Part V

Future directions
Introduction

... it is impossible to develop a full and deep understanding of the discrimination and marginalisation that a 30-year-old female immigrant from Ecuador might suffer in Barcelona if one does not take into account a series of overlapping and interlinked social dimensions. These dimensions include (1) the ways that this woman is positioned in class terms in Catalan society (as a lower-class person doing low-level service jobs like cleaning); (2) her institutional and social status as an immigrant, that is someone who is progressively more unwelcome as the economic crisis deepens; (3) the fact that she is a person of colour, a visible minority with an Andean appearance, whose physical features are not valued in mainstream Catalan society; (4) her status as someone who is culturally different, someone with a world view and behaviours which are not considered ‘Catalan’ or even ‘Spanish’; and (5) her immersion in gender regimes in her home life (with her Ecuadorian husband) and in mainstream Catalan society, which are differentiable but which in both cases work against her attempts at self-fulfilment.

(Block 2014: 69)
ever discussed as a methodological option or in theoretical terms by researchers. We then move to an examination of data collected by Victor Corona, the other co-author of this chapter, over the past several years as part of his ongoing study of young Latinos in Barcelona. Our aim is to develop an intersectional analysis and understanding of the lives of Corona’s informants, which might serve as a framework for other language and identity researchers in applied linguistics to follow. We then close the chapter with some observations.

**Current issues**

**What is intersectionality?**

The increased interest in intersectionality in the social sciences and humanities in recent years (e.g. Grzanka 2014; Jackson 2014; Hill-Collins and Bilge 2015) has arisen amid several trends. First, there is a general understanding among researchers that, while research often focuses primarily on one dimension of identity, it is impossible to do this without including other dimensions. Thus, research on racial identity will necessarily include references to and an engagement with gender, nationality and other identity dimensions. Second, where researchers do deal with several identity dimensions simultaneously and do so in an overt manner, this needs to be done in conjunction with an exploration of how the different dimensions included in their analyses actually interconnect. So, in the previous example, it is not enough to say that race and gender are important heuristics for understanding the life of experiences of an individual; there needs to be some discussion of how they are interdependent and how they interrelate in emergent social activity. Third, and finally, there has been a paucity of research which addresses intradimensional differences and variations to a sufficient degree, that is, explorations of how labels such as ‘Latino’ may hide as much as they reveal if there is no acknowledgement or exploration of the differences among people classified according to these labels.

Ultimately, intersectionality is seen by researchers in the humanities and social sciences as a way to deal with issues like these, all of which point to the complexity of identity in the increasingly varied and variable circumstances of the times in which we live (call it ‘late modernity’, ‘the new millennium’ or even ‘the global age’). At the same time, and again following the theme of complexity across contexts, it is worthwhile to bear in mind that ‘intersectionality does not refer to a unitary framework but a range of positions, and that essentially it is a heuristic device for understanding boundaries and hierarchies of social life’ (Anthias 2013: 4). In this sense, it is wise to avoid universal, overgeneralised statements about what it is.

Although intersectionality has arguably always been around in the humanities and social sciences (who has ever successfully isolated an identity inscription such as ethnicity in research?), any discussion of it taking place today must take on board its origins in Black Feminism (Bilge 2013), the common reference being two key publications by Kimberlee Crenshaw (1989, 1991) some 25 years ago. A law scholar, feminist and anti-racist activist, Crenshaw sought a way to understand how race and gender and, to a lesser extent, class interact in the construction of inequalities in society. She noted that mainstream thinking and theorising in both feminism and anti-racism emerged in isolation from each other, based as they were in very different foundations. In addition, she noted that simply grafting race onto a feminist framework, or feminism onto a race-based framework, would not get activists very far, as experiences emanating from one’s gendered positionings were very different from those emanating from one’s racialised positionings. She concluded by emphasising the importance of an intersectional approach to identity, stating that ‘[b]ecause the intersectional experience
Intersectionality

is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated’ (Crenshaw 1989: 140).

At about the same time, Crenshaw’s call for a greater emphasis on intersectionality was echoed by Patricia Hill-Collins (1993), who argued for the need to move away from either/or, dichotomous thinking, whereby people are conceptualised in terms of their opposites, such as Black vs White, to ‘both/and’ thinking, whereby a multitude of positions, both passing and more permanent, can be included in the conversation. Hill-Collins also critiqued the tendency of some researchers to rank oppressions, posing questions such as the following: How do you feel most oppressed, as a woman or as a Black person? In bringing intersectionality to the fore in Black feminist scholarship, Crenshaw and Hill-Collins were following still earlier calls for similar thinking about identity, with three foundational sources standing out: Franz Fanon (1967 [1952]), bell hooks (1981) and the Combahee River Collective (1977), an African American feminist and lesbian association formed in 1974. Drawing on the experience of having grown up in the French colony of Martinique and several years of life in France, both during and after World War II (in which he fought), Fanon (1967 [1952]) wrote Black skin, White masks as a psychological treatise on the lasting negative alienating effects that colonialism had on those who experienced and endured it. In this work, he explored many issues related to race, but most important in the context of this discussion is his examination of the interrelationships between race and gender (and sexuality) in terms of ‘the woman of color and the white man’ (Fanon 1967: 41–62) and ‘the man of color and the white woman’ (ibid.: 63–82).

Some years later, and writing about North American feminism, hooks (1981) argued against the essentialisation of identity categories and how Blackness was often masculinised in discussions of race, while feminism was often framed following the interests of middle-class White women. Her book, Ain’t I a woman: Black women and feminism, is based on the ex-slave Sigourney Truth’s speech at a suffragettes’ meeting in Akron, Ohio, in 1851. Truth famously interrupted the meeting, dominated by well-educated White women, with a compelling personal statement that ended with the famous question ‘Ain’t I a woman?’ This question was posed after she made clear the differences between her experiences as a Black woman and the experiences of her fellow (White) suffragettes. Truth had worked like a man in the fields, gathering and ploughing, and she never had men to protect her from the elements or the vicissitudes of life. Meanwhile, she viewed her White counterparts as the beneficiaries of gendered regimes that, while denying them the vote, nonetheless served to protect them. Along with other early Black female activists, such as Harriet Tubman, Frances E.W. Harper, Ida B. Wells Barnett and Mary Church Terrell, Truth served as an inspiration for the Combahee River Collective, who in April 1977 issued their statement of principles. In this statement, members declared that they were ‘actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression’ and that their aims were to ‘develop […] integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking’ (Combahee River Collective 1977: no page).

From this early work on intersectionality to the present, the theorisation of intersectionality has advanced considerably, such that most researchers today would accept that identity is multilayered and complex; that different dimensions of identity cannot be dealt with in isolation from one another; that intracategorical differences are often the most interesting aspect of identity research; and that to ignore intersectionality, adopting a default divide-and-analyse position, is to produce research that can only ever provide an incomplete portrayal of
research informants. This consensus notwithstanding, there are, as Jennifer Nash (2008) notes, a few issues pending in discussions of intersectionality. For example, Nash queries the extent to which intersectionality is a useful component of a general theory of identity, asking if it ‘actually captures the ways in which subjects experience subjectivity or strategically deploy identity’ (Nash 2008: 11). In other words, do individuals live their lives intersectionally in that they are always conscious of how constraints on their activity are multilayered and never just about one single dimension? Or, do individuals self-consciously invoke different dimensions of their identity, selectively and strategically, as they go about their day-to-day activity? In the midst of these and other questions, Nash suggests that answering them ‘requires intersectionality to craft a theory of agency and to grapple with the amount of leeway variously situated subjects have to deploy particular components of their identities in certain contexts’ (Nash 2008: 11). It also requires a narrative-based approach to research, as there is a need to listen to the stories of individuals and collectives.

Another issue raised by Nash concerns how intersectional research is carried out. Here she cites Leslie McCall (2005), who has explored this very issue in depth. For McCall, over the years there have been three complexities that have (or have not) been dealt with by researchers working intersectionally, which she outlines as follows:

1. ‘Anticategorical complexity’. This means a rejection of boundaried identity categories such as race and gender, because (a) they are deemed to be overly simplistic and totalising to capture the complex lives of individuals today and (b) they strengthen the very power regimes that scholars have sought to destabilise and overturn.
2. ‘Intercategorical complexity’. Inequality is observed to exist between social groups, even if these are relatively difficult to define. Thus, existing analytical categories can be useful in the documentation of inequality along multiple and conflicting dimensions.
3. ‘Intracategorical complexity’. This angle on intersectionality is based on a suspicion of categories, as in the case of anticategorical complexity, although it is more about handling categories with care and above all about breaking them down, challenging the nature of their composition and how they are used in empirical research.

McCall frames these three types of complexity as options, as points of departure for researchers. She eschews anticategorical complexity as self-defeating, but while she is interested in intercategorical conflicts, she sees intracategorical complexity as where the most useful work remains to be done. More concretely, McCall proposes a move beyond intercategorical inequality and conflict to the examination of intracategorical inequality and conflict. It seems that until the diversity inside categories is understood, it is only with great difficulty and imprecision that they can be invoked in research examining intercategorical differences. Thus a category like Latino, apart from needing contextual clarification (are we talking about the United States or a European context?), needs to be unpacked and understood as a multilevelled marker for lived experiences before it can then be intersected with masculinities and femininities (gender), race or nationality or any other dimension of identity.

An additional issue arising with regard to intersectionality is if it is always based on a conceptual core or central dimension of identity, one that reflects the most important and significant interests of the researcher. It is fairly clear in Crenshaw’s work, for example, that race is in some sense the baseline of her movements outward to examine intersections with other dimensions of identity. Meanwhile, other scholars interested in race and gender have taken different tacks. For example, hooks is far more ambiguous about the centrality of race
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and gender in her work (e.g. hooks 1981), sometimes seeming to devote more attention to race and other times favouring gender. In addition, in her 2000 book *Where we stand*, she situates social class as a baseline dimension of identity around which race and gender rotate continuously. Meanwhile, Mignon Moore’s (2011) research examining how Black lesbians form families includes a close synthesis of race and sexuality, moving gender to a more peripheral position. We could go on citing examples, but the point is that, while intersectionality will, ideally, involve analysis across several dimensions of identity, there will usually be one particular dimension that is the baseline of the research. However, it should be noted that this kind of anchoring need not fall into the ontological isolation described by Hill-Collins, whereby ‘each group identifies the type of oppression with which it feels most comfortable as being fundamental and classifies all other types as being of lesser importance’ (Hill-Collins 1993: 25); rather, the idea is to engage (pro)actively with how dimensions beyond the base dimension articulate with that base dimension as well as each other.

**Intersectionality in applied linguistics**

In contrast to what we find in race and gender studies, in applied linguistics there is not much in the way of a developed line of discussion or debate focusing explicitly on intersectionality. This assessment applies to publications on research methodology in applied linguistics as well as the huge number of publications on language and identity which have come out in the last decade in applied linguistics journals (e.g. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*), as monographs (e.g. Joseph 2004; Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Omoniyi and White 2006; Block 2007; Riley 2007) and as edited collections (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; De Fina et al. 2006; Caldas-Coulthard and Iedema 2008; Lin 2008; Llamas and Watt 2010; Higgins 2012). An exception of sorts is a book chapter by Ingrid Piller and Kimie Takahashi (2010), in which the authors make explicit that intersectionality is a principle running through their research on gender, language and transnationalism: ‘our concern is with the ways in which general identities are produced and maintained in transnational contexts and the ways in which they are intersected by linguistic ideologies and practices’ (Piller and Takahashi 2010: 540). Of course, this is a different sort of intersection from the more common two-or-more-dimensions approach outlined above, but it is intersectionality nonetheless. In their paper, the authors manage to show how ‘gendered people and gendered discourse … do not circulate in isolation from each other, nor in isolation from language ideologies and other aspects of identity’ (ibid.: 549). However, what is missing throughout their discussion is a more-than-cursory presentation of what intersectionality is about and the various issues arising around it, as discussed above. In fairness to the authors, one does not normally expect explicit treatment of an approach to research in a publication that is meant to discuss content and results, and their importance.

In the absence of explicit treatments of intersectionality, one is left to observe how it actually emerges in deed if not in name; language and identity researchers, following trends in identity research in general, have long accepted as axiomatic the impossibility of isolating identity dimensions and then focusing on them individually. There is always seepage across these dimensions and in the context of migration experiences, just to cite one example; there is a confluence of ethnicity, race, gender, nationality and other dimensions of identity. Trying to isolate one of these dimensions would be fruitless. Of course, this very point is made clearly in Bonny Norton’s (2013 [2000]) classic book *Identity and language learning*, in which she very effectively
David Block and Victor Corona  

shows how gender and ethnicity in particular (but also, at times, nationality and social class) flow together in her analysis of the lives of five immigrant women in Canada.

Another good example of intersectionality in action in language and identity research is Carmen Fought’s (2006) work on race, ethnicity and language, as she shows that one cannot really understand a dimension like race without having some notion of how it intersects with other dimensions of identity such as ethnolinguistic affiliation and social class. Fought follows up William Labov’s (1972) classic research on African American Vernacular English (AAVE), which itself documented intersections between race, ethnicity, ethnolinguistic identity and class. She defines AAVE as ‘a variety [of distinct non-standard English] spoken by many African-Americans in the USA which shares a set of grammatical and other linguistic features [e.g. phonological features] that distinguish it from various other American dialects’ (Fought 2006: 46). Writing about contemporary American society, Fought examines how AAVE-linked racial and ethnolinguistic identities intersect with social class.

As Fought notes, early research on AAVE was based primarily on data collected from working-class informants and therefore there was a certain marginalisation of middle-class African Americans from studies. The intracategorical issue that arises here is that obviously African Americans occupy a range of class positions and that these class positions will have an impact on linguistic practices, in particular whether or not AAVE is used, how it is used and in what contexts it is used. Fought surveys research examining the linguistic practices of middle-class African Americans, contrasting their experiences with those of working-class African Americans. She argues that the latter often grow up in segregated neighbourhoods in which a very high proportion of their interactions are with working-class and poor African Americans like themselves. Meanwhile, middle-class African Americans are far more likely to grow up in desegregated neighbourhoods and to have interactions with people from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds over the course of their lives. In addition, they are more likely to experience intensive pressure to assimilate to mainstream American middle-class culture, which tends to be identified as ‘White culture’. Part and parcel of such assimilation processes is exposure to socialisation into standard varieties of English from an early age (ibid.: 62).

It is in assimilating to mainstream middle-class values and adopting middle-class American English as the dominant way of communicating that intercategorical tensions arise. In short, racial and ethnic affiliations, or the desire to maintain a recognisable and legitimised African-American identity, come into conflict with social class positions in society (Morgan 2002). This occurs, above all, because, for many African Americans, AAVE is, historically, a key marker of African American identity: as Geneva Smitherman (1977: 3) puts it, it is ‘a language mixture, adapted to the conditions of slavery and discrimination, a combination of language and style interwoven with and inextricable from Afro-American culture’. However, where choices can be made as to what variety of English to employ, matters generally do not play out according to an either/or AAVE/middle-class American-English scenario; rather, there is a scale along which African Americans communicate, and middle-class African Americans insert themselves into this scale every time they speak. One interesting phenomenon that arises from this complex ethnolinguistic milieu is the fusion of middle-class grammar (in terms of morphology and syntax) with some phonological features of AAVE; just enough to identify one as African American but not enough to put off mainstream middle-class Americans (Morgan 2002).

Space does not allow further discussion of Fought’s work on ethnolinguistic identity: its intercategorical intersections with other dimensions of identity and how it helps her to problematise
race and ethnicity, in particular the intracategorical complexity of ‘African American’. As stated above, Fought does not frame her work as intersectional, so we are once again in the realm of intersectionality in deed but not name. In the next section, we will continue along the same lines as Fought, examining intersections involving race, ethnicity, ethnolinguistic identity and class. We do so with a view to exemplifying how more explicit interactional analysis might be carried out in future research. As we have done elsewhere (Block and Corona 2014), we draw on Victor Corona’s research on Latino youth in Barcelona.

Future directions

In the context of Barcelona (and by extension, Catalonia and Spain), the term Latino encapsulates the ways in which immigrants from Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and other Latin American countries affiliate to and participate in a variety of activities (including dance, cinema and food consumption), employing semiotic resources (including language, body movement, hair styles and clothing) which index lo Latino (Latino-ness) as a distinctive subculture, differentiable from autochthonous Catalan and Spanish culture. Victor Corona’s research on lo Latino in Barcelona, which began a decade ago, grew out of his interest in studying what elements were involved in the construction of this identity in the context of massive Latin American immigration to Barcelona from the early to mid-1990s onwards. In early 2005, he started an ethnographic study involving participant observation in a working-class neighbourhood in Barcelona with a high proportion of newly arrived immigrants, specifically focusing on public spaces such as parks, bars and, above all, the schools where his adolescent informants were students. The data discussed in this section come from a large corpus consisting of interviews (both group and individual) and spontaneously recorded conversations, collected between early 2005 and mid-2013. We focus on three examples from Corona’s corpus which we believe show how identity dimensions – race, ethnicity, language and class – come together in the day-to-day lives of these young Latinos.

As we mentioned above, Corona’s research was carried out in working-class neighbourhoods in the northern part of Barcelona. Historically, the neighbourhoods have always been predominantly low-income and working-class areas. They received a good proportion of the massive migration from other parts of Spain to Barcelona in the 1950s and 1960s, and they have received a good number of the immigrants who have come to Barcelona in recent years, with a high proportion coming from Latin American countries (Ayuso and Piñol 2010). The majority of the informants in Corona’s research come from low-income families in which the parents have few or no formali qualifications and, as a result, have ended up in employment such as cleaning, construction and various manual jobs like house moving and warehouse work. In her comprehensive survey of immigration to Barcelona between 1995 and 2010, Marina Subirats notes how, for the majority of recent immigrants, ‘working conditions are much more precarious than those of the autochthonous population … as a consequence of being situated in the low qualification sector’ (Subirats 2012: 378; translation by David Block). And in this context, a Latino identity is very much associated with precarious work conditions and low-qualification jobs. In the interview data presented in Extract 1, Lucía, a girl from Ecuador, tells the story of her mother’s plight, working as a maid in the homes of middle-class Catalan families.4
Sennett and Cobb (1972) famously wrote about the personal anguish, disappointment and shame felt by people who have not achieved as much as they might have in life in terms of material wealth, education, housing and other aspects of life that index social class, using the term ‘hidden injuries of class’ to capture such feelings. In Extract 1, we are allowed a glimpse at what we might call the ‘unhidden injuries of class’, that is, the very overt wrongs wrought on the less powerful by the more powerful. In addition, Lucía goes on to talk about how in Ecuador her mother had worked in higher prestige jobs, certainly not as a maid, and she further reports that as soon as she was able to do so, she left the service of the Spanish family to work as a butcher in a supermarket.

One factor hindering Lucía’s mother in terms of her employment conditions was her physical appearance. For the most part, Latinos in Barcelona constitute a ‘visible’ minority, given that many are not European in appearance (being dark-skinned and having Andean and African features), and this leads to a racialisation of their status as immigrants and ultimately how they are slotted into the existing (though ever-evolving) class system in Barcelona, Catalonia and Spain as a whole. In Extract 2, four of Corona’s informants, all male Latinos, explain what their status as a visible minority actually means in practice:

**Extract 2 Corpus 2013**

Participants: Rony (RON) and Miguel (MIG), Ecuadorian
Sergio (SER), Colombian
Naldo (NAL), Bolivian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Original in Spanish</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 RON</td>
<td>la mayoría son racistas/aunque no lo digan/o sea/tú vas por la calle=</td>
<td>most of them are racists/even if they don’t say so/I mean/you’re walking down the street=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 SER</td>
<td>=sí=</td>
<td>=yes=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This exchange came in response to a question posed by Corona about the four boys’ sense of citizenship and belonging in contemporary Catalonia. The story told here collectively is one of racial profiling as a natural part of their day-to-day lives, whereby for many older members of the local population (and perhaps for older women in particular), the mere physical presence of these young men in public spaces is framed as a threat. In this sense, being Latino is a racial positioning. However, it is also about a long list of associations marking one as different from a mainstream Catalan culture, such as the boys’ tendency to be dressed in a hip-hop style (more on this below) or the fact that they are adolescent males who tend to move around the city in groups of four.

Another way that lo Latino gets realised is through language. Extract 3 illustrates how the pronunciations of certain phonemes serve as ‘acts of identity’ (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985) in the same way that certain linguistic features mark one as an African American in the United States (see discussion above). And the production of these features does not go unnoticed by those who self-position as Latino.

Extract 3 Corpus 2007–2008
Participants: Victor Corona (VC)
Ángel (AG), Colombian
Javier (JV), Ecuadorian

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TN</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>Original in Spanish</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>tú que sientes/por ejemplo cuando ves un ecuatoriano por ejemplo pronunciando la +θ+ ¿/</td>
<td>what do you feel/for instance when you see an Ecuadorian/for instance pronouncing the +θ+ ¿/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>AG</td>
<td>cómo?/</td>
<td>what?/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We see here the significance of using the voiceless dental non-sibilant fricative (the \textit{theta-\theta} – typical of Spanish in much of the Iberian Peninsula) as an identity marker to be avoided if one is to be considered Latino. In effect, being Latino means talking Latino, and those who do not conform are said to have Spanish-ised, that is, sold out to local norms and culture. However, using particular vocabulary, and pronouncing it in a particular way, is not the only means by which Corona’s informants position themselves as Latinos. There is the broader multimodality of communication (Jewitt 2009) to consider, whereby we take into account how communication and acts of (re)presentation are not just about language but also a whole array of modes, including dress (clothes worn), ornamentation (e.g. piercings, bracelets), body moulding (haircuts, tattoos), gestures, posture and gaze. In Extract 4, Corona is talking to five female informants and one male informant about Latinos and dress in the school context. The female informants are from a range of backgrounds: Catalan, Moroccan, Peruvian and Ecuadorian. The sole male informant, Denilson, is the son of immigrants from the Dominican Republic.

\textit{Extract 4 Corpus 2008–2009}

Participants: Victor, Corona (VC)  
Marta (MR) and Leire (LR), Catalan  
Fatia (FT), Moroccan  
Ana (AN), Peruvian  
Andrea (AD), Ecuadorian  
Denilson (DL), Dominican

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>TN</th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>Original in Spanish</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>cómo se viste él/cómo se viste?</td>
<td>how does he dress/how does he dress?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>=pues se viste: e bie: en/</td>
<td>=he dresses: es ni: ice/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>yo primero agarro/</td>
<td>first I take/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>LR</td>
<td>no no/</td>
<td>no no/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>AD</td>
<td>si no estuvieramos/</td>
<td>if we weren’t/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>chicos/hay clase/chicos/chicos (.)</td>
<td>guys/there’s a class/guys/guys (.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>AD</td>
<td>EL JUAN ESTÁ MUY BUENO/” risas de todas” (.)</td>
<td>JUAN IS REALLY HOT/”all the girls laugh” (.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>VC</td>
<td>ey/sin gritar (.) cómo te vistes?/”dirigida a Denilson”/</td>
<td>hey/no shouting (.5) how do you dress?/”directed at Denilson”/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apart from being part of the Latino group in the school, Denilson was also closely connected to the world of rap and reggaeton, which acted as a shaper of his wardrobe choices. The girls evaluate his dress style favourably; they see him as cool and fashionable, and even in possession of a certain charm or ‘glamour’, as Leire puts it. As Andrea informs us, Denilson and other Latinos look cool wearing their clothes because they are dark-skinned (Denilson, it should be noted, is Black). What is interesting here is how Marta, Leire and Andrea relate clothing to race and ethnicity, with Marta saying that Spanish guys ‘look awful’ (les queda fatal) when they try to dress like Latinos. For these girls, not everyone can be Latino and, indeed, Spanish guys cannot even pretend to be Latino because they do not have the necessary skin colour and what Bourdieu termed body hexis. In this context, Denilson is authentically Latino.

| 09 | AD | bie:en/ | ni:ice/ |
| 10 | DL | primero:o/ | fi:ist/ |
| 11 | AD | bien (.5) | nice (.5) |
| 12 | FT | como si fuera/ | like he was/ |
| 13 | LR | o sea (.5) | like (1.5) |
| 14 | DL | primero agarro la camiseta/ | first I take the t-shirt/ |
| 15 | LR | tiene/o sea:a/aunque vaya/aunque vaya con ropa:a/así:í indicando anchura con las manos'/ancha y eso/ pero:o/no sé/tiene glamour/ | he has/li:ike/even though he goes/even though he goes around with clothe:es like tha:at indicating width with her hands'/wide and that/ but/I don’t know/he has glamour/ |
| 16 | VC | Ey/escuchamos lo que (1.5) | eh/we are listening to what (1.5) |
| 17 | MR | y a él le pega esta ropa/ | and he looks good in these clothes/ |
| 18 | AD | le pega/le pega (.5) porque es moreno/ | he looks good/he looks good (.5) because he is dark/ |
| 19 | MR | tiene cuerpo para llevar esto/ | he has the body to wear this/ |
| 20 | VC | y los latinos se visten de alguna manera/ | and Latinos dress in a particular way/ |
| 21 | LR | sí sí sí/ | yes yes yes/ |
| 22 | MR | te digo una cosa/let me tell you something |
| 23 | FT | no te pongas roja/ | don’t be embarrassed/ |
| 24 | MR | yo lo he visto/hay españoles que/yo conozco uno/que intenta ser la/que intenta vestirse como latinos/pero les queda fatal/les queda fatal/no/a los españoles no les pega/a lo mejor a algunos/pero a los latinos les queda mejor la ropa así/ | I’ve seen it/there are Spanish guys/I know one/who tries to be la/who try to dress like Latinos/but they look awful/they look awful/no/Spanish guys don’t look good/maybe some do/but Latinos look better in those clothes/ |
Summary

In this chapter we have discussed what intersectionality is about before making the point that while there would appear to be a default intersectionality at work in most language and identity research in applied linguistics, this is not made explicit. The lack of explicitness leads to the absence of any detailed and in-depth consideration of the multiple difficulties arising in the establishment of intercategorical interrelations and intracategorical divergences. We have endeavoured here to inject an explicit intersectional agenda into our discussion of young Latinos in Barcelona, all too aware that we would not be able to do justice to this population in the space allowed here. Nevertheless, we believe that by presenting and discussing the four extracts above, we have made several points about intersectionality worth carrying forward into future language and identity research.

Different individuals intervene in the four extracts, but what emerges is a set of recounted experiences that arguably are shared among those who are positioned by others and who self-position as Latinos in Barcelona. And what we see is the construction of a Latino identity as part of the larger intersection of interrelated identity dimensions embedded in McCall’s (2005) ‘intercategorical complexity’. In this sense we are in the realm of the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, gender and multimodal behaviour (which includes linguistic behaviour), even if we must be careful how we use these categories, so as not to fall into a kind of default essentialisation.

Meanwhile, the other side of the intersectional coin is ‘intracategorical complexity’, which is in evidence only by default. Thus, where racial phenotype is cited as an identity marker, we need only to imagine those Latin Americans who have a European phenotype (in particular, the Argentinian, Uruguayan and Chilean immigrants) to see that not all individuals potentially classified as Latinos are equal in this regard (Corona and Block in preparation). Class (see Block, this volume) also looms large here, both in terms of the informants’ parents, who occupy the lower ends of the Barcelona job market, and the informants themselves, who seem to be destined to work in low-skilled jobs in the local employment market. In addition, with reference to class position, there is the dilemma faced by upwardly mobile Latinos who orient to mainstream middle-class values, a process which has an impact on speech patterns and their multimodal behaviour in general. These individuals may be positioned as disloyal to their Latino roots by other Latinos who have not moved in this direction. There are also gendered differences in evidence, particularly in the story told by the four boys in Extract 2 (would the same thing have happened if the woman in the story had come across four Latinas instead of four Latinos?), and in Extract 4, which is about cool masculinity and style. Indeed, there is much space for further exploration of the multiple masculinities and femininities within the category of ‘Latino youth’.

Of course, in the midst of this intracategorical complexity, there is also the prospect that Latino as a category may be narrowing, reserved only for those who are relatively dark-skinned, act in certain ways, work in certain sectors and so on. All of this means that intracategorical differences always depend on the demarcations and delimitations of the category in question.

Finally, we would like to return to two questions posed above in our discussion of Nash’s (2008) critique of intersectionality:

- Do individuals live their lives intersectionally in that they are always conscious of how constraints on their activity are multi-layered and never just about one single dimension?
- Do individuals self-consciously invoke different dimensions of their identity, selectively and strategically, as they go about their day-to-day activity?
In the four extracts cited above, the informants do invoke different dimensions of their lived identities, and this appears to be done in a fairly self-conscious way as a means of conveying to Corona an awareness of the complexity of their lives. Lucía manifests a kind of class awareness when she retells her mother’s story of the overt injuries of class in a middle-class Catalan household. In Extract 2, Rony, Miguel, Sergio and Naldo easily relate their experience of the ‘old lady’ crossing the street to racism in Catalan society, a racism which positions them as dangerous because they have dark skin (although mode of dress surely is an additional factor in such cases). In Extract 3, Ángel and Javier explain (and therefore show a keen awareness of) the sociolinguistic rules of the game – how speaking in certain ways situates one either as a Latino or as a sell-out. And finally, Marta, Leire, Fatia, Ana, Andrea and Denilson show an awareness of and talk candidly about the ethno-racial politics of style, inflected by a Latino/non-Latino dynamic, that reigns in secondary schools in Barcelona. In short, these young people do appear to live their lives intersectionally in that they show a degree of self-awareness as regards to how constraints on their activity are multilayered and never just about one single dimension. And they do self-consciously invoke different aspects of their identity in different contexts.

Of course, the reader may well wonder what is to be gained by making intersectionality explicit in research. After all, if most researchers are doing it without naming it, what difference does it make? In response we might point to the fact that from the earliest exemplifications of the notion, from the words of Sojourner Truth to the work of hooks (1981), Crenshaw (1989), Anthias (2013) and others, intersectionality has been linked to political activism, particularly movements demanding the civil rights of women and people of colour. We believe that a specific focus on intersectionality, in effect, makes activism more possible; it makes clear that injustice is never about just one dimension of being, and therefore is not remediable through a focus on that one dimension. In such a process, injustice is revealed as far more complex than public discourses would often have us believe. And by grasping this complexity and confronting it as such, researchers are more likely to be able to propose action on behalf of those who suffer injustice.

Related topics
Positioning language and identity: poststructuralist perspectives; Language and ethnic identity; Language, race and identity; Language, gender identities; Class in language and identity research; A linguistic ethnography of identity: adopting a heteroglossic frame; Language, gender and identities in political life: a case study from Malaysia.

Further reading
hooks, b. (1981). Ain’t I a woman: Black women and feminism. Boston: South End Press. (hooks examines how Black women have been oppressed throughout history by White men and Black men, albeit in different ways, and by middle-class White women as well, and in the process she lays many of the foundations of current thinking about intersectionality.)
Notes

1 Victor Corona is grateful to the ASLAN project (ANR-10-LABX-0081) of the Université de Lyon for its financial support for his ongoing research within the programme ‘Investissements d’Avenir’ (ANR-11-IDEX-0007). The ASLAN project is funded by the French government, via the National Research Agency (ANR).

2 This is a reworked and expanded version of our discussion on intersectionality in Block and Corona (2014).

3 Practice varies as regards the use of capital letters when ‘Black’ refers to race. Here we have chosen to use capital letters, following the practice of most scholars we have read who write about race. In addition, and for the sake of consistency, we have also used ‘White’ with a capital W when referring to race. However, we have left intact all quoted material where either term appears in lower case.

4 It is worth noting that throughout Corona’s databases informants make reference to ‘the Spanish’ (los españoles) to refer to anyone they deem to be autochthonous. This denomination does not take into account sociolinguistic differences dividing this population into Catalan-preferent and Spanish-preferent speakers, but it does go to the heart of a very real issue, namely the feeling among many Latinos that live their lives as separate from ‘the Spanish’. We use ‘Catalan’ here because the people referred to would likely refer to themselves as ‘Catalan’.

5 Reggaeton is a genre of urban music directly linked to hip-hop and rap, which also draws on Caribbean rhythms such as bomba, plena, salsa, latin pop and bachata. The specific rhythm that characterises reggaeton is referred to as ‘Dem Bow’. Reggaeton is generally associated with rapping and/or singing in Spanish. It originated in Panama in the 1970s as reggae music sung in Spanish. In the 1990s, reggaeton developed and modernised in Puerto Rico and received its current name. It has since become a global phenomenon, and nowadays has a world market which spreads well beyond the geographical boundaries of Latin America.

6 Bourdieu defined body hexis as follows: ‘Body hexis speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic, because linked to a whole system of techniques involving then body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values: in all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult – a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience’ (Bourdieu 1977: 87).

References


Intersectionality


Appendix

Transcription conventions

Slash (/) shows the end of a chunk of talk, normally paced.
A question mark (?) indicates question intonation.
Pauses are timed to the nearest with the number of seconds in brackets: (.5).
Equals sign (=) at the end of one utterance and the start of the next speaker’s utterance indicates that there was no audible gap between speakers.
Phrases or words in angled brackets (< … >) is an additional comment by the transcriber on what is happening at the time or the way in which something is said.
CAPITAL letters means a raised voice.
Underlining indicates a word or words stressed for emphasis.
Colon (:) indicates an elongated vowel (e.g. no:o).
+ + with an italicised transcription in between indicates a phonetic representation of something said.
Double brackets around ’x’s shows that the speaker’s utterance is inaudible or cannot be made out: ((xxx)).