The first one is a post on Eduardo’s, a young second generation male,
wall by his girlfriend, Lola, a generation 1.5 female who had invited him to go to mass on
Ash Wednesday.
|   | Lola’s post on Eduardo’s wall:  
|   | “It meant a lot that you came with me to church even if you were acting up… thank you :)” |   |
|   | Eduardo likes this. |   |
|   | **Eduardo** i wasn’t acting up >.< lol your lucky i didn’t have a kid in front of me so i can make scary and funny faces to lol i love doing that in church cause then the kid tries to tell his parents and there all like “callate!!” lol :) it was my pleasure | Like “shut up!!!” :) it was my pleasure |
|   | Lola I would have stood up and gone to sit else where... |   |
|   | **A cousin** guys check this out [hyperlink to a prank website] |   |

Excerpt 7 "Cállate"

The second is a status update on Lola’s wall the same day as Lola’s post on Eduardo’s wall, which is read by Eduardo’s cousin Daria. Both posts are on Ash Wednesday.

|   | Lola’s wall post as status update:  
|   | “Got our ashes – with Eduardo and [brother]” |   |
|   | Lola’s cousin likes this. |   |
|   | **Daria** did Eduardo burn? Or melt? Let me know.:) |   |
|   | **Lola** he was complaining that the ashes were burning his forehead and no se podia percinar lol | and he couldn’t cross himself lol |
|   | **Two** people like this. |   |

Excerpt 8 "Got our ashes"

These examples show how young members are both maintaining and changing religious practices (reminding each other of religious practices and displaying a knowledge and practice of their religion). In the first example, Lola who had invited
Eduardo to mass, thanked him publicly on his Facebook wall for accompanying her. In the second example, she also made reference to the event on her own wall. In both instances, members of the focal network used this opportunity to change the frame to joking stance. The first one refers to what Eduardo usually does in masses; in the second instance, Eduardo’s cousin Daria played with words regarding the ashes. Even though these examples show a female maintaining religious practices and a male joking about them, these roles are not necessarily organized by gender. Male members of the network engage in religious activities often, for example, carrying a statue of a virgin or a saint during a procession; moreover, some younger generation females have questioned Catholicism.

Along with religious celebrations, another display of a ranchero identity is the incorporation of a drinking culture into their celebrations. Thus, there are numerous wall posts, responses, and pictures that index this topic (e.g. a drink they made up for a baptism celebration, how much they drank on their saint day anniversary, or how much they long for the weekend to go out and drink). A difference must be drawn between displaying this drinking culture and constructing an identity of coolness or as a party drunk. Unlike typical college students’ pictures and posts studied in Grasmuk et al. (2009), younger second-generation members usually tie these practices to a celebration, and they are in the company of other family members. That is not to say that they never post other kinds of drinking images; however, it seems that it is a lot less common. All of this account of ranchero practices, including religious ones, illustrates how their parents’ culture is both maintained and changed by younger generation members in both the rancho and in Chicago.
Not only is the display of ranchero culture and practices an expression of identity for members of the network, but so is the frequently expressed pride in and longing for their parents’ place of origin, San Juanico and Michoacán. Members’ posts often mention missing or wanting to be in San Juanico, a small rural village in the State of Michoacán. Some members note that they want to know the origin of their classmates to find out whether the classmates are also from Michoacán. As a young male member and his sister stated:

“no por hablar mal de la persona pero le digo cómo, cómo no vas a saber de qué parte de México eres, y que le digo, y me dice ‘pus no sé’ porque es lo que – y yo yoiendo a hacer a hacer mucho preguntar de dónde es la persona yo no sé porque a mí me da como mucha alegría saber de que es de Michoacán, no me importa de qué parte de Michoacán pero que sea de Michoacán”

His sister added:

“y yo sí pregunto de dónde eres y por decir no necesariamente a lo mejor porque sepas yo mucho o lo que sea o lo sé por historia o por haberlo estudiado o escuchado no sé, pero me gusta conversar de dónde soy y a mí no me avergüenzas como decirles empiezo a hacer plática y ellos no saben “no sé de donde no sé de donde” y a mí la verdad me importa creo que eso define mucho si eres mexicano o no.”

“not that I want to talk badly about the person but I tell him how, how can you not know where you are from in Mexico, and I tell him, and he tells me “well I don’t know” because it’s what – and I I tend to make to make questions where the person is from, I don’t know why, I feel happiness knowing they are from Michoacán, I don’t care what part of Michoacán but from Michoacán”

His sister added:

“and I do ask where are you from and maybe for not necessarily saying maybe because I know a lot or whatever I know due to history or because I studied or I’ve heard or I don’t know, but I’d like to talk about where [people] are from and I don’t feel ashamed to tell them, I start making a conversation and they don’t know “I don’t know where I’m from, I don’t
know from where” and I really do care, I think that defines you a lot, whether you are Mexican or not.”

Similar to their parents, members of the network with more experiences of transnationalism still express a rhetoric of longing for their place of origin and a desire to return to their “home” country. Such members also distinguish themselves from other types of Mexicans (e.g. non-rancheros, and non-Michoacanos). The majority of second and third generation members, however, only returns for holidays, religious ceremonies, and vacations. And it is in this context that those members form and display this identity. Thus, the two most common displays of an identity of pride in their parent’s place of origin are 1) “shout outs” (porras) and 2) posts about missing (and longing for) their rancho and/or the people who are currently there.

Regarding the porras (shout outs), some members of the network, especially those who return to Mexico every year for vacation, post random status updates when they think of the rancho, all of which follow a similar format. First, most porras posts begin with a statement of mood, an adventurous phrase, or an accomplishment. Then, the posts end with an exclamatory phrase such as “y arriba!” (a phrase similar to que viva “long live”) / love / missing [San Juanico or Michoacán], an interjection such as chingao, ajúa (fuckers, yeehaw), and an exclamation point. Porras posts are responded to with other shout outs and phrases of agreement and likes. Often, members post that they are already in San Juanico or that they are going soon (and provide dates). The following excerpt is one example of a porra:
Excerpt 9 Love Michoacán

Members often use rhetoric borrowed from the Mexican government, which promulgates an ideology of a single, combined Mexican race (including Spanish, indigenous, and African roots). Therefore, posts about missing Michoacán are sometimes accompanied by references to the indigenous in the region (P’urhépecha or Tarascans).

For instance, in a status update, Tita wrote “Cómo extraño mi tierra Tarasca” (How I miss my Tarascan land), or other members post “puro Tarasco” (pure Tarascan).

Another common practice in members’ posts is expressing longing for their rancho. Members often count the days until they return to Mexico or count with dread the days before they return to the U.S. Members also refer to memories of activities they engaged in while in Mexico that they wish they could do now that they are in the U.S. (such as horseback riding, riding four-wheelers with cousins in the mountains, or attending patron saint festivities in the rancho on June 24, the Day of San Juan or St. John’s Day). Additionally, members in the U.S. plan parties for or begin dialogues about what they would do if they were in Mexico, for example posting a photo showing food, candy, clothing, horses, guns, cars, and snippets of what they have experienced in Mexico. Usually members accompany the post with a description of the event where the photo was taken, and express that they want to repeat the activity. These types of posts
have no specific intended audience, since they are made as status updates, and anybody who is “friends” with them on Facebook can read them. However, on some occasions rather than labeling the items featured in the photos, members give hints by writing about where the items were obtained for others to guess. Such hints indicate that the primary audience for these posts is other network members or friends who identify as being from the rancho or otherwise know the rancho very well. Many of the posts containing these hints, as well as many of the responses, contain expressions of desire to be in the place described (e.g. at the plaza in the rancho) or have the items depicted in the photos (e.g. uchepos – a tamal-like food from the state of Michoacán). By sharing these feelings members are asserting their identity as Michoacanos and looking for affinity within the group.

Music is another indication of ranchero identity displayed by members of the network. On Facebook, members sometimes post a ranchero (music typical to the Mariachi band) or banda (heavy brass-based popular music in the north of Mexico which originated with a form of German polka) song or a YouTube link to a music video accompanied with a shout out (porra) or statement of longing for Michoacán. When there is a famous ranchero or Banda singer or group scheduled to give a concert in Chicago, members and their close friends start providing links to favorite music videos, along with posts regarding plans for how to dress, what to eat, and most importantly what to drink the evening of the concert. Members pride themselves on making parties, even when there is no money or time (e.g. a Sunday night) to do so. Members say that they are all happy together because members can count on each other for basically anything, both in Mexico and in the U.S. It helps that the larger social network to which the Cárabez social
network belongs is comprised of tight knit and overlapping subnetworks. It is important for members living in the U.S., when meeting someone new of Mexican origin, to know that person’s place of origin, as this information will directly affect his or her position in or relationship with the network. Being from Michoacán, especially if a person is from the rancho (San Juanico) or nearby, generally affords that person a favorable place within the network, at least relative to people from other parts of Mexico. Facebook provides a taste of the sense of affinity based on Michoacán origin, as well as examples of ranchero characteristics (represented by members as Michoacán characteristics) of pride, quick-wittedness, and use of retort, and humor. For instance, the following Excerpt 10 “Tenías que ser Michoacana” shows how network members agree on these characteristics:

|   | Vania’s wall post as status update: Mi Hermana “ando en la Sam’s, necesitas algo?” Si, un iPad, el perfume light blue de Dolce & Gabbana y una bolsa ke mire en el aparador! “K cab..na” Jajaja…. Para ke pregunta entonces!!!! Jajajajaja…. Lmao ♥ Susana | My sister “I’m in Sam’s, do you need anything?” Yes, an iPad, the light blue Dolce & Gabbana perfume, and a purse I saw in the display window! “What a smart a..s” Hahaha… Why does she ask then!!!! Hahahahaha…. Lmao ♥ Susana |
|---|---|
| 1 | 29 people like this. | 1 |
| 2 | Rogelio Tenias.que ser michoacana!!!!!! Listisima…. | You had to be a Michoacana!!!!! Super smart…. | 1 |
| 3 | Vania Jajaja… Asi es, orgullosamente Michoacana! “Ajua, Ajua”— Dice Fanny LOL | Hahaha… yes indeed, proudly Michoacanal Yeehaw Yeehaw -- As Fanny says LOL | 3 |
| 4 | 2 People like this | 4 |

Excerpt 10 "Tenías que ser Michoacana"

Vania relates a smart-witted and funny conversation with her sister in post 1, which shows wit and humor. First Vania positions herself as the smart-witted by requesting items that are very expensive and that maybe cannot even be purchased at
Sam’s Club. Then, Vania includes the response by Susana, her sister, a retort in which Susana calls Vania a *cabrona* (smart ass), disguising this taboo word by omitting some letters in its writing. Calling Vania a *cabrona* indicates Susana’s acceptance of the joke. Vania then writes a laugh (*jajaja* – *hahaha*) several times to frame the joking stance, but which could also be taken as a sign of “fake” indignation to complement the joke. Vania understands this nuance as part of the event, and she herself presents her “fake” indignation to make a point of the lack of sincerity (*para ke pregunta entonces* – why does she ask then) of her sister when Susana declines to bring Vania the requested products. Vania ends the post with a heart, to symbolize love, and her sister’s name.

This post generated 29 likes, in post 2, which represents the approval and identification of this speech event as witty, humorous, genuine, and as such, a representation of the members’ ranchero (Michoacán) culture. Thus in post 3, a friend who is part of the network not only ‘likes’ the comment but also asserts Vania’s quick-wittedness is because she is from Michoacán and is therefore ‘super smart’ (*listísima* in post 3). Vania ends the conversation by asserting her pride and identity as being from Michoacán with a *porra* (cheer, yell, or shout out) to Michoacán (post 4). As previously explained, a *porra* to Michoacán has two components: praise of Michoacán and an exclamation phrase or interjection, in this case “*ajúa*” (yeehaw) – an interjection that members of the network use when they attend rodeos. In post 5, there are more signs of acceptance, as expressed by two ‘likes.’

The degree to which members of the network post cheers, longing for San Juanico or Michoacán does not correlate to age or generation levels. Older and younger members alike express their preferences for and affinity with the rancho; and other older and
younger members alike participate in the posts. However, it is interesting to note that not all members express a desire to actually return to the rancho. In fact, recently a female member in middle school returned to live in Mexico, while her older sister who is in high school, and who does not have the same competence in Spanish than her younger sister, preferred to stay in Chicago.

Ranchero Ways of Speaking.

Quick-wittedness and retort are staple characteristics of ranchero societies, and they are highly valued in this network, even over other attributes such as high levels of education or knowledge of other languages (see Chapter 5). This is not to say members do not care about those attributes, but they do not constitute pride and identity formation. Among men, hard work, especially physical labor (e.g. construction work, working on the railroad), is highly valued and any young man who does not engage in such activities is taunted. However, this standard has changed somewhat over the generations because younger members are now expected to go to college, while maintaining a job on the side (as long as it does not interfere with school). Usually, the part time job is physical in nature (e.g. assembly line at a cabinet factory). For women, a minimum of an associate’s degree is desired in order to obtain better employment (away from factories or sales clerk); but academic knowledge is downplayed, while roles as mothers and wives are elevated. Facebook conversation Excerpt 15 in Chapter 6 exemplifies this ambivalence towards knowledge and education (highly desired, but not crucial to their identity).

Along with quick-wittedness and retort is the use of swearing in the practice of *franqueza* (candid, frank speech) and *relajo* (joking around), characteristic ways of
speaking in ranchero societies (Farr, 2006). Thus, Facebook posts are fraught with words that would be highly stigmatized in many non-ranchero circles in Mexico, and especially at school and in other formal settings. However, Facebook offers an uncensored platform for the use of profanity and other stigmatized vocabulary and forms of speech. It is common to see posts such as the following one in Excerpt 11 Annie’s boyfriend, which is not meant as cyber bullying, but rather as an imaginative application of all available linguistic abilities. In this case, the aforementioned practices also cross into their language use in English, where such words sometimes carry stronger and different connotations than if they were being used in Spanish. The following example is a conversation between two sisters, Annie and Nara. Nara, the older sister, is asking Annie to take the post down (which Annie did not do), because Nara did not agree with the content of the post in which Annie made an angry remark about an earlier argument with her boyfriend.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Annie’s wall post</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Yea ii Got A BoyFriend You Got Beef Bitch!? oooooO Really? Well Guess What iM A Vegetarian Suck My Dick(:”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Friend 1</strong> likes this.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Friend 2</strong> woah ur mad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> Hell Yea I’m Mad. (: Don't Worry You Didn't Do Anything iTs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> All My Boyfriends Fault. You Shud Go Fuck'em Upp :D jk ♥</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Friend 2</strong> Gomez aight lol</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> :D lol iI Say We Compare Relationships to cupcakes. Agree? Lets begin(:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Boyfriend’s friend</strong> beat my ass ahaahahaha ur funny babe XD</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> Hi Was Joking. This Kids Half Your Size.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Boyfriend’s friend</strong> bogus to him lol</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> He Loves Me Okay! Shut Up.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Like · 2 people (Friend 1, 2)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> Lmao Cesar You Know Ya Love Meh :D</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Friend 2</strong> yup</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> Lol</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>Friend 2</strong> lol</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> ♥ Love You Cheeser!!</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Nara</strong> take this down.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Nara</strong> dont be dumb putting ur shit on blast bruh be a lady</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>Annie</strong> Wow……</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 11 Annie’s boyfriend

This example demonstrates that the concept of “being a lady” for the females in this network has less to do with language use and more to do with presentation (i.e. what topics to discuss in public). The language used by Nara in post 19 to call attention to her sister is just as taboo as the language that Annie used throughout the conversation. Nara even uses AAVE feature (bruh for brother), which is not marked. In other posts, Nara has
been called out by other members of the network for using taboo language; however, she insists that she can speak any way she wants and that she is not intimidated by what it may mean for other people. Likewise, Tita, Fanny and their mothers (Dalia and Licha respectively), use this type of language, though to a lesser extent, in their speech, although they do not use it on Facebook, where they primarily communicate in Spanish. However, not all members see the use of this language by women as an appropriate practice, and criticize it, even if they do so only in a teasing manner. In the following conversation, Nara is scolded by her uncle, Tito, in her sister’s (Margo’s) post.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Margo’s wall post. A picture of a bean dish called Frijoles Charros (cowboy style beans). A bowl in the middle of their kitchen table. A caption that read: “Nara, what is this?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tito likes this.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tito frijoles charros child</td>
<td>frijoles charros child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Margo Tio pa que le dices?! Uncle why did you tell her?!</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tito mija pues tu preguntasteee,,,,,,,,, lol Child, well you ask</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Margo I’m trying to tease nara cuz she wanted some lol</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tito ok erese the coment then mija lol</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nara fuck u man!!!!!!!</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Like · 1 (Tito)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Margo Too late tio muahahaha</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tito what’s up whith that lenguage</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Margo Yeah nara! Smh</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tito yeap mija,,,,, not nice,,,,, lol yeap child, not nice, lol</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 12 Frijoles charros

In this conversation, in post 8, Nara uses strong language and AAVE feature to address her sister (“fuck u man”). Although her uncle ‘likes’ Nara’s comment in post 9, in post 10 he calls her attention to the inappropriateness of that language, but does so in a
joking manner as evidenced by the use of “lol” (laughing out loud). In contrast, Margo, whose Facebook wall posts usually mirror Nara’s post in post 8, respected the social expectations for her to address an older member who has higher status within network (her father’s brother) with appropriate language or respeto, a ranchero way of speaking that emphasizes norms for language use that show respect, especially from younger to older members of a community (Farr, 2006) (see lines 4 and 6). Thus, Margo uses ‘tío’ (uncle) in post 4, even to complain that he had ruined her teasing of Nara. Then in post 10 she does not join the joking tone Nara is starting, and she continues to address him as tío and avoids using foul language like Nara did in post 8. Margo shows her communicative competence by using respeto in English, and in post 12 aligns with her uncle and his tone of reprimand, even if it is to keep the joke going. Margo mocks the reprimand by using more serious language than she normally does in her posts, and by using the textese ‘smh’ (shaking my head) to expresses a somewhat humorous disapproval. Tito continues the joking and ends with a final reprimand, saying “it’s not nice,” but signaling that everything is alright and that his reprimand was, at least in part, in jest with ‘lol’ in post 13. Tito criticizes Nara for the use of profanity in her Facebook post; however, Tito ameliorates his criticism by framing the conversation as a joke. The fact that the issue of profanity use by a woman was brought up at all evidences language ideologies as they pertain to gender: it is not really considered appropriate for women to use that kind of language, although it is tolerated. Note that while women also use AAVE features in their speech, its use is not marked as using taboo language is for other members of the network.
4.3.2.4 Marked Ranchero Identity

The first way in which members display their Mexican identity in a positively stereotyped way is to allude to the old ranchero society, that of their parents. They frequently talk about their own visits to Michoacán. They express pride in their rancho, and in being part of the Cárabez social network. The second way members display ranchero Mexican identity is based on either a negative stereotype or a romanticized notion of ranchero identity (which does not reflect the realities of their ranchero upbringing). In the following sections I discuss both negative and romanticized stereotypes of ranchero identity that emerge on Facebook and in the lives of the members of this network.

Of Rancheros and Paisas.

Statements of longing for “old” or “traditional” ranchero ways, such as old family parties and old fashioned forms of travel (i.e. driving to Mexico instead of flying) are common on Facebook. Even though such statements are part of their identity formation, there is also another, more negative, side of being ranchero that has been stereotyped. In the positive stereotype, a ranchero/a from Michoacán is hard working, funny, smart-witted, humble, street and skill smart, family oriented, and nature loving. However, in the negative stereotype, the notion of ranchero refers to an uneducated, rude, proud, rural person. This negative stereotype of rancheros is one commonly held by urban Mexicans. As Farr (2006) points out, the meanings of ranchero are multiple and complex. The ambivalent notion of ranchero makes members of that society both affiliate and distance themselves from the term.
Members of the Cárabez social network also have their equivalent of this negative stereotype. Members often stereotype other members of the network or larger Mexican community in Chicago who have not abandoned their old ways (and should do so, according to the members applying the negative stereotype), even if only momentarily. For example, members often stereotype those individuals who are not transnational and have not acquired new ways (e.g. eating out or buying machine made tortillas). Members often tease shy people who prefer to deal with other Mexican-origin individuals rather than non-Mexican-origin or non-Spanish speakers. Some members even refer to people (both in and out of the network) who do not know how to behave in larger cities such as Chicago as *rancheros*. However, *ranchero* as used by this network is not simply a derogatory label for undermining people who are simply not transnational, nor is it intended as a way to join the larger Mexican society in their stereotypical description of rancheros. *Ranchero* is a label that allows members of the network to construct an identity which is differentiated from that of their parents (the “true rancheros” as one member stated). Using the word *ranchero* also allows members to behave or display that same identity they criticize, criticizing themselves to some degree for doing so, but simultaneously granting themselves permission to behave in that way since it is part of their heritage.

A word favored by many younger members of the network is *paisa*, short for *paisano*, which means countryman. *Paisa* has taken on similar connotations and uses to the word *ranchero*. For example, Margo, using the Tweeter app on Facebook, tweeted the following (observe the influence of Spanish prepositions in the use of *on* instead of *in*):

“On *paisa* mode. Fuck it. #Mexican problems.” In this tweet, Margo acknowledges her
mood and indexes ‘permission’ or justification for behaving “too Mexican” or “too ranchero”, something maybe she should not do, but she does not care at the moment of the post. In other settings paisa is used to criticize what another member is doing, such as listening to too much of a particular genre of music (e.g. banda) or dressing like a cow boy. For instance, an older second generation male posted a link to a music video of old fashioned Banda music. A friend responded in a comment “Oh snapps!!! Let me grab my king cobra 40’s!! Que naco!” (King Cobra 40oz is a type of American Malt liquor); to which he responded “jajaja feeling a little paisa dude.” Naco is another word, comparable to paisa, but that definitely has a negative connotation in any social context in Mexico and in Mexican-origin communities in the U.S. Calling each other paisa or paisita (as a term of endearment) is usually preceded by a frequently used adjective (pinche or fucking, damn– and its variations pinchi, inche, che) is common in response to pictures, food, music, and rodeos that clearly display traditional ranchero identity. Therefore, being in ‘paisa mode’ or ‘feeling paisa’ are ambivalent statements used to simultaneously claim membership in the network, and authenticity as Mexicans or Michoacanos, while distancing themselves from negatively stereotyped or non-transnational identities such as “naco.”

Rancheros, Charros, Rodeos.

For network members from the immigrant generation prior to coming to the U.S., their economy was subsistence agriculture. The immigrant generation did not have much land, but members worked what they had and when it was not enough to provide for the family, they left for the north. As members accumulated money they sent remittances to
family still in the rancho, but instead of using the money to simply maintain family members back in Mexico, they brought more family members to the U.S. and many started investing in land back in the rancho. As Barragán López (1997) and Farr (2006) point out, using remittance money to invest in land is not a common practice among ranchero societies or in Mexico in general (p. 79). However, for this network it was a way to progress from a very poor social class to be, or be perceived as, middle class. A look at the network’s houses in the rancho from before they emigrated and after 20 years of living in Chicago (Appendix H) provides an idea of the type of investments members made in their houses in the rancho. Furthermore, while civic projects members have supported, such as the construction of the plaza through the 3x1 Program (a Mexican government sponsored program that donates 1 peso from federal funds and 1 peso for state funds per 1 peso sent as a remittance for a particular non-religious project) demonstrate the commitment members have for the community in Mexico, such endeavors also reflect many members’ changing goals and the use they have for Mexico. Unlike some members of the network, who view Mexico as place to retire or potentially find job opportunities when they cannot find any in Chicago, the majority of members see the rancho as a vacation destination, a place where they can “go, relax, and not worry about anything” as Susana stated.

Given this background, the ranchero society that the grandparent generation lived in included the use of guns, horses, and knowledge of how to manage ropes and other skills for their agricultural practices. As soon as transnational members began earning and sending money, they also began abandoning manual labor in favor of machines and tractors, and walking or riding horses in favor of trucks and motorcycles for
transportation. Although members of the network owned horses before, they used them primarily or solely for work, and seldom for leisure. Charreadas and rodeos (both similar competitive events that include horse riding and bull riding) were the sport of the upper-middle and upper classes, for the clothes, horses’ care and training, and accessories were and are still expensive. As network members became more affluent and took/sent dollars back to the rancho, they were able to afford better cars, bigger trucks, better guns, and other types of clothing. They did not, however, immediately take up any of the cowboy sports such as charreadas or rodeos. If anything, they were mere spectators, as one of the grandparents stated.

However, members’ way of dressing and engagement with charros (Mexican cowboys) and charreadas changed along with their perception and the construction of a new ranchero identity by the second generation in the U.S. Although first generation network members’ lives continued to mirror what they had left in Mexico, and no indication of an upper class ranchero culture (such as those of charros and charreadas) had emerged, in time members of the younger second generation began identifying with this romanticized notion of ranchero culture. As they began watching videos, observing upper-class rancheros in Mexico, and seeing the cultural mixing among cowboys in the U.S. with Mexican-origin rancheros, younger generation members began identifying with charreada culture. Younger members do not identify much with agriculture. Only two have taken up the avocado business and now live in Mexico (after dropping out of college due to debt). Instead, the rest of the members of the network began to identify themselves with the nostalgic and classic view of the ranchero (charro) portrayed by Pedro Infante (one of the most famous actors and singers who has been compared to
Elvis Presley due to his fame and his intestate death) in the golden years of Mexican cinema. Another example of a ranchero (charro) is the image and ideas that Vicente Fernández (a very famous Mexican singer known as “El rey de la canción ranchera” – the king of ranchera music) shows in his music. Watching charreadas, rodeos, coleaderas, and jaripeos (these last two are cowboy sports similar to rodeos but with slightly different activities, rules, and cowboy accessories) has become a common activity for younger generation members. Some younger members (and even older ones) began attending weekly charreadas and coleaderas or other types of contests in nearby ranches in Joliet, Illinois (a Southwest suburb of Chicago).

This assimilation to this charreada culture has taken the entire network by storm. Numerous members reported during interviews (and it was also a common topic of conversation) that Fabián (a sixteen year old generation 2 boy) started the charreada trend within the family. He began learning how to florear (do tricks with a lasso – a sport that demonstrates the skill of a charro, and ends with the capture of a goat or small bull), almost at the same time I began fieldwork (see Photo 2 Fabián floreando in Chicago). He had been dressing like a Mexican style cowboy, but more recently had begun learning terminology and similarities and differences between Mexican and American cowboys and rodeos. At first, it was only Fabián and a few cousins his age or older second generation members who had moved back to Mexico, who began adopting this new identity, but now most of the network is also adopting it. As a result of their transnational lifestyle, this also includes many family members who primarily live in Mexico. For instance, among the immigrant generation siblings, the youngest male in the family (Antonio) never came to the U.S. to work, remaining in the rancho to study. His studies
were possible due to remittances sent back from Chicago. However, Antonio did not finish his studies and started working and supervising the avocado orchards that had been purchased. As the wealth of Antonio’s family increased, Antonio began to have trouble with his children who, as he stated, had it all: money from avocados, land, work, and also commodities such as motorcycles and trucks, which they abused and frequently destroyed. Following one particular motorcycle accident, Antonio took away all of these distractions to make his three sons work and help in the family business. Around the same time, Fabián began visiting the rancho for vacation and began borrowing a neighbor’s horse. According to Antonio, Fabián’s enthusiasm for riding horses as a sport led to Antonio’s three sons taking in interest in horseback riding. During my 2012 visit to the rancho, Fabián’s three cousins had a horse and were teaching it to dance to go to the rodeo and jaripeo. In a way, rodeos, charreadas, and jaripeos have gone beyond mere sport for the family, to become another source of identity formation, both in Chicago and, to a lesser degree, in the rancho.

Photo 2 Fabián floreando in Chicago, in an alley (left) and in a street (right) in Chicago
Many of the young members have embraced this new identity and display it frequently on Facebook. They often post photos and videos of themselves attending a charreada in ranches near Chicago. Women plan outings and post outfit ideas to wear at such events. Members post invitations and make plans, and they ask for each other’s opinions on hats, clothes, boots and accessories (men and women alike). Only on rare occasions does an older member or recent immigrant member post or join in these conversations about outings or ways of dressing. When these older members do enter such conversations, they do so only minimally as a show of support or in an attempt to make some kind of loose connection between the activities and their own history and culture. For instance, in the following post, Fabián lets the family know that after almost two years of borrowing horses in Mexico, his father had bought him one. He posted in a status update a photo of the horse, along with a caption apologizing to his uncle in Mexico, who was stabling the horse in Fabián’s absence:
And at the same time on Fabian’s sister’s wall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Fanny’s wall post.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A repost of Fabian’s picture with her status update that read: “Introducing you to the new member of the Suarez Carabez Family, El Mondongo! &lt;3”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2 | **10 people** like this. |
| 3 | Susana nice! |
| 4 | **Telma** Se parese al cantaro, el caballo que tenia mi pa chema. | It looks like *El Cántaro*, the horse that belonged to my dad chema |

Excerpt 14 El Mondongo
These examples show how, little by little, this new identity has begun to be displayed and constructed on Facebook. Even some older generation members have started relating in some way to these cowboy sports, which in their younger years were exclusively for rich people (as someone had to have money for the attire and tools, and time to train the horse or practice skills with the lazo or lasso). This is the case of Telma, a generation 1.5 woman who compares Mondongo (Fabián’s new horse) to her father’s horse, in post 4. The difference is that her father’s horse, unlike Mondongo, was for working in the avocado fields and was not just ridden as a hobby, as Fabián uses Mondongo. Note that Fanny introduces Mondongo in her post in post 1 of Excerpt 14, similar to the way you introduce pets in American culture: as part of a family, rather than a simple commodity.

*The Emergence of Non-ranchero Identities.*

In the case of charreadas and jaripeos, the newly acquired charro/ranchero identity adopted by younger members of the network, and taken to Mexico, may be a product of the combination of personal choice and the personas represented in the music and movies members of the network consume. Other kinds of institutions influence identity formation in school and government settings and test members’ identities. Specifically, I am referring to the official stance on race/color/and ethnicity that the Mexican government has adopted since the 1920s, when José Vasconcelos, a philosopher who was Secretary of Education under President Lázaro Cárdenas, proposed in 1925 a cosmic race, arguing that a mixture of races was superior, which is why Mexicans would be better off by creating a single mixed race (Vasconcelos, 1997). The erasure of labels
for races, at least on paper, dates back to 1810, when *criollos* (children of Spanish parents born in the Americas), *mestizos* (children of one Spanish and one indigenous Mexican parent) and *mulatos* (children with at least one black parent), took the country into a war that resulted in the independence of Mexico. The long system of castes that had been in place since the Spanish conquered the Americas included the three main categories mentioned above, among others. Since 1924, after Vasconcelos, the Mexican government has promoted an agenda of “we are all the same” and “we honor the three heritages: indigenous [source of greatest pride], Spanish, and African [not discussed as openly, until recently]”. This ideology continues to be promoted in textbooks, government sponsored pictures, calendars, commercials, and in political and other propaganda. Despite the acknowledgement and inclusion, to some degree, of indigenous and African heritages, Mexican communities still stigmatize darker skin color and desire being of lighter complexion. As a result, the ranchero immigrant generation holds conflicting ideologies, with the knowledge that they themselves come from a marginalized group among other Mexicans (*rancheros*), in spite of their light skin, while simultaneously feeling apart from and in opposition to indigenous Mexicans (Farr, 2006).

An example of how pervasive school ideologies are among members of the network is Tita’s statement, in which she explained why she feels more inclined or loyal to a Mexican identity than an American one. What Tita learned at school in the U.S., especially about the history of the U.S., led her to conclude that she is not part of American society, in spite of having a U.S. birth certificate:

“God, I can’t believe I’m this [American]. This is, is where I live, this is where I grew up, like this is on my birth certificate, like I am, I’m part of this, this is the label that’s been given to me, and I don’t like this, I’m
against this and you know and and you learn the culture and history of Mexico and somehow… I don’t know it’s because it’s in our blood or whatever, but I’m so much more attracted to that to that history.”

In this example, Tita explains that the history taught at school in the U.S. is different from the history she learns by reading Mexican newspapers or attending FEDECMI meetings, and she accepts the view of history as presented in Mexico. Tita accepts the ideology and identity therein prescribed: that of mixing Spanish, indigenous, and African heritage, but elevating the indigenous as the ultimate, idealized heritage. As mentioned elsewhere, not all members of the Cárabes social network adopt this identity. Interestingly, younger members celebrate national Mexican holidays that were not observed by the grandparents’ generation in Mexico, such as Day of the Dead, a Mexican mixed indigenous-Catholic national celebration honoring the dead around the same time as the All Saints celebrations of the Catholic Church. A few male members of the network sometimes identify with the Chicano movement, but recognize that they are not actually part of it, although they do emulate some Chicano-inspired fashion and activities that resonate with them. Eduardo, for example, would love to have tattoos, dress with baggy pants, and do graffiti art in murals but does not because he has been prohibited from doing so by his father, who had to pick him up at a police station after Eduardo was detained for inscribing graffiti on the wall of a train car Pink Line (services between 54th/Cermak, Cicero, Berwyn, and the downtown Loop) of the Chicago CTA trains. Daria’s boyfriend and cousin, Cosme (who lived in California), also adopt many of the features identified with cholos or Chicanos, many of which also simply echo current young adult fashion in general (loose pants, hats, and tattoos). Additionally, Marcos said
that even though he knew he did not fit classifications such as Chicano, Cholo, Pachuco, and other labels assigned to Mexican-origin individuals in the U.S., he felt the need to adopt them at school. At school, he explained, he had to read literature about these groups, which led him believe for a period that he had to belong to one. He said he identified with Chicanos in Los Angeles the most because his parents worked in agriculture (avocados) and his family was poor.

The following post illustrates all displayed identities discussed in this section. The Facebook wall post is from Fanny, a young generation 2 female who has both lived and studied in Mexico for several years at a time at two different points during her childhood:

“Nieta de Javier Carabez. India Tarasca. Michoacana de corazon!!! Ajuuua!!!
<3” (Granddaughter of Javier Carabez. Tarascan Indian. Michoacana at heart!!!
Yeehaw!!! <3).

In this wall post, Fanny expresses four key identities, explained in Table 22

*Fanny's four displayed identities* her family pride, her government influenced identity, her Mexican national identity, and the newly adopted ranchero identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wall post</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Family pride identity</th>
<th>Government influence identity</th>
<th>Mexican national identity</th>
<th>New-ranchero identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nieta de Javier Carabez</td>
<td>Granddaughter of Javier Carabez</td>
<td></td>
<td>Government influence identity</td>
<td></td>
<td>New-ranchero identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India Tarasca.</td>
<td>Tarascan Indian.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michoacana de corazon!!!</td>
<td>Michoacana at heart!!!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajuuua!!!</td>
<td>Yeehaw!!!</td>
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Table 22 Fanny's four displayed identities

As an expression of her identity as Cárabez and family pride, Fanny writes that she is the granddaughter of Javier Carabez. Mr. Javier Cárabes (d.) was the first-born male of
the central family in the social network studied by Farr (2006) and was thus a central figure in the network. Regarding the government influence identity, Fanny expresses that she is an indigenous Tarascan. Since Fanny is from a micro-region of Michoacán that is surrounded by indigenous communities, she takes pride in being from that micro-region and adopts this indigenous identity. It is important to remember that, traditionally, rancheros construct their identities in relation to who they are not, and that for decades rancheros have constructed their identities specifically as non-indigenous (Farr, 2006). As far as a Mexican national identity, Fanny indicates the state of Mexico from which her parents come. However, she displays it as if she herself had come from the state of Michoacán, while adding the phrase “by heart” to index her situation: a U.S. born Mexican. Finally, she writes a *porra* (cheer) in the form of an interjection, which is usually used in rodeos or *charreadas* indexing her new ranchero identity.

4.4 Membership: Centralization and Marginalization

In the previous chapter, the discussion of the network and the power relationships among its members explained that there is a constant negotiation of centrality vs. marginalization within the network. This negotiation has resulted in two salient practices among members of this Cábrabez social network: 1) Constructing Identities and 2) Constructing Centrality and Marginalization. In the previous sections, the first practice, constructing identities, was discussed. In this section, the focus will be on how members negotiate the second practice, *positioning within their network*, in terms of *centralization and marginalization*. The understanding of how members position themselves and others through practices of centralization and marginalization will serve to better explain how
members engage in identity formation through language, and how often those constructed identities are in contention.

4.4.1 Centralization

The social order that individuals try to negotiate within their network can be studied in terms of centrality (Boissevain, 1974; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Centrality is the position a person takes and/or is assigned in the network, in terms of prestige, activity, importance, and ties held in relation to other members of the network. Additionally, centrality refers to how influential a member is to the others. In this case, centralization also involves the constructing themselves as more Mexican than others within both their own network and the larger Mexican-origin society in the U.S., by maintaining influential and visible relationships in the family, in the larger Mexican-origin U.S. society, and in the place of origin in Mexico. Centralization is a complex and ever evolving negotiation process. For instance, a young second-generation female, when talking about her relationship to her grandparents, explained:

“we have kind of grown on the outside of the family, we are not their favorites and we are okay because I mean...Well for us well like for our age like between Tita and Pepito like us the kids it would have been Fanny, Eduardo and Fabián, like everybody else, like them they are the center and even the little baby Pepito is the center because he is the baby and stuff. But we also have another [baby] cousin, and they kind of they have got they chose to leave because they thought nobody loved his son but they did because they are both the same age. They wanted more attention, but things happen, but I mean he is little no matter what people love kids but they are the center of the family pray [sic] (praise). Because they can speak Spanish, they kind of look darker than us, I don’t know if that’s the issue, but then again I look at Itzel and she is kind of, she is very light but she can speak Spanish and she is very like in your face like to a point where it’s kind of disrespectful but hey like she is young she is going to learn just like I learned. But we, like if we make a mistake it falls on my mom, like you are the... bad ones.”
These types of evaluations and placements within the family were common to hear. Centrality is often negotiated by members of the network using language to index four staple emic criteria (reviewed below), but it also includes other criteria that were not studied such as personality, favoritism, and individual ideologies. Members of the network know that not all of them are seen as equals, and it is usually the marginalized members like the one above who are more explicit about identifying a person’s relative centrality within the network. If the person is central, he or she never explicitly says that others are not the favorites or are at the margin; instead, they talk about certain abilities that the other person does not possess. In an interview, an older second-generation member who has spent a lot of time in Mexico (years at a time in elementary, middle school and college) was discussing what it means for her to be Mexican, and how there are some people who are more Mexican than others, but when she was about to elaborate, she hesitated and explained:

_“But if I say it, it will be kind of racist, won’t it? It is hard for me to say “somebody is Mexican, but he doesn’t speak the language well” or he doesn’t know his roots very well, his family, where his parents come from, maybe it is that I’m more Mexican than, who? [Sidury: why do you worry to say “what if I’m racist for what I say?] Because I wouldn’t like to offend anyone or catalogue someone because within my own family there are people who are more Mexican than I am.””_
Members of the network frequently engaged in discussions of what it means to be Mexican. Even more frequently are comments that network members make of each other’s perceived degree of Mexicanness (e.g. calling someone “white” or “paisa”). Because Mexicanness is such a common topic among members, some share frustrations at what they consider “unfair.” That is, some members explained that many network members treat each other differently depending on their perceived level of centrality and Mexicanness. The quote above explains that despite the acknowledgement that there is a certain new social order, the speaker did not want to offend marginal members. While this subject was not pushed and was only a source of conversation when members brought it up, many members did talk about Mexicanness (which was the topic at hand) and immediately began positioning themselves and others within the Cárabez social network in terms of the degree of Mexicanness. In my conversations with them, members of the network describe a negotiation for centrality based on four emic criteria of Mexicanidad (Mexicanness), which have all been identified by the members themselves: language (bilingualism in Spanish and English), skin color, transnationality, and display/practice of Mexican culture. All of these criteria will serve to explain the practices of centralization and marginalization of members in the following chapters.

4.4.1.1 Language and Centrality

Although it may appear at first that in the criteria of language, members usually refer to the ability to speak Spanish as a staple characteristic of their Mexicanness, it is important to remember the context in which members of the Cárabez social network are constructing their identities. That is, members of the network are in some Chicago
neighborhoods in which Mexican-origin individuals are the majority of residents. However, those neighborhoods are part of the city of Chicago, in which Mexican-origin population is still a minority. Thus, when members of the network index their identities through their language ideologies of bilingualism, they often mention Spanish as they assume a competence in English. Nevertheless, in a transnational context, in which these members interact with Mexican citizen and residents in the rancho, the social order and centrality to their transnational network is indeed their level of Mexicanness they have but in this case it is transnational Mexican. In other words, if a person is Mexican from Mexico, speaks Spanish fluently, and lives in Mexico, this person is considered too Mexican. This means the person is ranchero, non-transnational, and non-central to their transnational network.

For instance, there are members of the network who have spent more years in Mexico than in the U.S. Because these members’ lack of English skills, they cannot be regarded to be in a central position in their transnational network, even though, they are the “most Mexican” but not in the context of a transnational network. Another instance is the immigrant generation. Although the immigrant generation travels to the U.S., has learned some English, and speaks Spanish the most, they are not considered central, for they cannot be influential in the rest of the network as some more bilingual people are. Thus, members of the Cárabez social network construct their identities with language ideologies of bilingualism, which in a U.S. context, means that they would emphasize knowledge of Spanish as long as proficiency English is already recognized.
4.4.2 Marginalization

Regarding centrality, if some individuals place themselves and others at the center of the network, there are others who are marginalized. Marginalization does not simply mean being at the periphery until they are accepted, or until they learn and become part of the center, as in a community of practice model (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this network, members function within a dynamic of competition to acquire or maintain a more central position, which involves constant movement. That is, at a given moment, member X can place him or herself closer to the center, only to find that member Y, whom member X considers to be less central, is contesting member X’s positioning. So, member Y tries, by means of the four-emic criteria of Mexicanness, to decentralize or marginalize member X. Centralization and marginalization are fluid and constantly negotiated by all members using the four criteria.

4.4.3 Central and Marginal Positioning within the Network

For the analysis of this data, the Cárabez social network was studied within and in relation to the larger social network of families to which the Cárabez social network belongs. Members of the Cárabez social network include the children of three of the original nine siblings at the center of the larger social network studied by Farr (2006), and their respective families, as well as three other families of the larger network. Not all of the children of these three siblings belong to the Cárabez social network, but, not surprisingly, most of the grandchildren do. Grandchildren usually study in the same schools, hang out together at bars, and are friends with each other, despite their parents not getting along at times. The following figure (7) represents how members of the
Cárabez social network perceived degree of bilingualism and Mexicanness of themselves and of each other, both of which correlate with member’s centrality or marginalization within the network. Figure 7 contains three positions identified by members of the network: Central (more transnational Mexican), Intermediate (somewhat Mexican and somewhat American), and Marginal (too American or too Mexican). These positions are underlined and in bold; the quotation marks mean that it is the exact words members used during our conversations. These positional identities correspond to the members’ perceptions of their varying levels of bilingualism: more transnational Mexican members are said to be “fluent” in English and Spanish as well as “real bilinguals.” Somewhat Mexican or kind of American members are said to be “kind of bilingual” (in this category members explained that their languages are “not complete” or one of their languages is “weak”). Finally, the too American or too Mexican members are those who can speak only one language well and very little of the other language (i.e., are monolingual in English or Spanish). These three levels of bilingualism are also underlined but are not in bold. Note that all of these categories form a continuum and are not to be taken as enclosed categories that define a member. Instead, these are areas from which members position themselves and others depending on who members interact with and the context of such interaction. The figure also has explanations of the categories, which are not marked with quotation marks and are not underlined. Those are my own words and system to ease their classification.
At the center of the circle in Figure 7, members who positioned themselves and others as the “real” or “fluent” bilinguals are represented. These are members of the network who are known to be as fluent in both English and Spanish. As Eduardo, a young second-generation male, explained about his father and his siblings, all of whom are generation 1.5 members of the network,

“… so he's been here for a while, yeah, like he's fluent in English, like he's one of the few people that I know doesn't have a Mexican accent when he talks English and he doesn't have the American accent when he talks Spanish, he does not have an accent, like he'll talk fluent Spanish, you know he'll talk fluent Spanish and he'll talk fluent English. It's like Tía Licha. They are both the same, they'll have the fluent Spanish and the fluent English. Actually, now that I mention it, my dad's brothers and sisters none of them they do not have an accent, I tell them all the time "how do you not have an accent?".

Not all members in this central position are generation 1.5; there are younger members (as young as 13 years old) who are also centrally positioned by themselves and others. This category also represents what members call “more Mexican.” Remember that
these positions are constructed within the U.S. context, in which they are a minority valuing their ethnic language and culture. Thus, members of the Cárabez social network (a subnetwork of a larger social network that includes the grandparent generation) consider the ability to speak (not necessarily to write) Spanish as the most important characteristic of their Mexican ethnic identity in a U.S. context.

The second circle represents the “kind of bilingual” category, in which many of the second-generation members position themselves and others. They don’t consider their knowledge of Spanish to be complete, and often they call it their “weak” language. In a few cases, they are fluent speakers of Spanish, whose English is the “weak” language due to their upbringing, either because they were spoken to in Spanish as children in Chicago or because they spent extended periods in Mexico. Because of their lack of English skills, these members are a little more marginal than others. This circle includes the grandparent generation. They are important, but not the most influential or central.

The outer circle, and the last category, is for those who are considered to be the “most American” of the network, and these are the people who don’t speak Spanish or have very limited skills in speaking Spanish. More central members of the network use derogatory labels such as “white” or “gringo/a” to refer to these most marginal members and frequently contend that a person also loses his or her ethnic identity if he or she loses Spanish. These marginal members do not agree that they need to be fluent speakers of Spanish to be more Mexican than American, so this topic is in constant negotiation. This “most marginal” category also includes some people who do not speak English, live mainly in Mexico and are not transnational, which makes others consider them not central to the Cárabez social network (regardless of whether they have less or more
money than the transnationals). Sometimes these non-transnational members are called ‘paisa.’ While some marginal individuals in this category may be considered the “most Mexican,” they have limited or no English skills and are thus not considered central in the network. However, members of the Cárabez social network operate within a U.S. context in which Mexicans are the minority. Therefore, members’ assertions of more Mexicanness refer to someone who possesses strong Spanish language skills and Mexican culture, while also being fluent in English, which can only be acquired if they are U.S. born or came to the U.S. as children (generation 1.5).

After a few months of participant-observation, I was able to identify, by hearing what members told me about themselves and others, which respective circle each member belonged to. Figure 8 Member’s perceived positions represents the perceived bilingual balances and network centrality that members assigned to themselves and others in both interviews and informal conversations. The figure is that of a circle in which some members are more central and others are more marginal. These positions are fluid and change according to involvement with the network, as well as over the course of their lives (like moving to the other country for longer periods of time). The arrows show the changes that I have observed from the status members held in the early days of my participant-observation in 2011 until September 1, 2012, the 10th anniversary of the Family Reunion (picnic). Participants are grouped by age, not by nuclear families. Some members are currently living in Mexico, or go back and forth for a few months at a time, but the majority lives in Chicago. See Appendix B for information on members’ current residences.
Figure 8 Member's perceived positions within the Cárabez social network based on perceived bilingualism and degree of Mexicanness

Note that members in the circle are only arranged according to their age and perceived level of bilingualism and not by family affiliation (a single nuclear family). That is, siblings often hold different positions relative to centrality (e.g. Tita and Daria, who are sisters). Refer to Error! Reference source not found. in Chapter 2 for a complete representation of family affiliation of the member participants in this study. Additionally, as explained before, there are central members (more bilingual) in each age group, although the number of central members does decrease among the younger generation. It is important to note that there are also fewer children per family across generations. The older the member, the more children they had. Nowadays, the average number of children born to generation 1.5 and older second-generation members is 2-3
children. Many of the younger second-generation members have said they would either have one or two children at the most, and some say they may not have any.

While I did not administer a test of fluency in Spanish for the English dominant speakers or of English for the Spanish dominant speakers, I observed that the language of participation in Facebook actually reflected what members of the Cárabez social network reported to me regarding their perceived levels of bilingualism. Figure 9 *Use of languages on Facebook* demonstrates the frequency of use of English and Spanish displayed on Facebook by participants who were positioned by themselves and others as more central, intermediate (less central), or marginal. Although members of the younger generation in general (regardless of centrality) use English with much greater frequency overall, those in more central positions also exhibit high frequency of Spanish use (either alone or in codeswitching), in contrast to less central, and marginal members.

Figure 9 Use of languages on Facebook by central – marginal members of the network
As can be seen in Figure 9, more central members of the network, especially the older generation, use English and Spanish with relatively equal frequency to communicate on Facebook, while older members of the network who are less central utilize Spanish with greater frequency than they do English. The other difference among older members which relates to their relative centrality is their frequency of codeswitching. While more central older generation members codeswitch only 8.63% of the time, less central older generation members codeswitch 19.43% of the time. This numbers also support the idea that bilingualism is characteristic of more central members as they use English and Spanish alone at similar frequencies (48% and 43% approx.), and do not codeswitch as much. In contrast, less central generation 1.5 members codeswitch twice as frequently as they use either English or Spanish alone. Although younger generation members’ dominant and most frequently used language overall is English, the frequency of use of Spanish among more central members is significantly higher (21.88%) than that of the less central (9.09%) and marginal (2.68%) members of the network. That is, more central members use Spanish twice as often as less central members, who in turn use it three times more frequently then the marginal members of the network. Young members also use codeswitching differently depending on their position within the network. More central young members of the network seem to use Spanish alone (21.88%) slightly more frequently than they use codeswitching (19.64%). However, less central young members utilize codeswitching slightly more (10.74%) in their posts than Spanish alone (9.09%). Frequency counts are similar for the marginal members. Thus, for less central and marginal younger members, their limited Spanish use mostly occurs with codeswitching, and within primarily English discourse.
4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the presentation of self (how members see and describe their identities). It also described the strength of the Cárabez social network in order to provide a background and frame the discussion about the negotiation of membership in terms of centralization and marginalization. Additionally, this chapter explained members’ own notions of Mexicanness, which includes what it means to be a Mexican living in the U.S., (U.S. born Mexican) as well as what it means to be a ranchero Mexican from both positive and negative stereotyped views. The Cárabez social network maintains their multiple ties to each other by engaging in an ongoing series of gatherings, working with each other, taking care of each other’s children while parents travel to Mexico or send the children to Mexico, and god parenting.

Since relationships between members of a social network are based partially on power, individuals negotiate to position themselves within the network, either through social order (Milroy & Milroy, 1992) or centrality (Boissevain, 1974; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). As can be seen, members of the Cárabez social network arrange themselves and others in this social order, placing themselves and others as more or less central, and even marginal, to the network. Members rely on four emic criteria to socially position themselves and others in the network: language (knowing English and Spanish), race/ethnicity (color of skin), transnationality (degree of ties to Mexico), and knowledge and display of Mexican culture (e.g. observation of the Day of the Lady of Guadalupe, Mexican Independence Day). These four emic criteria are manifested via three major practices: presentation of self (how members view and describe themselves), which was explored in this chapter; relative identity construction (how members construct their
identities in relation to others); and position within the network (central to marginal).

These last two practices will be explored in the following chapters. The result is that, for a U.S. context, being the most Mexican is attributed not to the traditional social order (respeto) that places the oldest male immigrant as the center; instead, it is the most influential members at the center. In a U.S. context in a transnational network, the most influential, is not necessarily the oldest, but the one who is considered the most Mexican, the most bilingual (emphasis in ability to speak Spanish as long as English is already fluent), most transnational, and strongest practitioner of Mexican culture (the four emic criteria). This social order explains why some members who are primogenitors or first born are not always central, and some males can be very marginal. The following chapter will explore how these four emic criteria are at play in members’ discourse, and how members are constantly positioning themselves and others within the their network.
Chapter 5: Language Ideologies and Membership

5.1 Introduction

Spanish is a language spoken widely within the Cárabez social network and the broader Mexican community in Chicago. Interactions at schools, banks, restaurants, and other settings are often carried out partially or completely in Spanish. The constant influx of new immigrants to the Chicago area and the transnational lifestyles of the network members create a linguistic context in which both languages (Spanish and English) are needed to succeed. For the Cárabez social network, however, Spanish is more than a linguistic tool for socioeconomic success; it is an index of membership in a Mexican community and one of the most important indicators of a Mexican identity. According to most members of the network, speaking Spanish is one of the most important characteristics of being “Mexican” (within the U.S. context). Many members explained that Spanish is significant because it is the “language of my people” or the “language of my parents” and the language with which they were raised (fully or partially). Members with very few or no Spanish skills are generally marginalized and even referred to as “whites” or “güeros/as,” terms that almost always carry a strong negative connotation within the network.

Although ability in Spanish is an important index of Mexican identity, it is bilingualism that bestows greater centrality within the network. Members classify themselves and others according to their perceived level of competency and performance
in both languages (as explained in Chapter 4). The current chapter explores the
construction of positions within the network through language ideologies of bilingualism,
competency, purism, and standardization. First, this chapter includes a brief explanation
of language ideologies. Second, an analysis of sample Facebook conversations among
members of the Cárabez social network is presented in order to exemplify how language
ideologies are indexed through language use.

5.2 Language Ideologies

Language ideologies are the “implicit, unwritten, covert, de facto, grass-roots and
unofficial ideas and assumptions about language in a particular culture” (Schiffman,
2006, p. 11). Woolard (1998) explains that language ideologies are not simply about
language but are also about the person in relation to society and its institutions.
Therefore, language ideologies are the beliefs people have about language as it relates to
their position in society as a whole.

Traditional sociolinguistic research has underscored the link between a particular
linguistic feature and a characteristic of a particular social group that uses it. However,
with the concept of language ideologies, sociolinguistic research can now be concerned
not only with a single linguistic feature that reflects and represents a particular social
group, but a set of features that index cultural images or activities, behaviors, systems,
have, and act in relation to, ideologically constructed representations of linguistic
differences. In these ideological constructions, indexical relationships become the ground
on which other sign relationships are built” (p. 37).
Silverstein (1992) explains the language ideology views on traditional sociolinguistic research in terms of indexicality, which can be thought of as “stratified patterns of social meanings often called ‘norms’ or ‘rules’” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 172). In first-order indexicality, certain uses of a feature serve as “pointers” to a particular social group (Silverstein, 2003). Thus, variation studies in sociolinguistics utilize first-order indexicality to study how speakers understand linguistic variation and frame other people accordingly. Although important, this correlation does not explain speakers’ reactions, an imperative to understanding language ideology. As a result, Silverstein (1992) argues that second-order indexicality or “noticing” of the connections identified in the first order is one way to understand the reactions and the language ideologies people apply when they react to or evaluate others. Under second-order indexicality, language ideology becomes a “mediating link between social structures and forms of talk” (Kroskrity, 2000; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Woolard, 1998). Unlike the traditional sociolinguistic view in which the focus of indexicality is concerned solely with language and denotative meaning, second-order indexicality considers “the very notion of the person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institutions as religious ritual, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, schooling and law” (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). Second-order indexicality explains why “linguistic ideologies can and do become instruments of power as part of larger ideological complexes” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 171).

“As people use language in conventional ways, they simultaneously organize relations among people” (Farr, 2006, p. 16) in terms of social order and use of language. People can also index views of language, context, place and notions of bilingualism. Thus, within this framework, special attention is given to what members say that indexes
their ideologies of bilingualism and social dialects, as well as to comments that index bilingualism as a social phenomenon characteristic of a particular social order existing within the social network.

5.2.1 What Is the Ranchero Ideology and Identity?

Farr’s (2006) work expands the relationship between ideology and identity by asserting that particular “ways of speaking are conventionally agreed upon speech styles that, with their associated contexts, implicate language ideologies and thus larger social and political processes, including social relations” (p. 16). Farr identified three ranchero ways of speaking (franqueza, respeto, and relajo) used to index ranchero ideologies and enact this unique identity. Farr (2006) explains that franqueza emphasizes ranchero self-assertiveness and independence, which members portray in this honest and direct way of speaking, as it indexes a trustworthy person whose ‘word’ can be relied upon. Respeto conveys an ideology of deference to authority, but the authority is not based merely on social status or economic hierarchy. Authority for rancheros considers age and gender with respect to public face and respect for individuality. Finally, relajo is a carnivalesque talk used to challenge the status quo while entertaining the audience (with verbal performances) and sometimes forming a consensus. In general, ranchero ways of speaking have been stigmatized by elite Mexican society, even though, as Farr (2006) points out, that same society engages in a form of romanticized nostalgia of ranchero cultural heritage, as can be seen in movies, soap operas, and music videos.

Although Farr (2006) documented well these ideologies of language and identity among the first generation rancheros, she also pointed out that the second-generation
children have an ideology of language purism that could be attributed to their formal schooling. These children believe that there is a correct way of speaking in English and in Spanish, even if they themselves rarely, if ever, speak in these ways. In fact, second-generation children recognize and accept that their speech is characterized by frequent switching between two languages (codeswitching), which they see as a natural, yet academically incorrect practice. These conflicting ideas are explored in the following sections.

5.3 Perceived Bilingual Balances and Network Centrality

Bilingualism in English and Spanish is of utmost importance for the Cárabelz social network. Members of all ages criticize, and even condemn, the fact that others in their community in Chicago, especially within the network, are “losing their culture” as one young generation female member noted. Maru, an older generation 2 female stated that “me da más coraje cuando veo o escucho a alguien de mi familia que no habla el español bien. Me da coraje, me da mucho... porque es culpa de los papás” (I get more upset when I see or I hear someone from my family who does not speak Spanish well. I get upset; I get very… because it’s the parents’ fault). Members often blame the mothers of those individuals for not teaching them Spanish well, if at all. A father is not severely criticized for not teaching his child, as language teaching is seen as a mother’s duty. Some members consider that any individual who has lived in the U.S. but whose parents (especially the mother) speak Spanish as their dominant language should also know Spanish.
In general, members consider their network to be fairly bilingual. Many can switch back and forth between English and Spanish and communicate well using a combination of the two languages. The better a member speaks Spanish (what other members perceive as correct), the more centralized that member is within the network (as seen in Chapter 4). The more centralized a member is in the network, the more Mexican he or she is considered to be. As explained in the previous chapter, centrality also depends upon having native or native-like proficiency in English, as fluent bilingualism indexes members’ transnational identity, as can be seen in the graph in section 4.5.3 in Chapter 4.

5.3.1 Bilingualism and Identity

“Being able to speak Spanish” is a staple characteristic that makes someone Mexican, according to members of the Cárabez social network. Younger members with less fluency in Spanish did not entirely agree with this criterion, but recognized that the ability to speak Spanish is a characteristic that they and other members valued and considered a sign of being “more” or “true” Mexican. Apart from members’ levels of Spanish, members explained that they also needed to be fluent in English. Speaking English is not considered necessary to be “Mexican” but to be a central member of their social network. Bilingualism is evident on Facebook, where members constantly switch back and forth between the two languages when writing or responding to posts. Even the members who hardly speak any Spanish display their bilingualism by peppering their walls and posts with phrases, memes (see Appendix A for definition and example), and videos in Spanish or by responding (in English) to posts and conversations written in
Spanish. Parents and grandparents brag and show pride when declaring that a younger child member speaks Spanish and are clearly saddened when a child either does not learn or does not seem to care as much about Spanish. Not only do younger members of the network consider speaking Spanish an index of their Mexicanness, but they also consider it part of their cultural and family heritage. Fabián, a 16-year old second-generation male, stated that “[le] da lástima” (he pities) his former and current classmates, because they cannot learn Spanish. Three other young generation 2 females even question how some of their classmates were able to communicate with their parents, since the classmates’ Spanish was poor or non-existent and the parents of those classmates did not speak English well.

Members of generation 1.5 and older members of generation 2 often worry about the Spanish of those younger than they. Perhaps the worry is due to self-assigned roles as language teachers for the younger members. Older generation 2 members noted feeling as if they have not always done a “good” job in teaching younger members to speak Spanish. For example, while watching the children playing (and some children being excluded from the game because of language) during a birthday party, a generation 1.5 woman and her sister-in-law – a first generation immigrant, were discussing their regret over the decision to take their children out of bilingual schools. At the time, the two women said, they had made the decision based on the rationale that learning English well would be better economically and academically for the children, and as mothers they did not want their children to become confused or not learn either language well; however, these mothers also said they didn’t have time to teach the children Spanish because they did not know how. As a result, these women’s children (now pre-teenagers) have to learn
Spanish on their own. Some younger generation members’ high schools do not offer Spanish as a heritage language, only offering Spanish as a foreign language, which younger members consider boring and too easy. In other schools, members are not able to take Spanish due either to a scheduling conflict or because teachers do not want heritage language learners in a foreign language class; thus, some younger generation members have no choice but to take another language.

Although most issues around centrality and marginalization involve English and Spanish, the contact that members of this network have with other languages is evident in their daily conversations and on Facebook. On the one hand, contention exists within the group surrounding P’urhépecha, as the Farr (2006) study demonstrates. Although younger generations do not identify linguistically or culturally with the P’urhépecha (Tarascans), some have expressed a desire to learn to speak P’urhépecha, as they consider indigenous background to be another index of Mexicanness (see discussion in the following section and in Chapter 6). Interest in indigenous languages or culture by younger members is in contrast with older members of the network, especially the immigrant generation, who tend to view the P’urhépecha as the Other and with a certain degree of disfavor. On the other hand, young generation 2 members are required in school to take a foreign language. While generation 1.5 members were allowed to take Spanish (and many, as the interviews demonstrate, did not want to deal with any other language, or thought that Spanish would be easy), some younger members attend schools in which Spanish for heritage speakers is offered, but does not count as a foreign language or is not offered at convenient times (e.g. it sometimes overlaps with other
subjects). Thus, some younger members have taken or are currently taking languages such as French, Mandarin Chinese, or Korean.

Although speaking another language besides Spanish and English may serve as a source of personal pride, and is considered an asset career-wise, it is not an index of a member’s identity as Mexican. It does not add anything to their Mexican identity, but it does not take anything away either. Moreover, speaking a language other than English and Spanish does not affect the member’s relative centrality in the network. The following example, Excerpt 15 “La tuya,” is from a young generation 2 female’s (Itzel) Facebook wall post, in which she quoted a dialogue between her sister (Liz) and herself at Costco that morning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ME: ok…. wo xi huan-</td>
<td>ME: ok…. wo xi huan-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz: la tuya!</td>
<td>Liz: [Fuck] yours!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MY DAD, MOM, AND ME:</td>
<td>MY DAD, MOM, AND ME:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMAO!!!!”</td>
<td>LMAO!!!!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esa es mi ahijada! Lol ♥ Liz</td>
<td>That’s my goddaughter! Lol ♥ Liz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good one</td>
<td>Good one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Itzel</td>
<td>Itzel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I KNOW WE WERE LAUGH SO HARD EVERYONE AT COSTCO STARTED STARING AT US LOL</td>
<td>I KNOW WE WERE LAUGH SO HARD EVERYONE AT COSTCO STARTED STARING AT US LOL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good one Liz!</td>
<td>Good one Liz!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good one</td>
<td>Good one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
<td>Cousin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lol! Che Liz, love her goofy self!</td>
<td>Lol! [D]Amn Liz, love her goofy self!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 15 "La tuya"

This example represents characteristics reviewed in this section. First, note that the conversation, although mostly in English, includes some Spanish. In post 1, Liz first makes a request in English, her older sister’s strongest language; however, she later
chooses Spanish to complete her joke. The choice was not random; Spanish was chosen
to complete a joke that could not have been as effectively completed in English due to the
meaning of the phrase used; thus, a higher level of Spanish proficiency is needed here to
understand it. While Liz acknowledges that her sister speaks or is learning another
language, she purposefully asks her sister, Itzel, to display this knowledge so that Liz
herself could exercise smart-wittedness or retort, a characteristic of her ranchero culture
(Farr, 2006). Liz utilizes a common Mexican joke used to “be safe” (shield oneself) in
case an offense is by someone in another language, or who is speaking Spanish, but
whose message is not understood (e.g. a doctor or lawyer using their registers to explain a
situation to a person who does not have that background). The default is to assume that
the other person was offending one’s mother (a common offense). Thus, in the
interlocutor’s mind, the message that was not understood is imagined as “chinga tu
madre” (fuck your mother), so the response to complete the turn sequence of this
adjacency pair is “[chinga] la tuya” ([fuck] yours”). For the network, what is more
important than mere linguistic knowledge is pragmatic knowledge, which displays the
member’s pragmatic competence in Spanish (post 2 shows that 13 members “liked” the
joke). The aunt also switched to Spanish in this conversation when praising her
goddaughter (Liz) (notice the multiple network ties). In post 3, she praises Liz in Spanish,
but laughs (lol=laugh out loud instead of ja ja ja, also used by the members) and uses
emoticon of a heart symbol to express “[I] love” to mean “[I] Love Liz.” Itzel reads her
aunt’s message and replies in English, and her aunt then continues in English in posts 5
and 6. Finally, a cousin also writes a message in two languages. First she laughs in
English and then uses Spanish to say pinche (damn) Liz, but does not use the full word
(pinche), instead opting for the more colloquial form ‘che’, and then continues the post in English.

Second, rather than praising the ability that Itzel has in speaking Chinese, the focus is on Liz’s pragmatic use of Spanish, which is highly praised and which positions her momentarily as a more central member of the network than her sister, who usually prefers English to communicate, even for joking, as seen on her Facebook page. The cousin’s comment is an indication that Liz often uses her languages to joke around, which my observations confirmed. The 13 members who liked the post include mostly generation 1.5 members, but also some older and younger second-generation members. My observations suggest that younger second generation members who speak more Spanish are favored by generation 1.5 members and older adults, and are thus constructed as more central than those who do not speak much Spanish. Being central in the network goes beyond being seen as “insiders” or the “favorite grandkids” or “favorite nephews,” as one young second generation female member put it. Centrality can grant a member certain privileges, such as being allowed to have a Facebook account at a younger age than is permitted for others (the case for Liz who is 12), to be known more intimately by grandparents and distant relatives (and thus receive better gifts or have more guests at a party), to receive more attention from the grandparents, and to have more activity on Facebook (people responding to wall posts, pictures, engaging in conversations, liking something).

Bilingualism (English and Spanish) is the first means of distinguishing between centrality or marginalization. Among the members studied in this network, the more Spanish one speaks, the more central that person’s position is in the network. Of course,
centrality is only assumed if the member has a high level of English, which is often the case among young second generation members. Although this dynamic was not studied on first generation immigrant members of the current network, interviews and comments of the 1.5 and second generation demonstrate that this was also true for them. Younger members of both generations explain that they remember that there were uncles (or great-uncles) who either married an English-speaking person or learned English quickly, and everyone thought they would be the ones with more opportunities, better work, and therefore more money; thus, these members, along with those children who spoke better English (among generation 1.5), were considered central at the time research began in 2011. Some members later lost a certain level of English when they were taken back to Mexico for longer periods and attended school there, which resulted in a temporary loss of centrality that was gained back even more strongly when they returned to the U.S., as their Spanish was more fluent than others who had not spent as much time in Mexico. In any case, being bilingual was and continues to be an asset within the network, the increase of which tends to grant the member greater centrality within the Cárabez social network and to improve the network’s view of its own status in the larger Mexican-origin society in Chicago.

However, the ideologies of members of generation 1.5 and subsequent generations regarding bilingualism are conflicted, to varying degrees. These conflicting views resonate with competing language ideologies of progressive and traditional views of bilingualism in academia. Progressive views place an integrated understanding of bilingualism that “privileges language as social practice, speakers as social actors and boundaries as products of social action” (Heller, 2007, p. 1). Traditional second language
acquisition research views bilingualism as the complete mastery or native-like proficiency of two languages (Gass & Selinker, 2008). These competing language ideologies are both used at different times by members of the network to give themselves and others centralized membership or to marginalize others. In other words, they display their proficiency in any language variety or mixture of varieties (regardless of whether it was written in a grammatically correct manner), and at the same time, they allude to correctness and knowledge of the language (grammar and spelling) to position themselves as more knowledgeable of Spanish (having English proficiency already) and therefore more Mexican and central.

5.3.2 Spanish Communicative Competence and Membership

One way to index centrality relates to knowledge of Spanish, either by displaying it or by questioning another person’s ability to use Spanish. In the following example, two young second generation female cousins (Tita and Fanny) are using Facebook to make arrangements for a party in which one of them has to buy ingredients to make an alcoholic beverage. Since Tita posts a question on Fanny’s wall (a common practice), they are creating a public conversation in which the channel is not exclusive to them. Facebook feed (the home page where all friends’ activities are displayed) makes it possible to have the equivalent of “overhearers” (Goffman, 1974), that is, people who are not part of the conversation but who can ‘hear,’ in this case ‘read’, what is going on. Overhearers can be either passive members of the communication (those who read and move on, or those who let their presence be known. Facebook lets these overhearers take a more active role or make their presence known to the interlocutors, since they can
simple “like” a comment, conversation, or response, without necessarily communicating anything else. Thus in this example their same-age aunt (a young second generation member of the Cárabez social network), Lety, “likes” Tita’s question on Fanny’s wall, but her presence on Facebook is noticed by Fanny, who takes the opportunity to make fun of Leti’s Spanish skills by using formal Spanish with her and then asking Lety how long it took her to read the Spanish.

| 1 | Tita’s post on Fanny’s wall: “ey…tell your mom if she is still is going to want us to do the mix drinks so we can go get the stuff either tomorrow or friday”.
| 2 | Lety likes this
| 3 | **Fanny** Yeah.. Ummm I just have to get the mula and were ready to go! Lety: Mandame tu numero de cellular porfavor, necesito comunicarme contigo. Gracias. (how long did it take you to read) je je..
| 2 | Yeah.. Ummm I just have to get the mule and we’re ready to go! Lety: Send me your cell phone number, please. I need to communicate with you [talk to you, expressed in formal language]. Thank you. (How long did it take you to read) he he..

Excerpt 16 "How long did it take you?"

Language use becomes a tool to index centrality and to marginalize other members of the network. Even though this conversation is primarily in English, it is peppered with words in Spanish and references to Mexican culture (the use of *mula* instead of ‘mule’ and *je je* instead of ‘he he’ all in post 3). Fanny constructs a bilingual identity of a Spanish speaker who is very familiar with common features of the rancho by using *mula* in post 3 instead of ‘car.’

Additionally, Fanny makes fun of Lety’s Spanish skills through two actions. First, in post 3, after writing the vocative, “Lety,” to direct some words to her instead of in
response to Tita’s post, Fanny writes a request in Spanish and then asks Lety, in English, how long it took her to read the message in Spanish, followed by a laugh (in Spanish). A second, a less obvious action, is the use of serious tone and an attempt to write the sentence using more formal Spanish and in a very direct way (e.g. use of the vocative ‘Lety:’). The formal stance can be observed by the choice of formal words such as the verb ‘comunicar’ (talk); the use of the phrase “por favor” (please); and a closing at the end with the word ‘gracias’ (thank you). All of these words are usually written in informal language such as the use of the verb hablar, which also means ‘talk,’ or either using netspeak or English such as in “thnx”. The switch from colloquial/informal (oral-like) English to a formal (Spanish) demonstrates Fanny’s higher level of proficiency in Spanish. In regular talk, members of the network mostly codeswitch, use American Spanish features, or use very localized Spanish (Ranchero Spanish) to communicate, and very seldom do they use formal Spanish. However, Fanny decides to write in a form of Spanish only known to those who have studied it formally (Fanny lived and studied there for three years while in elementary school and is one of the members who has traveled to and spent the most time in Mexico). Both Tita and Fanny were indexing membership in a Mexican community by peppering their English with Spanish, but Fanny was also claiming greater centrality in the network for herself by showing higher literacy skills in Spanish, simultaneously marginalizing her cousin, Lety, for not having the same level of proficiency. Lety belongs to a family which many members of the social network refers to as “the Americans” or the “most American,” the latter since some members of that particular family have been trying to learn more Spanish in the past few years (Lety
temporarily moved in with her daughter’s father, a Mexican immigrant whose family is monolingual in Spanish).

In other cases, some marginal members of the network whose Spanish was not fluent but improved at school or work, and who began to practice it more, are often rejected or teased for trying to use Spanish more. For instance, Sara, an older second generation female and Leti’s sister, wrote on a cousin’s wall “sapu verde” (green frog) on his birthday. ‘Sapo verde’ (green frog) is a play on words used in a parody of the ‘Happy Birthday’ song in Spanish in Mexico. The word ‘birthday’ is difficult to pronounce for monolingual Spanish speakers, and if said quickly it sounds like /berdei/, which is not a word, and is thus turned into ‘verde’ /berde/ (green). Happy does not sound like ‘sapo’ (frog), but is a two-syllable word that can precede the color adjective and is funny. Thus, ‘sapo verde’ (green frog) would match and be funny in the song “Sapo verde eres tii” (You are a green frog) sung to the tune of ‘Happy Birthday to you’. In this example, Sara displayed knowledge of English by using the expression ‘happy birthday’ to congratulate her cousin, and she also tried to display knowledge of Mexican Spanish by using ‘sapu verde.’ However, the way she writes “sapo” uses the Ranchero Spanish pronunciation sapu. Sara could have been indexing her ranchera origins to gain more ethnic authenticity (Hall & Bucholtz, 1995, p. 362); however, this may not have been on purpose, since Sara has never learned Spanish literacy, so she may have just been writing the word phonetically, as she hears and pronounces it. However, Susana, her cousin, ‘likes’ Sara’s post and comments, “you sound like a true paisa”. Susana’s use of English to “praise” how ‘paisa’ (Ranchera Mexican in a positive light) her cousin sounds indexes her own centrality and serves to marginalize Sara. First, Susana praises her in English, as
you would praise someone who is learning Spanish, indexing her lack of Spanish skills, and then she uses the words “*true paisa*” to acknowledge Sara’s intent to centralize herself within the network among her central cousins. Sara’s use of the word sapu*, does gain her some centrality, but it is only acknowledged and then rejected by Susana’s (a more central member) switch to English and the qualifying praise offered to Sara.

Contention about proficient knowledge of Spanish to index a Mexican identity often occurs during face-to-face and Facebook communication among social network members. Mexican identity characterized by knowledge and usage of different varieties of Spanish is often used to index centrality or to marginalize other members. However, marginalized members disapprove of these practices, as they often feel left out and, at times, offended. For example, Daria and Natalia, young second generation females, and their cousins Nora and Citlalli, all agreed during interviews that if one is *Mexican* (Mexican-origin) one *should* know Spanish; however, not knowing the language well “does not make you less Mexican” (Natalia), nor are you less Mexican if you “have an accent” (Citlalli) when speaking Spanish. Daria, a member often disparaged by her cousins (who are more central members of the social network), claims that in her case she “chose to be Mexican” and “chose to learn Spanish”, as she did not have the opportunity as a child. These types of comments, however, are specifically rejected by other members, such as Susana, an older second generation female, who during an interview explained that she had self-assigned herself a role in the network to monitor and maintain Spanish learning among the members, and who explained that Mexicanness has to be “lived and felt”, and not “*de dientes para afuera, sino del corazón*” (from the teeth out,
but from the heart), and by that she meant wanting to go to Mexico all the time and, very importantly, speaking Spanish.

5.4 Language Purism and Marginalization

In the introduction to this chapter I explained that members of the Cáarabez social network had competing language ideologies. On the one hand, they believe that their bilingualism allows them to use the two languages randomly. Members are comfortable switching back and forth between English and Spanish in a conversation, whether it is informal or formal, at home or in the work place, unless the use of Spanish is prohibited or there are no other Spanish speakers present. However, despite the acceptance of codeswitching practices among the network, as the “normal way” to talk or the “language” members speak (remember Susana stated “we speak bilingual”), members also evidence language ideologies of purism. Many contend that speaking Spanish well is the most desired characteristic of Mexicanness, despite the fact that no one in the network has actually attained this idealized level of Spanish proficiency. This mindset of language purism may be due to school-taught ideologies (Farr, 2006). These ideologies are indexed in members’ language use and in the correction of language they engage in with one another. In an attempt to teach Spanish, or to correct the use of Spanish, members make fun of and tease others, indexing their own superior knowledge of Spanish and thus their Mexicanness and centrality of membership. On one occasion, Citlalli, the youngest of four siblings, was teased for speaking a “worse” (and accented) Spanish than a visiting white European-American native speaker of English male who had learned Spanish during college. During dinner, Nara told her sister “you are doomed” and “you have more
accent than he does." Citlalli seemed ashamed and stated “That’s sad… I’m Mexican and I have a more... I have an accent”. In this case, the language purism ideology is indexed by her regret about having an accent when speaking Spanish, which is perceived as a negative index of her Mexicanness, since the guest was not Mexican-origin. The practice of teasing (and sometimes attacking) one another’s level of Spanish is also very common on Facebook. The following example is an excerpt from a member’s Facebook wall. The conversation that follows is between a young second generation male (Cosme), whose involvement with the network increased over the past two years, and whose Spanish knowledge began to grow as a result of this involvement and a few trips to Mexico, and his cousin’s girlfriend (Linda), a friend of many members of the network who usually attends family parties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cosme’s wall post: “Finally home :) Porfin En La Casa”</th>
<th>Finally home :) Finally at home.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 people like this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Linda You are very bilingual now !! :)</td>
<td>You are very bilingual now !! :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cosme pa que intiende my people</td>
<td>For my people to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(misspelled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Linda I think its entienda</td>
<td>I think it’s understand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this example, Cosme displays the language knowledge he is acquiring by writing a bilingual post in post 1 (his wall is mostly in English and prior to his increased involvement in the network, his use of Spanish was minimal or non-existent). Translating a phrase from one language to another, as Cosme does in post 1, is already an indication of place in the network. Most members who are “more bilingual,” however, would codeswitch rather than translate (see section on codeswitching). However, this effort by
Cosme is welcomed in the network, as is indicated by the number of likes from members of his family and a few friends (post 2). However, when Linda praises his level of bilingualism in post 3, this is interpreted by Cosme as a criticism since it was not necessary to include a Spanish translation since everyone understands English (and knows he doesn’t speak Spanish well). Her use of two exclamation marks and a smiley indicates a level of fake surprise and the intention, which is meant to be joking and a hint of irony equivalent to the raised eyebrows that members exhibit in face-to-face conversations. Thus, in post 4 Cosme further displays his bilingualism by writing an answer containing intrasentential codeswitching rather than translation, a practice more common to the more skilled bilinguals in the network. He uses colloquial Spanish and standard English, but he makes a mistake in the spelling due to a phonetic spelling at the beginning of the word entienda, using /i/ rather than /e/. Moreover, the end of the word lacks the subjunctive /a/ instead of /e/, an error caught and noted by Linda, who corrects him in post 5. What Linda did is a common practice on Facebook, where not-so-bilingual members are reminded of their lack of proficiency, corrected, and sometimes teased or mocked, keeping social positions of centrality and marginalization in place.

Pragmatic message of Cosme’s post is understood, but there is a perceived need by Linda to correct it, in this case the spelling.

The following excerpt among family members of the network relates to the use of collocations in Spanish. Collocations are a sequence of words that occur frequently together in the same order. This exchange occurred between a young second generation male (Eduardo), a cousin (Ivan), and his aunt (Telma), an older member of generation 1.5.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo’s wall post: “picándome los mocos”</th>
<th>Picking my boogers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 people like this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ivan Los mocos no se pican es la nariz</td>
<td>You don’t pick boogers but your nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Telma You meant sacándome los mocos ;(</td>
<td>You meant taking out my boogers :)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 18 "Picándome los mocos"

This is similar to the previous post above in that the message can be understood whether the “correct” expression is used. However, a younger and older member of the network decide to correct Eduardo’s Spanish, marking their own levels of proficiency and, in doing so, classifying Eduardo’s Spanish as less proficient. This practice may index a decentralization of Eduardo or a centralization attempt by Ivan and Telma. Less Spanish-proficient members of the network who take Spanish as a foreign language in high school or college (not Spanish for heritage speakers) are also teased about their use of Spanish. This is the case of Daria, who recounted a conversation with her sister, Tita.

Daria explained that she has been criticized for not being able to speak Spanish well at home and in some heritage language classes she took. However, Daria explains that in the Spanish as a foreign language classroom, she felt better because it was a more sheltered environment.

“I feel more comfortable in our classroom setting than my home setting. Yeah it’s like that I was told that that is the right Spanish the one that they teach us and the Spanish we learn [at home] is more like it’s almost like Spanglish sometimes ‘cause sometimes all you say is like there those words that you say in Spanish accent they are English but you say it in Spanish accent so they sound in Spanish like, there is like American like bañar instead of saying bañar they say duchar on the book. I say duchar but that sound weird that’s what the shower means and I thought that that was cool, I know one word, and I tell my sister ‘Me voy a duchar’ and she laugh and she is like ‘I know what it means but it’s weird the way you use
it ‘cause we don’t use it, [we use] ‘Me voy a bañar, me voy a meter en el agua [I’m going to take a shower, I’m going to get in the water].’”

The issue of feeling uncomfortable at home vs. heritage language classes is important, and an entirely different topic that could be explored to understand language ideologies and practices of centralization and marginalization. However, in this particular case the attention is focused on the language ideologies as to what kind of Spanish vocabulary is considered acceptable by the Cárabez social network. Daria explains that she is learning the “right Spanish”, as she was told at school, and she notices that her family codeswitches, which she does not consider to be the right way to speak. She later uses the example of the word *duchar*, which she learned from her textbook and tried to use with her sister, Tita, who is a fluent bilingual. *Duchar* is a verb which does not belong to colloquial standard Mexican Spanish, but is used more frequently in other varieties of Spanish. Tita’s explanation (and laugh) that “we don’t use it” is interesting. The use of the first pronoun plural ‘we’ in this case clearly indexes Tita’s centrality in the network and the marginalization of Daria. She uses an inclusive “we” versus “you” indexing otherness. Less fluent members such as Daria are not the only ones who fall victim to this marginalization from other members of the network. Eduardo, who is less central but not marginalized, said that he thinks more central members “take Spanish too seriously”, but at the same time, he paradoxically notes frustration with members of the network who do not command Spanish as well as he does.

5.5 Language Purism and Correctness

During fieldwork, I noted that a frequent practice of this network is oral correction, mainly in Spanish. Older and younger members alike usually correct
someone’s Spanish if it is below what they consider a “passable” level (as Daria phrased it in an interview). However, most of this correction occurs as self-monitoring, in which members correct their own use of Spanish before someone else points it out. Not surprisingly this correction happened in many situations, including when the interlocutors were in a serious conversation, such as when a teen was complaining to older members or siblings about a bad day at school. Even in such contexts, errors in speech would be corrected, leaving the speaker frustrated because the audience paid more attention to the speech errors than to the problem at school that was being recounted. As Daria explained, sometimes this correction goes beyond what is necessary, to a point that intimidates the speaker or creates antipathy to learning more Spanish. Correction practices also occur in English, though to a lesser extent, since all of the individuals in this study from generation 1.5, 2, and 3 have attended or currently attend school in the U.S. However, unlike with Spanish, correction of speech errors in English is not taken as an attack on the speaker’s identity, their abilities, or pride.

Farr (2011) asks, “Why then does a belief in a standard persist, and why is it so widespread among speakers, even among those who admittedly do not speak according to its rules?” (p. 14). She explains that this is due to the coexistence of different language ideologies, ones that accept practices of purification and standardization, but also ideologies of hybridization, and such thinking is “deeply embedded in our social, cultural, political, and linguistic history” (p. 14). Constant monitoring and ideologies of purification and standardization have left many members feeling as if they possessed deficient versions of the language varieties they speak and that they cannot speak either language well (as Marcos, an older generation 2 male stated during a meal). Facebook
exhibits these practices and feelings constantly in the conversations members engage in with each other, with their friends, and with other relatives in Mexico. Due to this deficient view of their linguistic proficiency, these members were not considered “full bilinguals” by their network at large or by their teachers (see discussion above about the ideology of “true” bilingualism). In reality, it is the widespread use of vernacular varieties in both English and Spanish in members’ speech that is not recognized. Therefore, when writing, members are very careful to hedge their claims. When they write on Facebook, many generation 1.5 members said in interviews that they try to review and correct every single post before publishing it in English, and even more so in Spanish, since they did not study it much formally. On some occasions, if I was there when they were updating Facebook, they sometimes would ask me for orthographic rules, since they know that I studied through my bachelor’s degree in Mexico. Although most of their Facebook posts are in Spanish (see Chapter 3), they tend to be short. However, the Spanish these members use is oral-like, often with American Spanish features (e.g. calques), or with non-standard orthographic rules of spelling and accent marks that may be due to hypercorrection, such as excessive use of accent marks. For example, a Facebook message from Vania, an older second generation female, read: “Acabó de terminar la presentación del lugar...” (Someone just finished the presentation of the place). This message is interpreted ambiguously as evidenced by some of the reply posts. Many alluded to the “good job” Vania did in her presentation; however, the first word acabó (finished – 3rd person singular, preterit tense) refers to a third person doing the action, a conjugation in which an accent mark is required (acabó). The first person singular preterit would be acabé (I finished), but in this context it is necessary to use the
present tense *acabo* to indicate that the person speaking just finished doing a task. The meaning of the verb *acabar* is to just have finished. Thus, what Vania wrote (*acabó* for *acabo*) does not need an accent mark. In addition, she added an unnecessary accent mark in the word *términar* (for terminar – to finish), and omitted an accent mark in *presentación* (for presentación). Many members of the network use accents marks indiscriminately since many have not studied Spanish literacy formally, and if they have taken Spanish classes in elementary school or as an elective in middle or high school, most never really advanced to a level at which they can use the rules they memorize about the accents, much less “read a novel in Spanish” (as Maru and Fanny, among others, stated).

Whereas generation 1.5 codeswitches less frequently than younger generations, using each language separately, second generation members use codeswitching all the time. As Susana explained, the way members speak is different from other American people because they can always use Spanish to make their comments funnier, more serious, or “more smart.” Her sister and cousin, who said that although they are all native speakers of English, they did not always possess the necessary English vocabulary, and thus use Spanish to complement their English, echo the idea that Spanish is used to embellish their language. The preference for use of Spanish by generation 1.5 and some older generation 2 members is not surprising, since it is evident that the immigrant generation would speak Spanish to generation 1.5 and older second generation members, since it was the only, or primary, language the first generation knew. When these younger generations began having children, however, they had a broader linguistic repertoire (knowledge of both Spanish and English and of multiple varieties of each) to use and
teach their children; thus, members of the younger second generation and older third generation members learned both languages at the same time. Susana’s response to the question “what languages do you speak?” was “we speak bilingual,” which she tried to explain that they use any variety and combination of the two languages they have as they needed, felt like, or that simply “came out”.

Studies have demonstrated that sometimes codeswitching can be systematic, and there are a number of codeswitching taxonomies that scholars have proposed (see chapter 1 and 3). Informally, people have identified a variety of language emerging from English and Spanish to which they have applied the label “Spanglish,” which scholars identify as a lay term for codeswitching; however, people refer to Spanglish as a variety of language when individuals can no longer separate the two languages if necessary, something the majority of members in this network can still do (perhaps due to the constant movement of network members between the U.S. and Mexico). In the case of the younger second generation, their use of Spanish is so minimal that all their activities, especially at school but also including interactions with older network members who primarily speak Spanish, are in English. The younger second generation has specific ways to use Spanish, which include, as Susana and others said, embellishing their English. However, sometimes their codeswitching prompts older generations 1.5 and 2 members to criticize it, even though for the younger second generation members it is a natural thing to do, and in criticizing younger members these elders marginalize the individual who codeswitched, often alluding to ethnic identity, as can be seen in the following example.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fabián’s wall</th>
<th>On my way to the dance of the [Name of the group]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“On my way to el baile de raño de la esperanza”</td>
<td>On my way to the dance of the [Name of the group]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Tito</strong> hablén mijo o gringo o mex</td>
<td>Speak well son (in the general sense, since Tito is a relative, not Fabián’s father) either <em>gringo</em> or Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Fabián</strong> likes this.</td>
<td>Excerpt 19 Hable bien</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This example demonstrates that an ideology of purism embedded in a “monoglot ideology that attempts to erase the presence of non- (standard) language use” (Farr, 2011, p. 1163) is also pervasive among some members of the network, as it is present widely in a plurilingual city such as Chicago. Additionally, these language ideologies are apparent when members of the network self-monitor their language when writing on Facebook. Note that Tito in post 2 does not simply bring up correctness but ties it to a specific ethnic/national identity. His ambiguous post could be interpreted in two ways. One interpretation is that he is simply instructing his nephew to either speak one language or the other, not to mix them. Another interpretation is that he is telling his nephew to choose an identity, either American or Mexican. This interaction is difficult to interpret with certainty, since it is very brief and there is no information that would index a non-ambivalent intended meaning of the utterance. However, what is clear is that by the use of term ‘*gringo*’ as opposed to ‘American,’ his uncle is indexing an ideology that Spanish is preferred because *gringo* is a negative, even derogatory way to refer to Americans. Fabián simply acknowledges the comment by “liking” the post in post 3.

In many cases, correction activities offer a glimpse of the language ideology of standardization in and outside of formal/school settings. Facebook is a platform that is monitored almost exclusively by the participants themselves. Thus, correction is not
necessary; it is up to the users to spell correctly and/or follow grammar and punctuation rules. Despite this common knowledge, female participants reported being very careful when crafting a post (especially older generation women), although none of the men reported doing the same. In the following example, Eduardo contests adherence to language rules on Facebook by making a distinction between personal or non-formal settings and impersonal or formal settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo’s wall post as status update: “Who the fuck is bon iver #niggahyougay grammys are stupid and wisconson sucks!”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eduardo’s post was crafted to follow a hashtag on Twitter (a topic signaled with a # sign with which you can participate on Twitter), and he did not observe syntactic or</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Friend 1 Wisconsin*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female Friend 1 there’s*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Linda Well your grammar shows why you need to have 1 on 1 meets with your professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Linda im sorry babe.. I take it back lol.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 20 English 101

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eduardo pusssss put it on blast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Eduardo lol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Linda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Linda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
spelling rules (e.g. lack of question mark, use of capital letters to initiate a sentence or indicate proper names, and misspelling of Wisconsin). This lack of conventions is acceptable in computer-mediated communication or netspeak. Usually, people who correct these types of posts are joking, want to poke fun at or annoy someone, or in some less common cases want to exert an identity of being an expert or more educated. This is the case of the female friend who corrected the word Wisconsin. Although the post could be understood as it was written, the friend decided to correct the spelling of the name, while failing to correct other mistakes in Eduardo’s post. The correction of only one problem in the post may indicate that she was only being annoying and teasing him, which worked, as evidenced by four other likes to the correction. In post 4, Eduardo continues his rant against Wisconsin and indexes with a joke about the spelling that he does not care about that state; however, at the same time he attends to his grammar and partially corrects it in post 6. His friend continues to bother him and corrects him again in post 7 by noting that he lacked an apostrophe and had added an extra ‘e’ to the word ‘there’s’. Post 8 shows Eduardo’s frustration regarding ideologies of purism and standardization. He makes it clear that Facebook is not a place for ideologies espoused in schools, and also reveals his own ideologies of language use on Facebook by exhorting his friend to “stay hood” in a joking manner. High levels of vernacular features characterize Eduardo’s posts. Eduardo often uses AAVE features (although not according to AAVE grammatical rules), and he appropriates rap and hip-hop lyrics to create his own phrases. In post 11, Linda picks up on the friend’s corrections and engages in relajo, a form of teasing that is a common ranchero practice (Farr, 2006), about Eduardo’s intellect or performance at school. Eduardo responds in postss 12 and 13 in what could be
interpreted as an angry response, for Linda breaks the conversational frame by apologizing to him and stating that she was joking and perhaps that she does not want to take the conversation in that direction (as Eduardo and Linda usually do with their friends in other posts).

Although the previous example showed monitoring of correctness from others, most of the corrections are self-initiated, as in post 6, often without an immediate antecedent of someone else correcting the person. Correcting and monitoring one’s own language use and spelling is a way to save “face” (Goffman, 1979) and appear more educated and knowledgeable to the rest of the network.

5.6 Language Purism and Codeswitching

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is a difference in the language of preference of generation 1.5 and older generation 2 members of the network and that of younger second-generation members. While generations 1.5 and older members of the second generation widely use (and in similar frequencies) both English and Spanish in their conversations and posts on Facebook, younger second generation members use Spanish so to a lesser extent, since their competence in some cases is not as high as members of the generation 1.5 or older second generation or simply because they are not as accustomed to using Spanish. This is exemplified by a female member of the older second generation, who responded “we speak bilingual” when asked what language(s) she spoke, as well as by a male member who told me, “we speak a mix of English and Spanish, _el que caiga_” (whichever one comes out). During observations, it was apparent that these descriptions were accurate. The generation 1.5 and 2 members switch back and
forth between English and Spanish without an apparent reason or conscious choice most of the time. Of course, sometimes their use involved rhetorical strategies, because they used Spanish to make or complete a joke, or either language to say an expression that does not exist in the other. Many of the members of the younger generation, except those in central positions, felt more comfortable in and used English for conversations among themselves, and primarily used Spanish only when talking to the older generation or when it was absolutely necessary. The following is an excerpt from a conversation in which the topic was about the back pain one of the pregnant women was having:

“Pues sí, ya fui con el chiropractor, fui por un massage porque ahí mismo con el quiropráctico tienen para los masajes and they can pressure and it helped me a lot on this side, so now I have to go back pa’ que me ajuste este lado. Pero sometimes I wake up crying and oh, Lord how I’m gonna turn? Pero eso me levanta, every two hours me levantaba como una punzadita.”

Well yes, I already went to the chiropractor, I went for a massage since at the chiropractor’s they give massages and they can pressure and it helped me a lot on this side, so now I have to go back to get an adjustment on this side. But sometimes I wake up crying and oh Lord how I’m gonna turn? But it gets me up every two hours a little pinch makes me get up.

This example shows that many times their speech includes English and Spanish components, without any apparent reason or conscious choice. On Facebook, this practice occurs in a similar fashion. In general, older generation members use Spanish for their posts and responses, while younger generation members overwhelmingly use English. However, the difference between face-to-face encounters and Facebook is that many members often utilize only one primary language to present themselves on Facebook, regardless of their degree of bilingualism, even if dialogues and response posts are one in English and one in Spanish. For instance, Vania, who is fluent in English and Spanish,
chooses to participate almost exclusively in Spanish on Facebook, even in response to posts by others that are in English. Only when her interlocutor speaks little or no Spanish does she switch to English. On the other hand, Daria, a more peripheral member of the network, conducts virtually everything on Facebook in English and very rarely publishes using Spanish, and in most cases where she does, it is with common phrases that she grew up with (e.g. *Gracias tía* – thanks aunt).

Despite these larger differences between generations and their language choices on Facebook, most younger generation members and their family and friends use two languages (to varying degrees) to express their thoughts on Facebook, and with this comes a practice of monitoring each other for correctness and language purity, which results in marginalization of certain members via “language sanctions” (making fun of or calling them ignorant). As previously stated, some correction is done through self-monitoring. As one generation 1.5 female member said “we [my sister and I] check revise our posts for grammar and spelling before we publish them on Facebook,” especially if they are writing in Spanish since most only went to school in Mexico for a few years. Interestingly, most of the people members write to are also network members (all with family ties), many of whom have an equal or lesser knowledge of the grammatical rules of Spanish. Members explain that this practice of self-monitoring is making a statement that if you are going to do it, you should do it right, and it is an “example for the *chiquillos*” (the little ones – although not referring specifically to age, per se, but to younger generations). In an attempt to be extra careful and correct, members often hypercorrect their Spanish posts, mainly through the inappropriate use of accent marks,
and their written product in Spanish still ends up containing basic spelling errors, although there are fewer problems with their syntax.

It is important to note that although both their face-to-face interactions and those on Facebook are conducted in two languages, the manner in which members use their languages does not follow a single theory of codeswitching. In some cases, members accommodate their interlocutors (Giles, Coupland & Coupland, 1991). At other times, members codeswitch situationally and metaphorically (Gumperz, 1982) when discussing certain topics or to express a persona. It is important to note that Spanish is not always the language employed for Mexican topics. In other cases, members codeswitch as a contextualization cue (Hymes, 1974), or to mark ‘footing’ (Goffman, 1974). The only discernible pattern seems to be that younger members’ use of codeswitching is more intrasentential than intersentential (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

In English, most of the correction happens at the spelling level and is self-monitored. Members of the network do not usually criticize each other’s English as much as they do in Spanish. For instance, if a member does not know or understand a word in Spanish, other members often give that person a hard time, as it is the network’s expectation that he or she should know. In the next example (only an excerpt from a conversation took at least 50 turns), there is a young second generation female (Nara) talking to a male cousin and a friend about a word she (Nara) did not understand. The word was *coladera* (strainer), which in soccer terms means a bad goalie.
Moises Cómo no vas a saber? How come you don’t know?

Jade Te lo dijo con albur oh sin albur? Did he say it to you with pun/double meaning or without it? Lol

Nara speak english to me jade….lol

Nara jo no espiro mexicano I don’t speak Mexican

Excerpt 21 Coladera (the original conversation contains 51 posts but only 4 are shown here)

In this example Nara, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, but who has never studied Spanish formally, and whose degree of bilingualism is fairly skewed to English, is told a slang term used in soccer to call her a bad goalie. However, the word *coladera* has several connotations, some sexual, in addition to the denotational meaning ‘strainer’. This is the reason her cousin, in post 2, criticizes the fact she does not know the meaning of the term, and instead of answering the question, he asks why Nara does not know (implying that she should, since she is Mexican and a soccer player). Her friend Jade, probably aware of Nara’s limited degree of Spanish proficiency (Jade seems to have a higher level of bilingualism as evidenced by her use of both languages in the rest of the post) asked Nara to clarify the context in post 3, but uses another unfamiliar word, ‘*albur*’ (pun/double meaning), to Nara. In turn, Nara asks Jade to speak English in post 4, basically positioning herself as a monolingual English speaker, and then in post 5, constructing an identity as a bilingual, perhaps as a Latina, but not as a “Mexican” since she does not speak “*Mexicano*” (meaning Mexican Spanish). Nara is not the only one who, due to language criticisms, has brought up the fact that she feels more American than Mexican. In fact, when there is a mistake in English, she and others excuse themselves by saying such things as “*se me salió lo paisa*” (the /negative/ ranchero stereotyped Mexican came out).
In the previous two examples, the Facebook conversations happened among members of roughly the same age (although not always from the same generation, as already explained). As shown in the previous section, when members of different age groups correct or teach each other grammar, spelling, and use, these are acts of sanctioning, sending the message ‘you are not using it well’. While members of generation 1.5 and the older second generation have a high proficiency in both languages, much of their communication takes the form of codeswitching. Therefore as one member mentioned, codeswitching is simply the way they speak, they cannot speak any other way because that is how they learned to talk. Although many make a conscious effort not to codeswitch within their family and in their neighborhood, most other places they go such as schools and workplaces, the people they interact with the most speak both languages similarly to the way they do. Codeswitching for these younger members is just a way of speaking; it’s their style. Nevertheless, even though codeswitching is a common practice, it does not go unsanctioned. Many members of the network agree that a person should be able to speak one language or the other well, and should learn to separate the two for employment, educational, and also personal reasons. They strive for knowledge of the two languages for potential use in conversation with monolinguals, or bilinguals whose language pair is not English and Spanish. Although the ideology of language purism does not arise all the time, it emerges occasionally on Facebook, when one member tells another to keep their languages separated, which serves as further evidence of the persistence of linguistic purism among the network.

This contention occurs both among members of the network and between the network and the larger community. Generally, generation 1.5 is criticized for not
mastering English, and generations 2 and 3 are criticized for not mastering Spanish. The lack of mastery of a language is also criticized at school by both Mexican and American teachers, who want students to learn and use the standard of both languages and who criticize the vernacular varieties of both languages people learn and actually use. These criticisms derive from an ideology of purism still pervasive in school settings, which promotes as an attainable and desirable goal a standardized national language over dialects that are considered subordinate (Farr & Song, 2011).

However, generation 1.5 members of the network spent many of their school years in bilingual classes, classes in Spanish, ESL classes, or in English classes where they could not understand much, as many explained during the interviews. Many members found it very difficult to be in a class where they did not understand anything (in English) but were expected to perform the same tasks and at the same level as their classmates. In the case of the older second generation, a similar experience occurred, since all of the members learned Spanish first as children, and the other children with whom they played were recently arrived immigrants or members of generation 1.5 who were more proficient in Spanish than English. Going to school and learning both languages was a challenge for generation 1.5 and older second-generation members. In many cases, they were criticized for the limited language skills they had in English, for they were not learning fast enough and used informal “ghetto” English, as they call it. By the description of it, and by observations of everyday speech, these members’ English is a mixture of European vernacular English, and even some traits of African American Vernacular English (AAVE). What is worse, many members also had teachers who attacked their Spanish, which was primarily a Ranchero dialect that did not follow the
conventions of formal Spanish grammar. As Marcos explained to me “I didn’t know English or Spanish well”. This made it difficult for members to pass writing or grammar classes and succeed in college level writing classes in many cases. In the case of some other members, who were doing well in school, they were nonetheless linguistically profiled. Despite these disadvantages, members overwhelmingly felt pride in knowing two languages and using them both to their advantage in various situations, though (with Spanish) mainly to mark their Mexican identity.

5.7 Discussion: A Bilingual Linguistic Context

The place members of the network give the ability to communicate in Spanish is paramount to the construction of their Mexican identity, and also to the centrality within the Cábrapaz social network and the larger Mexican society in Chicago. The U.S. society in which these Cábrapaz social network members participate has a linguistic context that makes bilingualism necessary to succeed. Both the language ideologies and the dynamics of identity construction and the practice of centralization and marginalization are indexed by language features that members of the Cábrapaz social network exhibit in their Facebook posts and every day conversations, as well as by what they state in interviews. One of the differences between immigrant communities and transnational communities is the latter’s constant movement of people, goods, ideas, values, traditions and commerce between two countries. In this case the concept of sending and receiving communities does not work, since depending on the generation, one community could be the sender and another one the receiver. For example, in the immigrant generation studied by Farr (2006), San Juanico, Michoacán was the sending community and Chicago the receiving
community; however, nowadays for some young second generation members, Chicago is the sending community and San Juanico is the receiving community. Some researchers have called this movement “going back” (Smith, 2006). However, this label does not fit members of generation 2 who, in many cases, only visited Mexico once or twice a year growing up (and thus were “emotional transnationals,” according to Levitt & Waters, 2006), but did not attend school there, were not involved in the community in Mexico, nor in the family’s avocado business growing up. For those among generation 2 who now are moving to Mexico on a long term or even permanent basis to make a living in their parent’s avocado business, Chicago is the sending community and San Juanico the receiver. (As an example, refer to Appendix H, a picture of a Mexican kitchen in Chicago, and a very American kitchen in San Juanico, both built by the same second-generation member). This constant movement of people from one side of the border to the other has made both locales a rich linguistic context for the two languages to thrive: command of English and Spanish to varying degrees, but command of both for the most mobile members. It is in this linguistic context that members of the Cárabez social network place the importance of English and Spanish, and not only for the Cárabez social network, but for the Mexican-origin transnational community in the U.S. as a whole.

Language ideologies about bilingualism and Spanish communicative competence become very important to the dynamics of this community. Losing Spanish results in losing a connection to the transnational community, and could signal a transition in the network from being a Mexican community to a Mexican-American community in Chicago. Thus members retain their heritage language in order to maintain their ethnic authenticity (Hall & Bucholtz, 1995, p. 362).
Additionally, members are not only negotiating self-constructed identities but also assigned identities, since they are subject to linguistic profiling by other members of their community. This is the case of members in the Cárabez social network who do not master Spanish, such as Daria. In order to succeed, not only as a central member of the Cárabez social network, but at as ‘real/competent’ Mexican, she has endured criticisms from other Mexican-origin individuals who criticize the fact that she is English dominant, leading her to feel compelled to lie about the extent of her Spanish linguistic skills, by not correcting an employer’s assumption, for instance, that she was fully bilingual when she was first hired.

In these two excerpts she explains this situation:

I don’t know if my mom was trying to teach me Spanish when I was younger, but I remember learning English first. I was four or three and she put me in an all-Spanish class and it turned really hard and the teacher told my mom that I was a shame… they were disrespectful ‘cause they don’t have no English but now people disrespect you if you don’t know Spanish like your own people is very like judgmental, like ‘why are you gonna let go of your culture?’

In this interview excerpt, Daria explains some of the dynamics in a bilingual linguistic context. Even though they are in the Chicago school system, there are bilingual or immersion programs where children are taught in Spanish during their first three years of education, along with other primarily Mexican-origin children. The assumption is that all such children should be able to speak Spanish. Daria, an English dominant speaker, was therefore linguistically profiled and criticized as being a shame and letting go of her culture. In the next excerpt she explains the consequences of not being bilingual in the society in which she lives in Chicago.
“it ultimately matters if you look the part or if you are, like if you are good with language, like hey I don’t hear you speak it. So, you are probably not fluent we want someone that’s fluent like when they look for bilinguals for jobs like, no, ‘you are okay.’ Like sometimes I have to lie in my resume and be like yeah I’m fluent in Spanish and then if I have a question like after a while when I start practicing then they are like, I didn’t know you have troubles. It’s like I thought that I had troubles just on vocabularies and they are like vocabulary is different…”

Here Daria explains the language ideology of “full bilingualism” where being bilingual means being completely fluent in English and Spanish. In the linguistic context that bilinguals inhabit, they cannot afford to be educated only in English.

The toll of failure to be bilingual can be both emotional and financial. On the one hand, competency as a bilingual ties a person to the local community and to the Cárabez social network more specifically; on the other hand it also opens financial opportunities. Paradoxically, bilingualism, when English is not the dominant language, or is not used at what others consider an acceptable level, can also serve as a financial and professional impediment. If a linguistic minority stays within the confines of their network’s society, and only finds jobs that involve dealing with the same community, they run the risk of never measurably participating in political processes or enjoying a level of influence in institutions of government and industry consummate to their presence in the U.S. Nevertheless, there is also the risk in venturing out from their communities that they will lose their connection with the Cárabez social network, resulting in marginalization and rejection from members of that community.
5.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed one of the primary dynamics that members of the network engage in when positioning themselves as Mexicans, using Spanish as a measure or indicator of their Mexicanness and with it their relative centrality within their network, as well as within the larger Mexican-origin population in Chicago and the U.S. Members of the network index relative centrality by using language features from popular Spanish, Ranchero Spanish, or Hispanicized English to display a bilingual, bicultural identity. However, the same features displayed are used in different ways to construct an identity as Mexican, American, or as a bicultural person. The same strategies members use to index central membership for themselves are also utilized to marginalize other members who are less fluent in Spanish, through sanctioning (correcting) and even mockery of the other members’ attempts to use the language.

In general, members’ level of Spanish proficiency alone is not as important as the ability to switch back and forth between different varieties of English and Spanish (codeswitching) and to understand what others are saying. Correctness and purism only surface as a means to index membership or marginalize others. The next chapter will discuss another level of Mexicanness members use to index their place within the network, which is that of how language indexes a color (ethnic/racial) identity.
Chapter 6: Constructing Identities in Contention – Communicative Competence and Skin Color

6.1 Introduction

As seen in the previous chapter, language use is a notable way in which members of the Cárabez social network index their positions within their network, and therefore their Mexicanness. Through language use these members centralize and/or marginalize themselves and others in terms of power and influence within the Cárabez social network by displaying their bilingualism or marking someone else’s proficiency in Spanish as deficient or non-existent. Marking members’ Spanish as non-existent relates to a larger process in U.S. society that erases (Irvine & Gal, 2000) minority languages because its speakers do not “speak well.” Minority language speakers are erased due to an ideology of purism that proclaims that a person is not a legitimate speaker of a certain language unless he or she speaks it well. This practice displays their language ideologies of purism and standardization. The current chapter explores how the use or misuse of language, besides serving as a centralization-marginalization index, also often triggers references to another emic characteristic of Mexicanness: that of skin color. “Looking Mexican” (and related to it, “sounding Mexican”) is another important characteristic of Mexicanness, in addition to “speaking Spanish,” that members of the network stated.

According to answers provided in the ethnographic interviews, as well as naturalistic observations, what “looking Mexican” means for the network is to be darker-
skinned, which includes pride about having an indigenous heritage. For example, a few females include occasional displays of self-identification with the indigenous P’urhépecha (Tarascans) of Michoacán. Members’ identification with the P’urhépecha indigenous group is only superficial. Historically and culturally rancheros have constructed their identities as non-indigenous despite being *mestizo* (racially mixed) to a certain extent (see a discussion of this topic in Farr, 2006). However, governmental and other institutional official rhetoric both in Mexico and in the U.S. often proclaims that indigenous populations are the *real* Mexicans, or the rhetoric ties a Mexican identity to strong indigenous heritage.

A Mexican society context and a U.S. society context cause identities to be in contention among members of the network, as there are ambivalent identities at play. That is, members of the Cárabez social network alternatively claim a transnational U.S. Mexican identity, a ranchero identity, and an indigenous Mexican identity depending on the context they are constructing and depending on their audience. For example, members of the network often associate darker skin with indigenous heritage, and they associate indigenous heritage with more Mexicanness. Thus, some members occasionally claim indigenous heritage. However, most of these members are fair-skinned themselves; there are some that are somewhat *morenos* (people with dark skin). So, fair-skinned members would compare themselves to those other members whose skin-color is lighter. Even if their skin color is not too dark, members point out when some family members or friends’ skin color is not, usually in pictures. The association of skin color is problematized as in both Mexican and U.S. societies being light-skinned is pervasively desired and idealized as a sign social status. Thus, even if members claim themselves to
be darker than their cousins (for example), being fair-skinned categorizes members of the network as non-indigenous.

Therefore, the use of the three identities (transnational U.S. Mexican identity, ranchero identity, and indigenous Mexican identity) serve members of the Cárabez social network as discursive resources that can be used as they need them depending on the context. At any given moment these three identities are in play. In one context, they may construct one identity; in another context, they may negotiate or adopt another. In fact, if in a single conversation, their context changes, members may adopt or reject an identity. Figure 10 *Contending identities as discursive resources* summarizes the three identities among members of the network.

![Figure 10 Contending identities as discursive resources](image)

*Transnational U.S. Mexican* is an identity that includes members of the network who grew up in a U.S. society to Mexican families from the rancho. Unlike the immigrant generation studied by Farr (2006), members in this identity category grew up in both countries (sometimes in U.S. more than in Mexico) but within the same
community (Mexicans). Transnational Mexicans continue mestizaje through marriages from people who belong to the rancho and neighboring states to Michoacán in México such as Jalisco or Guanajuato; some of the marriages are between a güero (white/blond) and a moreno (person with darker skin) (Farr, 2006).

Ranchero is an identity that historically has been ambivalent for the larger Mexican society in general. On the one hand, ranchero culture is reminiscent of Mexico’s post-colonial reality, as can be seen in the Golden era of Mexican cinema, and in iconic figures and music. On the other hand, rancheros are at the near bottom of the hierarchy in Mexican society. Families in the rancho in San Juanico can trace their ancestors to Spain, and acknowledge that mixing with indigenous Mexicans is recent, since the Mexican revolution (1910-1920). Rural communities that are not indigenous or that have been historically regarded as not indigenous are often omitted from Mexican rhetoric (“todos somos iguales” – we are all equal, Levinson, 2001 as quoted in Farr, 2006, p. 139), and instead align themselves with common expressions such as “la güera de rancho (the white/blonde of the rancho)” (Farr, 2006, p. 137). Despite the rhetoric of “we are all equals”, such expressions reflect the pejorative treatment given to rancheros by the larger Mexican society. People from the rancho are light-skinned, light-eyed, and blonde, and those in the U.S. can be perceived as “whites” until they speak Spanish or accented English (Farr, 2006). Although lighter skin is a preferred characteristic in Mexican society, being from a rancho is viewed as being undesirable, even with light skin.

Nowadays, San Juanico has changed due to immigration and transnationalism, as well as its fruitful avocado business. Streets are paved, and many households have wireless Internet access. Transportation is more accessible which makes it possible for younger
generations to attain higher levels of education. For instance, a second-generation non-transnational cousin is currently completing her rotations in a hospital to receive her degree in family medicine. However, there is still a stigma attached to being from a rancho.

*Indigenous Mexican* is an identity given to those people whose ancestry and, many times language, is primarily P’urhépecha due to the micro-region in which the rancho is located. Farr (2006) explains the complex relationship between rancheros and indigenous since both groups inhabit rural areas and are at the bottom of the hierarchy in Mexican society. However, indigenous Mexicans are often presumed to be more “authentic” and identify with, despite being the most politically and economically oppressed groups (Farr, 2006). Historically, ranchero groups have distinguished themselves from indigenous groups, which they see as deferent and shy. Most importantly, rancheros distinguish themselves from indigenous groups in terms of valuing progress and social mobility achieved through hard work, not through government aid as one second-generation male explained.

The following sections elaborate on how individuals in this network construct their ethnic identities through language use. By exposing their language ideologies of purism, standardization and bilingualism, members use available knowledge of languages to index membership and detach themselves from ranchero and indigenous Mexicans, while on other occasions affiliating themselves with these identities. Many members alternately claim and reject these identities, all of which alludes to their contending identities and make the identities be discursive resources. These dynamics are evident also in everyday face-to-face communication both within members’ own network and
between their network and the larger society in Chicago. Additionally, these identities and language ideologies are apparent in regular Facebook postings, especially when the response platform in Facebook turns into a multi-party dialogue. For a discussion of *mestizaje* in México, refer to Farr (2006).

### 6.2 Transnational U.S. Mexicans and Ranchero Mexicans in Contention

As seen in the previous chapter, the language use that members of this network display on Facebook helps them index themselves as either central or marginal members of the network, which is translated into being either more or less Mexican, in a U.S. context. However, the use of language itself is not always a direct indicator of a specific identity, for instance, members can use ranchero Spanish in a mocking manner to construct their non-ranchero identity (as Excerpt 22 *Sleep over shows*), or they can use English to argue about who has the most Mexican identity. Identities are primarily constructed, then, in relation to other people (Barth, 1969, as quoted in Farr, 2006). Sometimes, an identity is constructed based on not being its opposite. Therefore this section discusses how members construct their identities as transnational U.S. Mexicans, placing their identities in contrast with the non-transnational ranchero and indigenous people that fellow members sometimes try to emulate.

Members of this network constantly position themselves as either marginal or central members of their own network and the larger Mexican society in Chicago in terms of their “degree of” Mexicanness. However, this positioning goes beyond marking members’ degree of Mexicanness to positioning themselves against, or in relation to, the larger Mexican society, particularly the regional Mexican society members interact with.
each time they travel to Mexico. When members of the network travel to Mexico, they are faced with the same marginalization practiced within their network in Chicago. That is, Mexicans in the rancho, non-transnational or less transnational (i.e., the immigrant generation who went to the U.S. and now is back in retirement in Mexico), often criticize a network member’s variety of Spanish, which in their view is heavily influenced by American English and culture, and to a lesser degree by AAVE features (although not culture) labeling the variety of Spanish spoken by members of the network as *gabacho* or *pocho* (negative terms that mean choppy, mixed, incomplete; *gabacho* is also used as a more pejorative term for *gringo*, and *pocho* refers to Mexicans in the U.S.). Thus, both membership and identities are constructed in relation to other members who are, in their view, more or less Mexican. For example, in one visit by members of the network to Mexico, there were constant negative references to the ways in which U.S. cousins spoke Spanish. Even though they were able to communicate with each other, non-transnational cousins living in Mexico constantly poked fun at their U.S. cousins for having a ‘*gringo*’ accent, speaking funny, or making ‘dumb’ mistakes. Many times U.S. cousins responded by saying ‘you cannot even speak English’ or making a point that they were “making an effort” to keep their conversations in Spanish so that their non-transnational cousins were not left out of the conversation. As some older members of the network explained, language practices among youth are changing. Some young members exclude themselves from interacting with their cousins in Spanish. These older members explain that some young members speak very little or no Spanish, which results in “hating” (as two members stated) the experience of visiting the rancho since they can only talk to other bilingual members (often generation 1.5 adults).
In contrast to some members who exclude themselves from interactions with non-transnational Mexican cousins, other members try indexing Mexicanness with a positive stereotype of Mexicans in the rancho by often stating they are “from a rancho” (somos de rancho) and making a point of speaking only Spanish when they visit Mexico. For instance, Fabián, a 16 year old second-generation male member of the network often updates his status on Facebook with statements similar to the following: “Nací en Chicago pero soy de rancho” (I was born in Chicago but I’m from a rancho); others talk about the rancho calling it “mi ranchito” (my little rancho), or they express that they are in “paisa mode”. Paisa is a bivalent term that is used both positively and negatively to refer to Mexicans in the rancho, and generally non-transnational. In the case of being in “paisa mode,” the term paisa is used to index a positive stereotype of non-transnational Mexicans from Mexico. However, in other cases, when members of the network are behaving or speaking like a Mexican from the rancho in a negative way (e.g. timid, stupid, clumsy, uneducated), they scold each other by saying, “don’t act/be paisa” or just “paisa” to negatively say that they are behaving like a non-transnational person from a rancho.

None of the members of this network utilizes the word ranchero to identify themselves or each other. The term ranchero is utilized derogatorily by the larger Mexican society to refer to people from ranchos, and it is often associated with stereotypes such as stupid, uneducated, impolite, rude, and timid in urban areas due to ranchero’s history and culture. The ranchero stereotype can be traced historically to living without government, to having deeply ingrained individualistic ideology of progress through hard work and own efforts, and to being self-assertiveness (Farr, 2006),
all of which can be mistaken by stubbornness or rudeness in urban areas. Members of the network know the negative stereotype associated with the word *ranchero*, but when asked if they identified themselves with the label or whether they were *rancheros* themselves, they would answer ‘yes’ with great pride. However, members would quickly add that not all rancheros are the same, and that some rancheros are like the ones in the stereotype to which they sometimes refer as *paisas* (negative connotation). *Paisas* are members of the same society, but who are not transnational, receive *migradólares* (money from remittances), and are very much following the ways of traditional rural Mexican society and not a more Americanized lifestyle (for instance, elder women who prefer to travel by bus for two days to Chicago rather than by airplane). Therefore, the use of *paisa* to refer to themselves when criticizing or marking a very ranchero identity (in a negative light) and speaking Spanish (“making the effort” to include cousins in Mexico) can be interpreted as ambivalence about their own transnational U.S. Mexican identity and the non-transnational ranchero identity of their cousins in the broader context. This contention also happens within the Cárabez social network in Chicago.

The contention between transnational and non-transnational ranchero identity is linguistic, as members of the network often evaluate the way in which they speak Spanish (as seen in Chapter 5). Additionally, when transnational members are at a linguistic disadvantage, they allude to the economic power and the status that being native speakers of English grants them. However, among transnational members themselves, and very often among Mexican-origin communities in Chicago, the main contention over identities centers around who is more ranchero and Mexican than the other. Communicative competence in Spanish is used to index a ranchero identity, but specifically a
transnational ranchero identity, not to be confused with the immigrant generation, their non-transnational cousins, or the larger ranchero society in Mexico (who did not speak English for example). Therefore, members use communicative competence and performance, what speakers *know* and *do* (Gass & Selinker, 2008), to index centralization (being more Mexican or being more ranchero) or to marginalize other members of the network. Centralization in the network is often achieved by displaying language knowledge (e.g. using a particular language variety), and in the case of Facebook by the insertion of representing a Spanish accent in English (using ‘netspeak’), especially depending on the audience. That is, depending on their language varieties and proficiency, members post messages using parts of their linguistic repertoire if the audience is “general” friends on Facebook; however, when they post on another member’s wall, or engage in conversation, they often choose a specific variety of language to index their knowledge and centrality, especially if the other participants in the exchange do not know that particular variety of the language well, if at all. Members’ use of language varieties and interactions with each other indexes also how they position themselves in the network, such as can be seen in Excerpt 22 *Sleep over*. In this conversation, Fanny, a young second-generation female, posts on her wall an invitation to a sleep over party at her house. Fanny has chosen to write her post using three language varieties: Standard English, Standard Mexican Spanish, and Ranchero Spanish (italics in left column).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fanny’s Wall Post</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Sleep over at the Cardel Cárabez Residence, o sea my house! <strong>Tita Rosas</strong> tu <strong>trais</strong> una de Azul, <strong>Kati Luna</strong> tu te <strong>trais</strong> unas tortas, <strong>Vania Pavón</strong> tu <strong>trais</strong> unos cupcakes i un galon de leche. :D eeeeeeeh!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Tita</strong> Lol. Kati and i need a cab!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> Saquen el <em>pinshi</em> caballo! O el tricycle bahahahaha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Josefa Caña</strong> Damn I thought after this weekend I was with the crowd…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> Yes you are part of the in crowd Josefa Ortiz! You are more than welcome to sleep over :)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Kati</strong> wtf hah i do need a cab lol!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> you guys will need one si no puedo sacar mi troconona del garaji! Lol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Vania</strong> Peru me <em>tenes</em> que recojer en el troconon <em>porqui</em> mi abtomobil se me entasca. <em>Saqui</em> el trocono del garach. Jejeje….</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> ill pick you up! si o no?!!! dime correle correle..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Susana</strong> a dondee le corro? cuando és el guateque?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Excerpt 22 Sleep over**

Note that in this conversation, even though Fanny is using ranchero Spanish, its use here is not actually to construct a non-transnational ranchero identity. Instead, Fanny and later Vania (her older second-generation aunt), index a counter-identity of transnational ranchera background different from that of their parents by making fun in their use of ranchero Spanish. By mixing Ranchero Spanish features with English and standard Spanish, Fanny and Vania index ranchera-origin, transnational and bicultural identities. In post 1, Fanny who regards herself, and is regarded by other members, as one
of the most centralized members of the network (and as “more” Mexican), utilizes three varieties of language to write an invitation on her wall: standard English, Standard Spanish, and Ranchero Spanish (using intersentential codeswitching), thus constructing a complex identity. By codeswitching within her wall post, she is asserting her bilingualism, and by using both of her last names (the first from her father and the second from her mother) she is indexing her Mexicanness and validating ethnic identity and membership (Fought, 2004).

Fanny also displays her biculturalism and her American background by inviting others to a sleep over (a practice which members from the rancho and generations 1 and 1.5 do not engage in), requesting food and drinks such as tequila, tortas [Mexican style sandwiches], and cupcakes with a gallon of milk. Cupcakes and gallons are terms that are only common for a Mexican from the U.S. (older members still refer to gallons as liters, just as they often refer to dollars as pesos). Fanny chooses Ranchero Spanish to request these items, displaying her knowledge of this variety, while not actually indexing a ranchero identity, but rather that of a non-ranchero or a child of rancheros (more transnational) due to the sarcasm displayed in the words representing laughing (e.g. jeje, haha) when using the variety. After Fanny finishes her post, she includes a smiley face – in reference to her Ranchero Spanish use-- and then writes the interjection eh /eh?/ to represent the rising voice tag question older members of the network use as a threat when giving orders to children as a way to emphasize the seriousness of the order (e.g. ¡cálmate, ¿eh?! [o vas a ver], calm down, won’t you? [or else]).

In this wall post, Fanny is indexing herself as a “U.S. born Mexican” (a term widely used by Fanny and Tita), bilingual and bicultural, transnational ranchera-origin
woman. However, the responses that follow show that not everyone is as bilingual as Fanny, nor can everyone use Ranchero Spanish to the same extent. Those who do, actually do so in order to construct a non-ranchero identity as well, indexing centrality in the network for knowing and using ranchero Spanish, while at the same time mocking the non-transnational ranchero identity and indexing an identity as U.S. born. For instance, in post 2 Tita, a very close cousin who is regarded as another very bilingual member, although not as central, does not join the playful stance Fanny has started with the use of ranchero Spanish, but instead simply asks for a ride for her and Kati. Fanny takes the opportunity to further display her knowledge of Ranchero Spanish and culture to tease Tita in post 3 (saquen el *pinchi* caballo! o el triciclo* - Take out the damn horse! or the tricycle). First she uses horse as a mode of transportation, rather than a car, as horses are often used in the rancho by non-transnational Mexicans, then she utilizes *pinchi* using ranchero Spanish rather than the standard *pinche*, and, to complete her joke, she brings up tricycle, an unrealistic mode of transportation used only for play by children. Then in post 4, Tita’s friend, Josefa, a member of the extended network, but not of this particular subnetwork, switches completely to English to complain that she was excluded from the invitation since her name was not tagged in the initial post (Josefa has limited ability in Spanish). However, she picks up the invitation and expresses that she expected to be part of the in crowd after an outing they had the weekend before (documented on Facebook as well). Fanny replies to Josefa in post 5 in English and makes reference to the invitation; however, she adds a nickname for Josefa, calling her Josefa Ortiz, a display of Fanny’s knowledge of Mexican culture (Josefa Ortíz de Domínguez is an important figure in the independence of Mexico). In post 4, Fanny simultaneously maintains her own centrality
by inviting Josefa in English (demonstrating her bilingualism) and indirectly indexing the marginalization of this mutual friend by codeswitching from English to Spanish in posts 7 and 9 to continue with her joke.

Kati, in post 6, also uses English to respond to Tita’s request for a ride in post 2, but also pays no attention to the rest of the post, nor does she utilize Spanish, let alone ranchero Spanish, which she has exhibited in other posts. In post 7, Fanny keeps the transportation joke going and does so using Ranchero Spanish, switching from Standard English. She tells her friend and cousins that they will need a cab if she can’t get the truck out of the garage. While Fanny does drive a truck, the use of the word *trocona* is a combination of a borrowing with an augmentative suffix. In Spanish the standard word for ‘truck’ is *camioneta*; however, Fanny and Vania use the borrowing *troca*, which is the word ‘truck’ with a Hispanicized pronunciation and the feminine gender suffix –proper of the Spanish equivalent. Additionally, they add an augmentative suffix –*ona* -*onona* making the word *trocona* or *troconona* in order to emphasize that the truck is large, once more indexing Fanny’s knowledge of Spanish. Fanny also writes *garaji* following the spelling for the pronunciation of garage in Ranchero Spanish. The standard spelling and pronunciation of the word is *garaje*. The last four posts are a conversation between Fanny and Vania, in which Vania responds to the post in the manner that was intended, utilizing Ranchero Spanish with words such as *peru* for the standard *pero*, *tenes* for the standard *tienes*, *porqui* for the standard *porque*, *abtomobil* for the standard *automóvil*, *saqui* for the standard *saca*, and *garach* for the standard *garaje*. In this last example, Vania is also pronouncing the word *garage* with a Spanish accent, the way her ranchero elders pronounce it. Vania keeps the joke alive until the last post (10) but uses unmarked
Spanish to be somewhat serious about the transportation (note the use of the word *guateque* (party), a word characteristic of Cuban Spanish.

This conversation exemplifies the way in which members of the network index centrality by using language varieties in strategic ways that show them as more knowledgeable and more “Mexican” and others as more monolingual English proficient and more marginal. Although Fanny and Vania used Ranchero Spanish to communicate in this post, it was not to simply construct a ranchero identity. On the contrary, they indexed a transnational ranchero identity, joking around about the lifestyle and language (traveling on horseback rather than by car, and spelling words in a manner that represented the ranchero dialect) of their parents (some generation 1.5) and grandparents (immigrant generation). For the second generation primarily, a symbol of centrality is the command of Spanish and its regional varieties, especially those of Michoacán, the state where their parents are from, and the localized forms in their rancho of origin. Thus, as this example shows, the dynamics of language use index social position within the Cárabez social network, and within the society at large, as friends (Kati, in this case) are also included in the same dynamic. The dynamics of the family positions transnational bilinguals at the center of this network.

Paradoxically, another way the ambivalence between a transnational and non-transnational ranchero identity manifests is when members construct an identity based on perceived degree of transnationalism (more trips and more engagement with non-transnational Mexicans in Mexico). This contention is enacted first at the language level as seen in the Excerpt 22 *Sleep over*, but also where ideologies of purism and
standardization are used as triggers to evoke the color, and therefore the race/ethnic identity, of the person (darker = more Mexican; lighter = more American).

The following example is an interaction between an older second generation female (Vania) and her niece, a younger second generation female (Fanny). When Vania posts this reply to another member’s wall post, she makes a typo, which her smartphone catches and autocorrects wrongly. Her niece, Fanny, catches the error and points it out to marginalize Vania, indicating that her Spanish is not good. Vania is one of the few members whose activity on Facebook and much (roughly 70% of the time) of her everyday activity is carried out in Spanish rather than English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Susana’s wall</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“enjoying the last day of vacation – with Tita and 3 others at Café X”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Vania</strong> likes this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Vania</strong> Disfruto mucho nuestras saliendo en familia!!!</td>
<td>I very much enjoy our family outs!!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Vania</strong> *** salidas en familia ** *** family outings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> UFFFF!!! Che mala ortographia tienes guaaaay! Pero si, I have to admit it was quite a fanshi smanshi delish brunch! Best part was being with the good looking family I have, I mean cuz looks is all that matters ya know!</td>
<td>Ugh! What a bad orthography you have dumbass! But yes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Vania</strong> Me entendiaste guaaay?!?!??! Es Lo k importa, che… Guera artificial! Bahahaha…</td>
<td>You understood me dumb ass?!?!?!? Thats what matters, [d]amn artificial blondie! Bahahaha…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> Ayyyy mushos gracias por lo de guera hermosa deliciosa!!!</td>
<td>Ay! Thank you very much for calling me beautiful delicious blondie!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td><strong>Vania</strong> un mega uff para ti Guera deliciosa y apostosaaaaaa….</td>
<td>Super ugh for you delicious and stinkyyyy blondie….</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 23 "Guera artificial"
In this example, Vania’s post in post 3 contains a mistake due to her phone’s auto correction feature. Vania immediately corrects this mistake in post 4. However, Fanny catches the mistake and, in post 5, criticizes Vania’s Spanish proficiency (indexing her own centrality – more bilingual/more Mexican). Note that Fanny uses Spanish to make the criticism of Vania’s errors, but in so doing Fanny makes her own spelling mistakes by writing ortographia with a ph instead of the standard ortografía (orthography) with an f, in addition to incorrectly referring to an error in syntax as orthography. Fanny, then, switches to English to continue the conversation about enjoying family outings. Vania’s original statement had correct orthography, while Fanny’s postings did not (notice in post 5 the spelling of “che” instead of qué). Fanny’s intersentential codeswitching in post 5 here is used to mark her footing (Goffman, 1959) from Spanish as a centralized member who is acting as language police, into English, a regular interlocutor in the dialogue. However, Vania responds with pragmatic ideology (i.e. correctness does not matter as long as meaning is understood) in post 6 and indexes centrality by marginalizing her niece using color/race, calling her ‘pinche guera artificial’ – damn artificial blonde, a color desired by Mexican society to index higher social status (Fanny has dyed or highlighted her hair), but which both lack as they are a bit darker-skinned than the rest of the family. Vania utilizes the attack on color, since being blonde would index less Mexicanness (and less indigenous heritage). Thus, in post 7 Fanny does not accept the color marginalization and responds with the positive stereotype of blondes, that they are beautiful and delicious. Fanny here uses a regional pronunciation to frame this as joking (mushos instead of muchas where the /sh/ sound is associated with some traits of Michoacán Spanish), though still in contention with her cousin. Finally, in post 8, Vania
further rejects the way Fanny indexes her centrality (evoking a desired feature in Mexican culture – being of light complexion) and evokes negative a stereotype of American blondes, who she says are indeed delicious, but stinky (admirable but not desirable). Attacking each other as white blondes mirrors the rhetoric of non-transnational rancheros in reference to transnational rancheros, who classify the transnationals as Americans.

While it is clear that Vania and Fanny are joking, two important shifts occur in this Facebook conversation. The first is that the contention shifted from an ideology of purism and standardization that helps index membership as Spanish speakers and being more Mexican for using Spanish correctly, to language as an index of skin color, in the case that of lighter and darker Mexicans. The second is that Vania and Fanny suggest that there are Mexicans who are “artificial” blondes, also marking both of their identities as transnational Mexicans (and possibly true Americans), and not as blonde “wannabies” (artificial blondes who want to appear more American). Thus, this example demonstrates the contention between the network and the larger Mexican society (ambivalence between transnational U.S. Mexican and non-transnational rancheros). During one of the interviews, Susana, an older second-generation member, provides another example of how her cousins in Mexico viewed transnational members when they would visit their grandparents in Mexico.

First thing, first thing...go and see my grandmother from my dad’s side, todos apestosos pero ahí vamos. Le digo, can we go and take a shower, please? and, ‘no we gonna see your grandmother’. So, Oh Lord I would just pray that nobody would be there just my grandmother. Yeah, but it’s easy, too, I mean because you will just see, all this Illinoid (sic.) truck going to the city Michoacán and then, us in our clothes so everybody knew that, los güeros o los gringos are coming. Siempre gringos. Si, la
güera. I don’t know if I’m not there I’m not a Mexican, no pero I guess it just the native that they put to us, and if we do a party, Ah los gringos van a ayudar a pagar la musica, o los gringos van a hacer eso.

First thing, first thing... go and see my grandmother from my dad’s side, everyone stinky but there we go. I tell him [father], ‘can we go and take a shower, please?’ and, ‘no we gonna see your grandmother’. So, Oh Lord I would just pray that nobody would be there just my grandmother. Yeah, but it’s easy, too, I mean because you will just see, all this Illinois truck going to the city Michoacán and then, us in our clothes so everybody knew that, the whites or the gringos are coming. Always gringos. Yes, the blonde. I don’t know if I’m not there I’m not a Mexican, no but I guess it just the native [Mexicans] that they put to us, and if we do a party, ‘Ah the gringos will help pay for music, or the gringos will do that [something].

In her quote, Susana explains that non-transnational Mexican relatives view transnational members of the network as completely different from themselves; not even a little Mexican. Susana explains that non-transnational family members use remarks about color (güeros - whites) to index an American way of dressing and acting. Non-transnational family members also used words such as “gringo” to classify transnational members in the same category as white European Americans. Gringo also carries the connotation that transnationals are the ones with the economic power (or have money – dollars) to pay for certain needs the larger social network has when making parties. Thus, the division between non-transnational Mexicans and transnational Mexicans is also created to some extent from the Mexican side, in addition to from the U.S. side.

The following dialogue demonstrates how members construct identities in relation to others in the network (they are all transnational U.S. Mexican rancheros). However, members of the network are often rejected and criticized for their attempt to centralize themselves, paradoxically as closer, but not the same as, non-transnational rancheros. The contention between centrality and marginalization also occurs as a monitoring
among members of the transnational community. If members consider that someone in
their network is claiming too much Mexicanness or knowledge of Spanish, they often
contest the claim. This happens among members with approximately the same level of
bilingualism, and it happens with regard to language, but also with other aspects of
identity as can be seen in sections 6.3 and 6.4 in this chapter. For instance, in the
following Facebook conversation (6.3 *Imboxeo*) Fanny, who lived in Mexico for three
years and visits Mexico often, typically uses and manipulates Spanish to joke and to
construct *relajo* (a joking activity; see Farr, 2006). However, in this segment, her cousin
Margo, a fluent bilingual who also lived in Mexico for a year, does not accept Fanny’s
display of Mexicanness, and instead interprets Fanny’s use of language with a negative
stereotype of Mexicans (e.g. with the negative meaning of *paisa*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Margo’s post in Fanny’s wall: “u going to tht babyshower tday?”</th>
<th>you going to that baby shower today?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> I think so.. Tu?</td>
<td>I think so.. you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Margo</strong> gimme ur # foo</td>
<td>Give me your number fool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> Horita te lo imboxeo</td>
<td>I’ll inbox it to you right away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Margo</strong> OMG ur so beanerish!! lol “imboxeo” (que mamadas)</td>
<td>OMG you are so beanerish!! lol “imboxeo” (how stupid [vulgar])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Fanny</strong> Ooh chet ap! Lol</td>
<td>Oh shut up! Lol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 24 "Imboxeo"

In this dialogue, Margo begins the conversation in English to which Fanny
replies, codeswitching from English to Spanish—a common practice or a *habitus*
(Bourdieu, 1977) that does not necessarily indicate a change of *footing* or index anything
in particular (Fought, 2004). In post 3, Margo replies using some textese (e.g. ‘ur’ for
‘your’ and # for ‘number’) and AAVE feature (e.g. ‘gimme’ for ‘give me’), to which
Fanny replies with a combination of standard Mexican Spanish and Ranchero Spanish. In post 4, Fanny uses the Ranchero Spanish word *horita* for the standard *ahorita* (right away), and the borrowing *imboxeo* (for the verb ‘to inbox’, meaning to deliver a private message in a person’s inbox on Facebook). By writing the word *imboxeo*, Fanny follows the morphological rules in Spanish that require a letter _m_ before the letter _b_. Additionally, the morphological change also reflects the phonological rule in Spanish stating that “nasals take a bilabial place of articulation before bilabial consonants” (Hualde, 2005, p. 46) such as in /imboxeo/. In post 5 Margo rejects Fanny’s use of Spanish (legitimate since the borrowing *imboxeo* is a borrowing that follows), and she catalogues it as being too Mexican (non-transnational) by using the stereotypical word *beanerish*. *Beaner* is a derogatory term used to refer to Mexicans, regardless of whether they are illegal or U.S. citizens; the word implies that the individual is uneducated, poor, and eats beans (see nuances for the use of this word in Urbandictioary.com). Margo claims her own identity as bilingual and transnational, as she criticizes other non-fluent English speaking Mexicans who utilize borrowings (such as Fanny is doing in this case). Margo is indirectly telling Fanny that she (Fanny) is not “that” type of Mexican (non-transnational, non-bilingual) by expressing the use with “*que mamadas*” (for ‘how stupid’ in vulgar terms); hence, for Margo, the language Fanny should use is non-Anglicized Spanish, or just English, to mark her identity as an educated transnational woman. However, in post 6, Fanny rejects that assigned identity and chooses to write the command ‘shut up’ with spelling that represents a Spanish accent in English “*chet ap*” in order to index a Mexican identity and retain her centrality by indexing her bilingual proficiency.
Another place in the network where these identities (transnational U.S. Mexican and non-transnational rancheros) are in contention can be found between younger and older members of the second-generation, the latter being more transnational in the sense that they return to Mexico more often and work, have houses, or businesses there. Unlike older members of the second generation, younger members usually complain in several postings on Facebook about younger members’ perceived “accent” in English. Three of young second-generation members, at least (Eduardo, Margo, and Nara), have expressed surprise and discomfort several times, either during interviews or at family parties, when other non-network members point out that they have an accent in English. Margo and Nara have actually posted when someone told them they have an accent in English. Not surprisingly, a discussion of accent results in a discussion about skin color, making it a subject of contention. Excerpt 25 “I have an accent” is one example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Margo’s wall post</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“So apparently i have an accent…”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 people like this.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Friend 1 paisa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Friend 2 yeah you do but it’s a Chicago accent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uncle its ok that prubs that ur not white!!!!</td>
<td>it’s ok that proves that you are not white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Friend 3 U kidding Right?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Uncle ju r mexicana</td>
<td>you are mexicana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 25 "I have an accent"

In this conversation, a classmate told Margo that she has an accent in English. While neither Margo nor any of her cousins said during informal gatherings or interviews that the accent made them feel ashamed of their Mexican and ranchero backgrounds, the
comment that someone thought they had an accent did make them wonder why they had a Mexican accent (or were perceived to have one), since they were born and raised in Chicago. In the example above, Margo does not show much emotion, but the word “apparently” indexes that she did not consider herself to have an accent, being mostly ‘American’ for not going to Mexico often (as she said repeatedly during interviews and informal talks). However, in post 5, Margo’s uncle (generation 1.5) states that having an accent only proves that Margo is not white (American). In doing so, Margo’s uncle uses language to index skin color, constructing his own and his niece’s identity as that of Mexicans living in the U.S., and different from whites. In post 7, Margo’s uncle goes beyond this, and, using Spanish phonology to represent a Spanish accented ‘you’ /ju/, he reminds his niece that she is Mexican, while also indexing his own Mexican identity.

During an interview, Eduardo described a similar experience. Eduardo explained that while playing a video game online (online gaming platforms allow users to listen and talk to participants, tweet, or Facebook while they are logged in; additionally, these platforms allow gamers to enter and exit without concluding a game) with people from other states and countries, someone had stopped the game just to ask him whether he was Mexican. Eduardo did not remember what he had said, nor how he had said it, that revealed what he termed “who he is.” Eduardo then remembers going to a family party that weekend and asking all the young second generation members whether he or they had accents. For some younger members of the network, having an accent did not represent a source of either shame or pride in their heritage; however, for others, having an accent in English was a source of conflict between their Mexican ethnic identity (tied to non-transnational Mexicans and Mexico) and their American (or transnational
Mexican) identity. When someone points out their accents in English, it can be interpreted as questioning their American identity, and perhaps categorizing them as less transnational in the sense that they may not be as fully integrated into either society, as they believe their parents (generation 1.5) to be.

The focus of this section was the discussion of how members construct their identities through language use, especially in relation to the language ideologies of purism and standardization. Members use different features of English and Spanish to shift between being transnational or non-transnational, as these categories are multivalent, each of them having both positive and negative values attached to them. However, it is important to mention that the context in which members live is heavily influenced by other English speakers of Mexican-origin, as well as by recently arrived immigrants, exposing members to speakers of multiple varieties of Spanish and English in their daily interactions at school, businesses, banks, and work.

6.3 Constructing a Non-indigenous Identity

One of the core characteristics of ranchero identity is that it is constructed as being non-indigenous. Studies such as Farr (2006) on early immigrant and transnational rancheros demonstrated that ranchero societies constantly disengage from an indigenous identity. In fact this was precisely one of the purposes of Farr’s (2006) book: to explain that not all Mexicans are, nor do they conceive themselves to be, mestizos (people with mixed Spanish and indigenous blood) of predominantly indigenous background. This is not to say that rancheros do not have any indigenous blood or heritage. They are mestizos in the strictest sense of the label, but in terms of culture, language and color, they are
predominantly different from other Mexican groups, e.g., indigenous Mexicans or urban Mexicans. Ranchero ways of speaking (Farr, 2006), which examples here can demonstrate, illustrate *franqueza* (candid language), *relajo* (an extended joking activity), and *respeto* (appropriate language of respect for one another). It is not surprising that the younger generations have inherited this identity as rancheros and index it when they are in contention about their language knowledge and use, either face to face or on Facebook. Another way members of the network index their identities of transnational U.S. Mexicans is by rejecting an indigenous identity. Members favor their transnational (or even the ranchero) identity by preferring Spanish-English bilingualism over Spanish-P’urhépecha [Tarascan] bilingualism.

P’urhépecha is the language of the indigenous of their region of origin. Due to government and institutional rhetoric that bolsters pride in Mexico’s three cultural backgrounds (Spanish, indigenous, and African), generation 1.5 and 2 members have become more accepting of an indigenous heritage than their parents were. Tita has even stated her desire to learn P’urhépecha. Although younger generation members are more accepting of a rhetoric that highlights their indigenous background and even they themselves use such rhetoric, younger members continue to construct their identities in opposition to an indigenous identity, just as the older generations have historically done.

As explained in section 6.2 above, transnational U.S. identity and ranchero Mexican identity are in contention within the Cárabez social network. However, these two identities are in contention at the level of Mexican society in the rancho, where more central transnational members of the Cárabez social network attempt to index centrality in the larger network by displaying their knowledge of Spanish. These displays of
Spanish by network members are negatively branded by non-transnational ranchero Mexicans in the rancho, much as more Spanish-proficient members do in Chicago to less Spanish-proficient members in the Cárbabez social network. For younger generations, speaking Spanish is an index of membership in the network and of Mexicanness. On the contrary, from the Mexican society perspective, speaking English is a symbol of power (as it was for older members of the network). Thus, in a Mexican society context, English is a source of status among younger members in relation to their non-transnational counterparts in Mexico. In contrast, for younger generations (transnational and non-transnational rancheros alike) speaking P’urhépecha is not desired, and the only value they give to this ability is negative. Speaking P’urhépecha is equal to being an indigenous person. Thus, telling someone he or she speaks P’urhépecha is derogatory and thus undesirable.

The following example (Excerpt 6.5 Amzombia) is a Facebook conversation between an older second-generation male (Marcos), who has been living in Mexico for the past year (but who was born, grew up, and studied in the U.S. until his junior year in college), and a distant relative and friend from Mexico (Caro). Marcos updated his status with a quote he had heard that day. The quote has serious meaning, which Caro points out is too serious for Marcos, and jokingly asks him to calm down. A conversation framed as *relajo* commences with plays on words to complement each other’s sequences (note use of *get stuck*). The creative language used by both parties places Marcos and Caro both as fluent uses of Spanish. It perhaps gives Marcos authenticity in the larger Mexican society for his command of Spanish and his ability to joke. In other words, Marcos and Caro are equals; they both are ranchero Mexicans talking to each other until Marcos misspells...
insomnia in Spanish. Marcos’ spelling mistake brings into question his Spanish ability; thus by laughing at his mistake Caro questions Marcos’ ranchero identity. As a response, Marcos imputes indigenous identity to her. Marcos puts Caro down by promising to make fun of her when he hears her speak Tarascan (the indigenous language of the P’urhepecha), which she does not know at all. Notice how the ideology of language purism invokes a hierarchy of languages based on a hierarchy of peoples. Additionally, a preference for English-Spanish bilingualism over Spanish-Tarascan bilingualism indexes a more transnational identity.

Excerpt 26 "Amzombia"
This Facebook conversation exemplifies two aspects of language ideologies and identity. First, there is the marginalization of Marcos due to language (Marcos is made fun of for not mastering Spanish, implying he is not Mexican enough). Second, the hierarchy of language that Marcos alludes to in regards to English and the indigenous language is evident, favoring knowledge of English over knowledge of the indigenous language. Regarding marginalization, both members have equal social position in the network when the conversation starts. The post, made in English, attracts a response from Caro, in Spanish. In post 3, Caro makes fun of the “wisdom” quote Marcos posts on the wall, implying in a joking manner (as evidenced by the smiley symbol), that it is too serious for him. In post 4, Marcos justifies why he posted that quote, saying “se me pegó” (it got stuck in my head), and he rejects the joke by telling Caro to go to sleep as a way to tell her to be quiet or stop joking (but still joking himself). Caro initiates relajo (joking talk that uses artful word play, Farr 2006) by playing with the word pegar (to stick), telling him that the only thing that stuck to Marcos is madness (la loquera). In posts 7 and 8, Caro responds to Marcos’ suggestion that she go to sleep by explaining she still has some homework to do and asks why he is still awake. Carrying on the relajo, Marcos repeats the word “pegar” (to stick) to indicate that what got stuck to him was insomnia (misspelled as amzombia); however, Marcos knows he is not spelling the word correctly and immediately says “however it is said,” indicating his focus on the relajo rather than language accuracy. However, Caro does not let this mistake pass as she laughs and makes fun of the word in post 10 and teases Marcos, saying it would have been better expressed in English. In doing this, Caro makes evident the status she is giving Marcos as a better
English speaker and even as a non-Mexican due to his lack of Spanish proficiency. What is not clear is whether she asked Marcos to use English because she knows that insomnia is a homograph cognate in Spanish and English or just because she wanted to make evident that Marcos is not a “real Mexican.” The spelling mistake by Marcos causes laughter by his cousin, as it is a spelling that no minimally educated native speaker of Spanish would make. Caro thus rejects him as a “legitimate” speaker of Spanish (his lack of literacy skills contests this), and places him as an English speaker, thus less Mexican than she is. Marcos does not welcome this distinction, in post 11, where he calls Caro “mala” (bad one or mean). More importantly, Marcos also tries to make fun of Caro by saying that he will laugh when he hears her speak Tarascan.

Marcos’ hierarchy of languages shows in post 11. Marcos seems to reject the idea of deficient English-Spanish bilinguals who have to resort to English to be understood. Marcos knows well that his erroneous use of amzombia could easily be understood as meaning insomnia, and believes it is an unkind move of Caro to make fun of him as she did. By telling her that he will laugh when he hears her speak Tarascan, Marcos alludes to two ideas: one that bilingual speakers will do the best they can to communicate in both languages, even if it is not to perfection, and second, that English-Spanish bilingualism is better (more important/powerful/useful) than Tarascan-Spanish bilingualism. This can be interpreted as Marcos “putting down” Caro, since she does not actually speak any Tarascan. Although Marcos does not speak Tarascan either, he is putting Caro down by assuming she is more likely to know Tarascan, as Tarascan is a low status Mexican language compared to English is higher status U.S. language. Marcos’ use of the word Tarascan indexes the difference in status, not only between the languages, but between
Caro and him. Marcos is implying that Spanish-English bilingualism is better than Spanish-Tarascan bilingualism. A related inference from this is that knowledge of Tarascan is usually equated with indigenous identity. Thus uses Spanish-Tarascan bilingualism to offend his cousin, essentially calling her indigenous. Using indigenous language as offense is affirmed by Caro’s continued laughing in post 12, and then by her switch to other topics (the tickets) using intersentential codeswitching to index her English-Spanish bilingualism, even if it is limited.

Indigenous Mexicans are at the bottom of the pyramid when it comes to social status in Mexico, in spite of institutional campaigns presenting them as the “true” Mexicans. They are below non-indigenous rancheros in status, even though rancheros themselves are below urban and more educated Mexicans in status. The low status of indigenous identity is also indexed in posts in which members explicitly make fun of the indigenous (e.g. in one post, someone uploaded a picture of an indigenous woman with an iPhone taking a picture of herself in a bathroom mirror; the responses included over 17 comments making fun of her appearance, the perceived mismatch of technology with the indigenous image, or joking about wanting to “friend” this person on Facebook or become a fan). Members also disclaim any indigenous heritage, as in the following case in which Nara, a second-generation female, does not know the meaning of the word coladera (strainer). Nara is scolded by her Mexican-origin friends for her ignorance, and one of the ways one friend criticizes her is by calling her “indioranta” a play on words that merges the word indio (indigenous)+ ignorant (ignorant) + the suffix –a to indicate female gender. Nara does not like this label and responds “no soy india” (I am not indigenous). All of this indexes member views of the indigenous as being even more
uneducated than rancheros are perceived to be by urban Mexicans. Nara’s example is particularly noteworthy, since such negative references to the indigenous are almost always made by women, who on other occasions paradoxically refer to their own indigenous heritage as a way to index themselves as more Mexican; this is in contrast to male members of the network, who were never observed to invoke indigenous heritage as a positive self-reference, as explained in Chapter 4.


The previous section showed how transnationals use English-Spanish bilingualism to construct both their non-indigenous ranchero identity and their identity as transnational Mexicans. However, sometimes members of the network construct identities evoking an indigenous heritage. In most cases, members’ posts evoke the heritage even if it is only by alluding to government rhetoric that praises Michoacán for being a region where the P’urhépecha are numerous. A contention arises when members of the network evoke an indigenous identity in conversation with other people of the larger Mexican community who do speak some Tarascan. Such individuals, in turn, mark members of the Cárabez social network (who do not speak any Tarascan, other than borrowed words referencing food and other items) as being less Mexican. This section discusses first how some members (all female) display a Mexican identity that is completely linked with an indigenous identity. Later this section will explore how members of the larger society contest this displayed indigenous Mexican identity in terms of indigenous language knowledge and use.
The ‘About me’ page on Facebook of each member of the network provides an idea of the identities they want to display. For instance, 11 out of the 14 focal members followed on Facebook state that they are from “San Juanico, Michoacán,” while the other three only state that they ‘live’ in Chicago, Il, not that they are from there. Identifying themselves with the place of origin of their parents is not an uncommon practice among transnational Mexican-origin individuals in the U.S. (Cornelius et al., 2009; Smith, 2006), as it marks their roots and allows them to find affinity in that way. Focal members also show affinity to their parents’ place of origin through frequent visits to their ranchos.

As Fabián, a one young second generation male, explained, the first question after meeting someone who claims to be Mexican is typically “where are you from?” and the expected answer is the name of a state in Mexico, especially Michoacán, Guanajuato, or Jalisco. Thus, his of identity as someone who is from San Juanico, Michoacán, is strong. However, unlike older generations who have lived and resided in Mexico for longer periods of time, younger generation members who have not done so (some have, but have gone to school while there), fall into the school view of race/ethnicity and the stereotyped notion of Mexico that non-Mexican origin U.S. communities have of them, which is that there is a high degree of indigenous heritage among all Mexicans. Therefore, one of the identities that some females display and express pride in is an imagined indigenous heritage. It is imagined because the members of the Cárabez social network do not actually have significant indigenous ancestry and also because this view is not adopted by members of the same age who spend more time in Mexico, nor is it expressed by any of the male members of the network.
Due to the rancho’s proximity to a primarily indigenous town, members of this network have seen and even interacted with P’urhépecha (Tarascan) people. Some generation 1.5 and second generation individuals’ interaction with them has been limited, since these members have never resided in Mexico for long periods of time. However, older and younger generations alike (mostly males) have primarily interacted with P’urhépecha because of business, either to sell/buy goods or to work together in the avocado orchards. There is one instance of a first-generation woman and her husband in the Cárabez social network becoming godparents of a family of six indigenous who live in conditions of extreme poverty, and because of her very strong Catholic upbringing, she has taken on the task of providing for the indigenous family (even going so far as to purchase some land so that they could build a house). This is an isolated case in the Cárabez social network. Most of the attitudes displayed by members are of distancing and differentiating themselves from the indigenous. For instance, Susana and Vania often say they have seen Tarascans (due to her parents being godparents of the indigenous family), but never interacted with them. On other occasions, Maru, Margo and Anie, who share a darker skin color than that of their cousins, have reported that as children, if they were to visit Mexico and drive past an indigenous town, their family members would tease them by telling them to hide and would cover them up, saying that if the indigenous saw them, they would take them back (implying that the darker-skinned children were indigenous). With these taunts, members of the network index the family’s non-indigenous ideologies and identities. Most members of the Cárabez social network tend to be very light-skinned, to the point that many of them have told me of instances in which other Mexican-origin or Latinos in the U.S. could not believe they were Mexican, much less
that they could speak Spanish, even if they were already communicating in Spanish.
During interviews, Maru, one of the darkest-skinned members of the network, explained
that she was always very proud to be dark and have long black hair in a thick braid. Maru
is proud of her heritage and thinks that her physiognomy and color, along with the fact
that her Spanish is among the most fluent of the network (she lived in Mexico for 4 years,
3 as a child and 1 as a university student) and characterizes her as “more Mexican”, and
thus more central in the network.

Additionally, it is common at Mexican festivals in the U.S. to see that traditional
typical folkloric dances, especially from Jalisco, although there are some from
Michoacán, include the dances of the P’urhépecha. Thus, as a way to embrace their
ethnic identity as Mexicans, some female members of the network also embrace the
tradition of dancing or admiring these dances, talking about them and expressing pride in
them, even though at a personal level they do not identify with the dances (except
perhaps with those from Jalisco, which use big colorful skirts and is typical of Mexican
and Mexican-American folklore dances in the U.S.). Therefore, women, especially,
sometimes dress in guanengas (embroidered blouses made by the P’urhépecha), part of
the typical dress of the P’urhépecha, and every time they go to Mexico they buy not only
blouses but also earrings and other accessories for themselves and for their female
children. During a birthday party, Mila, a third generation toddler, was wearing an entire
outfit from a P’urhépecha town that her grandparents had brought from their recent stay
in Mexico. When asked about the blouse, the grandmother replied with pride that the
outfit was “authentic Mexican” and that it looked beautiful on her daughter because of
her skin color (brown, and darker than most in the family). Interestingly, this family is the
one that speaks perhaps the least Spanish and is regarded by most in the network as being the “most American”, since the father learned English quickly, married an American woman of Texan origin, and the children speak very little, if any, Spanish (see the example of Lety in Excerpt 16 How long did it take you? in Chapter 5).

Men do not discuss an indigenous heritage as the women do, nor do they dress or buy artifacts from indigenous Mexicans; however, men treat indigenous as the Other by only interacting with them as tourists. For example, during my field work in Mexico, one older second generation male took his sister, her daughter, and me (the researcher) for breakfast one day, lunch another, and early supper to various indigenous towns to eat. Yet another day, he took us to different places that sold good food (all indigenous) and tried to convince us to get some well-known drinks and dishes from P’urhépecha establishments. In none of these trips did older members interact with any of the indigenous other than to bargain a price or ask them to explain to the researcher what they were doing. Many male members of the network have noted that their relations with the indigenous are now better than they were when they first migrated to the U.S. from the rancho, but they did not elaborate much as to how or why. However, this is perhaps due to their migration to the U.S., rather than to improved relations.

Younger generations have generally adopted the ideology of Mexico being a mestizo culture with an indigenous heritage for the following reasons: 1) a combination of proximity between the rancho and indigenous towns and a desire to construct a Mexican identity recognized by other Mexican-origin U.S. people and other Latinos, 2) an idealized or stereotyped view of Mexico in both Mexican and U.S. schools and mass media (e.g. Aztec team is the nickname for the National Soccer team in Mexico) and 3)
the constant rhetoric by the Mexican government and other institutions with the message that Mexico is proud of its three roots (indigenous, Spanish, and African). Current revitalization programs, funding and subsidies for indigenous towns, as well as the privileged place that many anthropologists and sociologists give the indigenous as the subjects of study (Farr, 2006) demonstrate the rhetoric proposed in the third reason. Because indigenous Mexicans are often seen as the ‘authentic’ Mexicans, little research has focused on non-indigenous (ranchero) Mexicans (Farr, 2006).

On Facebook, the numerous posts female members write about their “indigenous heritage” demonstrate this mestizo ideology and adopted rhetoric. For example, on one occasion Fanny posted on her wall: “India Tarasca” (Tarascan Indian) a post that did not receive any response posts from her family members but that gained the “like” of at least 4. Later in the year, she posted “Como extranho mi tierra Tarasca. Sigh...” (How I miss my Tarascan land), which 7 people “liked” and to which 5 responded with expressions of agreement or showing off that they had just returned from a visit to Michoacán. In both of these occasions, the initial reference directly referred to an indigenous identity, but the responses did not. When asked, Fanny commented that she wrote these posts because she felt so proud of her rancho, her origins, that she wanted to go back and live there, and “porque me nace” (I feel like saying it at the moment). Many second-generation members make similar comments about missing Michoacán. In a way, members are echoing their parents’ or grandparents’ desires in these statements, because they are not, in most cases, ever planning to really return to Mexico. Thus, making statements about pride in a Tarascan land and missing the rancho are rhetorical, since they are not serious about ever moving back to Mexico. Only in two cases (Marcos and Raúl) have members in fact
already returned to live in the rancho. Although, in one other case, another member (Fabián) has made serious plans to return to Mexico as soon as he finishes studying.

In other instances, a reference particularly to the P’urhépecha or Tarascans is not obvious. Instead, members make reference to their skin color (indirectly indexing some indigenous heritage), and in some cases references are made to indigenous heritages that are not necessarily P’urhépecha. For example, one Halloween, Annie decided that she was going to dress as Pocahontas due to her dark skin color (as she explained to the researcher). When Annie posted the photos on Facebook, her sister Nara and other friends made comments on how good she looked, especially because the outfit suited her so well with her dark skin. She felt so proud and accomplished that she texted me a photo. Less obvious connections to indigenous heritage are made when posts contain pictures of the members, their children, or nephews and nieces with comments such as “I love the color of my skin” (a photo in which Vania, who has darker skin, posed with her light-skinned cousins). The responses to the comment “I love the color of my skin” all referred to Vania’s skin color, which many considered “beautiful.” Vania wrote the post in English (not her preferred language of communication) for a U.S. audience (in Mexico, light skin is preferred). Another example is comments such as “My nephew, chulada de maíz prieto” (My nephew, a beautiful dark ear of corn, which sounds more poetic in Spanish). This last comment received 9 likes from family members, and it is important because not only is it talking about dark skin color in a favorable manner, but it also identifies corn as a staple signature of Mexican identity: corn is even called the “blood” of indigenous populations (Sandstrom, 1992), which echoes books and articles of scholars who have studied other indigenous Mexicans.
6.5 Claims of Indigenous Identity Contested

The network’s displays of indigenous identity demonstrated that members have adopted the stereotypical views propagated by Mexican governments and Mexican-origin groups in the U.S., which praise an indigenous heritage. People in the U.S. stereotype Mexico as indigenous, and this ideology is reflected in books and celebrations. Therefore, stereotypes equate Mexican with a positive view of indigenous, partly due to the efforts by the Mexican government in their rhetoric and revitalization programs. However, ranchero heritage distinguishes itself from indigenous Mexicans as the indigenous are seen as at the bottom of Mexican society. Younger second-generation members thus are conflicted between being a more ‘real’ Mexican with an indigenous heritage and holding onto their cultural and historic identity as rancheros who separate themselves from the indigenous.

Thus, members often have the task of negotiating with these two identities, and they do so in contexts in which a member of the larger Mexican society who is not part of their network in the U.S questions their evoked indigenous identity. In the excerpt below, the ideology presented is one of indexing affinity to a particular identity, i.e ranchero identity, but supporting it with language knowledge and use, as shown in the Excerpt 27 Ando bien huichu. When a more knowledgeable person challenges the indigenous ideology, identities begin a negotiation process. Note that network members use of P’urhépecha words do not reflect the standard pronunciation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vania’s wall</td>
<td>thinking of my beautiful rancho in Michoacan!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 people like this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tita Ya [sic.] también!</td>
<td>Me too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vania quiero ir para las fiestas pero no ay $$ :();</td>
<td>I want to go to the Fiestas but there is no $$ ;(</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Martín (Friend) Y yo en las d michoacan !!!!</td>
<td>And me [thinking of] Michoacan women!!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vania Ay cosas BUENAS en Michoacan jajajaja…. Pinche Martín!</td>
<td>There are GOOD things [play on words meaning good women] in Michoacan hahaha…. Dumb ass Martín!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Martín Rebuenas las tarascas!!!!!!</td>
<td>So-good those Tarascan women!!!!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Vania Puro TARASCO papa!!!</td>
<td>Pure TARASCAN daddy!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tita Woo!!! 100% calidad!</td>
<td>Woo!!! 100% quality!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Martín I like a ware pa que me haga choskutas bien ricas</td>
<td>I like a guare [indigenous woman] so that she cooks delicious choskutas [tortillas, standard P’urhépecha ichuskutas] for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Martín ando bien huichu!!!!!!!</td>
<td>I’m feeling so huichu [dog, standard P’urhépecha vichu]!!!!!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Vania No ay nada mejor que unas buenas Chuscutas en el fogon y un buen aguacate para acompanarlas!</td>
<td>There is nothing more than some good Chuscutas in the bonfire and a good avocado to go with it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Martín y charanda pa pistear</td>
<td>And charanda [a type of alcoholic beverage distilled from sugar cane widely known outside of Michoacán region as aguardiente] to drink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Vania No quieres aguamiel?</td>
<td>Don’t you want aguamiel (pre-fermented juice from maguey [a plant in the agave family]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Martín En churení</td>
<td>At churení [dusk; churekua is the word for ‘night’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Vania Que es churení, Martín? Traduceme! Lol</td>
<td>What is churení, Martín? Translate it for me! Lol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Gerardo (Friend) Yo te digo vania!!! Estudie purepecha en la universidad de Morelia</td>
<td>I tell you vania!!! I studied Purepecha in the University of Morelia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Martín K en la noche la miel jahA</td>
<td>That at night the [agua]miel hahA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 27 "Ando bien huichu"
Vania begins a conversation posting that she is thinking of her rancho. Tita, her niece, joins this Facebook conversation about longing for the rancho. However, an argument starts unfolding when in post 5, Martín responds to the wall post in post 3 about thinking of Michoacán, but in his case he refers to the women in Michoacán. Following the play on words, Vania tells Martín that there are good things in Michoacán, to which Martín says, what is good are the Tarascan women, meaning they are beautiful in a sexual way (post 7). Following a consensus that everything in Michoacán is good, Vania and Tita state that there is 100% pure Tarascan in Michoacán and that it is high quality (posts 8 and 9), co-constructing an indigenous identity to index more Mexicanness.
Martín, following his joke about liking Tarascan women notes that he likes a *guare* (a term for an indigenous P’urhépecha woman, commonly used by rancheros in Mexico). Martín says he wants a *guare* to cook for him. This move not only indexes gender roles (women for the kitchen), but also lays out grounds for Martín to later refer to food and drink as aspects they enjoy from indigenous people, as many males in the Cárabez social network do, but that in no way signal any affiliation with them. Martín then explains that he is *huichu* (grumpy as a dog for not having eaten) but codeswitches from English to Spanish to P’urhépecha (posts 10 and 11). By codeswitching, Martín indexes more Mexicananness than Vania or Tita because he is now displaying his knowledge of indigenous food and language, two important aspects of culture. From post 12 to 14 Vania alternates with Martín, also displaying her knowledge of indigenous food. Vania attempts to construct the same identity as Martín; however, she ignores Martín’s assertion that he is feeling *huichu*. Subsequently, in post 13 and 15 Martín re-indexes a ranchero identity by bringing up drinking culture and Tarascan drink. Vania asks him if he wants to drink *aguamiel* instead (a sap of the maguey cactus, cousin of the agave cactus which is used for making tequila). Martín codeswitches once more to Tarascan in post 15 to say that he would drink it “*en chureni*” (at night). Thus, Martín positions himself as knowledgeable of indigenous culture and language, and Vania does not continue a frame-alignment (Goffman, 1974) with him as she was trying to do before, but instead positions herself as an outsider learning Tarascan words as she asks Martín what *chureni* means in post 16.

At this point, another friend, Gerardo, enters the conversation in post 17 and offers to translate for Vania. Note that Gerardo does not give the translation when
entering the conversation. Instead, Gerardo evokes school knowledge to bolster his credibility, indexing an ideology of language purism. Gerardo implies that the language taught in schools is better than the one learned by simply being in contact with others. In post 18, Martín translates for Vania, but she does not understand and asks him to instruct her by saying “instrúyeme” (note the Anglicized spelling, without the y in standard Spanish instruyme). Vania also begins calling Martín “Martín Valverde” (name of a famous singer). Vania’s laughs (jaja) and the use of the singer’s name index that Vania has dropped her affiliation with the indigenous and has returned to her identity of non-indigenous. Vania also sees the language (P’urhépecha) as fun, but non-essential to her identity. In post 21 she reclaims her “face” by detaching herself from a specifically indigenous Michoacán identity and instead by claiming a general Michoacán identity that is part of a culturally rich Mexican identity (“qué cultura la nuestra” - what a culture we have!), which allows her to include herself as part of the mestizo culture of all of Mexico, whose rhetoric (but not practices) places equal value to Spanish, indigenous, and African heritage. Vania then closes the conversation by thanking both friends.

This last exhortation by Vania to a rich unified rhetoric of Michoacán culture that mirrors the ideology of a generalized Mexican culture was a closing statement for the argument and negotiation: Nobody loses, everyone is Mexican and Mexican culture is so rich that it is not possible to learn it all. However, in post 22 Martín continues the conversation, contesting Vania’s monolithic statement about Mexican culture and reitering that he only claims to be from Michoacán because of the women there; he ends with a porra (cheer) to the State of Jalisco (his true state of origin). In a way, Martín, a native of the neighboring state of Jalisco, demonstrates that he knows more about
Michoacán than Vania or Tita, both of whom are (or say they are) from Michoacán, by displaying his knowledge of indigenous food and language from that state. Martín also disengages from Jalisco, his own state. By bringing Jalisco up, Martín embarrasses Vania and Tita for his superior knowledge of their state and the indigenous language. Vania does not let him “win” the competitive talk, reminding him in post 23 that without women, especially those from Michoacán, whom Martín has praised, he is “nothing”. Martín responds saying goodbye and codeswitching once more to Tarascan with the word huichu. The rest of the conversation is between Vania and Gerardo, who clarifies to her that huichu means ‘dog’ in Tarascan. Vania is then left to repeat what she has learned without being able to praise her state or her identity.

Although Vania and Tita do not directly reference their identity as tied to Tarascans at the beginning of the conversation, they index it later, after Martín responds that what is good about Michoacán is the Tarascan women. Thus, Vania and Tita begin constructing their identities based on Michoacán’s substantial P’urhépecha indigenous populations. San Juanico, Vania’s and Tita’s parents rural village of origin, belongs to a municipality situated between two municipalities with the highest percentages of P’urhépecha population, in which over 12% of the population speaks P’urhépecha (INEGI, 2004). Vania and Tita repeatedly expressed and praised their knowledge of indigenous populations during interviews and informal conversations. However, the codeswitching that Martín displays contests Vania’s and Tita’s constructed indigenous identities, which results in Vania leaving the conversation via the mode with which she begins, evoking only her rancho. Thus, if members of the network engage in presenting themselves as indigenous, they are often contested by members of the larger U.S.
Mexican society who understand the dynamics that currently exist between indigenous and non-indigenous societies in Mexico, rejecting network members’ constructed indigenous identities, thus marginalizing those members as less authentic within the larger U.S. Mexican society.

6.6 Discussion

This chapter explains how members of the Cárabez social network claim different identities in different contexts. As it is true for other individuals, members are not entirely consistent in the identities they portray. As the examples in this chapter demonstrate, members can claim a transnational U.S Mexican identity or an indigenous identity at a given time depending on the context and their interlocutors. For instance, in a private context, such as a pajama party, their identities can be those of non-ranchero or transnational U.S. Mexicans (as seen in Excerpt 22 Sleep over). In a public context that involves people outside their network (such as Mexican parties in the community, or at school events), members can claim an indigenous identity to celebrate their Mexicanness (and their mestizo heritage) with others, by wearing indigenous clothing to celebrate Mexican Independence Day (even if the clothing is not traditional to the indigenous P’urhépecha). Members exert a strong sense of Mexicanness through their posts and their discourse; however, it is not simple. While members construct a ranchero identity similar to their immigrant generation parents and grandparents, which they position as being closer to a Mexican in Mexico, members also construct a transnational identity that defines them as a “U.S. born Mexican”, indexing an identity different from their parents and grandparents (the immigrant generation) and from Mexicans in general. At the same
time, members also maintain the non-indigenous identity claimed by the immigrant generation, not mixing with other types of Mexicans and marking indigenous people as Other. Paradoxically, these same members also sometimes uphold the idea that having indigenous heritage is a characteristic of a “true” Mexican (and thus, sometimes, affiliate themselves with an indigenous heritage). This notion may be a positive response to institutional and government rhetoric. These findings demonstrate that members may display and construct different, and even conflicting, identities depending on with whom they talk and what they want to present at a given time. While men and women alike normally reject an indigenous identity, women paradoxically also embrace an indigenous identity at times, a claim that is often contested by other members who either are more familiar with indigenous languages and culture or who hold stronger prejudices against the indigenous.

These dynamics reflect the fluid, ever-changing nature of identities, which are always constructed with and in relation to others. The dynamics also suggest that different identities are available to individuals as discursive resources, which showcase different aspects of a person as needed in particular contexts. For instance, the fact that in the same conversation members of this network could construct themselves as transnational, non-transnational, Mexican-indigenous, and non-indigenous shows that identity, at any given moment, is co-constructed, may or may not be repeated, and may always be evolving.
6.6.1 Constructed vs. Given Categories

Studies of identity construction have explained that individuals negotiate identities when they are in contact with different ethnic communities (e.g. between Mayan Mexican, non-Mayan Mexican, and non-Mexican American in Whiteside, 2006; or Texan American and Mexican in González, 2001). Individuals also negotiate identities when in intraethnic communities; that is, people still negotiate identities when they are in touch with people with similar backgrounds (e.g. more and less English proficient Mexicans in Shenk, 2007; dark-colored vs. light colored Mexican in Baquedano-López, 1997). In such studies, there are cases of self-assigned or assigned identities, which often do not match the individuals’ self-perception or the perceptions they have of others. As can be seen from the data of this study, and the other studies just mentioned, people are actors (Goffman, 1981) and agents in the interactions they have with one another.

However, in cases of assigned identities, only one of the interlocutors functions as an actor, for he or she applies certain frames to interpret the world in a particular way and to see others in light of his or her own reality (Sarabia, 2007). Thus, each of the interlocutors in these interactions applies their own frames to interpret their realities and assigns a given identity to the other interlocutor (Lee et al., 2008).

Members of the Cárabez social network are often actors, for they see identities more as doing something rather than being a mere descriptor of someone. For example, Eduardo and Maru, a young second-generation male and an older second generation female, both explained that being born in the U.S. means nothing to them when all the people they interact with are Mexicans. These two members explain that they do not really know much of the American culture or interact much with it, which is why they do
not use the label “Mexican-American”, which for both would mean knowing and being part of both the Mexican culture and the American culture. They are just Mexican.

Eduardo explains:

“I don't consider the people that came in, like my dad [generation 1.5], oh I consider him more Mexican-American cause he's been here for a while, but my mom [first generation immigrant], she goes to school and everything [in the U.S.], but I consider her full Mexican. I mean that's how I feel about it, is just the way you take in the culture, that's how it is, so, it's pretty much the culture that will define how I feel cause like even if you are born here but you are not really into the American life, I’m not gonna say you are Mexican-American, I mean, because you don't even enjoy the culture so what would I consider you that.”

Eduardo compares his parents in terms of how “American” he thinks they are. However, even though they both hold U.S. citizenship and have gone to school and worked various jobs in the U.S., he considers his dad more American than his mother. While Eduardo’s father was brought to the U.S. as a child and studied through middle school in the U.S., his mother was brought up in Mexico and studied through high school in Mexico. Eduardo’s mother completed GED courses and, although she was attending a community college at the time this study was taking place, has mainly had interactions only with other Mexicans, which makes her, Eduardo asserts, more Mexican than his father is. It is their actions, as well as their interactions, that shape how Eduardo sees his parents and himself. Maru also explains:

“Nosotros nada más crecimos siendo mexicanos, porque mi mamá, aunque estábamos aquí, estábamos en una cajita donde sólo éramos mexicanos. Nunca conviviamos con amistades que no eran parientes o que no fueran mexicanos…”

We only grew up being Mexican, because my mom, although we were here [in the U.S.] we were in a little box which only had Mexicans. We never had close interactions in friendships that were not [with] relatives or that weren’t Mexicans…
Maru also expresses similar views that explain that not interacting with Americans and not acting like Americans defined their family as Mexican. Thus acting like Mexicans is just as important as speaking Spanish in order to be considered “Mexican” in members’ social network. Additionally, categories that are assigned and self-assigned are not static and can conflict with one another, but are also constantly negotiated and co-constructed, making identity a fluid, changing, and multifaceted concept.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter discusses how members of this network use language to construct their ethnic identities in relation to others. Members’ construction of these identities is influenced by language ideologies of purism, standardization, and their ideologies of bilingualism related to English-Spanish and Spanish-Tarascan pairings.

Language varieties alone do not represent identities, but are used to construct one. That is, individuals use their linguistic repertoires to construct and negotiate facets of their ethnic identity, even though this facet does not always match the language variety to which it is traditionally linked. For instance, some younger members use ranchero Spanish not to construct a ranchero identity, but to showcase their bilingualism, their Mexicanness, and their transnational identity, in contrast to their parents and grandparents, for whom a ranchero identity was assumed. English-Standard Spanish bilingualism is important, but it does not grant members more centrality within the network. It is the use of the variety of Spanish most suited to each given interaction that indexes the centrality of the individual.
Members of this network grapple with identities that sometimes conflict with one another. Whereas sometimes they construct non-indigenous identities to mark their ranchero background, they also showcase their transnationality, which they conceive to be an identity of power. These conflicting identities (that of ranchero Mexican and that of transnational U.S. Mexican) also place members into competition for centrality within their network, as well as sometimes at odds with other Mexican-origin residents in Chicago and other parts of the U.S. Concurrently, just as transnational members of the network seek to marginalize each other based on perceived relative Mexicanness, these same transnational members are marginalized (due to language knowledge and use, behavior, and appearance) by the less or non-transnational members living primarily or entirely in Mexico. However, the stereotypes propagated by both the U.S. and Mexican governments via school programs and media campaigns strongly tying Mexican identity to indigenous identity have to some degree resulted in a heightened desire for and greater praise of indigenous ties, and members often display this through clothing choices or as pride in dark skin color. What results is a complex and contradictory multidimensional identity, which simultaneously rejects indigenous culture, yet showcases an idealized version of it. In turn, other knowledgeable members of the U.S. Mexican-origin society then contest this complex and multidimensional identity.
Chapter 7: Creating a Transnational Space and Its Role in Identity Construction

7.1 Introduction: Transnational Studies

Studies on transnationalism in the past decade have been fruitful and comprehensive. They include sociologically based surveys, interviews with supplemental ethnographic components, and long-term ethnographic research (e.g. Cornelius et al., 2009; Levitt, 2001; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Louie, 2004; Smith, 2006; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010). Transnationalism studies focus on how individuals maintain connections between two countries (Levitt, 2001) and in what kinds of activities individuals engage (Levitt & Waters, 2006). In much of the transnational research a comparison is sought between immigrants and “native” groups (groups in the country of immigration) (Kasinitz et al., 2010). However, lately many studies have focused on the second generation of the transnational community and the social behavior that is maintained from earlier generations. Most recent studies in transnationalism have focused on groups settling in the United States as a result of the bracero (migrants going as manual workers to the U.S.) program (1942-1964), and have examined the coming of age of the second generation (Levitt & Waters, 2006; Smith, 2006). However, many recent studies have focused on the involvement of this second generation with their two communities: the one in the U.S. and the community in the other country. Additionally, studies have shifted interest to how the movement back and forth between the U.S. and the parents’ country
of origin has affected both the culture (e.g. in the domain of religion) and the politics of
the sending communities as well as the receiving ones (Cornelius et al., 2009; Levitt,
2001; Smith, 2006).

More recently, studies on the second generation in transnational communities
have shifted their focus to how members of this generation construct identities in relation
to the original sending communities (e.g. regarding gender roles), how they still engage
in these communities (Smith, 2006), and how the remittances transnationals send go
beyond economic value and are two directional (Levitt, 2001). Much transnational
research has been devoted to Latin-American countries due to their proximity to the U.S.,
but some have also been done with Chinese, Russian, or Indian communities, which are
also prominent immigrant groups in the U.S. Additionally, many of the studies that have
focused on Latin Americans have included Mexicans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans,
Cubans, Ecuadorans, Colombians and Peruvians. However, despite the variety, there are
still groups within such populations that have not been investigated. Studies in
transnational Mexican communities have included urban indigenous and ranchero
groups; however, most such studies have been focused on groups settled in California or
New York City, as is the case of Cornelius et al. (2009) and Smith (2006), while few are
devoted to transnationals in the Chicago area (e.g. Farr, 2006). Additionally, although all
of these studies do present a wide-ranging picture of transnational communities, they
have primarily focused on culture, community, and group identity formation. Only Farr
(2006) has centered on language and how, through language, participants form identities,
as is the focus of this study.
7.2 Definition of Transnationalism

Most books and articles define a transnational community as one which has civic, political and cultural ties, as well as participation in both countries either through individual participation (immigrants or their children) or through institutions (Cornelius et al., 2009; Levitt, 2001; Smith, 2006). Individuals who are part of a transnational community include those who migrate and travel back and forth between the two locations. Some scholars have documented through empirical findings that individuals who remain in the country of origin and do not migrate are impacted directly by transnationals and have become “transnationalized” as a result of their interactions with them (Levitt, 2001, p. 9). However, not all scholars agree that non-migrant individuals should be called transnationals, but that is still contested. Transnational practices are structural (Smith, 2009) and follow certain patterns of engagement. For instance, one pattern is that individuals who are unable to achieve social membership in the receiving community maintain stronger ties to “home” (Levitt, 2001). Another pattern is that of in addition to sending remittances, which have an economic value, there are emotional and cultural remittances for both the sender and the recipient (Levitt & Waters, 2006; Smith, 2006).

The notion of transnationalism started as a direct response to and critique of previous frameworks of adaptation, assimilation and segmented assimilation (Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Portes & Zhou, 1993). These frameworks imply that there is a single path to becoming American and that the concept of Americanness is static (Kasinitz et al., 2010). This trend is now viewed with skepticism (Levitt & Waters, 2006). Lately, some researchers view transnationalism and assimilation as
complementary but contend that the transnationalism notion cannot stand alone, since the children of transnationals do not necessarily become transnationals themselves (e.g. Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010). However, in this respect, other researchers posit that there is variation within transnationalism. As already mentioned, these researchers contend that second-generation transnationals also include the children of the first immigrants and the children of the people who never migrated but have significant contact with those who did (i.e. who have become transnationalized, Levitt, 2001). On the other hand, other researchers think that children of transnationals who simply go to visit or vacation in their parents’ country of origin participate in merely symbolic transnationalism or emotional transnationalism, if they want to visit or express longing for the idealized place their parents left (Levitt & Waters, 2006).

The current definitions of transnationals can be broad (e.g. inclusion of members who have never traveled and have become transnationalized such as in Levitt, 2001), or very specific (i.e. counting the number of times and length of stay to label a person transnational such as in the sociology surveys). Each of these definitions presupposes direct engagement with the two places, either physical through travel, or emotional through phone calls, remittances, and stories or visits from other people. The many ideas of what transnationalism is and consists of do not fit every single community, category, or group of people. However, if the concept of transnationalism is expanded to include more participants and scope, can it still be useful for analysis? The purpose of this chapter is not to advocate for another definition of transnationalism, nor to support an existing one, but to argue that all such definitions of transnationalism must now be considered in light of the ever more ubiquitous use of social media and computer
mediated communication (CMC), which some recent studies have concluded will become increasingly relevant (e.g. Smith, 2006). Social network sites such as Facebook, Skype, Twitter, and other media provide new means to maintain and strengthen the ties and practices of transnationalism. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that Facebook is a place where the Cárabez social network (a subnetwork of a larger social network of families studied by Farr, 2006) engages in transnational practices, and how their involvement with SNSs, specifically Facebook, also allows for the construction and contention of identities as members of this social network.

7.2.1 Membership: Centralization and Marginalization

As explained in Chapter 4, members of this social network relate to each other in various ways; not only are they family members who see each other constantly, but they are also co-workers, classmates, and business partners. Therefore, in their social network, as in any other, there are hierarchies and central figures (Boissevain, 1974; Milroy & Milroy, 1992; Wasserman & Faust, 1994), which do not necessarily follow the predicted pattern of simply respecting elders and males, but are organized by a combination of perceived statuses, identities, and ideologies of various members. These characteristics may be either self-ascribed (Bucholtz, 1999a) or given by other members who position themselves within the network, as I observed in fieldwork as well as from their activity on Facebook. Thus, members index centrality and/or marginalization to themselves and others, which positions them in this new social order in their network.
7.2.2 Family Ties and Transnationality

When the immigrant generation of the social network of families studied by Farr (2006) first came to the U.S., a total of seven siblings out of nine stayed, worked, and formed their own families in the U.S. Each one of these siblings had at least 3 children, many of whom now have at least two children each and a few of whom have one grandchild. In the immigrant generation, it was possible to study the social network as a single group. Members lived near one another, worked in the same places, and sent their children and sometimes grandchildren to the same schools. As the network grew, the dynamics shifted, and “in-groups” (Milroy, 1987), clusters (Boissevain, 1974), or subnetworks comprised by their children’s families began to emerge. These subnetworks, however, did not simply develop along nuclear family lines. That is, the children of one immigrant parent and their families did not automatically become their own subnetwork. Instead, some of the children of one of the nine siblings, and their families, along with some of their cousins (children of the other immigrant siblings) and their families developed close-knit ties with one another and formed a subnetwork. One of these subnetworks serves as the focal group of this study. The rest of the extended family network still communicate with each other but do not frequently attend the same social activities, work together, or study at the same schools. In some cases they do not visit each other frequently. Nonetheless, as previously stated, the extended family does maintain relatively strong ties, as most participate in the annual Family Picnic, and in certain special occasions (such as the graduation party for the first grandchild who finished college). As such, the extended family still comprises a larger social network, which actually includes multiple overlapping subnetworks.
For the present study, the observed subnetwork is referred to as the Cáarabez social network. However, it is important to note that one of the main characteristics that render centralization among the members of the Cáarabez social network is the number of ties between the families of this subnetwork and others in the larger social network studied by Farr (2006). Centralized members of the Cáarabez social network usually hang out together, work, and party together, but they also maintain close ties with members of other subnetworks in their larger family network. Additionally, they also have “close friends” (BFFs) who are family members who belong to other subnetworks and are generally on good terms with the rest. Most centralized members travel to Mexico more frequently than the rest of their subnetwork. Therefore, such members are also able to strengthen ties with those members of the larger family who reside in Mexico and never come to the U.S. All of the centralized members of the observed network live in the U.S., and even though there are members in Mexico who come to the U.S. on vacation, those living in the U.S. travel to Mexico more often and for longer periods of time. For example, centralized members living in the U.S. go to Mexico every time they have vacation (if they attend or work at schools), each time they are temporarily unemployed, or in order to conduct business. Those members living in Mexico come to the U.S. less frequently but for longer periods of time, and they mainly come for vacation and to visit family, and to lesser extent to do business. In many cases, more centralized members of the network hold dual citizenship, even among the younger second-generation members. Although such members may not have Mexican passports, they were registered as Mexican citizens either in Mexico or at the Consulate in Chicago.
Members’ transnational lifestyle has led them to keep birth certificates and records needed for school systems in the two countries as well as medical records in the two places (e.g. vaccination records). This is the case for families and individuals who in many cases have lived in Mexico for years at a time. Their involvement in communities in the two countries is also noteworthy. Members care about the wellbeing of their families as well as the places where they grow up. Thus, members are deeply involved in the community in both Chicago and in the rancho. In Chicago, they have joined and are active members (in some cases, representatives) of Casa Michoacán, an organization that belongs to FEDECMI (Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois – Federation of Michoacán Clubs in Illinois) – a non-profit organization originally founded by Mexicans from Michoacán that creates and funds educational, cultural and social projects at a bi-national level. Casa Michoacán provides members with guidance and means to take advantage of programs that help Michoacanos who reside in the U.S. and also transnationals who are involved in their community in México. One such program is 3x1 (Tres por Uno – Three for One), a Mexican government sponsored program that organized the remittances sent by families in the U.S. for city and infrastructure projects in their town in Mexico. Many times before the programs, families in the states would save and send thousands of dollars to build churches, pave streets and roads, bring electricity and running water, build schools, etc. only to find that their money was stolen or spent on low quality materials or on other projects. Thus, during the government of ex-president Vicente Fox, a program was created in which organizations such as Casa Michoacán organized members of a community in the U.S. and a designated person in the municipality in Mexico could agree on a project, and for each Mexican peso (converted
from the dollar) sent by Mexican immigrants or their children, the municipality or State
government in Mexico would donate a peso, and the Mexican federal government
another peso. This program, then, makes one peso of remittance worth three. Any project,
except for those of a religious nature, can be funded this way. This program resonates
with the activities that this network has engaged in. The first migrant family from the
rancho (who went to Kansas during the 1920s) donated the land on which the chapel was
then built (Farr, 2006) with migrant dollars. As Tita mentioned, “it is the pride of my
family.” Under this program, members of the network have worked to build a plaza and
kiosk for the town. Currently, they are in negotiations to build a healthcare center and a
cemetery, as well as a telephone station where village people will be able to communicate
with their relatives in the U.S. at no cost (using a line from the U.S.). Much
communication is already done via a radio signal due to the low cost, although this is
slowly migrating online via Skype, Google video chat, and Facebook. Younger second
generation members are being socialized to assume some of the community activities
such as building the town’s cemetery. However, until recently, members of the network
who participate in Casa Michoacán transnational programs have primarily focused on
Michoacán affairs in Chicago. Two network members (Tita and Fanny) have been
Señorita Michoacán (Miss Michoacán) in Chicago and another (Fanny) represented
FEDECMI at a national leadership conference in Boston in 2011.

7.2.3 From Traditional Respeto to Centrality

Farr (2006) discussed the age and gender-based hierarchy typical of ranchero
societies exploring the notions of reciprocity and respeto. Reciprocity is enacted mostly
in nonverbal ways, and tends be seen more in relations between families, rather than individuals. *Respeto*, on the other hand, emphasizes norms for language use, primarily between individuals, according to family, or family-like, roles. Thus, in the social order of ranchero societies, within families and publicly between individuals, gender and age organize interaction and power relations. Member’s current interaction offline and on Facebook, however, show that this traditional social order is changing.

Due to their transnationality, centralized members of the network have a “life” in both the U.S. and in Mexico. They have social roles in both societies, and many of their activities, including work, join the two places. Members refer to San Juanico as if it were a town only six hours from Chicago; they sometimes make travel plans spontaneously, if needed, in the case of a family emergency, e.g., to visit a sick family member or following the death of a loved one. Due to their transnationality, members have taken or have been given certain roles within their nuclear families and in their network, including as monitors of family events, relations, and language and culture. Not all centralized members of the network take the role of leader nor are they seen as one. For instance, some members of the network frequently organize the birthday parties and family activities; others function as the communication brokers for older network members; and others constantly monitor language and knowledge of culture among the younger members of the network (e.g. Susana, an older generation 2 female, believes it is her role to teach language and culture to her younger relatives).

The most important roles that members seem to uphold in face-to-face and on-line contexts are those that provide them with a place within the network; that is, the roles of caregivers, godparents, aunts and uncles, or responsible siblings, cousins, and friends.
Members are constantly fulfilling these roles by checking the health, status, and education, usually of younger members, asking about school progress and goals, jobs, and/or extra-curricular activities. They often listen to others, and very often provide advice. Younger members of the network also take up the roles of their older cousins, siblings, or their same-age aunts or uncles. Usually, if the member who offers the educating or advice is seen as more responsible, has attained a higher level of education, or is not regarded as a “partier,” he or she takes the role of the traditionally older members to the younger ones. Thus, it is not unusual to hear or read on Facebook a younger sibling scolding an older one for acting irresponsibly, publishing what he or she considers to be inappropriate Facebook posts/conversations, or not doing enough for the family unit or the network. These dynamics strain what traditionally has been an age hierarchy and considered the social order of respeto. As said before, these dynamics also can occur if the scolding member is considered more central than the one who is scolded, regardless of age or gender. Thus, all the respect, attention, and status traditionally given to first-borns is now passed instead to those members perceived as being more central: “more Mexican,” more influential, and more transnational. Members from the immigrant generation, all of whom are in their late 50s or 60s, now hold only a symbolic centrality. That is, everyone respects and honors them, but they do not make important decisions anymore; neither are they as influential in the decisions that will impact younger members of the network.

Daria explains a complex relationship between ability to speak Spanish and skin color. While she believes that darker skin color is an index of more Mexicanness, it is the ability to speak Spanish that grants a person a more central position in the network, even
if that person is lighter-skinned than someone else who cannot speak Spanish well. In this particular quote, Daria first explains that some of her cousins have a central position in her social network because they 1) can speak Spanish, and 2) look “darker than us” (her family is light complexioned). Regarding language competence, Daria does not refer directly to differences in Spanish proficiency between her nuclear family and the rest of the network. However, she does emphasize skin color. Then, she problematizes the centrality of a member by adding that some of her cousins are “very light” but can speak Spanish, giving the language ability a higher place to index Mexicanness than skin color. After that, she notes how if she and her sisters make a mistake speaking Spanish, more central members blame her mother and criticize the fact that she did not teach her children how to speak Spanish well. Daria then explains that such criticisms make her mother less central and influential, even though she is the oldest child among her siblings.

They are the center of the family (sic.). Because they can speak Spanish, they kind of look darker than us, I don’t know if that’s the issue, but then again I look at Itzel and she is kind of, she is very light but she can speak Spanish … But we, like if we make a mistake it falls on my mom, like you are the … because I mean they are the center but you would think my mom would be the dominant because she is the oldest.

Older members (including those who belong to the first generation) are not at the top of a ranchero hierarchy, as it used to be in traditional Mexican families, even though older members and first-born children still hold a symbolic centrality. Instead, older members have shifted roles, because older males from the immigrant generation have either returned to Mexico to work on their land or are retired, and do not take part in any major decisions for the network; older females usually fulfill the role of baby sitters for their grandchildren, and also are not involved in major decisions of the network.
7.3 Transnational Discourse

Daily communicative practices on Facebook have made it possible for researchers to study how people use their available linguistic resources to negotiate, learn, and display knowledge, ideologies and identities. Apart from opening another window to human communication and language use, Facebook allows researchers to study the multiple discourses people engage in. That is, on Facebook people are able to express themselves and discuss any topic they want, when they want, and with whomever they want. They are free to choose the privacy settings of their Facebook activity and are able to monitor who enters their conversations. For instance, in the case of the Cárabez social network, members have established a “Family Group” on Facebook. Only family members are able to access this information. Usually, as reported by members during interviews, topics covered in this private Family Group range from organizing a family reunion to dealing with family problems such as the behavior of some youth members of the network or what some perceive as an inappropriate post on Facebook. For this chapter, an analysis of their discourse was made but only on the discourse displayed for the public and not the discourse displayed in their private group (although members were willing to give researchers access to the information) as not all participants there gave written consent.

One of the salient discourses in these members’ Facebook activities is what I call transnational discourse. This is the kind of talk members use when constructing a transnational space for communication among members living in the U.S. (various neighborhoods in Chicago and other cities and states) and members living in San Juanico, Michoacán. It can be argued that this type of discourse may not always be necessarily
“transnational,” since a similar discourse is used when people are in different locations regardless of the distance. However, what makes this discourse unique is the frequent use of deictic features (e.g., references to here and there – aquí, acá, allá) and reported speech features such as “le dices” (you tell him/her). Most importantly, the topics associated with the discourse make it transnational. The topics have to be about places and things such as food that members on either side of the border need to know or have experienced first hand in order to enter the conversation. Conversations on Facebook have made it a platform for a transnational discourse and space that is being used for a number of purposes. Table 23 Frequent uses of Facebook offers a summary of some of the uses the Cárabeze social network has made of Facebook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uses of Facebook</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Planning for travel / gathering online spontaneously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Maintaining connections: Expressing missing each other, their rancho, or their house in Chicago; showing off; and fostering inclusion by tagging (labeling a post or a photo with a link to a person’s Facebook profile)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Fulfilling family roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Displaying and contesting identities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 23 Frequent uses of Facebook

In the following section, each one of the uses of Facebook will be explained and the transnational discourse created will be analyzed.

7.3.1 Planning for Travel: Gathering Online Spontaneously

The use of Facebook has allowed the members of this network to keep the close ties they already had physically in their everyday lives and travels back and forth between the U.S. and Mexico. Before computer mediated communication and social network sites,
communication was delayed due to mail and travel times, or by having to go to the nearest town to use the phones. Regarding travelling, earlier immigrant members only returned to the rancho every few years before becoming U.S. citizens; later, a few times a year they would drive back with their families to Mexico and visit other members who stayed, had returned temporarily or retired in Mexico. Now, with air transportation being less expensive than in previous years and being faster than driving, many members travel to Mexico any chance they have if they can find cheap flights. These vacations are often planned in advance and, in contrast to earlier years when all members of a nuclear family went, currently only members who choose to or can afford to make the trip go. Therefore the transformation in communication and transportation has helped these families keep in touch in different, more synchronous ways.

Facebook has changed the communication patterns in which members engage with one another. For instance, during a drive to Mexico, a member recalled that it was not easy to constantly call during the trip to make plans for after they had arrived to the rancho. However, due to members’ numerous travels along the same highways, key landmarks allowed members in Mexico to know that if a person called from the border, for example, it would take that person a certain number of hours to arrive at the rancho, an older member explained to me. With cell phones, smartphones, and Facebook, members of the network who have a Facebook account are able to inform anyone when they are planning to visit, if anything has changed, or if they will go suddenly due to a price drop in airfare or an emergency situation with the avocado orchard or health of a family member. Facebook has become a multimodal platform that allows users to easily plan and coordinate computers and smartphones for events that include members in one
or both countries. It is a place where members from anywhere can join in the conversation. Thus, spontaneous gatherings occur among members in any number of locations, both in the U.S. and Mexico, and members often plan an outing for the same evening, the upcoming weekend or for someone’s next trip to Mexico (especially if the trip is very soon). These interactions occur regardless of whether all of the members participating in the conversation will actually attend the event being planned.

Apart from planning, members create spontaneous conversations on Facebook. In these conversations, a member posts a picture of an ordinary activity that usually occurs in groups, for example, among young women, nail polishing. Thus, one posts pictures on her wall of her toenails before and after the process, and an exchange of pictures and conversation begins spontaneously if other members are online at the same time. This type of exchange typifies what I call a “gathering online.” For young men, it might be a link to a music video or a picture of a hat which sparks a conversation, with others affirming a good choice or providing links to other potential choices. Indirectly, Facebook allows members (males and females) to shop together, by posting pictures of potential purchases and soliciting feedback from others in the network.

Another practice that developed with these spontaneous gatherings online is the inclusion of members from both countries and the display of local practices in a new transnational space. Interestingly, most of the display of local practices happens from members in Mexico to an audience of members who are in the U.S. Members use Facebook’s ‘tag’ feature (which was originally intended to identify people actually appearing in a picture) to include people they miss or with whom they would prefer to be doing whatever activity is portrayed in the post. If the post is from Mexico, tagging is
used to let the U.S. members know what they are missing and provoke jealousy. In this sense Facebook is a constructed transnational space that erases political and physical borders and merges local spaces.

In example 7.1 *Unos buenos buñuelos*, one can appreciate how, through language, members construct a transnational space that erases physical and spatial borders. At the beginning of the conversation following a photo in Lola’s wall post, the language of the posts shifts to index that the members speaking are in different countries (some in Mexico, and some in the U.S.), to language that indexes that they are in the same place. Even though Lola’s initial Facebook post had the function of showing off a food her cousins in the U.S. could not have, the posts in the conversation shift from reacting to Lola’s showing off to a rhetoric about missing family members and planning for the next time U.S. cousins go to Mexico. The shift in language is what creates a transnational space on Facebook.

Lola is a cousin who lives in Mexico but spends her vacations in the U.S. Lola posts a photo on her wall. The photo is of a woman making *buñuelos* (flaky doughnuts) using a traditional portable charcoal stove used in ranchos to prepare food, possibly to be sold on the streets, holding a clay *cazuela* (casserole dish) with food and a large wooden spoon in front of a grandparent-generation ranchera woman dressed in a typical apron and clothes next to a dry palm basket and hand-embroidered cloth used to keep food warm. The picture tags 2 people in Mexico and 6 in the U.S. The caption reads: “*Unos buenos buñuelos*” (Some good *buñuelos* or flaky doughnuts). Excerpt 28 *Unos buenos buñuelos* shows the dialogue. The shaded rows indicate that the person who wrote the post is in Mexico.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lola’s wall post.</td>
<td>The picture tags 2 people in Mexico and 6 in the U.S. The caption reads: “Unos buenos buñuelos” (Some good flaky doughnuts)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 people like this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cousin 1 Aaaa yo quiero :/ Ah I want some :/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fanny Que envidia Lolis! What envy Lolis!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tita Lola… yo quiero! Lola… I want some!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lola Amigas…. ya falta menos para irnos todas juntas a comprar unos… some…. :(</td>
<td>My friends…. it won’t be too long before we can all go buy ourselves some…. :(</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Vania Muy pronto amiga…. Very soon friend….</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cousin 2 Que grosera eh yap or Que no estoy hummm What a mean person you are eh tell me why I’m not [tagged] hmmm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cousin 3 nomaz me faltho qomer buñueloz Eating buñuelos is the only thing I didn’t do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chela Me guarda comadre.. You keep some for me comadre [godmother of her daughter]..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Chabela Yue ricos buenulitos con vasito de leche y agusto What delicious buñuelitos with a glass of milk and enjoying them so much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cousin 1 Yo con atolito pa que caliente Me with atole [hot corn based beverage] to keep warm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Susana mmm que ricos se vern. Pronto! muy pronto!! Mmm how delicious they look. Soon! very soon!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 28 Unos buenos buñuelos
From posts 1-5, it is inferred that Lola posted a photo of a popular food that is well liked among members of the social network. Posts 4, 6, and 13 indicate that this is a traditional Michoacán food item, prepared in the traditional rancho way, in a location where members of the network living in the U.S. usually go to eat when visiting Mexico. Language is initially grounded in where the post is physically written (either Mexico or Chicago).

The language in the posts 2-7 and 13 index that participant members in this dialogue are in different countries. For example, “ya falta menos para irnos todas” (it won’t be too long before we can all go) in post 6 also indexes that the poster is in Mexico and the audience is not. Post 7, “muy pronto,” (very soon) implies that U.S. member will travel soon to Mexico, showing that she and Lola are not in the same place now. The language in post 7 thus indexes that the member who posted the message is in Chicago, but Lola is not. However, suddenly starting in post 8, there is this imagined “being in the other place.” The language in posts 8-12 index that participants in this conversation are pitching their language as if all were in Mexico (even if they physically are not). For example, “me guarda” (keep some for me), “que ricos con un vasito de leche” (how delicious with a glass of milk) indexes activities that members could only do if they were physically in the same location. These kinds of expressions make the communicative event mirror a face-to-face interaction. The expression in post 9 (“I only needed to eat buñuelos”) can only be said by a person who went with Lola to the food stand at the time the photo was taken, but did not eat buñuelos and possibly left early. By saying in post 9 “no más me faltó comer” (which could also be read as ‘Eating buñuelos `was the only thing I didn’t do’) the cousin is placing herself in that situation (although she was in the
U.S.) and her comment showed regret that “she was there” but “she didn’t eat that particular food”. This creates a transnational space where physical barriers are ‘erased.’ The expression in post 10 “*Me guarda comadre*” (You keep some for me *comadre* – godmother of speaker’s child) uses the present tense, which implies that Chela will go soon to pick up the food. This post can also be read in the same manner as the posts in 7 and 13, which express the fact that members will soon be able to go and do this activity together. Post 11 illustrates some expertise from the participant. Not only does she say how good the *buñuelos* are, but she also adds that a good way to eat them is with a glass of milk. Post 12 is a statement used without a verb, which in face to face communication would be what follows a speech act of asking, yielding the implicit message ‘I want it with…’, which is also a display of the members’ expertise in eating *buñuelos*.

The language in the conversation changed from simply expressing a desire (I want) (posts 3-7) to language used for ‘ordering’ food (posts 10-12). This change is especially noteworthy in the participation of Cousin 1 (posts 3 and 12). In post 3, Cousin 1 showed envy and said that “she wants” some *buñuelos*, an expression that anyone (transnational or not) could post. However, later in post 12, Cousin 1 changed her stance from just expressing a desire to be in Mexico to an “imagined” transnational space that had been created for conversation among members of the network who are in different places. Meanwhile Cousin 2, in post 7, complained that her name had not been tagged, making it known that she wanted to be included in the Facebook conversation or as part of ‘eating out’ and the future plans.

Additionally, in the case of this social network, Facebook is a place where members can “attend” family events by keeping in touch and keeping the conversation
going. So when members finally see each other in the flesh, there is not much need to
bring one another up-to-date with personal events. They do so regarding other larger and
more important events, and mainly to obtain specifics that were not communicated via
Facebook (sometimes because of the formal nature of the event, e.g. a Casa Michoacán
program) or by Skype or phone. In a brief Facebook exchange, Daria’s wall post extends
an open invitation to attend a “Tupperware party” that her mother has organized. Liz,
who has now lived in Mexico for a year, replies she will attend via her mother’s
Facebook account and “laughs” (lol). Daria then replies, “Tia come back” (aunt come
back). While short, this quick exchange on Facebook summarizes this transnational
discourse of “being in the same” place through Facebook.

7.3.2 Maintaining Connections

Another use of Facebook, which is not exclusive to transnational communities, is
to maintain connections. What makes the exchanges on Facebook transnational in nature
is that many are devoted to “longing for” people from “allá” (over there) so much. Posts
from members living in the U.S. often write to members who visit or return permanently
to Mexico “regresa /regrésate” (come back) messages. The posts for members in Mexico
who have lived in or visited the U.S. frequently but return to Mexico include “no te
vayás” (don’t leave/go) messages. Members who live permanently in the U.S. tell their
family members “do not leave/go” to Mexico. Such messages are not written unless the
family is thinking about permanently moving to Mexico.

In this network it has been very common for children to grow up living apart from
their parents and siblings for at least a period in their lives. Sometimes this is because
parents go to Mexico to take care of elders or business. Other times children are sent to live with relatives in Mexico to avoid gang problems in Chicago. Still other times, some family members go to Mexico simply because they enjoy the lifestyle there, but some older children (college age) opt to remain in the U.S. to continue studying or work for a period. Separated family members often communicate through radio signal over cell phones for quick conversations (the equivalent to texting) or use Facebook and Skype for longer, although still mostly spontaneous, exchanges. Facebook, then, is the place where members can express their feelings of missing one another and also integrate themselves into everyday conversation with others in the network.

Table 7.1 Components of Facebook “longing for” conversations outlines components of conversation exhibited in Facebook “longing for” messages (these are messages in which members express that they miss the other person). Of course, variations on these components form different patterns (see to examples 7.2 and 7.3, for instance) and other different patterns can be formed. All of these patterns have any of the 5 components listed in Table 24 The components appear in order, even though sometimes because of the participation of multiple Facebook users, they may not seem to be in order.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall post (photo, status update about mood, link to a video)</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression Camaraderie</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Through joking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to inclusion/exclusion (Acknowledging inclusion or complaining</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about not being included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. By tagging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of longing</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Statement of missing (person/ place/ activity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion with plans and promises</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Next time / We will for you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24 Components of Facebook "longing for" conversations

In the following two examples, the column to the far right contains the letters A-D that correspond to common patterns of conversation. Excerpt 29 “Pesitos” is a conversation between some family members who attended a party in Chicago and took a photograph. The member (Chela) who complained about not being included in the picture was actually in Mexico at the time the picture was taken, but when complaining about it, she made it sound as if she had just stepped out to use the restroom, in this was why she was not in the photo. Susana and Vania, her cousins in Chicago at the time, continue the joke, pretending with her, that she had been in the restroom and therefore missed being in the photo. This is yet another example of how language shifts to index that all participants are in Mexico, making Facebook their “imagined” space. The shadowed rows indicate that the member writing the post was in Mexico at the time.
Excerpt 29 “Pesitos”

Facebook discourse can be challenging to understand without knowing the offline context. Some network members frequently travel to Mexico or to the U.S. without notifying others in advance, so it is not always possible for outsiders of the network to know from which country a person wrote a post. In Excerpt 29, the conversation about the bathroom could have been understood as happening all in Chicago; however, Vania
told me that at the time of the photo, Chela was still in Mexico. Online ethnography can be challenging, but checking with members eases the process.

In Excerpt 30, Fabian updates his status as he arrives in Chicago from a trip to Mexico, briefly describing the trip, missing his horse, and stating that he already wants to go back. His aunt, who is in the U.S., then jokes with him, and his uncle, who lives in Mexico, scolds him for not saying goodbye.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fabian’s wall post: “Good trip to Chicago …Michoacan was the best like always, that horse is probly glad i came back lol but i had a really good time every time i was on him :) man I wanna go back to Michoacan already.</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 people like this.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vania The family and the horse are happy your back! LOL Welcome home….</td>
<td>1 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fabian Lol wich family ?</td>
<td>1 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Raul Ni dijiste adios carbon, miss you already broo..</td>
<td>1 D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fabian Dude! I found out I was leaving when I got home.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Raul Next time</td>
<td>6 E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 30 "Good trip to Chicago"

These two conversations are similar in several ways. First, both conversations include people in the two countries, statements of missing people or places, and closure with a plan or a promise. These conversations both also include humor, characteristic of ranchero ways of speaking (Farr, 2006). Some argue that Facebook promotes cheap entertainment (Carr et al., 2012). However, although humor is identified as a common
trend found in Facebook, the *relajo* exhibited by the network members should not be confused with cheap entertainment. The use of humor by the network is a characteristic feature of discourse among these transnational Mexican rancheros, whether face-to-face or on Facebook.

Another common conversation occurs between family members when some have been in Mexico for long periods of time. For example, a mother and a daughter constantly exchange versions of “I love you,” “I miss you,” “we’ll get back together soon,” but it is never said where the reunion will occur (in the U.S. or Mexico), and sisters living apart usually write on each other’s walls, explaining why one or the other of them has not gone to Mexico or come back from Mexico. The displays of affection, longing and missing can be all understood as part of identity construction as transnational individuals. Additionally, members foster their transnationalism with their use of phone calls, Skype, radio signals through cell phones and Internet radio station sites to keep up with each other. An indicator of the transnational community in this study is that non-transnational members, both in Mexico and in U.S., often use Chicago Radio station websites to dedicate a song or a happy birthday to their family members in the other country.

It is interesting how the “longing for” posts by members of the network index a Mexican space in their rancho. When members go to the rancho, many post that they are going “back” to their beloved rancho, its old ways and its calm way of living. However, what members say and do when they travel individually to the rancho, as opposed to when multiple members visit the rancho at the same time, is a little different. For instance, in Excerpt 31 *A white truck*, a generation 1.5 member who has been living in
Mexico for more than two months posts the message on Facebook via her eldest
daughter, Itzel. In this wall post, Itzel is representing a conversation that she and her
mother had earlier in the day. First, Itzel explains what happens (they saw a white truck),
and then she uses capital letters to indicate who is talking in the reported speech. Itzel
uses ‘MOM’ to mean that her mother is talking, and she uses ‘ME’ to represent that she is
talking. The use of dialogue (reported speech) is common in the story telling practices of
rancheros (Farr, 2006), and it is very common in members’ Facebook posts.

| 1 | Itzel’s wall post: | A |
| 2 | “me and my mom see a white truck like my tia dali’s MOM “i love see that truck it makes me think she’s here” ME “i like to think that there is an north face avalanche,a black Honda, an messed up mustang, a tahoe and a jeep..” MOM “y un carito negro that almost touches the ground” man how we miss you guys :( | |
| 3 | 4 people like this. | 1 |
| 4 | Fanny i just teared :'( please come back soon! | B |
| 5 | Itzel i know its not fun here without you guys | B |
| 6 | Fanny I know what you mean.. :/ | D |
| 7 | Itzel i miss your faces tooooo!!!!!!!!!!!! | D |
| 8 | Telma I miss talking to your mom every day too :( | E |

Excerpt 31 "A white truck"

Itzel’s claim in line 4 that her experience in Mexico is not fun if other Cárabez
social network members living in the U.S. are not there with her indexes affiliation to this
particular subnetwork and some distancing from other subnetworks she belongs to (which
are in Mexico). The level of agreement expressed with “likes” affirms that. For younger
members of the subnetwork, Mexico is mainly a place to go for vacations, not a place to
return to permanently or long term, as it is for older members of the network. Although it is common for such members to express missing those in Chicago and a desire to reunite, they do not express any nostalgia for Chicago (as a place), and only complain if they have not been updated on important events occurring among members in Chicago. Thus, there are frequent posts asking members in the U.S. to post photos of a newborn, a baby shower, a wedding, or an important birthday celebration which the members in Mexico could not attend.

However, again, there are also posts that transcend physical distance and bring members together in a single transnational space on Facebook, integrating knowledge of activities and places in both countries. The following example, Excerpt 32 *Fiestas en Tocumbo*, is an illustration. Cosme had gone to Mexico for his summer vacation and was partially sharing his party schedule (e.g. to show off what a good time he was having). Lola, a cousin in Mexico, wants to join them at their next outing and asks for the time. However, two people from the U.S. enter the conversation. One of them, Lola, suggests Cosme a particular party, but Cosme’s friend disagrees, stating that Cosme is not ready for that type of partying. Both Linda and the friend are able to enter this conversation due to their knowledge of and experience having been in the rancho and in Mexico. The shaded rows indicate that the person writing the post is in Mexico at the time he or she wrote the post:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cosme wall post: “12 días de puro fiesta aquí ando desvelado pero sigue las noches”</th>
<th>“12 days of just parties here I am sleepless but nights go on”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>6 people</strong> like this.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Lola</strong> Y al las fiestas!!</td>
<td>And to the parties!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Cosme</strong> en Tocumbo</td>
<td>in Tocumbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Lola</strong> A k horas se van??</td>
<td>What time do you go??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Linda</strong> you guys should have gone to la fiesta de la jabonera</td>
<td>You guys should have gone to the fiesta of the Jabonera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><strong>Friend in U.S.</strong> haha yu aint ready nigguuh</td>
<td>Haha you ain’t ready nigguuh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 32 Fiestas en Tocumbo

In this Excerpt 32, the participation is even more interesting because it not only shows that members in the U.S. know about Mexico, but it also displays a certain level of expertise (similar to some members in previous posts). This type of conversation would normally happen face to face. However, Cosme’s post is intended for an U.S. audience, even though he is in Mexico at the time of the post. Cosme usually lives in Chicago and has started going for summer vacation to Mexico; his level of Spanish is low but it has increased over the past two years. Five of the six people who liked the post were living in the U.S. In post 3, Cosme’s cousin, Lola, who lives in Mexico, completes Cosme’s wall post by saying that more parties go on. Cosme replies to his cousin by informing her that he will go to the party in Tocumbo, and then Lola asks him for the time they would leave (posts 4 and 5). At this point, two members of their network in the U.S. enter the conversation (posts 6 and 7) to suggest a “better” place to attend a party, to show expertise about Michoacán. A friend in post 7 adds to his expertise by advising Cosme that he is not “ready” for whatever there is at that party (either due to Cosme’s lack of Spanish skills, culture, or age), implying that the friend has gone to such a party.
The use of smart phones and applications such as Facebook Messenger, or texting services, has made it easier (and cheaper) for members of the network keep in touch with each other. At any given moment, any individual (in the U.S. and in Mexico) can text or message another to their smart phones to be immediately in touch. Although almost everyone carries and uses a smart phone to communicate using the Facebook app, this practice is not approved by some members who think Facebook communication is “out of control” and just another way to “gossip.” For example, Eduardo, a younger generation 2 male states:

“Facebook is only just to like it's more just like catching up with people on what they are on cause you know how people put what they're doing or whatever. So I'll just go and see what’s going on. The ladies gossip, or *el chisme*, I like it yeah it's like drama I just like witnessing like how it unfolds on Facebook and then it's like… yeah, er, or they'll have it [drama] because it starts on Facebook and then it'll happen outside or vice versa, it started outside and it ended up on Facebook and everybody knows and you are just like wow!”

Eduardo explained to me, as many others have also done, that there have been arguments within the network due to a Facebook post by a member. Some of the arguments have escalated from public space on Facebook (members’ walls), to the private family Facebook group page, and have even spilled over to outside of Facebook. On other occasions, problems or good experiences that start outside of the network end up “documented” on Facebook. Tita made a point of printing conversations to have “written proof” of what was said. This practice offers a glimpse at the literacy ideologies held by members and the place members give to written language.

Many of the posts by younger generation members exhibit a need to “document” many activities they are doing, and to share their posts with other members even when
they are physically next to each other (which members also often document on Facebook). However, this manner of communicating has an advantage for members who wish to participate in a particular event but who could not do so due to work or being in the other country. This is the case with a wedding to which not all members of the Cárabez social network were invited. Vania and Susana attended, while Licha and Chela’s families did not. Using her smartphone, Vania uploaded pictures and updates of the party to Facebook as they were occurring, and at the same time, Licha’s family was online waiting to see more updates (I was visiting them at that time). Many of their messages (comments) were “private” or texts; thus I have no transcript of them. However, the pictures gained good wishes and congratulations from members of the extended network in Mexico who could not attend or were not invited to the wedding. One of the comments read “Sigan mandando pa que vayamos a la party” (Keep sending [pictures] so we go to [also attend] the party). This also reflects transnational discourse: using localized language as an indexer of sharing the same space. It also shows Facebook use for synchronous communication.

On other occasions such as a grandparent’s 70th birthday, younger members of the network texted and Facebooked what they were doing, how they were feeling, and other updates about the party. These members posted videos, photos, and messages to specific members in Mexico who, based on the time of their response, appeared to be “online” as the event took place in the U.S., making this a synchronous conversation and gathering. In this way the “overhearers” (Goffman, 1959) have the choice of whether or not to join in.
This practice goes beyond families within social networks and is used by radio stations. For example, while doing my fieldwork in Mexico, we visited a woman who usually takes care of Licha’s mother. When we arrived, the woman was on the Internet and asked us to wait since there was something going on “over there” [the U.S.]. The woman was simultaneously listening to the radio (over the internet) as she was receiving well wishes live for her birthday from her daughter in Chicago. Radio stations in Chicago have also found this new transnational venue through their Facebook pages and Internet streaming to allow synchronous communication between Mexico and Chicago.

7.3.3 Fulfill Family Roles

Since Facebook became an open social network that accepts anyone over the age of 13, people of all ages have registered (40% of the U.S. population use it). Articles on helicopter parents and children feeling parents have invaded their privacy have filled the columns and opinion pages of periodicals. However, in the focal network, if a parent is not on Facebook younger members show their discontent for as this implies the younger members will have to fill their parents in on all the news. Thus in many cases, younger members are the ones opening accounts for older, less computer savvy members; younger members also monitor and teach the older ones how to use Facebook. Only in a couple of cases, children help their elders but still remain without friending them. Tita told me: “that was my condition when I opened my mom’s (Licha) page.” The majority of members of the Cáratez social network are ‘friends’ with each other. They have even formed a Family Group on Facebook where they post matters related to the larger network of families. The Cáratez social network does not have subnetwork groups on
Facebook, and they do almost all of their communication publicly (i.e. you do not need to friend them in order to see their posts). Thus, one can see how they prepare for their annual picnic, their joint vacations or outings, and their organization of trips to Mexico. Another common practice is to see how some members fulfill family roles that they lost when they moved to other parts of the city of Chicago, lost touch for belonging or being closer to a different family subnetwork, or had problems with their siblings and cousins but are now interacting with their nieces and nephews in this “neutral” platform.

Facebook is a neutral platform because the person with whom a member has a conflict (i.e. a parent) does not stand in between the member and the niece or nephew. Thus aunts and uncles can freely interact with nieces/nephews on Facebook, because it does not require going to their house and interacting with the relative with whom they are in conflict. Most interesting is that the parent with whom they have the conflict does not intervene to prevent the contact of their children and their other relatives with whom they do not get along on Facebook. Facebook, then, may be strengthening ties among network members in different ways.

Thus family members often use Facebook to keep in touch but at the same time *educar* or fulfill their role as a godparent, aunt/uncle, or as an older member who has already gone through school (for an explanation of differences between education – *educate* vs. *educación* - *educar*, see Farr, 2006 and Valdés, 1996) All of this erases physical forms of separation (houses, neighborhoods, and borderlands). For example, in a post about being sad that her mother had to stay in Mexico for several more weeks, Itzel posted a broken heart on her wall (</3). The members closest to her from the Cárabez social network all gave her encouraging words, and promised that they would visit her
after school, but other members who live in other states or in Mexico posted “we are here for you”, “I’m here, we’re here, I know we ain’t your mom but we love you the same : )”, and another who is part of another subnetwork, and does not get along with adults from the Cárabez social network – even though she attends Family picnic and larger parties, wrote “I don’t quite know what’s going on, but I’m here if u need me. Take care.” This example shows that members of the network interact according to their family roles and use Facebook as a way to keep up with them as they show appreciation, support, and sometimes give advice for other members.

Transnationally, godparents and aunts/uncles keep track of their godchildren or nieces/nephews. Thus many posts are response messages to wall posts or pictures by high school aged members that indicate or suggest that the members did not go to school, such as pictures taken around noon on a weekday. For instance in Excerpt 33 Skipping school, Fabian posted on his wall that he was playing baseball with his younger cousins (the time indicated it was 12:16 p.m.). He uploaded a picture to which his godparent, Marcos, in Mexico responded in a separate post to Fabian’s wall:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Marcos (godparent) wrote on Fabian’s wall: “yo shouldn’t you be at school foo?”</th>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marcos (godparent) wrote on Fabian’s wall: “yo shouldn’t you be at school foo?”</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fabian</td>
<td>I know but I’ve missed too much</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tita</td>
<td>likes this.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tito</td>
<td>MUY MAL ESO……, BUT IT’S ALRIGHT BECAUSE IT’S YOUR B-DAY……. LOL</td>
<td>That’s really bad. But it’s alright because it’s your birthday… lol</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 33 Skipping school

While Marcos is concerned about his godson’s education (which Tita, Marcos’s niece and Fabian’s older cousin agrees), Tito, Marco’s cousin, also disapproves but
justifies the action of skipping school as a “treat” for his birthday, in a way giving some tacit unrequested “permission” to do so. These kinds of actions, which are common throughout their posts and Facebook conversations show that members are trying to fulfill their roles in the network. Participating by posting a comment (funny or not) on a member’s wall is a way to make their presence known. It is a way to let other network members know that they care what others do, and that they are keeping a channel of communication open. It is then expected that the member would return the interaction; however, such replying to posts to more marginal members are not made as frequently as to centralized members of the network.

Fulfilling of family roles also happens quietly, and explicit interaction on Facebook only occurs if members need to be corrective or to scold others. That is, most participants on Facebook do not have “active engagement”, and instead engage in “stalking” practices of just looking around at people’s posts, photos, and walls (Carr et al., 2012). These members keep the role of “overhearers” (Goffman, 1959). Members of the network usually include in their daily conversations what they saw or read on Facebook about other members. Additionally, members discuss behaviors or actions from others and use the time to scold those members or provide them with advice. If the action is not appropriate and members feel the need to fulfill their role via Facebook, they do so. For example, Eduardo and Cosme, two younger second-generation males posted a picture of themselves at a party with their friends. They posed for the picture holding beers and making signs (such as the peace sign that people do with two fingers, or the thumbs up sign), except that these signs could have been misinterpreted as gang signs. Below the picture, there were numerous comments from the participants and people in the picture
recounting the party, how much fun they had, and how they wanted to repeat the experience. However, one of the last comments was from an older generation male who scolded the pair for making gang signs that could get them in trouble. The answer came only from Eduardo and Cosme, and not from any of the other friends, denying any wrongdoing and telling their uncle that he was wrong and that what they were doing was just for fun. The uncle repeated that it was inappropriate and asked them to be careful. The interaction ended with Eduardo and Cosme agreeing that they did nothing wrong and there was no gang sign. This topic was later brought up by Eduardo’s father during supper whose cousin had told him about the picture.

These sections described the functions that Facebook allows its members to carry out despite national physical borders. In addition to creating new spaces for conversation, these functions provide members a continuation of their roles in the network, whether it is to keep in touch, fulfill a parental or caregiver (such as godparent, older sibling) role, and to maintain ties with members of the network that did not have direct problems with them (for instance, if two cousins have an argument, their children can still communicate with each other on Facebook even if their parents do not talk to each other, or an uncle is able to maintain a relationship with the children of the relative with whom they have a conflict).

7.3.4 Displaying and Contesting Identities

The display of members’ notions of various identities and the interaction between members of different communities could not be without some contention. While some individual members express their views on what they consider salient aspects of their
ethnic identities (e.g. Tita’s imagined indigenous background, Fabián’s charreada – cowboy-sport), others subtly contest that notion, not in an adversarial, but in a joking way. This is not to say that the other members do not have a reason to contest it, but it is not typically meant as an attack or personal offense by the person, but as a way to mark centralization. In the analysis of the data, it was found that members challenged one another’s romanticized or newly adopted identities in relation to what is “real Mexican” and what is just new knowledge about indigenous communities or new affinity to a sport.

Excerpt 34 Go back to Mexico beaners show the acceptance of a new ranchero identity that is being rapidly constructed by younger members of the network. This new identity is that of a ranchero who attends charreadas, rodeos, and jaripeos. However, this new identity, which began as a romanticized notion of the ranchero culture their parents left, is also a source of jokes and opportunities to index membership and relative centrality, as well as for others marginalize the members adopting this identity and label them as “inauthentic.” For example, in the following posts, there is a group of members going to Joliet to attend a charreada. They all dressed in checkered long-sleeved shirts, cowboy hats and boots, and accessories, posed for a picture outside of a members’ house in the Pilsen neighborhood (almost downtown Chicago). The picture includes 9 people, an immigrant generation male, a recently arrived immigrant, four older generation 2 members, and three young generation 2 members (also two friends). The caption of the picture reads: “Coleadero en Joliet.” The following is the post associated with the photograph. The rows shaded are posts written by people in Mexico.
This conversation is one of many similar ones that occur daily on Facebook walls.

First there is the display of the new identity in line 1. *ChikiNacos* is a compound word made from the words “*chiquillos*” (little ones) and “*nacos*” (a slang word used in Mexican Spanish to describe a person with bad-manners, who is poorly educated and usually belongs to a lower social class – it is often used with people from small villages and ranchos who migrate to the city). Members in the picture know that they come from a small rancho, and that many came as children or lived in the rancho as children.

Additionally, by using the word *naco*, in this case, the members are showing pride of their heritage, as evidenced by the recognition and acceptance expressed in the number of likes in line 2 and praises from friends and family (lines 3 and 6). Then in line 6, Raul uses the word ‘naco’ (which sometimes is used as a synonym of the negative connotation of *paísa*) to sign a thank you note for the cousin who said they all look handsome, and in a way, making fun of themselves. Vania agrees and writes a shout out “*ajúa*” (now more
common in posts than a year ago). And in line 8, a friend expresses discomfort or dislike of the use of the word ‘naco’ posting ‘aaauuchh’, a metonymic sound that would indicate a feeling of pain. Then in line 9, something interesting happens, Marcos, Raul’s brother, who is currently living in Mexico tells all to ‘go back to mexico beanerzz” indexing more Mexicanness for himself. Marcos implies that while he is proud to have adopted this other identity himself, he, who is now in Mexico, has his own horses and land, and dresses this way, not to show off about going to an event, but to work his land. Therefore, he is the ‘true’ Mexican and the others are just playing or displaying being Mexicans, which he emphasize with the use of the term ‘beaners’, a derogatory term used by other Americans to put down Mexican workers. Vania seems to understand Marcos’ criticism of true Mexicanness, so she replies that Marcos is just jealous because, just as she does (Vania was not in the picture either), he wishes he had been with the group. Then she laughs and ends the post and the conversations saying “we miss you paisa”. This last move of calling him paisa indexes that the other members do now view Marcos as a more authentic Mexican, but one who lives in Mexico, and even though he is a transnational ranchero, at the moment they view him as less transnational due to the length of time he has now been in Mexico. Other posts show similar reactions criticizing these charreada outings (of course, in a joking way) with statements such as “pinches paisas” (fucking paisas), “don’t forget/where are your boots” (when they go to night clubs).

Similarly to contesting an adopted or stereotyped identity, members of this network also contested other identities displayed that are not, in their view, a true characterization of what they consider to be authentically Mexican. In the following
Excerpt 38 Catholic no more, a quick exchange between two cousins demonstrates this contention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tita’s wall post. “Happy Easter Sunday! ¡La resurrección de Jesucristo! :)”</th>
<th>Happy Easter Sunday! Jesus Christ’s resurrection! :)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 people like this.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Itzel Waaaaa your not even catholico no mores</td>
<td>What, you are not even Catholic anymore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tita Lol! Itza you’re such a dork! Come home already!</td>
<td>Lol! Itza you’re such a dork! Come home already!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tita And …your face!</td>
<td>And your face!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excerpt 35 Catholic no more

In this post, the older cousin, Tita, displays both her bicultural and her religious identity by wishing her Facebook ‘friends’ a Happy Easter, a phrase and an act that cannot be translated into Spanish without sounding ‘American’ or from an American dubbed television show (*Felices Pascuas*). Instead, in Mexico and in many Mexican communities in the U.S. Mexicans only attend mass because it is *Domingo de Resurrección* (Resurrection Sunday) and it is the day on which the saints and statues at church are uncovered, and changed into their normal clothing instead of purple or black. However, the current practices are changing, and it is common to see doctrinas explaining Easter Sunday, and family members giving the young ones Easter baskets or eggs (although not necessarily at church or as a church-related activity). In some cases, such Easter baskets are huge arrangements that take days to prepare and are given to the younger member with much affection and love (and then members post the pictures on Facebook). This is a practice that indexes their transnationalism, because it is not a
traditional practice in Mexico. However, in this case, Itzel, 18, who was in Mexico at the
time, chides Tita for posting the second part of her status update: “¡La resurrección de
Jesucristo!” Although the post itself was welcomed by at least 7 people (line 2), some
family members but mostly friends, it was not welcomed by Itzel, who contests Tita’s
religious practices which had taken place in a Christian Evangelist Church, instead of a
Catholic Church. Itzel interprets this fact as removing Tita’s right to speak in religious
terms, since she has left behind the family’s religion. Itzel does not devoutly practice
Catholicism (note her language use), does not attend mass regularly and only goes when
there is a major event such as a baptism, a quinceañera (XV year birthday party,
sometimes referred to as cotillion by younger members of the network) mass, or a
graduation party (e.g. her sister’s graduation mass from elementary school in Mexico). In
line 4, Tita probably knows Itzel’s interpretation and laughs and calls her a ‘dork’ for not
really knowing about religion and for pointing out that she should not be making these
types of comments if she is not practicing Catholicism as the rest of the family. Instead,
Tita exhorts her to come back to the U.S. along with her family.

7.4 Discussion

Recent studies in transnationalism have attempted to close the gap between
knowing how the children of immigrants integrate to a larger U.S. society and economy
and how transnationals engage with the receiving and sending societies. However, such
research is scant due to the belief that transnational parents do not produce transnational
children (Alba & Nee, 2003; Kasinitz et al., 2010), as many in the later generations are
not fluent in the parent’s language, know little about their parents places of origin, and
have no plans to live in their parents’ country. Nonetheless, fluency in the parent’s language, although problematic in many cases, especially in school settings, is also attained among members of younger transnational generations, who do continue to have a degree of activity in the parents’ country of origin. Facebook, as can be seen in the analysis of the data for this study, is an example of how members, whether central or marginalized, constantly try to integrate Spanish even at the expense of being rejected or marginalized by the others. Additionally, the constant dialogue with Spanish speakers in the network on Facebook has made the less proficient keep in touch at least by seeing and reading the language due to the posts. Their involvement with bi-national organizations or transnational businesses also helps. The more institutionalized the relationships in the transnational space are, the higher the probability that transnational membership persists (Levitt, 2001).

7.4.1 A Changed Mexico – Change in Dynamics between Transnationals and Non-Transnationals

One aspect not discussed nor described thoroughly in this research is the Mexican way of life, as many generation 2 transnationals, who only visit Mexico, do not have a traditional life there. However, members who have moved back or family relatives who never immigrated have faced a changing Mexican society. For instance, many ranchos now have free access to wireless Internet connections and computer use, inexpensive cell phones, and other quick communication services (e.g. radios, smart phones). Many town and village downtown plazas (not to mention those of most cities) provide free wireless access around the city hall and main plaza (park), and some even have mobile tents with
computers (as public libraries have here). Thus, many Mexicans in the U.S. may be at a disadvantage by having less cost effective ways to access technology. Coupled with this, a lack of computer training and limited Spanish literacy skills may diminish U.S. based members’ engagement in conversation with the Mexican resident counterparts. However, in turn, these Mexican resident counterparts may spend much of their time playing in online gaming communities due to the limited level of interaction the transnational members of the network (Cornelius et al., 2009). While this is not the case for this particular social network- the Cárabez social network (most have personal computers at home, internet connection, and mobile devices), this increased access to such media by members in Mexico does change somewhat the status given to transnational members in Mexico, which previously was one of greater affluence. These days, the non-transnationals and transnationals are equals. If transnationals send money it is just to invest, not to maintain or help anyone (perhaps a parent, but the parent many times collects Social Security benefits from the United States); if the transnationals choose to help the town it is for something they or their parents will use, such as a plaza and a kiosk for parties held when transnationals go for vacations, a cemetery and a health clinic for the retirees who have moved back to Mexico.

Another change in Mexico is that immigration to the U.S. has dropped significantly in the last five years, and according to a report by the Pew Research Hispanic Center in 2011 net migration has stopped and even reversed (Passel et al., 2012). One of the possible reasons for this fall is that, as of 2009, Mexican women (in Mexico) were projected to have an average 2.4 children, in contrast to 1960 when women in Mexico averaged 7.3 children. This trend is visible in the Cárabez social network.
studied here, as the youngest sibling only had three children and never migrated to the U.S. Money is not often sent as remittances, but instead is saved for future trips and to make their rancho in Michoacán prettier and better equipped for a party, not for the needs of family members. Having these changes in mind offers us a glimpse of the conversation dynamics of the network. In Facebook, members on either side of the border can post pictures of vacations, food, or outings, often for no other apparent reason than to show off what the other side does not have (e.g. in the case of Mexico, what transnationals are missing and do not have in the U.S., such as horses and traditional food; in the case of the U.S. is a designer purse, or a night at a bar, which are harder to have in the rancho as they would have to drive an hour to the nearest city). All of this is different from when a transnational is in Mexico and posts on Facebook for those back in Chicago.

7.4.2 Facebook and the Network

This chapter argues that Facebook has allowed members to move some of their transnational experiences to this “new” transnational digital space. By allowing members to include photos, videos, website links, and other forms of communication, Facebook provides a space for them to interact, give each other advice, “shop” together online, and make members on the other side of the border jealous of what they are doing, just as friends who are in the same town or school do. Facebook multimodality affords users a great degree of agency and dialogical discourse that transcends spatial, temporal, and physical borders. As seen in the previous examples, members of the network use images and their various linguistic resources to engage in conversations that go from general to
localized in order to display knowledge and expertise of activities and cultural artifacts from the other side.

New transnational space allows members to:

- Change from general to localized language – going from referring to the future and distance to talking as if members were in the same place, same time, and same communicative event.
- Referring to places, food, and activities without being physically present for them.
- Displaying knowledge and expertise about activities and items in the other country.
- Extending the definition of transnationalism – from physical to visual (people keep transnationalism going on Facebook). This kind of transnationalism is more than the “emotional” or “symbolic” transnationalism described in Diane Wolf’s chapter in Levitt & Waters, 2006. In many cases, youth who do not go to Mexico as often are more engaged with people and life in Mexico than the ones who go more often but do not interact with people there (e.g. the case of Natalia who goes more often than Margo, but Margo keeps in touch more with cousins there).
- Fulfill family roles, keep in touch, and carry on a conversation without having to wait for a phone call, a Skype call, or a visit to the other country.

Due to changes in lifestyle (more sedentary jobs, such as in schools or in offices), economy (less income or more expenses), and communication technology (access to Skype, internet, Facebook, smart phones and cheap plans to call Mexico, and radio),
traveling to the other country is not necessary to remain touch. For the younger generations, Facebook is currently the primary platform on which they convert all their local experiences into transnational, shared experiences and a ‘new’ transnational space for keeping communication alive.

- Facebook erases time & space in a communicative event
- Facebook multimodality allows for members of the network to be informed of and participate (either synchronically or asynchronically) in events
- Information is not restricted to one language variety but it includes visual (video, pictures, links, collages)
- Although physical contact and travel is still paramount in transnational communities, it is not the only way to maintain transnationalism and a transnational identity. Facebook allows strengthening the connections between the societies and the members despite the frequency of mobility.

7.5 Conclusion

Apart from presentation of self and contention among identities, members of the network use Facebook as a new transnational space that encompasses various forms of communication: chat, calls, instant messages, letters, and creates a multimodal platform where members can share pictures and events, thus creating the sense that they are experiencing the same thing. Facebook also allows members to keep in touch with their growing family in an organized way; more central members have family albums or post pictures during family parties, especially if the grandparent generation is there. Facebook also allows members to fulfill their roles and strengthen ties and relationships with other
members through compadrazgo. That is, members now can check on each other, call out behaviors (Chepe on a gang sign), or simply monitor youth’s activity as an overhearer, but stepping in when needed.

In addition to the benefits that Facebook offers, members of the network also use this transnational space to construct identities and experiences together (such as the case of eating certain foods), or contest presentations of self that exaggerate or romanticize an identity or do not reflect the identity that others see in them. Most importantly, Facebook has allowed members to construct a transnational discourse in which their language becomes localized, causing members to feel they are in the same place. Conversations can be carried as if members were sharing the same space and time without moving from their current location.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

Although there is much research yielding a better understanding of people’s general participation in social network sites (SNS), there has been little information about how people interact and construct their identities based on this participation. The present study explored how generation 1.5 and second generation Mexicans of transnational background engage with Facebook in order to understand what identities they construct on this SNS, how they construct these identities in relation to those with whom they participate on Facebook, what available linguistic resources they use, what role these linguistic resources play, and what the construction of these identities accomplishes. That is, discourse analysis of Facebook interactions focused on language ideologies and the construction of indexical meanings.

So as to capture the relationships between language and identity and how these relationships are constructed in the social network space of Facebook, Ethnography of Communication (Hymes, 1974; Saville-Troike, 2003) and Discourse-Centered Online Ethnography DCOE (Androutsopoulos, 2008) were employed. This new approach to study a social network via Facebook made this study unique, not only because this study is different from larger projects that study transnational communities, but also because research on online networks is scarce and has tended to focus primarily on college students.
Studies of transnationalism have traditionally been conducted in two geographical settings, but have not been carried out via an online site such as Facebook. Currently, there is no research on transnationalism using Facebook. With the more prominent use of technology, the combination of offline and online ethnography is now necessary to complete the portrait of social network practices.

All participants of this study are part of a subnetwork that belongs to the larger social network of families studied in Farr (2006). To distinguish between the two networks, I have called the focal network for this study the “Cárabez social network,” which is comprised of a subset of the descendants of the immigrant generation.

The three initial research questions for this study were:

- How do members of the 1.5 and 2nd generations use English and/or Spanish to construct varying social (e.g. ethnic/racial) identities in written language use, particularly on Facebook?

- How do members’ vernacular (oral) varieties of Spanish and English relate to their social identities (e.g. Mexican, American) on Facebook? How does their use of these vernacular (oral) varieties index language ideologies?

- What do members accomplish by constructing those identities?

Guided by these three research questions, this study shows that members of the Cárabez social network use multiple varieties of English and Spanish to construct and negotiate three main identities: transnational U.S. Mexican identity, ranchero identity, and indigenous Mexican identity. Members rely on four criteria to negotiate and socially position themselves and others in the network: language (knowledge of English and
Spanish), color of skin, transnationality (degree of ties to Mexico), and knowledge and display of Mexican culture (e.g. observation of the Day of the Virgin, Mexican Independence Day). Through language use, members simultaneously invoke language ideologies of purism, standardization, and bilingualism and index their fluid and complex identities. These three different identities are available to individuals as discursive resources, which showcase different aspects of a person needed in a particular context. Additionally, in constructing their three multivalent identities, members are shifting their social order from a traditional hierarchy of age and gender typical of ranchero Mexican societies, to a social order of centrality and marginalization, in which more central members are more influential and are regarded as more Mexican than marginal members. Members of the Cárabez social network arrange themselves and others in a new social order, placing themselves and others as more or less central, and even marginal, to the network, which correlates with their perceived level of Mexicanness and bilingualism, all within a U.S. context. When members are in a Mexican society context they negotiate authenticity as Mexicans.

The answers to these questions are complex and cannot be briefly explained without including important nuances, such as the long history of ranchero Mexicans constructing their identities as non-indigenous. Thus, this concluding chapter summarizes the findings for this research that provide answers to the three initial research questions. The findings have been divided into four major areas:

1. New social order, context, and language
2. Language features on Facebook
3. Language and identity construction
4. Facebook and transnational discourse

This chapter will first summarize the findings in each of the four areas; then it will provide some concluding remarks. Finally, this chapter will discuss suggestions for further research.

8.1 New social order, context, and language

Traditionally, in the social order of ranchero societies, within families and publicly between individuals, a hierarchy of gender and age organize interaction and power relations (Farr, 2006). Members’ current interactions offline and on Facebook, however, show that this traditional social order is changing from hierarchies of age and gender (patriarchal) to a dynamic of centralization and marginalization. That is, members constantly position themselves and others as more central or marginal within the network, positions that are constantly negotiated and contested through using certain varieties of a language and invoking certain language ideologies.

Depending on the context, centrality indexes members’ 1) Mexicanness, 2) bilingualism, and 3) Mexican authenticity. First, within their own network, members usually negotiate their positions as central or marginal depending on their perceived (their own and others) degree of Mexicanness. The more Mexican a member of the network is perceived to be, by him or herself and by others, the more centralized position he or she can claim or be given. The less Mexican (or more American) he or she is perceived to be, the more marginalized position he or she can be given or disputed. Mexicanness here is measured by the criteria of language (speaking Spanish), skin color (darker skin), transnationality (traveling constantly to Mexico), and knowledge/display of Mexican
culture (posting photos and music from Mexico). Note that the social network is situated in a U.S. society context in which Mexican-origin people are a minority. Thus, in this context, members construct their Mexican ethnic identity on Facebook, display it and use their language varieties to index a central place within their network, indirectly placing other members as more marginal. Therefore, within a Cárabez social network context, speaking Spanish is the main linguistic characteristic that bolsters their ethnic identity as Mexican (in the U.S. context).

Second, because of the nature of transnationalism, members interact with other members who reside mostly in Mexico (either those who have always lived there or those who have retired there), but who frequently visit the U.S. In this transnational context, even though the members who live in Mexico would be considered the most Mexican (because they are native speakers of Spanish and they “look” and act Mexican the most, they travel to the U.S. but spend more time in Mexico, and observe all Mexican holidays), such members are not central because of the bilingual linguistic context in which the network operates. Such members are not influential within the network for two main reasons. The first is that they depend upon other members with greater fluency in English to serve as brokers when they come to the U.S. Secondly, most of the decisions these members make are made in Mexico, while most of the network resides primarily in the U.S. For the Cárabez social network, degree of bilingualism is the main linguistic characteristic that identifies members as transnational U.S. Mexicans, or, as they would call themselves “U.S. born Mexicans.”

Third, the Cárabez social network is situated in two contexts: the Mexican society in Michoacán, Mexico (which includes interactions with non-ranchero background
individuals) and the larger Mexican society in Chicago (which includes other Mexican-origin residents and non-Mexican origin individuals). Thus, when members index centrality vis à vis other members of their network, they also index their degree of Mexicanness (being more Mexican than the other members). However, when interaction happens between a member of the network and a non-member, members index authenticity as Mexicans. Members index their knowledge of Spanish language, their dark color (in the case of some members) or their ties to Michoacán and its indigenous populations, their multiple travels to Mexico, and the practices of Mexican traditions that include religious and secular ones. Thus, in this context, speaking Spanish is an important characteristic that identifies members as authentic Mexicans and not Americans.

Indexing centrality by bolstering their Mexicanness in a U.S. context has shifted the traditional ranchero hierarchies of age and gender in which the older male is dominant to a more “transnational U.S. Mexican” who is more influential in the family network. This in turn has consequences for socialization among second and third generation members whose identity formation is a concatenation of striving to be a U.S. born Mexican, a transnational ranchero, a middle class individual, a successful immigrant, all while keeping ties and involvement with parents’ homelands and going through adolescence (as Smith, 2006 argues). Assimilation to U.S. society and transnational activity complement each other, and belong to the same social process (Smith, 2006); thus transnational networks challenge what linear models of immigrant incorporation such as acculturation, assimilation, and segmented assimilation propose, by describing the complex process of socialization in second-generation individuals’ transition to adulthood, which entails becoming part of, not an American mainstream, but a society
8.2 Language features on Facebook

Facebook data shows that members of the Cárbabez social network use multiple varieties of English and Spanish as well as codeswitching and netspeak (computed mediated discourse) to communicate, construct and negotiate their identities (refer to Table 2 Languages and varieties found in Facebook data in Chapter 3). Due to members’ interactions with other networks, the language varieties used by network members are not restricted to English varieties associated with Mexican-Americans. In English, members of the network use features from Standard English, AAVE, and European American Vernacular English. Additionally, because of their ranchero background, members do not regularly use standard Mexican Spanish. In Spanish, members use features from standard Spanish, Ranchero Spanish, and U.S. Mexican Spanish. Members of the network also exhibit codeswitching, as many bilingual communities do (Fought, 2003; Gumperz, 1982; Rampton, 1995; Zentella, 1999). All members recognize their use of codeswitching and consider codeswitching to be a marker of their identity (Fought, 2003).

Each variety of a language has contexts in which it is valued in a society; however, younger generations are including more varieties into their repertoires due to their contact with some speakers and with music from other groups, and in this particular case, a transnational lifestyle. When divided by age, groups differ greatly from each other. While older members of generation 1.5 or 2 use English and Spanish with roughly
the same frequency, younger members use English the vast majority of the time. Interestingly, both generational groups codeswitch at similar frequencies. However, although many older and younger members of the network switch between English and Spanish frequently, they do not always codeswitch within a turn. As such, the codeswitching that happens in Facebook conversations does not fall into the Myers-Scotton (1993a,b) categories (intersentential, intrasentential).

Decreasing percentages of Spanish among younger generation members seem to paint a bleak picture of what is happening to the Spanish language from older to younger generations. Research on immigrant groups in the U.S. shows that the immigrant generation retains their home language, while generation 1.5 and 2 are bilingual (Pew, 2009). By the second generation, members tend to have lost much of their parent’s language and are only “passive bilinguals” (Lipski, 2008), with very limited skills in their parents’ language. By the third generation, the immigrant generation’s language has waned, and the third generation speaks only English. However, a deeper look into Facebook data reveals that this pattern is not reflected in the language use of these social network members. Although there is a decline in the use of Spanish, the decline of Spanish use does not completely correlate with generation or age. Rather, the decline of Spanish seems to depend mostly on network dynamics, transnationalism, and personal goals. Males and females on average use English, Spanish, and codeswitching at the same frequencies. Older participants use Spanish almost five times as often as younger ones. However, not every member of the older generation uses more Spanish on Facebook, and not all members of the younger generation use mostly English there. Thus average frequencies are deceiving. Each individual’s use of English and Spanish on Facebook is
dependent upon his or her level of bilingualism and transnationalism, his or her choice, and whether he or she was raised in Spanish. English is the dominant language in members’ posts on their own walls, but Spanish is the dominant language for phatic functions, or reaching out to other Facebook friends who speak Spanish. Participants in the study all use both English and Spanish. Members seem to follow conversations in English and Spanish because, even though they may not have productive competence (e.g., for writing) in one of the languages, they often understand it when reading; if not, they ask someone to translate for them.

Another significant pattern is the use of vernacular features among both males and females. For instance, while older members of generations 1.5 and 2 use English frequently, only the male members in the older group use AAVE features; none of the older female members of generation 1.5 and 2 used AAVE features even once. This is unlike the younger generation in which all members, male and female, use AAVE features with varying degrees of frequency. This change of language variety features, especially in English, may be related to power dynamics. On the one hand, females are the ones maintaining the heritage language. Women use Spanish at higher frequencies than men do. Males, on the other hand, despite their very limited contact with speakers of other varieties of English, such as AAVE speakers, take up features of this language variety, possibly from hip-hop lyrics. The use of AAVE features by non-AAVE male speakers has been linked to exerting masculinity and dominance (Bucholtz, 1999b). Women, in contrast, use Spanish to assert their role as language keepers in the network.

Another reason the younger females use profanity is to exert some authority over language with the men. Younger men reported not liking that women use such words and

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expressions, but they did not seem to attach the use of profanity to very negative ideologies. If anything, the men thought such usage constructed the woman as strong and wanting to be equal to men, at least among cousins of the same age. Young members’ ideologies about profanity differ from the ideologies of older generation members, male or female. Women’s use of profanity is seen as inappropriate and un-lady-like, but only when such use is in public (displayed on Facebook) and not because members think women should not use it at all.

Thus, while members may not be proficient in a particular language or language variety, they are still familiar with these languages and varieties either from hearing them or from reading people’s posts. For example, members who do not have much productive competence in Spanish nevertheless hear and read it regularly, which possibly adds to their competence. Moreover, members of the Cáraz social network use features not only from the varieties in their sociolinguistic repertoire (those which they have in their communicative competence), but also features from varieties they are aware of but do not master (e.g. some AAVE features). Engaging in the use of such languages and varieties successfully plays a central role in the network dynamics of centralization and marginalization, as members jockey for position according to degrees of Mexicanness.

8.3 Language and identity construction

As seen in this study, members use different varieties of English and Spanish to communicate, construct identities, and index each other’s places (central or marginal) within their social network. Through language use, members expose language ideologies of purism, standardization, and bilingualism, indexing their fluid and complex identities.
However, the dynamics also suggest that different identities are available to individuals as discursive resources, which showcase different aspects of a person needed in a particular context. That is, *individuals use their linguistic repertoires to construct and negotiate facets of their ethnic identity, even though this facet does not always match the language variety to which it is traditionally linked.* For instance, some younger members use ranchero Spanish not to construct a ranchero identity, but to showcase their bilingualism, their Mexicanness, and their transnational identity, in contrast to their parents and grandparents, for whom a ranchero identity was assumed. Additionally, language use is not merely standard. Many members use a variety of language (e.g. AAVE features) but they do not use it according to studies that describe the grammar of AAVE (e.g., Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006). Instead, members use features to index or disengage from a particular identity. For instance, the use of some AAVE features indexes a non-white American identity, even if their use of AAVE is incorrect.

Despite the fact that there is a difference between older and younger generations’ use of English and Spanish, a close analysis indicates that *the more centrality and degree of Mexicanness a younger or older person considers him or herself to have or is considered by others to have correlates with how often he or she will use Spanish.* The more central a member is, the more Spanish and English a person will use. Spanish competency alone, without English fluency, is not enough for a member to claim centrality, influence other members, and have a powerful position in the network. It is the degree of bilingualism that indexes centrality or marginalization among members of the network. Additionally, while members may not be proficient in a particular language or language variety, they are still familiar with these languages and varieties either from
hearing them or from reading people’s posts. For example, members who do not have much productive competence in Spanish nevertheless hear and read it regularly, which possibly adds to their competence.

Language competence is a very important factor in centralization and marginalization. However, language is not the only aspect that positions members as central. It is their level of Mexicanness in relation to other members within the transnational U.S. context, their closeness to grandparents (being a favorite child or grandchild); and personality, as extroverted members are more influential and participate in more community (U.S. and Mexico) social activities, are closer to other relatives, and visit Mexico more often than other members. While it may appear at first that knowledge of Spanish is the characteristic that indexes Mexicanness, and gives members more centrality, it is members’ level of bilingualism that is most determinant of centrality, as members who are not fluent in English are neither as influential nor as involved in the network as bilingual members are.

The strong presence of the social network on Facebook has also created a venue in which members can construct their ethnic identity. The presentation of self that members display through discourse is primarily centered around four criteria: 1) language (and the importance of being bilingual); 2) skin color (and the ambivalence about having lighter skin—desired in Mexican contexts—and darker skin—desired as an index of indigenous heritage and thus as a sign of more Mexicanness in the U.S.); 3) transnationality; and 4) display of ranchero Mexican culture. Facebook postings and conversations constantly index members’ centralization or marginalization within their network. Members’ available linguistic resources and language varieties often indexes a
particular ethnic/racial identity when co-constructing and negotiating their centrality within their network. **Members index three major identities: transnational U.S. Mexican, ranchero, and indigenous Mexican.** These three identities are constructed, negotiated, and used as discursive resources, sometimes simultaneously, in a particular context.

One of the core characteristics of ranchero identity is that it is constructed as being non-indigenous. Studies such as Farr (2006), focusing on early immigrant and transnational rancheros, demonstrated that members of the ranchero society in the northwest region of Michoacán constantly disengage from an indigenous identity due to their proximity to numerous nearby P’urhépecha villages. In fact this was precisely one of the purposes of Farr’s (2006) book: to explain that not all Mexicans are, nor do they conceive themselves to be, mestizos (people with mixed Spanish and indigenous blood) of predominantly indigenous background. This is not to say that rancheros do not have any indigenous blood or heritage. They are mestizos in the strictest sense of the label, but in terms of culture, language and even, for many, skin color, rancheros differ from other Mexican groups, e.g., indigenous Mexicans or urban Mexicans. Ranchero ways of speaking (Farr, 2006), which examples here can demonstrate, illustrate *franqueza* (candid language), *relajo* (an extended joking activity), and *respeto* (appropriate language of respect for one another). It is not surprising that the younger generations of the network have inherited this identity as rancheros and index it when they are in contention about their language knowledge and use, either face to face or on Facebook. Another way members of the network index their identities as transnational U.S. Mexicans is by rejecting an indigenous identity. Members favor their transnational (or even the ranchero)
identity by preferring Spanish-English bilingualism over Spanish–P’urhépecha [Tarascan] bilingualism.

Members index their various, often contending, identities simultaneously (e.g. asserting their ranchero background while indexing their transnationality, or alluding to indigenous heritage while indexing their disengagement with indigenous language and culture). The construction of identities in contention suggests that identities should be considered as discursive resources. Analysis of Facebook conversations among members of the family network reveals that in a given interaction individuals fluctuate among what they see as different degrees of an identity (e.g. more or less indigenous, transnational ranchero, etc.), using what they consider factors that bolster a given identity (e.g. considering themselves more American only because they did not study in schools in Mexico).

Studies of identity run the risk of essentializing the people on whom they are focused, assigning labels that do not reflect the pluralism within a group or the fluid and changing nature of people’s representations. The problem with assigning a single identity or a set of identities is that labels do not reflect the complexity of a person in terms of culture, language, and self-representation. For example, Tita had the opportunity to participate in an international trip to England, France, and Spain as part of her Catholic group in her university. Tita explained the difficulty she had when she introduced herself as a Mexican from the U.S. Tita said that this topic even caused some arguments among members of her host family in London.

“when I was in Europe everybody identified us, and, um, like at a national-- so you are who you are based on where you're born, and I did get corrected, like numerous times when I was in London, about being
American and not Mexican because I was born in the United States, that I would be considered Mexican if I had a Mexican passport…”

Tita explained that she was corrected in Europe when she said she was “Mexican,” and had to explain numerous times why she considered herself ethnically and culturally Mexican, and not American. She also said that in France people seemed to have a greater understanding of her use of “Mexican” (although she said that she was taken aback by the fact that the same people told her that speaking Spanish was not necessarily an indicator of ethnicity). The problem with ethnic identity labels in this case was that, apart from having to explain to people her reason for introducing herself as Mexican, regarding her participation in religious activities, being in the U.S. group was a disadvantage for her, as she was not allowed to participate in the Spanish speaking section of the prayers.

“…like Catechism classes and things like that, they were predominantly all in Spanish, you know, every once in a while you had like bilingual like mixing of English and Spanish and stuff um… and it was weird because when I was in Europe the workshops that we attended were in English because it, we were split up by houses … and obviously because I came with a group from the United States I was placed in the English, so I would ask like my coordinator and like the people of the house if I could attend the workshops in Spanish, and I mean I understand that they were dealing with a lot, because they were dealing with like a huge number of people… And I remember I would feel so lost and I would write about that, like about how, like, weird it felt because that's not what I'm used to.”

Tita’s upbringing in a Mexican Catholic church—attending mass and Catechism in Spanish—prepared her culturally and linguistically to participate in Mexican Catholic church culture, which is different from American Catholic culture (as several members of the network explained to me to justify why they still hold major religious celebrations in Michoacán). Tita’s experience of not being allowed to self-identify ethnically nor to
participate in the language with which she felt the most comfortable show how restrictive labels can be. This example and discussion about identities supports the argument that identities should be seen as discursive resources that aid the co-construction and negotiation of identities at a given time, and that assigning labels to people can be detrimental and restrictive for the individual.

8.4 Facebook and transnational discourse

Most research on transnationalism has been carried out in a physical environment. Thus, it was necessary to turn attention to research online social network sites (SNS) such as Facebook and Twitter (e.g. boyd, 2008; Eisenstein et al., 2010; Ellison et al., 2007; Grasmuck et al., 2009; Pempek et al., 2009). The ubiquitous use of computer mediated communication (CMC) through personal computers, hand or portable devices has extended individuals’ relationships to the virtual world. Research on transnationalism and on social network sites has neither explored language and linguistic identity nor the language use, ideologies, and identities people display, construct, and negotiate in such settings. The present research thus explored how members of a transnational Mexican social network (comprised mainly of multiple related families) engage with each other on Facebook, focusing on how members construct their identities through language use, and how this language use indexes language ideologies that help them negotiate those identities.

As a reminder of the importance of this research, 69% of adult Internet users participate in a social network site (SNS), and 66% of the 69% use Facebook (Brenner, 2012). Latinos have the highest percent of usage (72%), slightly above the 68% of blacks
and 65% of whites (Brenner, 2012). However, most studies of SNS in the U.S., specifically of Facebook, focus on college freshman. Knowing how individuals outside of school settings engage in social network sites provides an understanding of how they construct their identities and how these identities may affect educational choices they make for themselves and/or their children. Thus, the study of Mexican-origin individuals on Facebook was necessary, since Facebook is a multimodal platform that allows them to use their available linguistic resources to project and construct an identity relevant to them.

Lewis and West (2011) catalogue Facebook as “cheap entertainment” (p. 1225). They explain that students usually engage in “passive stalking” (the constant viewing of friends’ posts and pictures without making a post or comment) and state that not many users have “active” engagement (e.g. making posts, comments, or uploading videos). These assertions are corroborated by Carr et al. (2012), which concluded that Facebook users produced mainly “funny” or humorous messages. However, Facebook also has been considered a necessary tool people use to keep in touch, enabling broad low pressure and low commitment communication with “friends” and supplementing other forms of communication (Lewis and West, 2011, p. 1223). With the present study, I argue that Facebook’s role among the network I studied contrasts with these descriptions of Facebook use as “cheap entertainment” and “passive stalking,” or as a site to maintain low commitment ties or simply to make humorous messages without a purpose. Instead members use Facebook in the following ways:

1. Planning for travel / gathering online spontaneously
2. Maintaining connections: Expressing missing each other, their rancho, or their houses in Chicago; showing off; and fostering inclusion by tagging (labeling a post or a photo with a link to a person’s Facebook profile)

3. Fulfilling family roles

4. Displaying and contesting identities

Facebook is a constructed transnational space that erases political and physical borders and merges local spaces. The language used by members on Facebook often indexes the creation of an “imagined” transnational space for conversation in which members of the network can pretend to be in the same place at the same time. The language used in Facebook posts is often used to manipulate time and space on Facebook, making a Facebook conversation at first appear as though people are writing from different countries, but later appear as though they are in the same physical location, even though they are not (see Excerpt “Unos buenos buñuelos” in Chapter 7). If one did not know that members were in different countries at the time they constructed their Facebook conversation, one would think that they were in the same city or within close proximity to one another.

Facebook provides a multimodal platform on which members of the Cárabez social network can continue their communicative activities with different networks (family, friends, co-workers, classmates, etc.). While Facebook does not substitute for their offline gatherings and other forms of communication (e.g. phone calls), it does provide members another way to fulfill family roles, maintain connections, and “attend” parties, despite being in different cities, states, or countries. Unlike the findings in Lewis and West (2011), in which Facebook is catalogued as a “cheap entertainment” (p. 1225)
for individuals engaged in “passive stalking” or production of funny messages without very little “active” engagement (Carr et al., 2012), members of this network utilize Facebook to strengthen ties, create new channels and ways of communicating, and perhaps continuing some socialization into being Mexican. Additionally, along with transnationality, Facebook use also helps members of the family network maintain contact with a bilingual linguistic context. Even if they cannot communicate proficiently in one of the languages, members are exposed to conversations that frequently switch back and forth between English and Spanish.

Members’ ties to their parents’ place of origin are not simply a reminiscence or stories of their past. Facebook makes it possible to witness changes in Mexico, providing members an idea of what is happening even if they are not physically there. As members grow older, many become more interested in strengthening those ties, which often begin on Facebook or continue to grow there. It is worth continuing to observe Facebook practices since Smith (2006) argues that transnational attachments of the second generation fluctuate throughout the years, and the experiences have different meanings depending on the age of the second-generation individual; however, my observations during ethnographic fieldwork challenge that assumption. In many cases, the trips to Mexico aroused an interest in life and opportunities in Mexico to study (where public universities are tuition free) or to work (e.g. working at the avocado orchards). These are opportunities that children of non-transnational immigrants do not have. While going back may seem to some like a way to “regress” and not progress, as Eduardo stated, for others it is another option, in case “things here [in U.S.] don’t work out,” as Fanny stated.
The discourse exhibited in posts made by this transnational network offers a glimpse into the language practices members engage in in their everyday lives. The frequent use of English and Spanish, even if each language is not used by all members to the same degree, is read by all. Bilingual postings and conversations on Facebook create yet another bilingual linguistic context members must be able to navigate. One of the main characteristics for centralized membership in the network is transnationality; transnational experiences make members aware of their need to learn Spanish and provide an opportunity to practice the language.

8.5 Findings Related to Education

Educational opportunities are changing in the two societies. There was a dramatic increase in years of schooling from the immigrant generation to generation 1.5 and older members of the second generation in both Mexico and Chicago (Farr, 2006). While poverty and lack of access made it difficult for the first generation, born and raised in Mexico, to attend school (at the lowest levels such as elementary school), rancheros nowadays can obtain subsidies and scholarships from the government, and schools are now located in rural ranchos and more available for all. The public Mexican educational system has always been free of tuition from kindergarten to college. However, enrollment fee and school supplies, uniforms and other needs had been what have kept some from attending school. Additionally, a need to support the family also made older siblings quit school in order to help the rest. This is still the case for many in Mexico, but the situation with the reduction in family size and advances in technology and transportation has made
it a less hostile environment in which to obtain an education. Problems for rural people have shifted to the quality of textbooks, teachers, and methods.

Likewise, for second-generation individuals living in the U.S., education has presented some barriers. While it is also free of charge from daycare through high school, lunches are provided at a subsidized rate or free of charge, and members generally attain greater educational levels than Mexican resident counterparts, they nevertheless experience extensive educational marginalization and confront challenges to their political integration in the U.S. (Cornelius et al., 2009). The lack of information to obtain the necessary resources to succeed in U.S. educational institutions sometimes results in dropping out of school due to high debt, poor academic choices, or becoming disinterested. Only three members of the Cárabez social network living in Chicago have obtained at least a bachelor’s degree (and one has a master’s degree), but at least three cousins in Mexico of the same age and who belong to a different subnetwork have now completed their bachelor’s degree and two others are still attending college. Marcos and Raúl, two second generation males now living mostly in Mexico, dropped out of their junior year at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and returned to work in their father’s avocado orchards with the sole intention of making money to repay student loans, which they did in two years. Both brothers stated they want to come back to the U.S. to finish their education, but more for themselves and their personal achievement rather than for a professional job, which would be limiting and low-paying. Marcos discusses his educational history in Chicago and the reasons he decided not to finish his university education:
“I was used to, like, teachers babysitting you in high school y aquí you're on your own… I feel the pressure in my little bubble: acá que gang bangers, y rockeros, y normal people… we were all brown or black y ya. Este… I mean, I just went through, you know. It's like iba ‘man this sucks’ it's hard but like man como voy a ganar right? como voy a ganar? So, este, I enjoyed it, it was really hard pero I enjoyed it, este, my English sucked, my Spanish sucked so I was like fuck! So I took classes, it was good, it was good… o then I did that um… también luego que Latino Studies Liberal Arts, pero luego digo yo mean what the hell am I gonna do with that, que voy a hacer, que voy hacer con ese degree, que voy a hacer con ese- I mean y ya cuando entre aquí I was like hell no- 14 bucks an hour? mejor le hubiera hecho caso a mis primos y me hubiera metido a constructions porque... a los que les preguntaba, trabajaban en non-for-profit.”

“I was used to, like, teachers babysitting you in high school and here [in Chicago] you're on your own [in college] … I feel the pressure in my little bubble: here [there were] gang bangers, and rockers, and normal people… we were all brown or black and that’s it. Well… I mean, I just went through, you know. It's like I was ‘man this sucks,’ it's hard, but like, man, how am I going to make a living? How will I make [money]? So uhmm I enjoyed it, it was really hard but I enjoyed it uhmm, my English sucked, my Spanish sucked, so I was like, fuck! So I took classes, it was good, it was good… or then I did that um… also did Latino Studies Liberal Arts, but then I said, ‘man, what the hell am I gonna do with that,’ what am I going to do with that degree, what am I going to do with that- I mean and when I finally was there [university], I was like, ‘hell no- 14 bucks an hour?’ I should have listened to my cousins and I should have gotten into construction, because all those I asked, they worked in non-for-profit.”

In addition to the problems with political integration into U.S. society, second generation students face situations similar to Marcos and Raúl. The role models they have are their parents and older cousins, who are making good money in construction or labor intensive jobs, but the models they have for professional jobs are limited to non-profit professional jobs to help people like them (lower income minorities), teachers, and social workers, none of which pay as well as a full time construction job. Marcos and Raúl, along with many of the second generation older and younger members, are not exposed
to Mexican-origin highly paid professionals, such as bankers, lawyers, business people, surgeons, physical therapists, etc. Thus, their goals and choices are shaped only by what they see and who they know. Eduardo is in a slightly better situation in which he has decided to become a police officer rather than working on the train tracks or in construction, as do his uncles or cousins. However, even though Eduardo began taking psychology classes and learning about careers such as criminal justice investigation or investigatory forensics, he decided not to study law enforcement. A law enforcement career could offer Eduardo more possibilities than just becoming a police officer; however, Eduardo explained that he does not know anyone engaged in these areas who could socialize him into that field, as he is part of a family whose males chose and value going into construction, avocado growing, or other physical labor. Farr (2006) documented that rancheros have always highly valued physical labor. For women, most have chosen career paths such as teaching aides, school secretaries, and in the best of cases, a bilingual school teacher specializing in early childhood reading (Maru). However, as Marcos, Maru’s sister, points out, those kinds of jobs require too much time, expense, and effort and yield pay that is often less than for other types of jobs in construction or in his family’s avocado business. Clearly there is a lack of role models and exposure for second-generation individuals to consider other types of work.

Some younger members of the network are getting such exposure in the Facebook social network and online environment, where they can find opportunities to learn and also to distribute their work, as well as gain some visibility and reputation (Cornelius et al., 2009; Ito et al., 2010). This is the case of members such as Daria, who posts her artwork and offers photography services, or Vania, who uses Facebook to sell tiaras and
prom gowns for girls, as well as souvenirs for religious or birthday parties. In this case, members use of Facebook provides a place and a voice among the broader U.S. population, and, by being in a public space, allows members to slowly integrate into the public and political climate of the larger U.S. society, while still keeping their links to their Mexican identity and transnationality active. Although this study focuses on generation 1.5 and second generation transnational Mexicans of ranchero background in Chicago, its implications may not be limited to Mexican-origin U.S. residents. Given the pluricultural and plurilingual nature of the U.S., this study may provide insights into the practices of bilinguals of any background, including Latinos of non-Mexican origin and non-Latinos. Many transnational Latinos and non-Latinos alike have competence in a language other than English. Additionally, transnational populations live in communities both in the U.S. and in societies abroad.

8.6 Pedagogical implications

The pedagogical implications of this research can be used to improve the school experience of the children and grandchildren of immigrants, especially those of transnational background. First, being aware of how second and third generation members construct identities is relevant for making choices in literature and pedagogy. It is important to have representation from a variety of ethnic groups in children and youth’s literature. Such representation of ethnic groups, however, should not be stereotyped. That is, inclusion of literature about one subset of a larger ethnic group (e.g., Chicanos in the Southwest to represent all Mexican-origin people in the U.S.) is not enough. Nonetheless, schools have now included Chicano authors and literature to
represent Mexican-Americans and even Latino communities in general. Such representations will not benefit, but confuse, in some cases, people from a different background, such as the Mexican-origin individuals in Chicago or New York, for instance. Instead curriculum should incorporate histories and various ethnic perspectives to promote critical thinking, allowing people to independently discover who they are instead of having labels and identities imposed on them (such as imagining all Mexicans as indigenous).

For example, Marcos explained his struggles, while at UIC, defining himself with a single label. He explained that his professors and classmates, who were mostly white, constantly asked him what he considered himself and wanted a specific label. He recalled explaining that he could not be American because of his dark skin color, neither white nor black, but “dark brown.” Marcos also explained that he did not consider himself fully Mexican because even though he regularly visits the rancho, he did not know [at the time] how to properly plant trees or make water wells, both necessary to work in the avocado orchards. Marcos added that he did not fit the description of Mexican-American because he was not Mexican or American, and instead he chose, for a time, to adopt the label Chicano. Marcos’ reasons to temporarily choose a Chicano label include the availability of the literature given to him to exemplify Mexican-origin populations. Marcos explained that he could see (from the literature given to him) that Chicanos are groups of Mexican-origin individuals who work in agriculture, are poor, and have low levels of education. He says it only made sense to group himself and his family with them. He later dropped the label as he realized that his family was very different from the Chicanos represented in the literature.
When asked about labels they use to describe themselves, most members of the transnational network in Chicago blatantly state that they are not Chicanos, and that Chicanos live in California or far away, as found by Elías-Olivares and Farr (1991) over two decades ago. The fact that a single group, such as Chicanos, is well known and studied does not mean it is representative of all Mexican-origin populations. Thus, including various ethnic perspectives in the curriculum and literature is important to aid the process of critical thinking and discovery of people’s own identities. This will in turn create an atmosphere of respect and acceptance for ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Findings of this research also have implications for heritage language programs and their educators, especially in terms of a revision of language ideologies of purism and standardization to promote the use of language varieties without discriminatory and negative attitudes toward less prestigious varieties such as Ranchero Spanish or vernacular English varieties. In Marcos’ quote above, saying “my English sucked, my Spanish sucked,” he indicates he has accepted dominant language ideologies of purism and standardization. Rather than denigrating vernacular varieties, schools should respect them, because these vernacular varieties are part of people’s identities, as has been argued extensively for AAVE (e.g., Rickford & Rickford, 2000). Unfortunately, in many heritage language classes, only the standard variety of Spanish of the teacher is taught, whether that is Mexican, Castilian or Cuban Spanish, for example. Likewise, the standard variety should be taught simply as another variety, and not as an inherently “better” variety of a language, even though standard varieties are associated with social and economic power.
8.7 Limitations and further research

The major limitation of the present study was that it was not feasible to extensively study the Mexican side of the network and spend more time in Mexico to understand what changes have occurred in the rancho as a result of the transnational lifestyle of this particular social network over the past more than 25 years, and how those changes have affected members who live in Chicago. Members of the Cárabecz social network belong to a single transnational community that is located in Chicago and Mexico; thus, knowing well the changes in the Mexican context could better inform the language practices, construction of identities, and choices all members of the network make.

Another limitation is presented by the constraints of the social network. Because this study focused solely on the Cárabez social network, it paid less attention to the engagement that members had with other networks than the engagement they had with each other. It is important to note that members of the network do interact mostly with each other, and to lesser extent with non-family networks, as demonstrated in Chapter 3; however, as new generations begin using social media, they increasingly interact with other networks. It would be interesting to find out how members of this network construct and negotiate their identities with non-Mexican origin individuals.

The participants in the present study belong to a single social network of transnational Mexicans in Chicago. As such, one must keep in mind that every family in this network had somewhat different immigration patterns, circumstances and transnational practices; thus, one cannot generalize to all transnational Mexicans. However, this limitation does not threaten the study because this network is reflective of
the background and immigrant history of many of Mexican-origin immigrants living in Chicago (Farr, 2006). Thus although the study cannot be generalized to all Mexican-origin people, it may be fairly representative of many Mexican transnational social networks based in Chicago. One more limitation was the time allowed for observations in private contexts. Due to privacy issues at work, for instance, it was not always possible to be a participant observer in that context. Additionally, it was not always possible to obtain copies of private online material, such as private IM communications on Facebook or Skype, emails, or texting messages/conversations from mobile devices.

Further research could also focus on language variation and change, but this would require structured interviews and an increase in the amount of time spent for such study. This research only offered a glimpse of the linguistic practices of generation 1.5 and second-generation Mexican-origin transnationals. However, in order to identify whether members are using one language variety more than another, or whether they are forming their own language variety (e.g. Chicago English, Chicago Spanish), it would be necessary to collect a more extensive set of ethnographic data with recordings of naturalistic conversations to a greater degree than was collected for this study.

Another topic for further research is the study of Facebook as a place for outside-of-school literacy practices. It would be interesting to see whether there are attributes of online writing that can bridge what students already do with academic writing. Additionally, further research could explore how academic literacy practices transfer to non-academic contexts (if they do so at all) and vice versa. Further research could delve more deeply into gender issues in the use of online networks, and it could also expand to include a more detailed account of education practices in both countries.
Overall, this study has furthered our understandings about the use of Facebook by transnationals, with a focus on their use of available linguistic resources and the construction of identities with respect to other members of their online network. This study focused on language use by generations 1.5 and 2 in three major areas: bilingualism and identity, language varieties and language ideologies, and transnational space. This study can provide a window into the engagement that such individuals have with Facebook in terms of identity construction and language use. By understanding better the diversity among Mexican-origin populations in the U.S., politicians and educators and may have a greater chance at making the necessary changes that will prepare individuals for a more diverse and complex society.
References


Ortmeier-Hooper, C. (2008). English may be my second language, but I’m not “ESL”. College Composition and Communication, 59(3), 389–419.


Stephenson-Abetz, J., & Holman, A. (2012). Home is where the heart is: Facebook and the negotiation of “old” and “new” during the transition to college. Western Journal of Communication, 76(2), 175–193. doi:10.1080/10570314.2011.654309


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Appendix A: Codes

The tables in this appendix contain the categories and names of codes used to analyze two months of Facebook data of 14 focal participants from the network. Each code contains a description. Examples of codes are provided, since none were given in Chapter 2 or 3. A post is an individual entry in Facebook. This is a summary of the categories and the Table number and name that contains its codes and descriptors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Table</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of posts</td>
<td>Table 25 <em>Types of posts found on Facebook</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 11 <em>Sample Facebook post</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of posts</td>
<td>Table 26 <em>Forms of Facebook posts</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language function of posts</td>
<td>Table 27 <em>Language functions based on Jakobson (1960)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlocutor</td>
<td>Table 28 <em>Type of interlocutor posting a message</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language use in post</td>
<td>Table 29 <em>Languages, varieties, and features found in Facebook posts</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Codes used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall Posts</td>
<td>Wall Post - Status Updates (SWP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wall Post - On friend’s wall (WPF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Posts</td>
<td>Response post - to friend’s post on writer’s wall (RWP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response Post - to friend’s post on friend’s own wall (RWF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response post on conversation (RC)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 25 Types of posts found on Facebook

Figure 11 Sample Facebook post
Category: **Forms of Facebook posts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code used</th>
<th>Description and examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plain text</strong></td>
<td>This type of post utilizes any letter of the alphabet, number, punctuation marks or other orthographic symbols (e.g. !, @, :, &gt;) to make a statement. It does not include combinations that are used in textese or netspeak (which include a combination of characters to represent an emotion or a gesture; e.g. the use of &lt;3 to represent a heart). Example (from Facebook conversation in Figure 12): “Yegua bruta ni con jinete afamado” (Untamed mare, not even with a dedicated trainer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textese</strong></td>
<td>These are abbreviated words or phrases that eliminate some written letters of commonly used words or phrases. Example: u (you), thnx (thanks), lol (laughing out loud), tttyl (talk to you later), smh (shaking my head).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emoticon</strong></td>
<td>These are pictorial representations of facial expressions or objects using a combination of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks to express an emotion. Example of emoticons that represent facial expressions for emotions: &lt;3 (love) ⊕ (happy) -<em>- (indifferent) &gt;</em>&lt; (doh!) Example of emoticons of objects: @&gt;--- (a rose)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media (photo/video)</strong></td>
<td>These are embedded pictures or videos produced by members themselves and posted either as a wall post or response. Media posts can be accompanied by any other form of post (e.g. plain text, textese, an emoticon, etc.). Example:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continued*
Table 26 continued

| **Meme** | These are ideas that are spread via the internet in multimodal form – e.g. pictures, music, callouts, and that can be mutated, adapted, and crossed over.

Example:
The following meme contains a picture of Kola Loka glue (Krazy Glue) with the caption “Lipstick for weight loss” and a foot note “ah dude!” |

| **Link to video** | These are video links from youtube.com, hulu.com, or other video hosting websites. Facebook embeds a small caption describing what the owner wrote on the video and a hyperlink to it. Members can post the video link from the website directly or copy and paste the link. Members can add their own caption in the status update if they want.

Example: |

<p>| <strong>Like button</strong> |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referential – focus on context (denotative function)</strong></td>
<td>Describes situations, objects, and mental states. Includes descriptive statements with definite descriptors. Usually combined with other functions. Includes utterances with deictic terms such as ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘here’, ‘now’.  Example: “I was sleeping.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotive – focus on addressee (expressive function)</strong></td>
<td>Produces an impression of a certain emotion, or a direct expression of a speaker's attitude toward what he or she is speaking. Includes interjections (e.g. oh!, wow!), modifications of linguistic sounds that add information about a stance or attitude taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conative – Focus on addressee (vocative and imperative function)</strong></td>
<td>Includes imperative sentences. Entails a call for action by another entity. Cannot be challenged by questions such as ‘is it true or not?’ Differs greatly from declarative statements. Example: “Call me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phatic (contact function)</strong></td>
<td>Serves to establish, to prolong or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works, and to attract or confirm interlocutor’s attention. Includes a set of formulaic expressions such as ‘can you hear me?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metalingual (code)</strong></td>
<td>Provides clarification when the addressee or addressee needs to verify whether they are using the same code. Example: “Do you know what I mean?” It is the function that talks about language, or the talk about talk. It includes the discussion of meaning of words and definitions. An example is “A sophomore is (or means) a second year student”. It is widely used in the context of language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poetic – focus on the message for its own sake</strong></td>
<td>Allows for the study of verbal play. Focuses on how speakers manipulate shapes and sounds to convey their messages. Lets form control the content. Goes beyond poetry. Example: “But you lied again, now you get to watch her leave out the window Guess that's why they call it ‘window pane’” (Eminem, excerpt from lyrics of Love the Way You Lie)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27 Language functions from Jakobson (1960)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes used</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interlocutor</td>
<td>Family/Friend – part of network</td>
<td>Post belongs to a member of the Cárabez social network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friend - not part of network but close to member</td>
<td>Post belongs to a close friend of a member of the Cárabez social network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family/Friend – not part of network</td>
<td>Post belongs to a family or friend who is not a member of the Cárabez social network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man to man</td>
<td>Post (wall or response) written by one man to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman to woman</td>
<td>Post (wall or response) written by one woman to another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woman to Man</td>
<td>Post (wall or response) written by a woman to a man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Man to Woman</td>
<td>Post (wall or response) written by a man to a woman.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28 Type of interlocutor posting a message
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Codes used</th>
<th>Description (examples can be found in Chapter 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code-switching</td>
<td>Intrasentential CS</td>
<td>Intrasentential codeswitching occurs when there is a change within the same sentence. The change can range from a single-morpheme to a clause (Myers-Scotton, 1993a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intersentential CS</td>
<td>Intersentential codeswitching occurs when there is a change between sentences (Myers-Scotton, 1993a) or speech acts (Saville-Troike, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translation CS</td>
<td>Written statement in one language, immediately followed by its translation to the other language, without adding, subtracting, or altering the meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unmarked Spanish</td>
<td>Standard Mexican Spanish varieties (formal, informal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ranchero (marked) Spanish</td>
<td>Stigmatized features that deviate from standard Mexican Spanish forms and have been found to be widely used by ranchero background Mexican speakers (Farr, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American Spanish features</td>
<td>Mexican Spanish used in the U.S., characterized by interference from English, such as the use of calques, (Lipski, 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unmarked English</td>
<td>Standard American English varieties (formal, informal).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AAVE features</td>
<td>Features of AAVE variety. (Explained in table in Appendix E)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (non AAVE) vernacular features</td>
<td>Features that belong to different varieties of English including AAVE, European American Vernacular English, Latino/Chicano English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slang</td>
<td>Forms that are considered slang, regardless of the feature it accompanies (e.g. slang written with AAVE features, slang written with other vernacular features, slang with unmarked English).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (not-dominant)</td>
<td>Languages other than English and Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29 Languages, varieties, and features found in Facebook posts
Appendix B: Cárabez Social Network Participant’s Information

This table provides the gender, country of residency, and educational level of all participants in this research. Participants are organized in family units. In order to see a graphic representation of families, refer to Figure 2.1 in Chapter 2. Of all the members of the larger family network, only those who belong to the Cárabez social network are included in this table, except those who explicitly requested not to be part of the study. Thus, there are omitted numbers, which represent the omitted members. The numbers assigned to the members refer to their place of birth within their nuclear families. An example is Tita (2.1.1). Tita is the first child (.1) of Licha, who is the first child (.1.1) of Javier, who is the second born child (2.1.1) of the Cárabez Linares Family. The colors represent whether the members are immigrant or non-immigrant and what generation they belong to.

- **Black** = Immigrant generation  (Country of birth: México)
- **Grey** = Non-Immigrant  (Country of birth: México)
- **Red** = Gen 1.5  (Country of birth: Mexico; brought to U.S. as children)
- **Blue** = Second  (Country of birth: U.S.)
- **Yellow** = Third  (Country of birth: U.S.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Male/ Female</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Education level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cárbarez Linares</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fam. Cárbarez Navarro (Javier &amp; Arcelia)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Licha &amp; Corro</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Tita</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Four year college (graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Daria</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Community college (graduate) / Four year college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Natalia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Esteban &amp; Etna</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Méx / U.S.</td>
<td>High school (graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Eduardo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Community college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Mateo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Elementary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Dalia &amp; Gabriel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Community college (graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Fanny</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Community college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1.1</td>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Fabián</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Telma &amp; Cosme</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1</td>
<td>Cosme</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Community college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Chela &amp; Juan</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1</td>
<td>Itzel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2</td>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3</td>
<td>Pepito</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fam. Cárbarez Valdovinos (Elías &amp;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Roberto &amp; Yolis</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High school (graduate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>Margo</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Four year college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>Nara</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Four year college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3</td>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4</td>
<td>Citlalli</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fam. Carbajal Cárbarez (Alfonso &amp; Lucía)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Méx/U.S.</td>
<td>See 4a below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Maru &amp; Chayas</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Milo</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Raúl</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>Four year college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Marcos</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>Four year college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30 Cárbarez Navarro Family

Continued
Table 30 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Fam. Cárabez Garza (José &amp; Ana)</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Lety</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1</td>
<td>Mila</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fam. Pulido Cárabez (Esther &amp; José)</td>
<td>Méx/U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Susana &amp; Peña (#5b)</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1</td>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Vania</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Chepe</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.1</td>
<td>Chepiz</td>
<td>M</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Country of residence</th>
<th>Education level</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Carbajal González</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1a.1</td>
<td>Lola</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a.1</td>
<td>See #2.6 Raquel &amp; Juan family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Alfonso See #5 Fam. Carbajal Cárabez</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Glafira</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a.1</td>
<td>Vigo</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 31 Carbajal Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leonor Navarro</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Peña – See #7.1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>Teyo</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Méx</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 32 Leonor Navarro Family
Appendix C: Sociolinguistic Interview Topics and Guiding Questions

This appendix contains two sections. The first section (1.1) contains the Guideline for individual interviews. The second section (1.2) contains the guided topics of conversation for informal small-group interviews.

Guidelines for Individual Interviews

Module 1: Background Information

1. Sex (F) (M)
2. What's your name?
3. How old are you?
4. Where were you born?
5. If you were born in the United States, are you a first, second, or third generation Mexican?
6. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
7. What are their names and ages, and where do they live?
8. What are your parents’ names and ages, and where do they live?
9. Are you married? How long have you been married?
10. Do you have any children? How many?
11. What are their names and ages, and where were they born?
12. How long have you lived in the United States? How long have you lived in Chicago?
13. How long have you lived in Pilsen/Little Village, Gage Park, etc.?
14. What other Chicago neighborhoods have you lived in? How long did you live there?
15. Are you presently a student/employed? What is your occupation?
16. Where do you study/work?
17. How long have you been studying/working there?
18. What do you consider yourself to be? Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, American, Latino, etc.
19. How often do or did you travel to Mexico?

Module 2: Literacy History

1. What was the first language in which you learned to read and write?
2. How old were you?

3. Who taught you or how did you learn to read and write in English?

4. Tell me about your experience reading and writing in Spanish.

5. How old were you when you learned to read and write in Spanish?

6. Who taught you or how did you learn to read and write in Spanish? How was it? How did you like it?

7. In what language did you prefer to read books and magazines as a child? Why?

8. In what language did you prefer to write letters or stories as a child? Why?

9. Tell me about the importance to be able to read and write in English, Spanish, in both languages. Why do you think it is/isn’t important?

10. Right now, how much do you write a lot in English, say for letters, notes to the family, diaries, or record keeping, or on the job? Are there any other uses for written English in the community?

11. Tell me about your uses of writing in Spanish. With whom and where do you practice it?

12. Is there anything that you regularly read in English? (Newspapers, magazines, religious materials, books, or anything else?).

13. Is there anything that you regularly read in Spanish? (Newspapers, magazines, religious materials, books, or anything else?).

Module 3:
Attitudes Toward Writing

1. How important is writing for school? What about for getting a good job?

2. Do you like writing? Why or why not?

3. Why do you think writing is easy/difficult for you?

4. What do you think about the writing required at school?

5. Are you comfortable writing? Where do you use writing? Do you like it?

6. Do you think writing is different in different places?

7. Which language you like better in writing, English or Spanish? Why?

8. What language would it be advantageous to know how to write? Why?

9. If you could choose, would you speak and write in English, Spanish or both? Why?

10. Is the English/Spanish you write different from the one others speak? What are some differences?

11. Do you think that there is a form of writing better or worse than the others? How so?

12. Do you ever mix the two languages when you write? (even when you think about what to write)

13. Do you feel you write well when you text or use Facebook?

14. Do you think that people should be allowed or not to use two languages when they write?

Module 4:
Mass Media
1. Does your family read any newspapers or magazines? Which ones? How regularly do you read them?
2. Do you watch videos on YouTube? Do you write comments? In what language? How often?
3. How familiar are you with Facebook or other social network sites? How often do you check your Facebook?
4. Do you write on Facebook walls/send Facebook messages?
5. What language do you use when you Facebook?
6. Explain reasons to check Facebook.
7. What about websites/web surfing? How often do you surf the web?
8. What kind of websites do you visit? Do you interact by writing?
9. How often do you web browse?
10. Tell me about your favorite websites.
11. What about blogs or groups? Do you participate in any?
12. Do you like using the Internet? How much do you use it?
13. Where do you get access to the Internet?
14. Does your mobile phone give you access to the Internet?
15. Do you Twitter or follow someone on Twitter?
16. What do you think of people who Twitter or Facebook a lot?
17. How much do you think your parents know about these social network sites? What do you think is their opinion about them?
18. Do you use any of these sites for school?
19. What is your experience using computers?
20. What about texting?
21. How often do you text? Who do you text to?

Guideline Questions for Informal Small-group Interviews

- Discuss your experiences with writing in English and Spanish:
  - At school
  - At home
  - In other contexts
- Talk about the place of writing in your life and in the society:
  - Need and importance
  - What kind(s) of writing?
- What is your idea of good/bad writing?
  - In everyday life
  - At school
  - For work
- What do you think of writing in general?
- Discuss advantages and disadvantages of writing:
  - Well/bad
  - In English/Spanish
• Do you consider texting and participating in social network sites such as Facebook writing?
  o If so, what kind of writing is it?
  o Talk about the advantages/disadvantages of that type of writing
• Talk about how your parents/family has influenced you on what you think of writing?
  o Discuss their background and how that relates to you.
  o Talk about your experiences growing up in two countries
  o Explain how going to two school systems affected your view and ability of writing.
Appendix D: AAVE Features

This table contains a synthesis of AAVE features as presented in Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2003) and Rickford and Rickford (2000).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Habitual *be* for habitual or intermittent activity | Sometimes my ears be itching  
She don’t usually be there |
| Invariant *be*               |                                                                         |
| 1) Leaving out *be* with contracted forms | Wait awhile. She be [ = ‘ll be] right around.  
Well, if I be the winner, I be [ = ‘ll be or ’d be] glad.  
He be talkin’ with this lady every day (compare to “he ø talkin’ to her right now”) |
| 2) Invariant habitual *be*  |                                                                         |
| Absence of copula for contracted forms of *is* and *are* | she walk for she walks  
she raise for she raises |
| Present tense, third-person –s absence | They acting all strange |
| Remote time stressed *béen* to mark a state or action that began a long time ago and is still relevant | You béen paid your dues a long time ago.  
I béen known him a long time. |
| Simple past tense *had* + verb | They had went outside and then they had messed up the yard.  
Yesterday, she had fixed the bike and had rode it to school. |
| *ain’t* for *didn’t*        | He ain’t go there yesterday.  
He ain’t do it. |
| *ain’t* is also used for negative forms and constructions | I ain’t lyin’ [ = am not].  
He ain’t never [ = hasn’t ever] had a job in his life. |
| **Syntactic features**      |                                                                         |
| Possessive –s absence        | man_ hat for man’s hat  
Jack_ car for Jack’s car |
| General plural –s absence   | a lot of time for a lot of times  
some dog for some dogs |
| Questions, direct and indirect | I asked him could he come with me. |
| Pronouns double subject      | The man, he walks to the store. |

Continued

Table 33 Synthesis of AAVE features as presented in Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2003) and Rickford and Rickford (2000).
Table 33 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonetic features (intonation, syllables, and stress)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Metathesis of consonants                            | aks for ask  
waps for wasp |
| *r* and *l* – deletion after vowels                 | he’p for help  
afta for after  
yo for you |
| *r* between vowels                                  | Ca[r]ol |
| Simplification of consonant clusters                | tes’ for test  
des’ for desk  
han’ for hand |
| Reduction of final consonant clusters when followed by a word beginning with a vowel | lif’ up for lift up  
bus’ for bust up |
| *skr* for *str* initial clusters                     | skreet for street  
skraight for straight |
| Use of *[f]* and *[v]* for final *th*                | Toof for tooth  
Smoov for smooth |
| Diphthong involving a glide pronounced as a monophtong | “Ah think ah’ve got somethin’ in mah ah” |
| Similar pronunciation of *e* and *i* before nasals   | Pin and pen sound like /pin/ |
| Placing stress on the first rather than second syllable | PO-lice  
HO-tel |
| Delete the unstressed initial and medial syllables (more often than whites do) | (a)bout  
(be)cause  
(a)fraid |
| Consonant replacement                               | skreet for street  
skretch for stretch  
hebben for heaven  
nebba for never |
| *n*-type of velar nasal at the end of words replaced by alveolar nasal *ŋ* | walkin’  
singin’  
thin |
| Replacement of *–th* by *t*, *f*, *d*, or *v* (depending on voiced/voiceless clusters) | Tin for thin  
Rufe for Ruth  
Dem for them  
Bave for bathe |
| Voiceless *th* by voiceless *t* or *f*               | |
| Voiced *th* by voiced *d* or *v*                    | |
| Deletion of voiced stops (*b*, *d*, or *g*) when any one of them is the first consonant in tense-aspect markers or auxiliary verbs | d of don’t (*Ah ‘on’ know – I don’t know and He ain’t do it  
– He didn’t do it”)  
G of gonna (“Ah ma do it – I’m gonna do it”) |
Appendix E: Stigmatized Features of Mexican Spanish

Unlike some varieties of English, such as AAVE, varieties of Mexican Spanish have not been widely studied. Thus, it is not possible to provide a complete list of features that identify a specific group of people. The goal of this table is to present a list of stigmatized features of Mexican Spanish used in the area where the Cárabez social network is from in Mexico (Farr, 2006; Santa Ana & Parodi, 1998). Speakers of ranchero background use these stigmatized features widely (Farr, 2006). Thus, in this research the use of these stigmatized features is labeled Ranchero Spanish.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stigmatized</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexical items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ái</td>
<td>ahí</td>
<td>over there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aigre</td>
<td>aire</td>
<td>‘air’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asigüñ</td>
<td>según</td>
<td>‘according to’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asina, ansina</td>
<td>así</td>
<td>‘this way’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ey</td>
<td>sí</td>
<td>‘yes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mesma</td>
<td>misma</td>
<td>‘the same’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muncho</td>
<td>mucho</td>
<td>much, very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naiden, nadien</td>
<td>nadie</td>
<td>‘no one’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on (as in on tā)</td>
<td>dónde está</td>
<td>where is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pa</td>
<td>para</td>
<td>‘for’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pader</td>
<td>pared</td>
<td>‘wall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pos, pue, pus</td>
<td>pues</td>
<td>‘well, then’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>probe</td>
<td>pobre</td>
<td>‘poor’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verb conjugations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bía</td>
<td>había</td>
<td>‘there was’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dijites</td>
<td>dijiste</td>
<td>you said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haiga</td>
<td>haya</td>
<td>‘there is’ (subjunctive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jueron, jui, jué</td>
<td>fueron, fui, fué</td>
<td>‘they went’, ‘I went’, ‘he/she went’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>queren</td>
<td>quieren</td>
<td>they want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semos</td>
<td>somos</td>
<td>we are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traiba</td>
<td>traía</td>
<td>you brought (imperfect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trujites</td>
<td>trajiste</td>
<td>you brought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trujo</td>
<td>trajo</td>
<td>he/she brought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venemos</td>
<td>venimos</td>
<td>we come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>via</td>
<td>veía</td>
<td>I/he saw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-i&lt;-e</td>
<td>pior, lechi, dali*</td>
<td>‘worse than, worst’, ‘milk’, ‘give it to him/her’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>peor, leche, dale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-a’o</td>
<td>-ado</td>
<td>plough/ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. ara’o</td>
<td>e.g. arado</td>
<td>(n. / past participle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-u</td>
<td>-o</td>
<td>toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. sapu</td>
<td>e.g. sapo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aspirated /h/</td>
<td>not aspirated /h/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>juido, jijo</td>
<td>huido, hijo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>huido, hijo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 34 Synthesis of Ranchero Spanish features (adapted from Farr, 2006 and Santa Ana & Parodi, 1998)
Appendix F: Mexican Spanish in the U.S.

This table summarizes the characteristics of Mexican Spanish in the U.S. described by Lipski (2008). As Lipski (2008) noted, only varieties such as Chicano Spanish or Texas Spanish have been widely studied. However, he presents what he calls features of “American Spanish.” The list below contains the name of the features and their examples, if available, from Lipski (2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shift from subjunctive to indicative</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in use of prepositions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in use of past tense verbs</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun adjective gender/number concord</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergence of ser/estar</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loan translations (disputed as true Anglicisms sometimes)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calques</td>
<td>“te llamo patrés” for “te regreso la llamada”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“dar para atrás” for “devolver”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“pagar para atrás” for repay a loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“pensar para atrás” for reflect “reflecticionar”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. use of “back” as in call you back, think back, bring back</td>
<td>Pachuco Variation or Caló slang: ranfla (car), ruca (girlfriend), birlotear (to dance), refinar (to eat), chale (no, shut up)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 35 Features of Mexican-origin Spanish in the U.S. as presented in Lipski (2008)
Figure 12 Updated social network of families studied by Farr (2006)
Appendix H: Photos of the Rancho and Chicago

Photo 3 Photo of a traditional house in San Juanico in 1990s (Farr, 2006)

Photo 4 Photo of a traditional house in San Juanico in 2012 (non-transnational owners)
Photo 5 Photo of modern house in San Juanico 2012 (non-transnational, avocado business owner)

Photo 6 Photo of a traditional house in San Juanico in 2012 (transnational owner)

Photo 7 Photo of modern house in San Juanico in 2012 (transnational owner)
Photo 8 Upgraded kitchen in San Juanico in 1996 (Farr, 2006), (transnational owner)

Photo 9 Upgraded kitchen in San Juanico in 2012 (transnational owner)

Photo 10 Upgraded kitchen in Chicago in 2012 (transnational owner)