Raciolinguistics

HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES OUR IDEAS ABOUT RACE

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Norteño and Sureño Gangs, Hip Hop, and Ethnicity on YouTube

Localism in California through Spanish Accent Variation

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The globalized culture of Hip Hop and the emphasis on local forms of language play important roles in other chapters in this volume (see chapters 2 and 6, for example).[1] In this chapter, my analysis of localism and the politics of territory in the constitution of various California language varieties adds multiple semiotic dimensions to this work. Below, I build upon my long-term ethnographic research among Latino gangs in California to highlight various kinds of Chicano/Mexican identity work through language. As I will demonstrate, the language ideological fault lines between Norteños and Sureños positioned the former as mostly speakers of Chicano English from Northern California and the latter as Spanish speakers from either Southern California or possibly of recent immigrant Mexican background. I build upon Hill's (2008) analysis of Mock Spanish as well as Talmy's (2010) use of "Mock ESL," as a mock register "surrounding the widely stigmatized acquisition of English as a Second Language," to uncover further layers of complexity in U.S. Latino language use in transnational, mass-mediated contexts. In the process, I examine cyberspace as a potential context where young people become political analysts (and actors) and synthesize their understanding of the larger processes of race (various forms of *Latinidad*), language (multiple regional, ethnic, and mock varieties of both English and Spanish), capital structures, and global power relations.

Recent work in sociolinguistic variation has examined the role of both the mass media (Coupland 2009; Stuart-Smith 2005) and of the Hip Hop/rap genre on language in various locales (Alim 2006 for the Northern California Bay Area; Morgan 2009 for Los Angeles; Blake and Shousterman 2010 for St. Louis; Taylor 2011 for Austin, Texas). Attention has increasingly focused on the role of new

media such as YouTube (see Schieffelin and Jones 2009). YouTube users post videos in what serves as a *call*; subsequently, this call brings *responses* either in video format, or as text commentary on the original posting. This call-response format provides a unique combination of data that allows for the simultaneous investigation of language, metalanguage, and their relationships to space and place.

Although new media have traditionally been thought of as delocalized, I draw on prior discussions of localism and politics of territory in the constitution of subaltern California language varieties, analyzing how stylistic variation and dimensions of proficiency in Spanish acquire a symbolic, localistic dimension for new media users. I argue that hemispheric localism is a projection onto the hemispheric political-stage of processes that began locally in the history of groups of Latinos in California, and that this meaning system becomes projected as a wider political analysis. Young people involved in Norte and Sur become political analysts and actors, organizing their experience through the lens of their participation in these groups. Their participation provides opportunities to make sense of broader racial, linguistic, and economic structures and relations of power.

This analysis draws on a small subset from a corpus of forty YouTube music-fan video postings and their associated responses collected between April 2008 and December 2012. The videos represent rap music claiming association with the California gangs[2] Norteños and Sureños (Mendoza-Denton 2008). A multilayered methodological approach utilizing discourse analysis and semiotic analysis is used to analyze the content and structure of images and language in the videos. As worn on T-shirts, as traded in figurines, and as circulated in hand-drawn artwork, recurrent historical symbols shown in the videos help to set the discursive chronotopes (Bakhtin 1981). These include the space/time intersectional frame of California in the 1960s and 1970s, invoked partially through the iconography of the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement (for example, pictures of the UFW symbol of an angular black eagle against a red background, known as the *Huelga/Welga* [Strike] Bird), and of prison-scapes and barrio-scapes, consistent with an imaginary of the prison as the place where gangs began.

If we agree with Tuan (1977, 6) that places are pauses in historical time, it is less obvious that meaning is embedded in physical space, or that there exist some objective coordinates on the earth's surface onto which webs of meaning are woven, as some definitions of space/place by political geographers would lead us to believe (Agnew 1987; see discussion in Cresswell 2004). *Places* on YouTube can be as ephemeral as a temporary electronic comment-board, or as durable as the well-established and recurrent pattern of references to both the [illegible] constructed discursively and graphically anew in the

This chapter focuses on the post–mass media phenomenon of fan video remixes, where not only are traditional physical spaces represented with map-making zeal, but new place distinctions are created. For example, while *banging* usually means "carrying out gang-related activities," there is a sharp distinction between *banging* on the streets versus *banging* on the Internet (sometimes called *e-banging*, regarded as less credible).

The data I present here are from new media mixed by fans from materials produced by Chicano rappers who claim to have involvement in gangs. As I have noted elsewhere (Mendoza-Denton 2008), an important division among Latino gangs in California involves the Norteños (Northerners) and Sureños (Southerners). Among youth in the 1990s in my Northern California ethnographic high-school study, Norteños saw themselves as Chicanos from Northern California, while Sureños represented themselves as either Southern Californian and urban, or possibly recent immigrant Mexicans. In each case, the group aligned more closely with a particular language. Chicano English was more emblematic of Norteños, while Spanish use was often interpreted as indexing Sureños. Although I don't claim that the situation I found is wholly replicated on YouTube, I offer examples that will allow us to explore continuities across the symbolic aspects of English and Spanish language use, and their relationship to space and place.

In fan-produced YouTube videos, images of California, North America, representation of area codes, and territorializing devices around language are specifically highlighted. Despite pervasive and native English-Spanish codeswitching in the rap lyrics and commentary, fan videos remixed by Norteños make use of Mock Spanish, Mock ESL, and boldly mispronounced codeswitching to portray Sureños as rural, backward, Spanish-accented immigrants, in line with discourses identified by Hill (2008) in her analysis of Mock Spanish, but notably deployed intraethnically. Elsewhere I have analyzed other linguistic devices in these samples including creaky voice (Mendoza-Denton 2011).

Working with YouTube: Fan Videos in the Post–Mass Media

YouTube, currently the largest online video-sharing website, has grown from its inception in 2005 to more than six billion video streams across the world. Lemos (2010) calls its participatory structure the *post–mass media*, and distinguishes it from our traditional understanding of mass media, which is supported by advertising and editorially controlled by corporations and by the state. Here I focus on semiotic/content analysis of four fan-uploaded videos. Table 7.1 lists the downloaded videos, stills, or music in the order in which each will be dis-

Table 7.1 **Videos discussed in this chapter**

Video number (subcategory)	*Hypotext/Source: Remix of song, artist*
Video 1. Brown Pride Norte (Revolutionary Rap)	"559" by PBC
Video 2. La Vida de un Sureño (Revolutionary Rap)	"La Vida de un Sureño," by Tongo
Video 3. Sur Trece Pela	Homemade track
Video 4. SK (Revolutionary Rap)	Untraceable song, but with recognizable sample from "Corazón de Madera" by Mexican Ranchera-genre music group Mister Chivo

YouTube users and commenters were not contacted for this research, and their identities or involvement as gang affiliates were not ascertainable from their posts. I do, however, identify broad discursive and thematic patterns common across online images that exhibit commonalities with material artifacts collected in fieldwork conducted among high school students in Northern and Southern California in the late 1990s–early 2000s (Mendoza-Denton 2008), and with material artifacts described in research carried out in Los Angeles neighborhoods in the 1970s and 1980s (Moore 1978; Vigil 1988; Moore 1991). In some cases, these artifacts are found in research dating back to the 1940s and 1950s (i.e., zoot suits; see Molina 2002).

These aspects of material culture often reference Mexican-American/Chicano history, bringing to life places and spaces—that is, chronotopes—at a particular, historically significant time. When graphic sequences do include stills, they may depict 30- or 40-year-old archival photographs of some of the founding members of the Nuestra Familia and the Mexican Mafia prison gangs, demonstrating fans' attention to historical context, consciousness, and continuity. These stills exploit well-known iconicities that can be read by members with knowledge of Mexican-American/Chicano civil rights and gang history.

Consider the image presented in Figure 7.1, found in fan-uploaded video #1 for the PBC song "Don't Wanna be a Playa." The image depicts a red puppeteer's hand manipulating the words "Bay Area," presented on the left panel, side-by-side with its hypotext, the movie poster for *The Godfather*, shown on the right. The localistic claim about Norteños controlling the Bay Area through a red puppeteer's hand references not only local gang ideology and the Hollywood movie but also the fact that both Norteños and Sureños gangs envision their structure as replicating that of the Italian Mafia (Mendoza 2005;

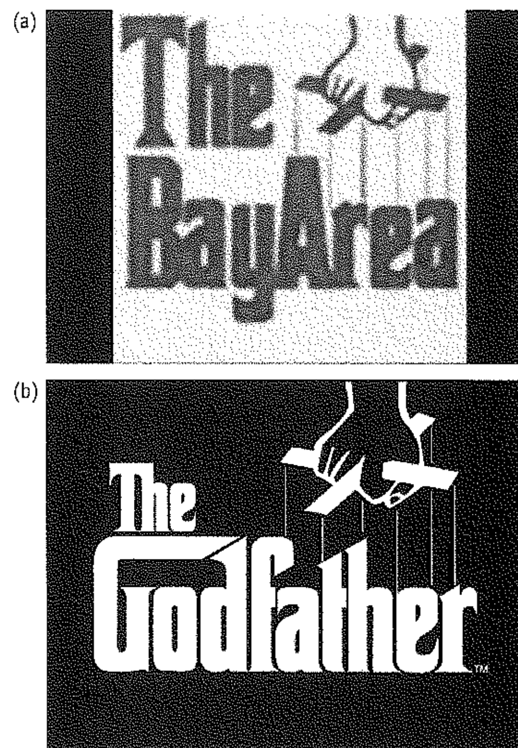


Figure 7.1 Comparison of Norteños "The Bay Area" image from a fan-uploaded video, and the image from the movie poster for *The Godfather*.

Animated Graffiti: History, Localistic Ideologies, and Linguo-Visual Semiotics

> Place is how we make the world meaningful and the way we experience the world. Place is space invested with meaning in the context of power. (Cresswell 2004, 12)

The gangs as depicted in the fan videos show localistic ideologies, claiming control of geographic areas as small as specific streets within neighborhoods, but most frequently representing claims with area codes and maps of various territories. In this way, fan videos extend the material practice of gang graffiti to the Internet. As gangs claim physical space, the chronotopic nature of the videos allows them to claim place as well. *Place* on these YouTube fan videos is linked to history in quite explicit ways. A Sureño-aligned video (#2) reproduces an advertisement that ran only in Mexico by the vodka company *Absolut* (Figure 7.2). The graphic lays claim to the historical territory that used to be Mexico in the early nineteenth century, depicted with the slogan "In an Absolut

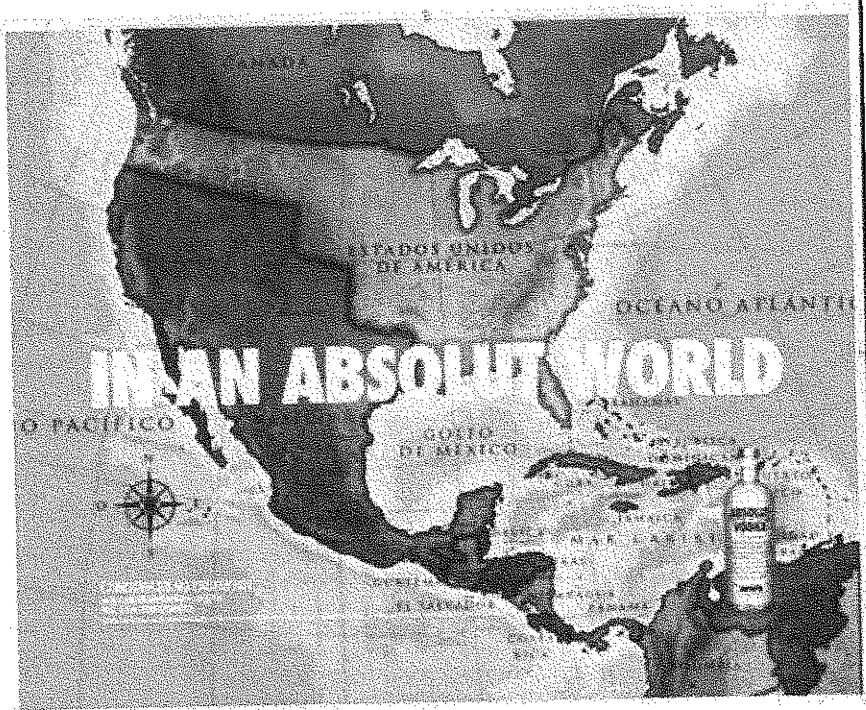


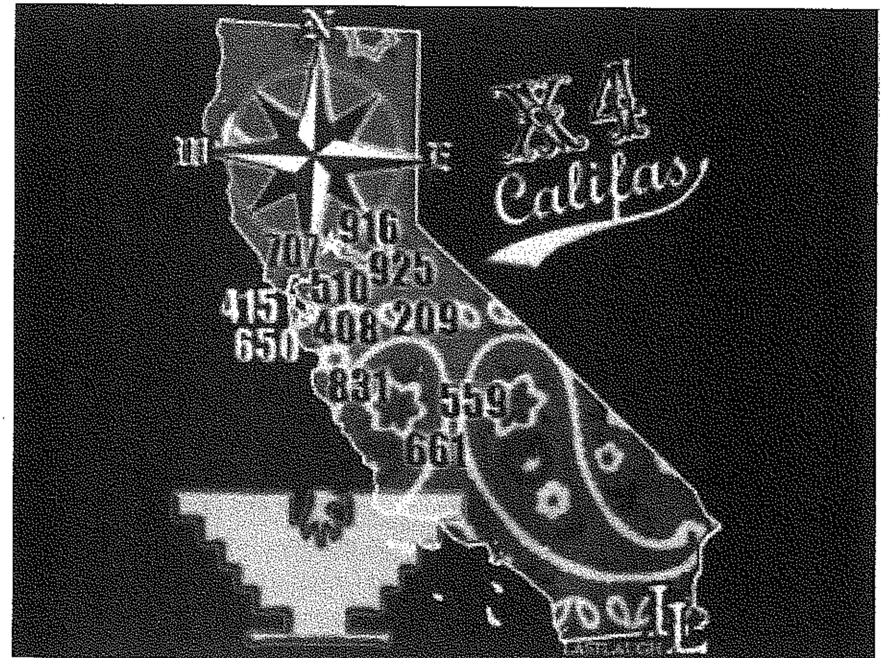
Figure 7.2 "In an Absolut World" image from a Sureño-aligned video.

World"—presumably Absolut here means "ideal"—overlain on a map of Mexico and the United States before the Mexican Cession of 1848, the Gadsden purchase of 1853, and the annexation of Texas in 1845. This map is projected in quick succession after a map of the territory claimed by Sureños (Figure 7.3)

The map of territory claimed by the Sureños in video #2 looks very similar to the Absolut/historical map except that it is animated. The two-second animation begins with the territorial outlines of an early-nineteenth-century Mexico map and eventually shows the entire United States, Mexico, and Central America as blue—Sureño—territory. Not only does the map reflect a historical connection with the prior territorial claims of Mexico, but it also has much in common with law enforcement and other time-series maps depicting the spread of gangs. This type of broad time-series geographic mapping of gangs has been used within police departments and in the media (Mendoza-Denton 2008). The homemade animated videos reflect both an awareness of the history of the territories in question and are intertextual with gang-related materials commonly issued by police departments.

Places in more circumscribed areas of the United States, such as specific cities in Northern California (see Figure 7.4), are represented by their telephone

Figure 7.3 Map of the territory claimed by Sureños.



being local to that area. In addition, sometimes the area codes appear as material objects through gang tagging (graffiti) or on bodily tattoos. People and objects are associated with particular places by their inclusion in the fan-videos or in the lyrics of the rap songs. For example, Tongo's "La Vida de Un Sureño" rap claims the 813 area code in Florida, "ocho uno tres/ ésta area me pertenece, [*eight one three / this area belongs to me*]," while PBC's (2000) song "559" finds its title in the area code currently given to PBC's home city of Lemoore in Kings County, California, which in 1998 changed from the 209 to the 559 area code. Even these prior area codes make their way onto songs: lyrics from PBC's song "4-Life" are given below:

> (1) We're just some crazy little bald-headed
> Mexicans
> representing for Lemoore city
> and when we put in work we do it
> and show no fucking pity.
> We used to be from the 209
> Kings county, 559.

In the case of area codes, the poster of a video has the power to represent their vision of what places are to be interpellated. These call-outs are supported or challenged by commenters reacting to the clips: here I suggest that the comments are akin to the repeated crossings-out of graffiti, with claims being posted, challenged, and reasserted. Since much of the claiming has to do with space outside the YouTube forum, a tension emerges through participants' claims of legitimacy in physical, localistic space; at the same time users appear to distance themselves from "e-banging," that is to say, presumably inauthentic (or at least unverifiable) gang-related behavior on the Internet. Nonetheless, geographic claims made online encompass broad swaths of territory, as is the case in Figure 7.5.

In both Figures 7.4 and 7.5 we encounter the chronotope of Chicano Civil Rights and of California in the 1970s through the Huelga Bird. Chronotopes put together the historical, intergenerational memory of California as a place where the farmworker struggle originated, and serve as an invocation and reminder of the roots of the gangs. This memory is richly accessorized with references to material cultural objects, semiotically bundled (Keane 2003) in their participation through various modalities. Memorialization in the "virtual landscape" consists of displaying images of historical, prison-related, and barrio-related iconography, overlain with sonic hypotexts such as Original Oldies ("Oldies"). These semiotic bundles serve as both memory and metaphor, and are participants in an epiphenomenal process: when appearing simultaneously, they trigger a new

Figure 7.5 "From Texas 2 th4 Bay, Nortenos run thizz $hit."

context. Because the iconography presented in the videos is also available in figurines, jewelry, t-shirts, drawings, magazines (like *Lowrider*), and other symbols outside of the virtual world of YouTube, they are multiply redundant and immediately interpretable to participants. Technologization and globalization of the post–mass media allow for fans' documentation and broadcast of local aspects of their material culture: when fans upload images of homemade art, or videos synced to popular rap songs, they participate in what I call an episemiotic intertextuality that transcends their local space and time.

So far I have discussed how aspects of locally recognized material cultures can be broadcast and made available to like-minded fans. Producers seek out, recombine, and manufacture their own music and images, pushing the limits of the technology (creating video channels and allowing other fans to follow them), effectively sending out privately coded public messages that echo some of the strategies—like the radio station dedication, and the scrawl of graffiti—available to their parents and grandparents, the original listeners of 60s Oldies, and originators of many of the intertextual icons being manipulated.

But how does a post–mass mediated technology like YouTube, allowing for the combination, indefinite storage, and simultaneous broadcast of music, text, and images, enable new kinds of language production and new kinds of localisms? And how do producers and commenters engage in metapragmatic stereotypes (Agha 2007, 150) that hinge on the overt identification of language ideologies? I proceed with a discussion of language ideologies, followed with one of Mock Registers and an analysis of fan-uploaded video samples deploying these registers for ideological effect.

Ideologies of English and Spanish Use

On fan-uploaded videos as well as in rap songs themselves, *language use is contested*, with English generally regarded as unmarked in videos originating in the United States (recall that both YouTube and the gangs are transnational). In videos claiming to originate in the United States, English-Spanish codeswitching is regarded as unmarked, while exclusive Spanish use is normatively classified as Sureño. For example, in video #2, the following lyrics from "La Vida de un Sureño" by the rapper Tongo are commented on by YouTubers:

(2) La vida de un Sureño	*The life of a Sureño*
Con el uno y el tres	*With the one and the three*
Te canto esta rola	*I'm singing (for) you this song*
En español	*In Spanish*
No en inglés.	*Not in English*

As is common in this genre of video, many of the commenters express agreement with the message of the fan-uploaded video, while some of them thunder invective. One commenter, a native Spanish speaker (his lexical choice in swear words and pronouns suggests he could be Colombian), uses mostly Spanish but also some English in codeswitching to make derogatory remarks toward Mexicans, referring to them as "beaners" and saying "come mow my lawn." A commenter responds in Spanish: "[. . .] seguro eres uno de e[s]os babosos k por k hablan un poco d ingles se creen una verga. *(I'm sure you're one of those idiots that just because they speak a little bit of English think they are the shit [meaning: excellent].)*" Another commenter responds: "porque [h]ablas asi de estos vatos. mejor no uses el espanol si no te gustan los mexicanos. (Why do you talk like that about these guys? Better not to use Spanish if you don't like Mexicans.)" These comments suggest that in this ideological context Spanish use is indicative of alignment with Mexicans, even if one is a native Spanish speaker from somewhere else. The lyrics of the rap song by Tongo, reproduced above, also allude to specific linguistic selection. By creating a contrast between Spanish and English, and aligning Spanish use with Sureño membership, rapper and commenters alike take a semiotic stance, one that is common on the streets (here I mean to contrast "the streets" with both prisons and the Internet) among Norteño- and Sureño-affiliated youth (Mendoza-Denton 2008; Bettie 2003).

Other examples reinforce the perceived alignment between being a Sureño and Spanish use, and between being a Norteño and English use. In the comments sec-

(3) comment1: o hell no this bitch ass video is a big disrespect for the surenos and the mexicans. fake ass video never put spanish on ur videos ur a bitch. this is big sur 13 m3x1can for life [. . .]

comment2: why the fuck is dat foo buster ass chapete rapping in spanish, fucking gringo bitch

comment3: Your Fucken Clueless! No Doubt Your A Wannabe! If You Knew What You Were Saying You'd Know We'z Mexicans Too Fucken IDIOT!! Never Seen A White Norteno Before! And Learn To Type You Fucken Little Kid.

comment4: mutha fuckin $crap$ alway$ think we nortenoz r muthafuckin guero$ putoz we muthafuckin chicano$ eh. fuckin $crapa$ pinche pai$a$ putoz [3]all bout NORTE XIV

comment5: mexico is in north america tho u fucking stupid ass skraps

comment6: iam reping all polk kounty and palmbeach kounty nortenos, lakeland, winter heaven, plantcity, hanincity, westpalm, lakeworth, and doverlocos puro norte XIV

In these examples, a contradiction emerges. On the one hand, the structure of YouTube has allowed the transcendence of strictly California-based interpretations of Spanish-language ideologies: both of the examples shown above are from Florida-based rappers, where the local meanings of Spanish use are clearly different from those in California. By using Spanish as emblematic of both Sureños and Norteños, and using specific types of Spanish to align with Mexicans, YouTube participation has deeply unsettled the original language ideologies surrounding the divisions between Norteños and Sureños.

From Interethnic Mock Spanish to Intraethnic Mock ESL

Hill (2005, 2008) identifies Mock Spanish as "a set of tactics that speakers of American English use to appropriate symbolic resources from Spanish" (2008, 128). It is a discursive register that borrows Spanish words and morphology and is used by Whites and other non-Hispanics (or non-Latinas/os) to display *covert* racism toward people of color. Crucially in Hill's account, the mockery is interethnic. It is also part of a long history of Spanish language use in the United States, a history that includes conflict with Mexico and the systematic and pervasive oppression of Spanish-speaking people in the United States, especially in the Southwest.

According to Hill, Mock Spanish goes largely unnoticed and is broadly accepted

the retrieval of this easygoing persona relies on accessing negative stereotypes about Spanish speakers—that they are lazy, for instance. This particular stereotype begets the pejorative use of the Mock Spanish *mañana* ("tomorrow"), while stereotypes of sexuality may beget Mock Spanish usage such as *mamasita* ("beautiful woman"; misspelling of Spanish *mamacita*, lit., "little mama") or "caliente" [lit., "hot"], taken in Mock Spanish to mean "sexy."

Hill outlines four tactics in the borrowing of Spanish words into the Mock Spanish register of English:

1) Semantic pejoration.
2) Euphemism.
3) Addition of Spanish morphology (*el* and *lo* articles and *-a* and *–o* suffixation).
4a) Hyper-anglicization and 4b) bold mispronunciation. (Hill 2008, 134–40)

Hill argues that the covert nature of racism in the examples she has collected allows for the portrayal of the speaker as jocular and relaxed, the kind of sophisticated person who may know Spanish but who might deliberately hold back that knowledge (Barrett 2006), peppering phrases with ungrammatical, anglicized Spanish to simultaneously show a distance from actual Spanish and its speakers as well as to convey pejoration toward Spanish speakers. In ethnographic work, Barrett (2006) conducted a study of a restaurant in Chicago that he calls *Chalupatown*, where Anglo servers used Mock Spanish toward the Mexican kitchen staff even though it caused misunderstandings among them in the fulfillment of customer orders and in the general operation of the restaurant. Ironically, the ungrammaticality of Mock Spanish perpetuated confusion in both spoken and written orders, but the misunderstandings were blamed on the Spanish speakers only, who were suspected of willful miscomprehension. Barrett bolsters Hill's conclusions that Mock Spanish is primarily used interethnically (across ethnicities) to convey and effectuate degradation and pejoration (see chapter 3, this volume, for an expanded discussion).

The research conducted here is also closely related to other investigations of dialect and register mockery, including the discussions by Ronkin and Karn (1999) and Rickford and Rickford (2000) of Mock Ebonics; Thompson's (2010) study of Kenyan ethnic parody; Chun's (2004, 2009) studies of the ways in which a Mock Asian register was used in the speech of a famous stand-up comic, and also in a Texas high school; and Hiramoto's (2009) investigation of how different dialects of Japanese were used to marginalize and stereotype racialized persons in the Japanese translation of the script of *Gone with the Wind*. As in Hiramoto's study of movie scripts, rap songs can be viewed as a type of scripted speech that is subject to performance and evaluation for audiences.

In the analysis of these data, I have in practice found it difficult to delin-

described by Hill and Barrett, and what Steven Talmy has termed Mock ESL (Talmy 2010), which we might define here as the mock register surrounding the widely stigmatized acquisition of English as a Second Language (ESL).[4]

This discussion of the semiotic stances of YouTubers vis-à-vis Spanish and English brings us back to our consideration of mock registers, where these are used to a different effect than that documented in the previous literature. Here I take up the question of what happens when the mocking takes place intraethnically rather than interethnically. In the case of the YouTube fan videos I analyze below, there is no "foreign culture" at play over which to display one's easygoing nature. Speakers (rappers/fans) and listeners (comment-writers) are bicultural and bilingual, and their usage of Mock ESL/Mock Spanish provides evidence of native English and native or near-native command of Spanish, with the ability to deploy fine phonetic details of Spanish in their mocking registers. The mocking register I describe here is an English-based Mock ESL/Mock Spanish with primarily English syntax and Spanish loanwords as described by Hill and by Barrett, though what I call here Mock Regional Spanish has interspersed sociophonetic features drawn from lower-prestige targets within nonstandard regional Spanish (like Mexican Rural Spanish, or Salvadoran Spanish). In traditional sociolinguistic terms this practice would fall under dialect crossing (Rampton 2009) or styleshifting (Rickford and McNair Knox 1994; Alim 2004).

Below are the lyrics from the audio track of a video titled "GB." This audio is layered on a static image showing a parental-advisory sign proclaiming "Warning: Norteños Puttin' it down." This is how the video self-identifies as a Norteño video. In this sequence two purported Sureños (PS) get beat up by some Norteños (N). The voice actors portraying them strain to produce their utterances in a higher pitch, and with features of Rural Mexican Spanish (*in italics*) and Mock ESL (underlined):

(at 00:58-01:27 Mexican Cumbia music plays)

1 PS1: Hey Joker, turn it up! That's my favorite song *ey!*
2 PS2: *Órale* homes, *órale*.
3 PS1: You know we gotta show these chapetes *ey*, we gotta [ch]show them!
4 PS2: Wear your paño proud! Wear your paño proud!
5 PS1: Ey! ah! Ey!
6 PS1: It's just under it ey? What you trippin' off of?
7 PS2: Los chapetes, dos chapetes, they're coming!
8 PS1, PS2: Oh they're coming, they're coming!
9 N: Who are these fools?
10 Hey no bang, no bang. No bang, no bang.
11 No, no, no! Don't do that ey?
12 [Sounds of violence]

In these videos, a corollary to being able to identify an area code is being able to distinguish what is and is not normal variation within the language of your interlocutor. Playing with that, overexaggerating (as in line 3, *ch* as a Mock ESL pronunciation of "show"), or alternately an allusion to the well-known *sh~ch* alternation in Spanish and some dialects of Chicano English, as documented by Flores-Bayer (2013); and underemphasizing the targets, either in the form of Mock Spanish or Mock ESL, relies on a very finely calibrated understanding of the interlocutor and of the mapping between language and space. In other words, it is a joke at the expense of the target, but the target has to "get it." The last insult heaped on Sureños in this sequence is the idea that they would switch to an even less fluent version of English to try to back down from a fight. If bold mispronunciation of Spanish is a hallmark of Mock Spanish, this bold mispronunciation and ridicule of L2 English is meant as a dig against Sureños, transparent at all levels of exaggeration to the intended targets. Fan video posters assume a particular model of an extended speech community that can encompass rural Mexican Spanish, deploy it in exaggerated ways, and make fun of it. Levels of proficiency in Spanish and English thus acquire symbolic and localistic dimensions.

Conclusion

Street political organizations—gangs—find an outlet on the Internet, a "network of networks" that has been likened to an idealized public sphere. Aspects of locally recognized material cultures can be broadcast and made available to like-minded fans. I have shown that content producers seek out, recombine, and manufacture their own music and images, effectively sending out privately coded public messages. Most of the videos that make up this corpus rely heavily on prior familiarity with the symbols known to the communities, and neither recruit (contra Arquilla and Ronfeldt 2001) nor welcome outsiders to comment on the opposing claims or the opposing parties already involved.

Core aspects that emerge are the negotiation of (a) language use and language ideologies; (b) various levels of localism, both California-centered and hemispheric; and (c) various kinds of Chicano/Mexican identity work, all mediated through sets of symbols that video-mixers tacitly agree on as representing their common concerns. Further work in this area will address the gendered dimensions of the economies of affect within the videos. I consider the present analysis as contributing to the call for a semiotics that analyzes "the ways in which systems and codes are used, transformed or transgressed in social practice" (de Lauretis 1984, 167). Lastly, semiotic analyses of the use, transformation, and transgression of particular varieties can greatly complicate our understanding

of language, race, and ethnicity across continually evolving, technological means of communication.

Notes

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2. I adopt the following definition of a gang from Brotherton and Barrios (2004, 23): "A street political organization is a group formed largely by youth and adults of a marginalized social class which aims to provide its members with a resistant identity, an opportunity to be individually and collectively empowered, a voice to speak back to the dominant culture, a refuge from the stresses and strains of barrio or ghetto life and a spiritual enclave within which its own sacred rituals can be generated and practiced."
3. The Spanish invective *pinches paisas* roughly translates to "stupid country bumpkins."
4. Many thanks to Rudi Gaudio for discussing this distinction with me.

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Part II

RACING LANGUAGE