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Los Angeles

Language and Student Political Participation in Chile

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Anthropology

by

Tyanna Debi Slobe

2024

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Language and Student Political Participation in Chile

by

Tyanna Debi Slobe

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Norma Mendoza-Denton, Chair

This dissertation considers how secondary school students in Santiago, Chile come into forms of political participation through social movements. It deploys linguistic anthropological methods to consider relationships between youth semiotic practices and institutional structures. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in two socioeconomically segregated secondary schools—referred to as The Private School and The Public School—between 2016 and 2020. This research occurred against the backdrop of waves of student movements for education reform that began a decade prior, which helped created the conditions for an uprising in 2019 known as ‘*el estallido social*’ [the social explosion]. The *estallido social* resulted in democratic efforts to replace Chile’s constitution, which was implemented in 1980 under a military dictatorship.

The first two chapters describe sociopolitical context. Chapter One provides a historical account of Chile’s dictatorship (1973-1990), its neoliberal economic reforms, and student political movements against dictatorship-era policies since the return to democracy. I also introduce The Private School and The Public School research sites and outline my methods.

Chapter Two describes the 2019 *estallido social* as a phenomenon of ‘collective effervescence’ (Durkheim 1912 [1995]), a feeling of emotional intensification and unity that occurs when a group of people participates in shared action. I provide an account of what happened in the first weeks of the *estallido*, and document collective effervescence by bringing together forms of art that were inspired by and helped to sustain participation in the social movement.

Chapter Three takes place during the first week of the *estallido social* in The Private School, an upper-class institution in a wealthy suburban neighborhood of Santiago. It examines conversations from a 2° *medio* [10th grade] Social Studies class about events and experiences related to the uprising. Data analysis highlights teacher corrective practices that consistently orient students’ attention to the language that they use to talk about the *estallido*. I argue that these discourse practices reflect students’ socialization into forms of professional expertise, and dispassionately objective stances, associated with the careers of technocratic elites.

Chapter Four takes place in The Public School, a working-class institution in the heart of Santiago. I introduce ‘protest contours’ to highlight a relationship between material features of language used by students to construct oppositional stances—pitch contours—and a collective memory formed around historical contours of state violence. The first part of the chapter examines 1° *medio* [9th grade] students’ use of pitch to construct affective stances in narrative accounts of police brutality experienced at a 2016 protest for education reform. The second part is based in ethnographic research that reveals The Public School students’ socialization into a historical memory about repressive tactics deployed during the dictatorship, which contributes to their understanding of contemporary state violence.

The dissertation of Tyanna Debi Slobe is approved.

Erin Debenport

Marjorie Harness Goodwin

Patricia Keating

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University of California, Los Angeles

2024

dedicated to The Students.

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Transcription conventions

Adapted from M.H. Goodwin (1990: 25-26).

<i>*h *hh</i>	outbreath (breathiness, laughter)
<i>.h .hh</i>	inbreath (inhale, gasp)
°[talk]	low volume
+[talk]	high volume
TALK	yelling
talk	emphasis, stress, increased amplitude
ta-	cut off speech
ta::lk	lengthening
<i>talk talk</i>	rapid
<i>talktalktalk</i>	extra rapid
(.)	pause shorter than 0.5 seconds
(#. #)	pause measurement to the nearest tenth of a second
A: ta//lk	marks the onset of overlapping speech, which is transcribed
B: overlap talk	in the following line
↑	rising intonation
↓	falling intonation
~talk~	falsetto voice quality
t <u>a</u> lk	creaky voice quality
na{d}a	lenition

<code>((comment))</code>	transcriber comments
<code>[talk]</code>	segment of talk that comment applies to
<code>(talk)</code>	transcriber is uncertain
<code><description></code>	non-vocal noise
<code>[IPA]</code>	phonetic transcription
<code>noun.fem noun.masc</code>	feminine and masculine gender markings
<code>texto en negro</code>	Spanish
<code>text in grey</code>	English

Note on names and images

Pseudonyms are used throughout the dissertation to protect participant anonymity. All names of individual participants have been changed, as well as names of the research sites. I use the real names of neighborhoods, but I have obscured some information related to schools' exact locations (*e.g.*, street names, nearby buildings, businesses). Names of well-known figures (politicians, celebrities, *etc.*) are not changed. I use blurring techniques and line drawings to hide participants' identities in photos and video stills. Images were taken by me unless noted otherwise. In examples of media and art I include the artist's name or social media handle whenever that information is known.

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Chapter One:

Schools and student political participation in Santiago, Chile

1.0 Introduction

This is an ethnographic study of political atmosphere, linguistic practice, and embodied experience in relation to student political participation in Chile. It takes place in socioeconomically segregated Santiago high schools against the backdrop of youth-led movements demanding social, economic, and political equality. I refer to the upper-class private institution as ‘The Private School’ and the working-class public institution as ‘The Public School’.

The dissertation is grounded in linguistic anthropological research methods. It takes a practice-based approach to youth language and culture (Bucholtz 2002) that considers relationships between bodily hexis and institutional structures (Bourdieu 1977). I follow ethnographers of language who center adolescent peer groups as communities of practice (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992; Eckert 2006; Wenger 1998) wherein members are socially bound through mutual engagement in semiotic action (*cf.* Eckert 1989; Mendoza-Denton 2008; M.H. Goodwin 2008; Bucholtz 2010; Rosa 2019).

Ethnographic attention to language and institutional organization in The Private School and The Public School compares how students are socialized into and through sociopolitical movements. I conducted research in these institutions between 2016 and 2020 amidst popular

feelings of discontent with neoliberal institutions; feelings that were sustained by waves of student protests for education reform that began a decade prior.

In October 2019, secondary school students organized protests in the Santiago metro to oppose a fare increase. These protests triggered a spontaneous political uprising known as *el estallido social* [the social explosion], which lasted for months. The *estallido* resulted in democratic efforts to replace Chile's constitution.

Chapter Two describes the *estallido social*. Chapter Three examines The Private School students' socialization into political subjectivities through the *estallido social*. Chapter Four examines The Public School students' socialization into political subjectivities through protests.

Chapter One is organized as follows: In Section 2, I provide background information about Chile's highly privatized education system and contextualize student protests for education reform. The two high schools are introduced in Section 3, and research methods are detailed in Section 4. The remaining chapters of the dissertation are outlined in Section 5.

2.0 Background

Research for this dissertation was motivated by an interest in contemporary student political movements and school segregation in Chile, which I began learning about during two semesters as an undergraduate at La Universidad Católica de Chile in 2011 and 2012. During that year, there were national student protests for education reform that challenged neoliberal economic policy implemented during Chile's military dictatorship. Below, I describe the dictatorship-era reforms that shape the Chilean education system (2.1), and the waves of student political movements opposing neoliberal policies that began in the early 2000s (2.2).

2.1 The dictatorship and the education system

On September 11th, 1973, a military coup covertly backed by the CIA overthrew the democratic socialist government of President Salvador Allende. The regime that took power was led by Augusto Pinochet. While Allende's democratic presidency had focused on legislature that would, for example, nationalize the mining industry, Pinochet's authoritarian dictatorship spearheaded privatization. Following recommendations from Milton Friedman and Chilean economists trained at the University of Chicago (Letelier 1976), Pinochet overhauled the economy through a series of 'free-market' policies that dramatically altered the funding structures for social services such as education, healthcare, and social security. These reforms are considered the world's first large-scale experiment with neoliberalism (Harvey 2005). Leftist political organizers and sympathizers seen as a threat to the regime's objectives were imprisoned, tortured, exiled, killed, and disappeared (Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate 2003). Several years into the dictatorship, the military government sought to formalize Pinochet's rule through a new constitution, which was put in place in 1980. Although Pinochet was removed from power through democratic processes in 1990, the constitutional structure remains in force thirty years later.

Beyond the 1980 constitution, many specific dictatorship-era policies have persisted into the present as well. Among these are market reforms that heavily privatized education. In the early 1980s Pinochet's government rolled out a 'school choice' voucher system aimed at promoting competition for primary and secondary student enrollment between institutions. On balance, these reforms incentivized families to register their children in *colegios subvencionados* [particular subsidized schools] (Gauri 1999), semi-private institutions eligible to receive vouchers as well as additional financial support through monthly fees paid by students' families.

Decentralization policy implemented during the dictatorship shifted administrative power for primary and secondary schools from the Ministry of Education to the local municipal governments of Chile's spatially unequal cities. Through the voucher system, students are free to attend schools outside of the municipality where they live. This creates a premium on public schools in better-funded municipalities with more historically established institutions, thereby increasing competition between public schools; in addition to the aforementioned public-private sector competition. In Santiago, these institutions, known as *colegios emblemáticos* [emblematic schools], are located in the heart of Santiago, in the municipalities of Santiago and Providencia. For many years, the most highly ranked public schools had admissions exams¹, which contributed to differential access to quality public education based on students' primary school educational experiences, and their opportunities to prepare for secondary school admissions exams. In this way, the voucher system supported a systematic de-funding of public schools in lower-income peripheral neighborhoods and increased educational inequalities, especially among secondary schools² (Torche 2005).

These dictatorship-era policies prompted an exodus of students from the public education system, which has continued in the years since Chile's return to democracy. During the 2020 academic year public schools accounted for only 32.5% of primary and secondary student enrollment; 54.4% of students attended semi-private institutions and 9% were in fully private schools³ (Centro de Estudios Minedc 2021).

¹ A reform that came out of student protests is that these schools have switched to an admissions lottery system.

² Secondary school students are better able to commute to school from peripheral neighborhoods than younger students. Many students who study at schools in the city-center spend hours commuting every day. This is relevant for understanding the 2019 metro protests.

³ The rest were enrolled in schools with other forms of administrative organization.

My dissertation research took place in a fully public school and a fully private school, putting these institutions toward the polar ends of Chile’s educational and socioeconomic spectrums.

2.2 Student protests

In recent decades, Chile has seen several waves of student protests targeting neoliberal policy leftover from the dictatorship. High school student movements in 2006 cleared the path for larger university student movements in 2011-2012, which paved the way for the *estallido social* in 2019—itself triggered by student protests.

Named after the aesthetic of black and white school uniforms, the 2006 *Revolución Pingüina* [Penguin Revolution] was organized by secondary school students in opposition to the marketization of education (Somma 2012). The movement was launched early in Michelle Bachelet’s first term as president⁴, and it criticized post-dictatorship governments for failing to dismantle Pinochet’s education system (Donoso 2013). Hundreds of thousands of students across Chile participated in protests, which generated support for: “1) the demand for free education, 2) the defense of public education, 3) the rejection of for-profit educational providers, and 4) the elimination of schools’ discriminatory practices” (Bellei and Cabalin 2013: 112).

In the same vein, student protests in 2011-2012 called for free higher education, a ban on for-profit schools, and greater state investment in public education (Cabalin 2012). These protests lasted for seven months, and they were primarily organized by university students (many of whom were involved in the Penguin Revolution). High school students also participated in various ways—including school occupations and hunger strikes. The charismatic movement

⁴ Bachelet served as president from 2006-2010 and again in 2014-2018. She is a member of the center-left Socialist Party of Chile.

generated significant public support, and it contributed to a significant decline in the approval ratings of President Sebastian Piñera⁵ due to his overwhelming rejection of students' demands.

Student protests over the past two decades have altered Chile's sociopolitical landscape beyond the education system. The 2011-2012 student movement launched the political careers of Camila Vallejo (president of the Universidad de Chile Student Federation in 2011), Giorgio Jackson (president of the Universidad Católica Student Federation in 2011), and Gabriel Boric (president of the Universidad de Chile Student Federation in 2012). Elected in 2021, Boric is currently the president of Chile, and Vallejo and Jackson were both appointed to his cabinet.

3.0 Research sites

I conducted ethnographic research in two schools in Santiago, Chile, referred to as The Private School and The Public School. The map in *Figure 1.1* points to the areas of Santiago where each school is located. The Private School is in the municipality of Lo Barnechea and The Public School is in the center of the city, in the Santiago Municipality.

⁵ Piñera was president from 2010-2014 and again from 2018-2022. He is a member of the liberal-conservative National Renewal party.



Figure 1.1 Map of Santiago⁶

3.1 The Private School

The Private School is a fully private (tuition-funded) institution that educates students from pre-kindergarten through high school. It consistently ranks among the highest performing schools in Chile on standardized tests, and it is also one of the most expensive schools in the country. The campus enjoys a close-knit community. Class sizes are small, families tend to enroll multiple children, and many students spend their entire primary and secondary education

⁶ Map is modified from Osmar Valdebenito, licensed by CC-BY-SA 2.5.

there. According to the school's principal, 100% of The Private School's graduates go on to pursue undergraduate degrees. Most enroll in Chile's top universities, though some attend universities abroad. In an interview about the school, the principal also noted that their alumni are increasingly pursuing graduate degrees from universities in North America and Europe, making the school's emphasis on English education especially valuable. Graduates are frequently invited back to campus for activities and events, including assemblies that highlight the careers and achievements of alumni, which also provides networking opportunities for current students.

The campus is located in Lo Barnechea, a suburban Santiago municipality nestled in the foothills of the Andes. The area is known for its wealthy gated communities, luxury condominiums, highly ranked private schools, upscale shopping centers, and privileged position above Santiago's smog line (*cf.* Méndez and Gayo 2018). The municipality motto, *Lo Barnechea: naturalmente lo mejor* [Lo Barnechea: naturally the best] is a pun that celebrates its advantaged proximity to nature (the best nature) and social prestige (naturally, the best). But Lo Barnechea's public image fails to capture its socioeconomic reality. The municipality is extremely segregated, home to residents of some of Santiago's poorest neighborhoods, as well as some of its wealthiest. The area's (not-so-) public infrastructure overwhelmingly caters to the lifestyles of the latter (*cf.* Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2008), which physically, socially, and financially isolates residents of the former (Sabatini and Salcedo 2007; Romero 2019). Most students at The Private School live in upper-class neighborhoods in Lo Barnechea, or in the nearby municipalities of Las Condes and Vitacura.

3.2 The Public School

The Public School is a fully-state-funded institution of secondary education that serves students from *1° medio* through *4° medio*⁷. Many students, teachers, administrators, and parents here are engaged in various forms of activism, including national efforts to reform the education system. The Public School was well-represented in the 2006 Penguin Revolution and 2011-2012 student movements. Motivated by the demands of these protests, in 2014 The Public School began implementing a series of institutional reforms based in critical pedagogy (*cf.* Paris and Alim 2017), especially inspired by the work of Paulo Freire (1970)—who is portrayed in a mural painted by students and teachers in the center of campus, near a classroom named in honor of Angela Davis. Reforms included finding ways to strengthen ties with community organizations, implementing restorative justice practices, and tailoring course material to students' lived experiences and interests. Students are attracted to the school because of its unique array of electives, which include courses such as feminist theory, hip-hop dance, chess, and circus performance.

Many students at The Public School go on to pursue higher education, but in a 2016 interview the school's principal told me that its graduates often enroll in exploitative, expensive universities that offer low-quality education. Since then, The Public School has been working more closely with recruitment organizations at *Universidad de Chile* and *La Universidad Católica*. A major barrier to enrollment in Chile's top universities, however, is the national university selection exam. A small number of students at The Public School receive scholarships for courses at pre-university centers that prepare them for the test. Others enroll in pre-university programs after graduating from high school and before university, including at *Preuniversitario*

⁷ The equivalent of 9th-12th grade in the U.S. education system.

Popular Víctor Jara⁸ [Víctor Jara Popular Pre-university], an educational non-profit that serves students from working class families.

The Public School is in Santiago Centro, and it falls under the purview of the Ilustre Municipalidad de Santiago [Illustrious Municipality of Santiago]. It is walking distance from important political and cultural sites, which the institution frequently takes advantage of for class fieldtrips. It's also near major metro and bus lines. Students travel to school from almost every municipality in Santiago, with some commuting up to two hours. Chile has seen an increase in immigration over the past decade. Over the course of my research, the number of foreign residents in Chile nearly doubled from 750,000 in 2017 to over 1.4 million in 2020 (INE-DEM 2020). There was an especially significant increase in immigrants from geographically distant countries such as Venezuela, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, many of whom reside in Santiago Centro (Pérez and Palma 2023). This wave of immigration rapidly changed the demographic makeup of The Public School. The institution quickly adapted to modify class material and incorporate school rituals that recognize cultural and linguistic practices of immigrant students.

4.0 Research methods

I started preliminary research in both schools in 2016 (3 months) and 2017 (2 months), before moving to Chile in late 2018 to conduct research full-time during the 2019 academic year. In 2016, I began working with a cohort of students in The Private School that was in *7° básico* (7th grade), and I remained with the same group of students throughout my dissertation research. In The Public School, I worked with a cohort of *1° medio* (9th grade) students in 2016 and stayed

⁸Víctor Jara was a famous folk musician, teacher, and activist who was brutally murdered by military agents at the beginning of the dictatorship.

with the same group in 2017. I switched to a 2° medio (10th grade) class in 2019 to match the grade-level of research participants in The Private School. The cohort of students that I worked with in 2019 graduated from high school in 2021.

My primary research methods included participant observation in school activities (4.1), recordings of classroom interactions (4.2), and interviews (4.3). I also created an archive of artifacts related to the *estallido social*, described in 4.4.

4.1 Participant observation

Participant observation research in both schools took many forms. During the regular school year, I switched between campuses each day and attended classes with students (except P.E.). My research plan originally revolved around *consejo de curso*—weekly class council meetings—so I designed my schedule based on when those meetings were held in each school. Although the focus of this project changed to other modes of political participation, studying *consejo de curso* provided important insights into student political practices in both institutions.

In addition to classes, I ate lunch with students and teachers, helped with class assignments, hung out during recess, volunteered at fundraiser events, sat around in teachers' lounges, came in on nights and weekends for parent-teacher meetings, and joined off-campus excursions such as fieldtrips and Battle of the Bands competitions. I met students' families, was invited to some of their houses, and attended a grandmother's birthday party. I knit outside of principals' offices while waiting to ask questions, where I also had fruitful conversations with school secretaries. In The Public School, I was also a member of the *Convivencia Escolar* [School Co-habitation] group, where I attended weekly meetings with school staff where we discussed community cohesion and designed research initiatives aimed at promoting classroom participation.

Before the *estallido social*, I attended some small protests with students from The Public School, as well as feminist protests in 2018 and 2019 with university students who had graduated from that school in 2016. Teachers at The Public School (and in public schools across Chile) were on strike for several weeks in 2019 (Morales-Valdés 2021), and I joined informational sessions and community events related to the strike. During the *estallido social*, I only saw students on campus or in their homes, but I occasionally ran into adults from both institutions at events related to the uprising. The Public School went into a *toma* [occupation] in November 2019⁹, and one afternoon I brought vegan pizza to occupying students. During the *toma*, adults were not allowed on campus (I had to get permission from both students and teachers' union leaders to attend), and I joined school staff several times in a crowded science lab at a nearby primary school where they were banished for the duration of the occupation.

Overall, participant observation—and my research in general—was much more haphazard in The Public School than it was in the Private School, where everyday school activities tended to run more smoothly. This mostly meant that I spent more time in the classroom in The Private School, and more time participating in spontaneous school-related events in The Public School.

4.2 Recordings of classroom interactions

As mentioned above, my dissertation plan originally involved weekly class council meetings, so I designed the research protocol with the goal recording naturally occurring classroom interaction. In the end, I was only able to do this in The Private School, where I recorded approximately 10 hours of classes between October and December 2019. Audiovisual

⁹ See Palacios-Valladares (2016) for background on student activism and school occupations in South America, and Rasse (2022) on vocational students' political participation on campus during the *estallido social*.

recordings of classroom interactions are the primary source of data used in Chapter Three, where I describe this method in more detail.

4.3 Interviews

I conducted dozens of interviews with students, teachers, administrators, and families from The Public School and The Private school between 2016 and 2020. In some interview contexts, I employed a person-centered approach (Levy and Hollan 1998). I also organized many semi-structured conversations between myself (the interviewer) and small groups of students (Alim 2004), or students and their family members. For interview format, I let participants choose if I could use audio and video, or just audio. I draw from these recordings as linguistic data throughout the dissertation, especially in Chapter Four. Interviews also provide ethnographic insights that inform my analyses of the social landscapes of both institutions.

4.4 *Estallido social* archive

I began collecting artifacts related to the 2019 *estallido social* a few days before it began in mid-October 2019, in the form of internet content about the student metro protests that triggered the uprising. Since then, I have amassed a collection of over 5,000 ‘things’ related to the *estallido social*¹⁰, including pictures, screenshots, videos, notes, articles, academic content, household objects, clothing, *etc.* This collection informs my analysis of the political uprising throughout the dissertation, but it is the primary source of data used in Chapter Two.

¹⁰ This is an estimate based on the number of photos and screenshots saved in my iCloud photos and SD cards between October 18th, 2019 and January 1st, 2020. The collection of things has grown significantly since then, but if I organized it all into a public-facing archive the number of objects be much smaller.

5.0 Chapter outlines

Chapter Two: *Collective effervescence in the estallido social* documents the shared moral experience of Chile's 2019 uprising using Durkheim's notion of 'collective effervescence' (1912 [1995])—a feeling of emotional intensification and unity that can occur when people participate in focused action. I provide a narrative account of major events and themes that emerged in the first days of the uprising alongside collages of relevant political ephemera and realia (photos, memes, street art, posters, stickers, clothing, *etc.*). By juxtaposing a narrative of 'what happened' with artifacts that embody the spirit of the *estallido*, the chapter explores how forms of cultural production both emerge from and contribute to the effervescence that powered this collective sociopolitical movement.

Chapter Three: *Fire, tear gas; dangerous things* analyzes socialization into elite responses to this effervescent political atmosphere through analyses of interactions in The Private School during the first week of the 2019 uprising. The chapter considers two conversations about physically dangerous things in the uprising: (1) a fire and (2) tear gas. In both cases, I highlight teacher corrections that orient students' attention to language used to describe events. I argue that these metalinguistic orientations reflect students' socialization into an ethical register (Debenport 2023) that asserts moral control over the construction of information and its dissemination to the public. Students in The Private School are taught to be hyper-reflexive about language because they are socialized into a dispassionate objectivity associated with elite, public-facing and often technocratic careers where *what* you say and *how* you say something can impact social, political, and economic stability. The most 'dangerous thing' in The Private School classroom is discursive instability.

Chapter Four: *Protest Contours* shifts focus to embodied experiences of protests to consider how students in The Public School come into political stances opposing state violence. Analytical attention to ‘protest contours’ highlights a connection between a material feature of language used in affective stance taking practices (M.H. Goodwin *et al.* 2012)—pitch contours—and a collective historical memory formed around contours of state violence, political repression, and resistance movements. The first argument in this chapter draws from Public School students’ narrative accounts of police brutality experienced at a 2016 protest for education reform, while the latter argument rests on insights about the construction and role of collective memory of historical and ongoing state violence—especially torture—gleaned from student assignments, related school activities, and public discourse during the *estallido social*.

El Estallido Social [The Social Explosion]



--*Estallido* collage, by me (2023)

Chapter Two:

Collective effervescence in the *estallido social*

1.0 Introduction

The uprising began on October 18th, 2019, and it continued until COVID-19 shutdowns in March 2020¹¹. This period was marked by daily protests drawing huge crowds, violent clashes between state agents and civilians, major disruptions to quotidian life, and mass political participation. It was motivated by shared experiences of economic precarity and social inequality, but it was not planned or organized by any political party, and it had no leaders. It just happened. And it happened for months.

At the time, what was happening seemed related to everything: public transportation, the cost of living, healthcare, social security, education, the dictator, the president, police violence, land, natural resources, indigeneity, colonialism, gender, sexuality, corruption. It was also happening everywhere—outside, inside, on the news, online, in real life, in art, on the walls, and in literally every conversation that I participated in or overheard (at least at the beginning). People began referring to what was happening as ‘*el estallido social*’, the social explosion, during the first week.

This is so semiotically overwhelming.

This thought ran through my head on repeat from October 18th until January 2nd when I left Chile. I wasn’t even sure what I meant by that. I just knew that everything felt so collective

¹¹ The largest protests occurred between October and December.

and meaningful, and trying to understand ‘it’ as a process of mass cultural semiosis felt like the only thing that I could do. It was a semiotic explosion, and in a desperate attempt to document it, what it meant, and *how* it meant I chaotically collected things. This is how I amassed an archive of over 5,000 political ephemera and realia related to the *estallido social*: photos, screenshots, videos, memes¹², murals, graffiti, interviews, ambient recordings, notes, clothing, text conversations, household objects, posters, pamphlets, books, songs, playlists, teaching material, news articles, academic articles, *etc.*

Chapter Two understands the feeling that I had—that *we* had—during the *estallido social* as an experience of ‘collective effervescence’—a term coined by Émile Durkheim (1912 [1995]) to describe a state of emotional intensification that can occur when a group of people participate in shared action. Drawing upon the archive of *estallido social* artifacts, the chapter attempts to make sense of collective effervescence through cultural semiosis by providing a narrative of ‘what happened’ alongside collages of relevant political ephemera and realia.

The chapter is organized as follows: Collective effervescence is described in Section 2. Then, I provide a narrative of major events and themes during the first weeks of the *estallido social* using collages (Section 3). The conclusion (Section 4) reflects on the role of symbols and feelings in social movements.

2.0 Collective effervescence

Collective effervescence is a state of heightened emotional energy that can occur when a group of people come together to participate in focused action. Sometimes described as a ‘force’

¹² This chapter has also benefited from an internet archive of *estallido social* Instagram content created by my friend Daniel Corvalán, which can be accessed here: <https://corvalan.dev/evade/>. Daniel’s page includes an option to view the archived images as a ‘webstory’, which is very similar to how we saw this content as it came out on people’s Instagram stories during the *estallido social*.

that energizes both the individual and collective body, it is an “intensification of a shared mood” (Collins 2014: 299) that arises from mutual engagement in activities such as religious rituals, concerts, and protests. The term was coined by Émile Durkheim in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912 [1995]) where he describes the potential for effervescent experiences to generate moral collective consciousnesses. Among anthropologists, collective effervescence has been examined in relation to group rituals that generate an “embodied experience of social force” (Throop and Laughlin 2002: 42; Rawls 1996), and an “intensified channel of spiritual semiosis” (Harkness 2017: 487).

Kearney (2019) identifies the potential of spontaneous effervescence in social uprisings to sustain mass participation, motivating political transformation. This insight is shared by a 16-year-old student from The Public School, Pablo, who I interviewed in November 2019 about his experience of the *estallido social*. The student recounts the first night of the uprising (October 18th, 2019) as he lived it from his *población*¹³ [neighborhood].

Ex. 1

- 1 Pablo: fue—fue un momento en de—
 it was—it was a moment where
- 2: de verdad que fue
 there was really a lot of unity
- 3: hubo mucha unidad
 there was a lot of unity
- 4: hubo mucha unidad
 there was a lot of unity
- 5: mucha organización espontanea
 a lot of spontaneous organization
- 6: eh—
- 7: harta solidaridad

¹³ ‘*Población*’ refers to Santiago’s working-class neighborhoods. See Pérez (2022) on the political history of *poblaciones* in Santiago, and Álvarez-López *et al.* (2023) on *pobladores*’ experience of the 2019 uprising.

a lot of solidarity

8: hubo harto—
 there was a lot

9: harta empatía
 a lot of empathy

10: y todos nos apoyamos entre todos
 and we all supported each other

11: sobre todo en las poblaciones
 above all in the poblaciones

Pablo describes collective effervescence as a heightened sense of unity (lines 3-4), solidarity (line 7), and mutual support among community members (line 11) and emphasizes the spontaneity (line 5) of its creation. He reflects on the potential for this collective experience, though perhaps fleeting, to generate political change from his perspective a month into the uprising.

Ex. 2

12 PAB: quizas—quizas profe
 maybe—maybe teacher

13: sinceramente
 honestly

14: como en muchos países
 like in many countries

15: lo único que vamos a lograr
 the only thing that we're going to achieve

16: es que siguen matando a gente
 is that they keep killing people

17: y no vamo—no va a haber ningún cambio
 and we—there won't be any change

18: pero lo que sí es bueno es que logramos a unir a la gente po
 but what's good is that we accomplished uniting the people

19: logramos sacar a la gente de las casas
 we accomplished getting people out of the houses

20: y mostrarles como una—una realidad diferente

- and showing them like a-a different reality
- 21: y logramos tener a lo-
we succeeded in having the-
- 22: a la gente que tiene plata con miedo
the people with money scared
- 23: a la policía que reprima a su propio pueblo
the police that repress their own people
- 24: con miedo
scared
- 25: y-eso-eso es lo que más yo creo
and-that-that is what I think
- 26: que más se rescata
the biggest takeaway is
- 27: que se puede construir alternativas políticas
that you can construct alternative politics
- 28: en base de movimientos sociales
based in social movements
- 29: todo eso
all of that

Pablo is cognizant of the possibility that the *estallido* will not result in the kind of revolutionary change that would, for example, upend the government institutions that authorize use of force against protestors ('maybe they will keep killing people', line 16). However, he argues that the experience of collective moral unity during the *estallido social* is still transformative because it exposed people to a 'different reality' (line 20). Here, Pablo highlights the potential for collective action to upset the status quo by de-stabilizing established social, political, and economic hierarchies—a potential that may not be realized if not for shared experiences of collective effervescence like that of the *estallido social*.

For this 'different reality' to sustain itself as a possibility, Durkheim might suggest, symbols of the social feelings generated by collective effervescence will be necessary:

Without symbols [...] social feelings could have only an unstable existence. Those feelings are very strong so long as [people] are assembled, mutually influencing one another, but when the gathering is over, they survive only in the form of memories that gradually dim and fade away if left to themselves (1912 [1995]: 232).

The following section describes the first weeks of the *estallido social* by drawing from some of the symbols that were generated by, and that reinforced, the effervescence of collective social action.

3.0 *Estallido social*

In the first week of October 2019 the Chilean government announced a 30-peso fare increase (~\$0.04 USD) for Santiago public transportation services. The new rate affected adult tickets during peak travel hours. Students and senior citizens, who enjoy subsidized passes, were not directly impacted by the cost increase, which is why some politicians struggled to understand the student response: a call for *evasiones masivas* [mass fare evasions] in the Santiago metro.

Depicted in *Figure 2.1*, *evasiones* [evasions] were acts of civil disobedience that consisted of collectively rushing metro stations during busy hours, jumping over turnstiles, holding sit-ins on platforms, and boarding trains without paying.

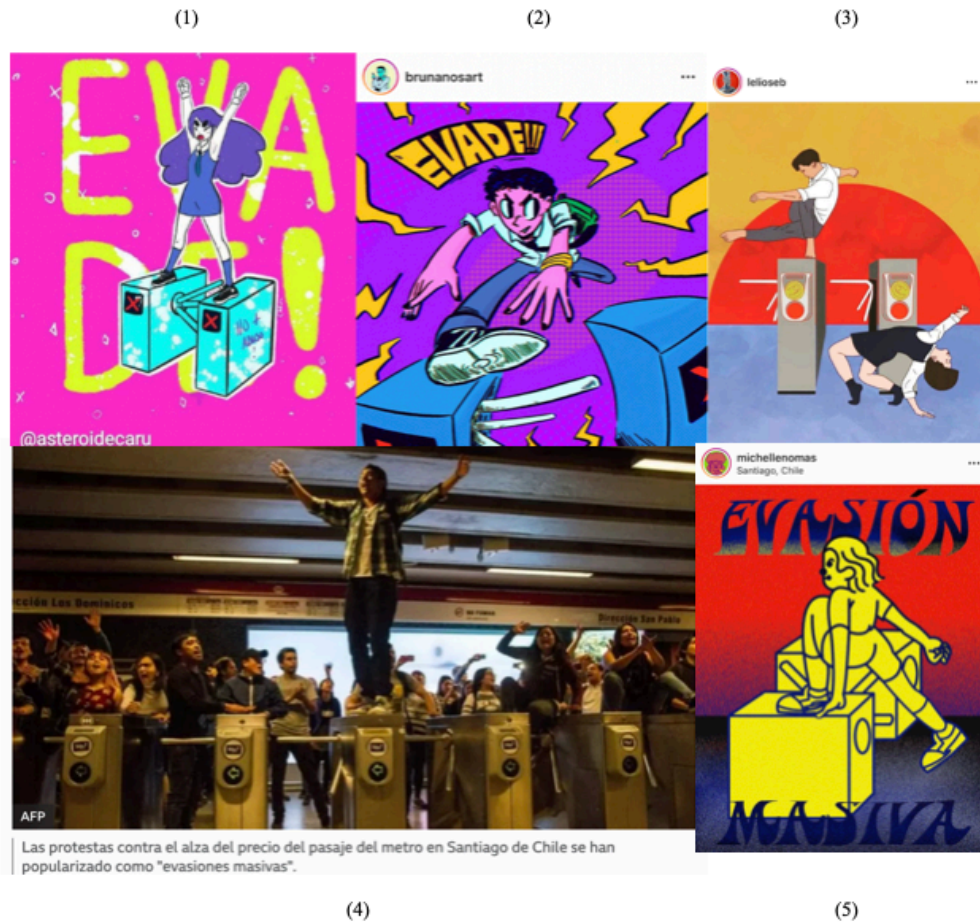


Figure 2.1: Evasiones masivas

- (1) “EVADE!”, “NO MORE ABUSES”. By @asteroidecaru (Instagram)
- (2) “EVADE!!!”. By @brunosart (Instagram)
- (3) By @lelioseb (Instagram)
- (4) “Protests against the subway increase in Santiago, Chile have become known as ‘mass evasions’” (BBC Mundo 2019)
- (5) “Mass evasion”. By @michellenomas (Instagram)

At first, *evasiones masivas* were concentrated in Santiago’s city center, and evaders were primarily from local public high schools. Over the ensuing two weeks, more secondary and tertiary students joined as protests expanded to more stations, and police repression of protestors increased. Students cited Chile’s high cost of living and severe income inequalities as motivation for their participation. They argued that high public transportation costs put stress on their adult family members who are already overworked, exhausted, and struggling to afford basic

expenses. They voiced frustration about government apathy toward working class communities impacted by cost-of-living increases.

Responding to *evasiones masivas*, Minister of Transportation Gloria Hutt maintained that students' protests were unfounded since the cost increase did not apply to their own fares (Emol 2019). In line with microeconomic theories of the lower cost of time among poor people, Andrés Fontaine—Minister of Economy, Development and Tourism—suggested that people struggling to pay the extra 30 pesos could take advantage of the opportunity to save money by waking up earlier to avoid the rush hour charge (CNN Chile 2019).

In the second week of October, a video circulated online and in the media of President Sebastian Piñera bragging about Chile's relative political and economic stability. Citing recession in Argentina and Paraguay, economic stagnation in Mexico and Brazil, political crisis in Bolivia and Peru, and drug trafficking in Colombia, Piñera boasted that “*en medio de esta América Latina convulsionada veamos a Chile. Nuestro país es un verdadero oasis*” [amidst this Latin American turmoil we see Chile. Our country is a true oasis] (Cooperativa 2019). In fact, Chile has been lauded as a “miracle” (Friedman 1982) in international development circles for decades, especially among economists who point to its free-market policies and years of economic growth as a “success story” (*e.g.*, Friedman 1994; Harberger 1993; *cf.* Letelier 1976; Winn 2004; Valenzuela and Dammert 2006; Somma et al. 2021).

In the third week of October, Piñera's oasis metaphor dried up. Mass evasions escalated into mass civil unrest across the country. In Santiago, *evasiones* were met with severe repression from *carabineros*, Chile's militarized police force, who attempted to stop the protests by arresting, physically assaulting, tear gassing, and shooting students. Calls for “no more abuse”

made their way rapidly into the work of Instagram artists, along with iconic confrontations between youth and militarized and/or satirized *carabineros*.

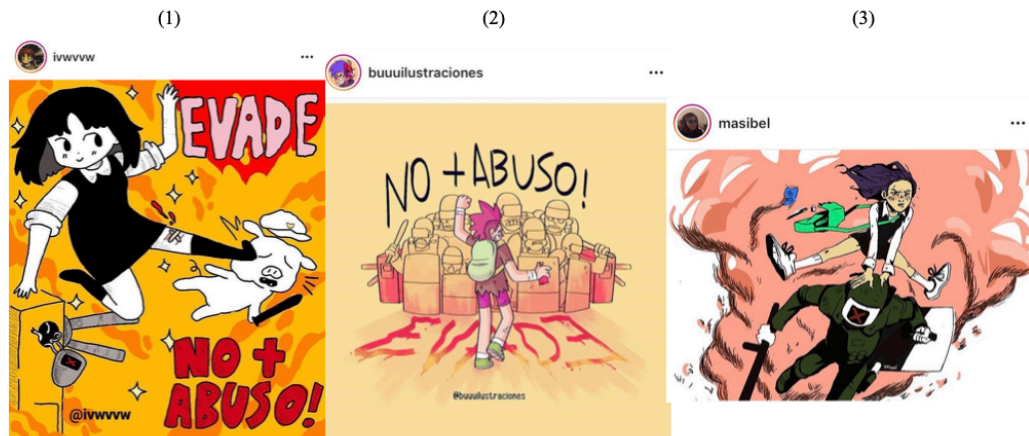


Figure 2.2: Students fighting carabineros in the metro

- (1) “Evade. No more abuse!”. By @ivwvwv (Instagram)
- (2) “No more abuse! Evade”. By @buuulustraciones (Instagram)
- (3) By @masibel (Instagram)

Footage of the police brutality circulated in real-time on social media. One viral video from metro Estación Central showed a girl bleeding on the floor of the station after *carabineros* shot her in the legs three times. The victim’s identity was not shared publicly, but it was clear from her uniform that she was a high school student. Within hours, artists began posting images on social media of a schoolgirl with a gunshot wound and blood running down her leg standing up to the police and to the metro. Through publicly circulated art such as the images in *Figure 2.3*, the bleeding schoolgirl became an iconic figure of youth resistance.

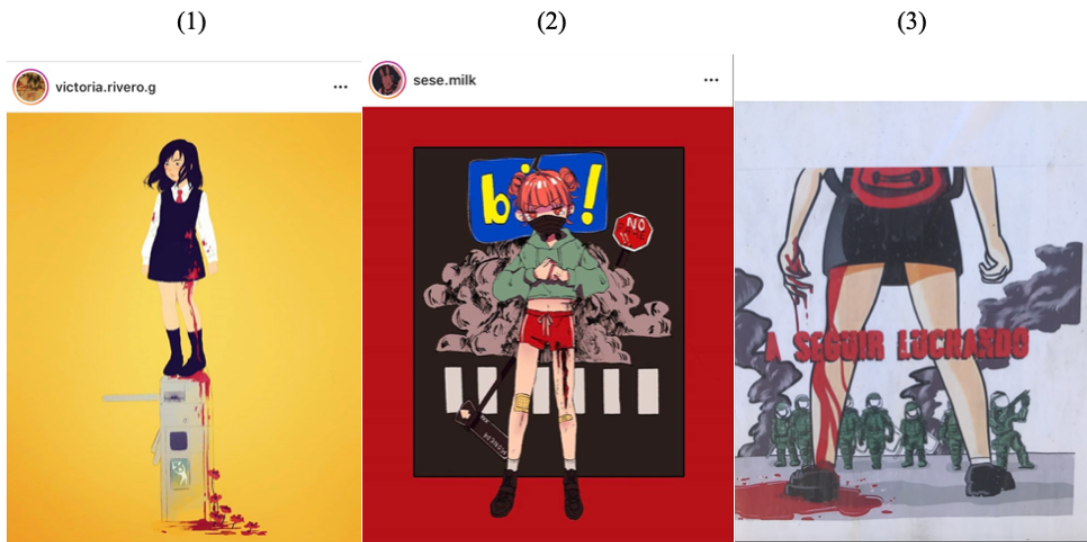


Figure 2.3: Bleeding schoolgirl

- (1) By @victoria.rivero.g (Instagram)
- (2) By @sese.milk (Instagram)
- (3) “To continue fighting” Artist unknown (Print poster)

The widespread disruption caused by the protests resulted in the collapse of Santiago’s entire public transportation system, leaving thousands of rush hour commuters to walk home through clouds of teargas as fighting between police and students escalated out of metro stations and into the streets. Between protests in the metro and clashes on the streets, moving about much of the city began to necessitate contact with the protests. Consequently, this marked the beginning of the collective effervescence.

People built fiery barricades in neighborhoods all over Santiago to block street traffic. Barricades doubled as meeting points for people to gather around and experience what was happening together. Some brought pots and spoons to bang them with in a form of collective rhythmic protest known as *cacerolazo*¹⁴. More people joined from windows and balconies.

¹⁴ *Cacerolazo* is a type of protest where people gather in windows, balconies, and streets to hit pots and pans with spoons in a collective rhythm. In Chile, *cacerolazos* were first organized by right-wing political parties during

There were fires all over. Most of them were small like the barricades, but others were large structural fires. An office complex occupied by Chile’s largest energy provider was set aflame in Santiago Centro (discussed in Chapter Three). In total, 20 metro stations were burned, and 40 more damaged. Metro trains and city buses were also torched (*Figure 2.4*).



Figure 2.4: Metro and bus fires

- (1) “Get out into the streets”. By @alexandermedel (Instagram)
- (2) Bus fire in Barrio Lastarria (photo)
- (3) “Evade”, “evade, don’t pay, another form of fighting”. By @dime.cas (Instagram)

Community protests continued through the night, and so did riots. On TV, every network provided breaking-news coverage of infrastructural damage, vandalism, and building fires. On social media, people shared information about riots as well, but there the news came alongside images of police brutalizing students and communities forming around barricades (*Figure 2.5*).

Salvador Allende’s presidency to protest food shortages (Vega Martínez 2019). Since then, *cacerolazos* have been mobilized more frequently by critics of right-wing government policies. They were deployed during the military dictatorship in protest of the regime (Vargas 2016), and during 2011-2012 student protests for education reform. In October 2019, Ana Tijoux released a song titled *Cacerolazo* in support of the protests in Chile. The song’s beat takes inspiration from the cacophonous clanking of the protests, and the music video includes protest content shared on social media during the early days of the *estallido*.

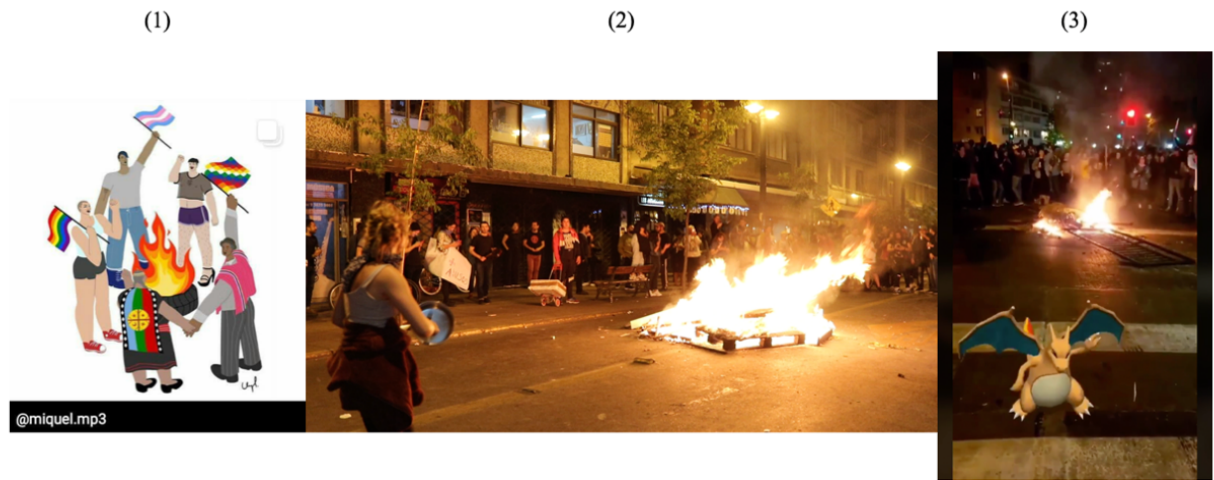


Figure 2.5: Barricades and cacerolazos

- (1) Mapuche Nation flag (bottom), Wiphala flag (right), Transgender flag (top), LGBTQ+ Pride flag (left). By @miquel.mp3 (Instagram)
- (2) *Cacerolazo* and barricade in Barrio Lastarria (photo)
- (3) Screenshot from a video made in the app Pokémon Go. Charzard dances to the beat of humans banging on pots and chanting “*el pueblo unido jamás será vencido*” [the people united will never be defeated], Shared by @radar_cl (Twitter), artist unknown

This was all October 18th. The next day, President Piñera declared a State of Emergency. He implemented a curfew and deployed soldiers in Santiago for the first time since the end of Chile’s military dictatorship (*Figure 2.6*). He also suspended the metro fare increase, but it was too late, the protests and riots continued to grow. Civil unrest spread to other regions of Chile in the days that followed, and the State of Emergency was implemented in several urban areas across the country.



Figure 2.6: Military deployed in Santiago

- (1) By @alen_lauzan (Instagram)
- (2) Metro station Universidad de Chile (photo)
- (3) Photo shared by the Instagram account @santiagoadicto

On October 20th, President Piñera addressed the public again. Speaking about the damage to the public transportation system, he declared “*estamos en guerra contra un enemigo poderoso que está dispuesto a usar la violencia sin ningún límite*” [we are at war with a powerful enemy who is willing to use violence without any limits]. This statement incited even more solidarity among participants in the growing social movement upset by its violent implications—generating even more coordinated action in the form of collective opposition to Piñera (Figure 2.7).



Figure 2.7: No estamos en guerra [we're not at war]

- (1) “We’re not at war”. By @granadadiseno (Instagram)
- (2) “It’s not war it’s union”. By @planetaliens (Instagram)
- (3) “We’re not at war”. By @aquiennolehapasao (Instagram)
- (4) ““Chile seems like an oasis because we have a stable democracy” 10/17/2019 “We’re at war” 10/20/2019”. By @pcayunqueo (Instagram)
- (5) “We’re not at war. We’re just reclaiming what’s fair. Chile woke up”. Artist unknown (protest sign)
- (6) “This isn’t war. This is the class struggle.” Artist unknown (poster)

Soldiers had been in the streets, curfews had been in place, and the government had waged war against its citizens during Chile’s military dictatorship, led by Augusto Pinochet from 1973 until 1990. During the *estallido social* people made connections between past and present forms of political repression, invoking a chronotopic alignment (Bakhtin 1981) between Piñera’s actions in 2019 and Pinochet’s authoritarian rule (Figure 2.8).



Figure 2.8: Dictatorship chronotopes

- (1) “We already said ‘no’ but he ‘yes’ is in everything”, ‘no’ and ‘yes’ icons are from the 1988 referendum campaigns where Chileans voted ‘no’ to Pinochet’s continued reign, ending the dictatorship. Artist unknown (poster)
- (2) “October 2019 Chile, Dictator in Democracy, ‘we’re at war’”. By @dream_estudio (Instagram)
- (3) Artist unknown (street art)
- (4) “Pinochet returned”. Artist unknown (street art)
- (5) Artist unknown (street art)
- (6) Pinochet holding Piñera. By @sadas.fak (Instagram)

The military government is known for its sweeping free market economic reforms, often considered to be the world’s first large-scale experiment with neoliberalism (Harvey 2005). These reforms heavily privatized once-public social services and concentrated political power in the hands of elites. Pinochet’s economy came at the expense of democracy and human rights: thousands of leftist political organizers and dissenters were imprisoned, tortured, exiled, and disappeared by state agents.

State-sanctioned violence against protestors during the *estallido social* was a traumatic echo of dictatorship-era violence (Figure 2.9). Investigations by national and international human rights organizations¹⁵ identified an excessive use of police and military force during the uprising. During these months, there were over 25,000 arrests, 13,000 injuries, and 2,000 charges of human rights violations, including 1,234 investigations of torture and 282 registered cases of sexual assault at the hands of state agents. The *estallido* is the largest-known ocular trauma event, with 347 people suffering eye injuries, primarily from kinetic impact projectiles such as pellets and rubber bullets shot into crowds by *carabineros*. At least 30 people died in relation to the uprising, several killed by agents of the state.



Figure 2.9: State violence

- (1) “Get out of the streets soldiers”, “Our dead will haunt you forever”, “Torturers, rapist, killers”, “all the bullets will come back to you”, “You don’t protect us you kill us”, “*Malditos* the people don’t believe you”, “Killer! Don’t go home your kids reject you!”. By @desobedienciavisual (Instagram)

¹⁵ See: INDH (2020); Comisión de Derechos Humanos (2020); Amnesty International (2020; 2022)

- (2) “No more mutilations. Resign Piñera”. Artist unknown (photo)
- (3) “It could be your child it could be mine. It could be your eyes or mine”. Display of projectile objects from the *estallido social*, artists unknown
- (4) “Opening wounds from the dictatorship is another method of torture”. By @nitantriste (Instagram)
- (5) “In Chile they are torturing again”. By @mariana.golondrina (Instagram)
- (6) “Chile torture state”, “Chile killer state”. Artist unknown (street art)
- (7) “How many eyes does dignity cost”, “More than 300”. Artists unknown (street art)

Chile returned to democratic governance in 1990, but dictatorship-era economic reforms and legislation established the shape of many of the country’s institutions. Pinochetista policies are enshrined within the current constitution, implemented in 1980. Hence the expression adopted by protestors in 2019: “*no son 30 pesos, son 30 años*” [it’s not 30 pesos, it’s 30 years] (Figure 2.10). The uprising was motivated by 30 years of living in democracy with institutions organized around a dictator’s priorities.



Figure 2.10: *No son 30 pesos, son 30 años* [It’s not 30 pesos, it’s 30 years]

- (1) “it’s not for \$30 it’s for 30 years”. By @grafikadiablorojo (Instagram)
- (2) “It’s not 30 pesos it’s 30 years”. By @paper.pas (Instagram)
- (3) “\$30 years”. Artist unknown (street art)

The *estallido social* fervently challenged the ‘Chilean miracle’ narrative by drawing attention to ways that neoliberal policy and state violence perpetuate quotidian precarity for economically and socially marginalized groups (Figure 2.11); for example, through high transportation costs, underfunded/defunded public services, and police/military violence targeting low-income and Indigenous communities. By disrupting everyday routines and laying bare forms of inequality perpetuated by neoliberalism, protestors confronted established political, economic, and military structures (Somma 2021).



Figure 2.11: Protesting neoliberalism

- (1) “Against all neoliberal, classist, racist, and patriarchal violence. We resist to live, we fight to transform”. Artist unknown (poster)
- (2) “Social explosion and death to the neoliberal state”. Artist unknown (poster)
- (3) “Neoliberalism is born and dies in Chile”. Artist unknown (street art)
- (4) “The neoliberal model is killing us”. Artist unknown (poster)
- (5) “Collectivity destroys neoliberalism”. Artist unknown, purchased in Persa Victor Manuel (t-shirt)
- (6) “Without fear”, “Latin America against neoliberalism”. By @artichokat (Instagram)

The collective effervescence of the *estallido social* was sparked by joint attention to the events of October 18th and shared anger about state violence, but it was sustained by acts of community engagement and support—it created and was created through social solidarity. Ritual solidarity took many forms during the *estallido social*, especially through acts of mutual care. One example of this is strangers pouring or spraying a mixture of water and baking soda on each other's faces at protests. The amount of tear gas deployed by police at protests during the uprising was immense. Dousing your face in a mixture of water and baking soda is one of the only ways to help neutralize the painful eye and skin stinging that comes from tear gas exposure. Almost every time I found myself near an active tear gas canister during the uprising, someone would emerge from the crowd with a bottle of baking soda water, asking everyone if they wanted the concoction sprayed in their eyes (*Figure 2.12*).



Figure 2.12: Mutual care at protests

(1) Post-tear gas (photo)

- (2) By @violetarosada92 (Instagram)
- (3) My face after a stranger sprayed it with water and baking soda (selfie)
- (4) Post-tear gas (photo)
- (5) Artist unknown (paper mural)
- (6) “For the baking soda and lemon of the afternoon”. Tip jar at a coffee shop
- (7) “Do you want a little water with baking soda?”, “Y-yes please”. By @pomme.___ (Instagram)

By supporting protestors, and thus sustaining the collective social action, mutual care during the *estallido social* was anti-neoliberal political praxis. Neoliberalism’s reliance on the liberal consumer as economic agent leaves room for only a few specific collective bodies, most prominently the family¹⁶, where much care work is concentrated (Bowles and Gintis 1986). By engaging in this care work on a new collective basis—or by creating social narratives of the beneficence of such—protestors moved out of the frame of the liberal consumer and towards a possibility of collective and, on a small scale, “construct[ed an] alternative politics based in social movements” (citation: Pablo).

Solidarity in the 2019 *estallido social* was routinized through intimate interactions such as spraying a stranger in the face with baking soda water, but it was also structured by experiences of collective organization and effervescence in past social movements. This is clear in the way that former political symbols were reused during the 2019 uprising. The black dog in *Figure 2.13* is Negro Matapacos¹⁷, a real dog who became famous for joining protests and attacking *carabineros* in 2011 during the student movements for education reform. Matapacos died in 2017, but his image was used as a symbol of faithful comradeship and resistance to police brutality during the *estallido social* in 2019, invoking the spirit of the 2011-2012 student protests.

¹⁶ The second sentence in Chile’s 1980 constitution is: “*La familia es el núcleo fundamental de la sociedad.*” [The family is the fundamental nucleus of society].

¹⁷ ‘Negro’ [black] refers to the dog’s color, and ‘Matapacos’ is portmanteau that combines the verb ‘matar’ [to kill] with the Chilean slang term ‘pacos’ [cops].

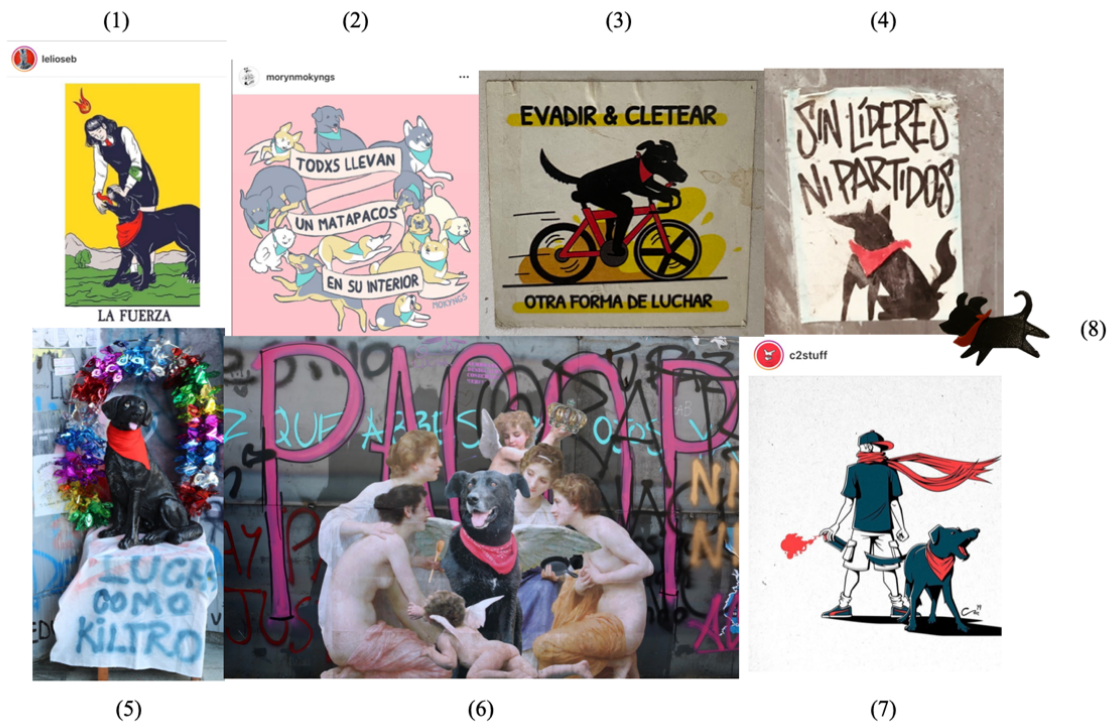


Figure 2.13: Matapacos

- (1) “The Strength”. By @lelioseb (Instagram)
- (2) “We all carry a Matapacos inside of us”. By @morynmokyngs (Instagram)
- (3) “Evade and bike (with cleats) another way to fight”. Artist unknown. (Sticker)
- (4) “Without leaders or parties”. Artist unknown (poster)
- (5) “Fight like a mutt/street dog”. Artist unknown (shrine)
- (6) Artist unknown (mural)
- (7) By @c2stuff (Instagram)
- (8) Artist unknown (refrigerator magnet)

On October 26th, Piñera revoked the State of Emergency, military deployment, and curfew. This followed massive protests around the country the day before, which included a protest in Santiago known as “*la marcha más grande de Chile*” [the biggest march in Chile] that saw participation from an estimated 1.2 million people. Downplaying or misconstruing protests of this scale—about 1/6th of Santiago’s population—may have seemed to Piñera less feasible

than it had a few days prior. Despite Piñera's attempt to quell the civil discontent, the movement continued. Protestors began to mobilize around constitutional reform (*Figure 2.14*).



Figure 2.14: Constitutional reform

- (1) Burning the 1980 constitution. Artist unknown (mural)
- (2) “New constitution”. Artist unknown (protest sign)
- (3) “To burn is a political act. To burn is a poetic act”. Artist unknown (poster)
- (4) “Constitutional assembly or nothing”. Artist unknown (street art)

The scale of the uprising forced political elites to respond to communities whose lived experiences are typically erased by narratives that depict Chile as an economic ‘success story’ and a ‘political oasis’. In response to a month of continuous protesting, in mid-November congress agreed to organize a national referendum vote for replacing the dictatorship-era constitution.

4.0 Conclusion: Dignidad [dignity]

A new constitution sounds like an immense overreaction to a peak-hour fare increase for a subset of commuters—but one made sensible through the lens of the collective effervescence. Mass participation in protests and other forms of political action during the *estallido social* coalesced around the moral category of ‘dignity’ (Figure 2.15).



Figure 2.15: Dignidad [dignity]

- (1) “Dignity”. Artist unknown (street art)
- (2) The plaza in Santiago Centro formerly known as ‘Plaza Italia’, changed by protestors to ‘Dignity Plaza’ in Google Maps.
- (3) “Until dignity becomes custom”. By @ay.palomay (shared on Instagram)
- (4) “Lights”, “gas”, “social security”, “credits”, “health”, “repression”, “education”, “debts”, “violence is not being able to live with dignity”. By @chiolin_ (Instagram)
- (5) “Dignity”. Artist unknown (Sticker)
- (6) “Dignity”. By @caomor (Instagram)

Chile's 2019 uprising was a demand for dignity by those for whom formal channels of feedback on policy matters are unavailable or insufficient. The collective effervescence of mass protests offers a unifying power to protestors, while generating symbols and meanings that solidify the groups' sense of moral unity. Moving through the kaleidoscope of protest art, protest slogans, ephemera, and realia that self-consciously unites the past and present, one always arrives at the same roots of the present *indignities*: untenable cost of living, state violence, institutions created by a dictator. The power of symbols—the feelings they capture and the meanings they make of the mass protests—is to make this link legible.

The Private School

*A otros le enseñaron secretos que a ti no
A otros dieron de verdad esa cosa llamada educación*

*To others, they taught secrets that they didn't teach you
To others, they actually gave that thing called education*

--Los Prisioneros, *El baile de los que sobran* (1986)
[*The dance of those who are left over*]

Chapter Three:

Fire, tear gas; dangerous things

1.0 Introduction

Chapter Three takes place in The Private School during the first week of Chile's 2019 *estallido social*. It examines student-teacher interactions during a 2° medio¹⁸ Social Studies period, focusing on two discussions about (1) a fire that occurred on the first night of the uprising and (2) a student's experience with tear gas at a protest. Drawing from linguistic anthropological methods for studying multimodal interaction (C. Goodwin 2000; C. Goodwin 2018; M.H. Goodwin 2008; M.H. Goodwin and Cekaite 2018), I highlight ways that socioeconomically privileged secondary school students are socialized into political stance-taking practices.

I recorded the class period discussed in this chapter on October 24th, 2019. This was the first day that The Private School campus was open to students following city-wide school and business closures caused by the onset of the *estallido social* six days prior. Santiago was still under a State of Emergency, nightly curfew, and military deployment; we could see soldiers guarding a building across the street from the classroom window. The uprising had severely disrupted and re-structured most people's quotidian routines in Santiago—public transportation was limited, businesses were closed, as were most schools. Administrators at The Private School chose to re-open campus during the State of Emergency with the goal of fostering a sense of

¹⁸ '2° medio' (*segundo medio*) refers to the second year of secondary school in the Chilean education system. It is the equivalent of 10th grade in the U.S. education system.

normalcy and stability within the school community. Little felt normal or stable in the world around us. Teachers altered their course plans to give students opportunities to process what was happening together.

Sir Carlos¹⁹, the 2^{o medio} Social Studies teacher, got to business as soon as class started, “*necesito que comprendemos esto*” [I need us to understand this]. Citing an urgent need to make sense of ‘this’—the uprising—he assigned the class to reconstruct a timeline of events leading up to and since the October 18th metro protests. Drawing from audiovisual recordings of this class activity, I highlight participants’ use of multimodal semiotic resources (C. Goodwin 2000) (*i.e.*, speech, gesture, gaze, physical objects) to establish knowledge, and to display political and affective stances relative to the *estallido social*. I argue that these student-teacher interactions reflect how students in The Private School come into styles of political engagement through their socialization into forms of expertise associated with technocratic careers.

The first data analysis section concerns a class conversation about a structural fire on the first night of the uprising. My analysis focuses on the arrangement of action in teacher-initiated corrections (*cf.* Jacobs-Huey 2007; Friedman 2010; García-Sánchez 2010; de León 2017) deployed by Sir Carlos to problematize the language students use to talk about the fire. I argue that this type of metalinguistic corrective feedback—which occurred many times during the class period—is based in a language ideology (Schieffelin et al. 1998; Kroskrity 2000) that promotes a relationship between ‘clear’ communication and epistemological truth (Silverstein 1996). I identify Sir Carlos’s persistent metalinguistic emphasis (Mertz 2007) as contributing to an elite (Reyes 2021), ethical register (Debenport 2023) that asserts moral control over how information should be disseminated to the public (*ibid.*; Debenport 2015). Students in The Private School are

¹⁹ In some elite private schools in Chile students refer to teachers and school staff as ‘Sir’ and ‘Miss’ (English loan words).

taught to be hyper-reflexive about language because they are socialized into forms of professional expertise (Boyer 2005, 2008; C. Goodwin 1994; Carr 2010) associated with powerful careers in politics, economics, business, and media—fields where ‘what’ you say or ‘how’ you say something can influence the political atmosphere of the nation state²⁰.

The second interaction also involves a correction routine. In this example, a student, Edgar, reports to the teacher that he was tear gassed while attending a protest in Santiago Centro the day before. Sir Carlos’s correction of the language Edgar uses to describe the incident creates discursive distance (Conley 2013) between the student and the gas’s source (a tear gas canister), de-emphasizing the student’s embodied experience of being tear gassed. Elaborating upon this interaction and the language ideology posed in the previous section, I posit that hyper-reflexive attention to linguistic form compels a dissociation from affective experience in pursuit of ‘dispassionate objectivity’ (*cf.* Mertz 2007). Based in sociolinguistic insights on stance (Jaffe 2009; Kiesling 2022), my analysis highlights how Edgar disaligns with Sir Carlos’s linguistic reframing of what happened by asserting his embodied experience of the tear gas. I theorize the student’s discursive resistance as a political stance against dispassionate objectivity.

The remainder of Chapter Three is organized as follows. In Section 2, I provide background information about The Private School and its return to classes during the *estallido social*, and I describe data collection and analysis methods. The fire and tear gas interactions are analyzed in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. Section 5 discusses the dangerous discourse of misinformation and social instability.

²⁰ See: politicians’ responses to student metro protests in Chapter Two.

2.0 Background and methods

In Chapter 1, I introduced The Private School as a highly ranked institution of education, that enrolls students from wealthy families, and socializes them into communicative competencies that afford its graduates symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) for easily navigating elite global networks after graduation. Teachers and administrators at the Private School are acutely aware of their institution's elite position. Students' socioeconomic class and future career trajectories were especially relevant to how teachers scaffolded classroom conversations about the *estallido social*.

In 2016, I interviewed the principal of The Private School, Sir Mark, about differences between his campus and Santiago's public schools. Expressing regret about socioeconomic inequality, Sir Mark provided a straight-forward description of The Private School's relative hierarchical position in Chile's educational economy²¹:

1 Sir Mark: This school
2: along with another 50-100 schools in Chile
3: educate the top 1% in Chile
4: so our reality is very very different
5: than the rest of the schools in Chile
6: but again
7: and this is very very sad
8: these are the kids that will be pulling the future in Chile
9: these are the guys that are the businessmen
10: the politicians
11: the-the presidents
12: and senators and so on
13: for good or for bad
14: but these are them

The fact that students at The Private School are in line to be the future power elites in Chile was on everyone's mind on Wednesday, October 23rd, 2019, during a staff event convened to discuss the possibility of returning to classes during the ongoing State of Emergency.

²¹ This interview was in English.

I carpooled to the meeting with one of the 2° *medio* headteachers, Miss Zoé, since public transportation was still affected by the uprising. When we arrived, staff assembled to listen to Sir Mark address the school community. He lamented the violence going on in the country and emphasized that The Private School would re-open as soon as administrators and local officials determined that it was safe to do so. He emphasized the importance of providing a supportive community for students to engage in respectful, democratic dialogue about what was happening in Chile.

Afterwards, teachers organized by grade level into smaller working groups to strategize their return to the classroom, and I joined the high school team. Teachers were especially sensitive to the weight of their ethical responsibility as educators of upper-class students during the *estallido social*—what did it mean to be teaching Chile’s elite class in a moment when mass outrage about class inequality had shut down the whole country? Sir Carlos, the teacher whose class is the topic of this chapter, voiced concerns about students’ potential exposure to misinformation about the uprising. He encouraged his colleagues to think about the types of discourses their students were exposed to online, in the news, and in conversations at home; and he wondered aloud about the frameworks he imagined students bringing back into the classroom upon their return. This concern with media and digital literacy (*cf.* Flamenbaum and George 2023) informs how Sir Carlos organized the class activity discussed in Sections 3 and 4.

That night, Miss Zoé messaged me to confirm that The Private School would open the following morning for a half-day of classes, with optional attendance for students. I contacted 2° *medio* teachers to ask if it would be possible for me to film, and they agreed. Prior to the *estallido social*, I had already made a schedule with teachers to begin weekly classroom recording sessions in late October, so we modified that plan to accommodate the school’s re-

opening during the State of Emergency. During homeroom on Thursday morning, 2^o *medio* head teachers set aside time for me to talk with students about recording classes that day, remind them about my research protocol and their rights as participants, and ask their permission to document their classes throughout the day. I also obtained verbal adolescent assent/adult consent from participants before hitting record at the start of every class period.

Following Charles's Goodwin's (1993) recommendations for recording human interaction in natural settings, I used several recording devices located around the classroom. A Canon EOS Rebel T6I DSLR camera on one side of the classroom with a tripod, which was equipped with a Røde Video Mic Pro microphone and external battery packs. I also recorded audio using a Zoom H6 Audio Recorder placed in the middle of the classroom. *Figure 3.1* shows how participants, recording devices, and I were organized in the in the space during the fire interaction (Section 3). The pink dotted box shows the view captured by the DSLR camera.

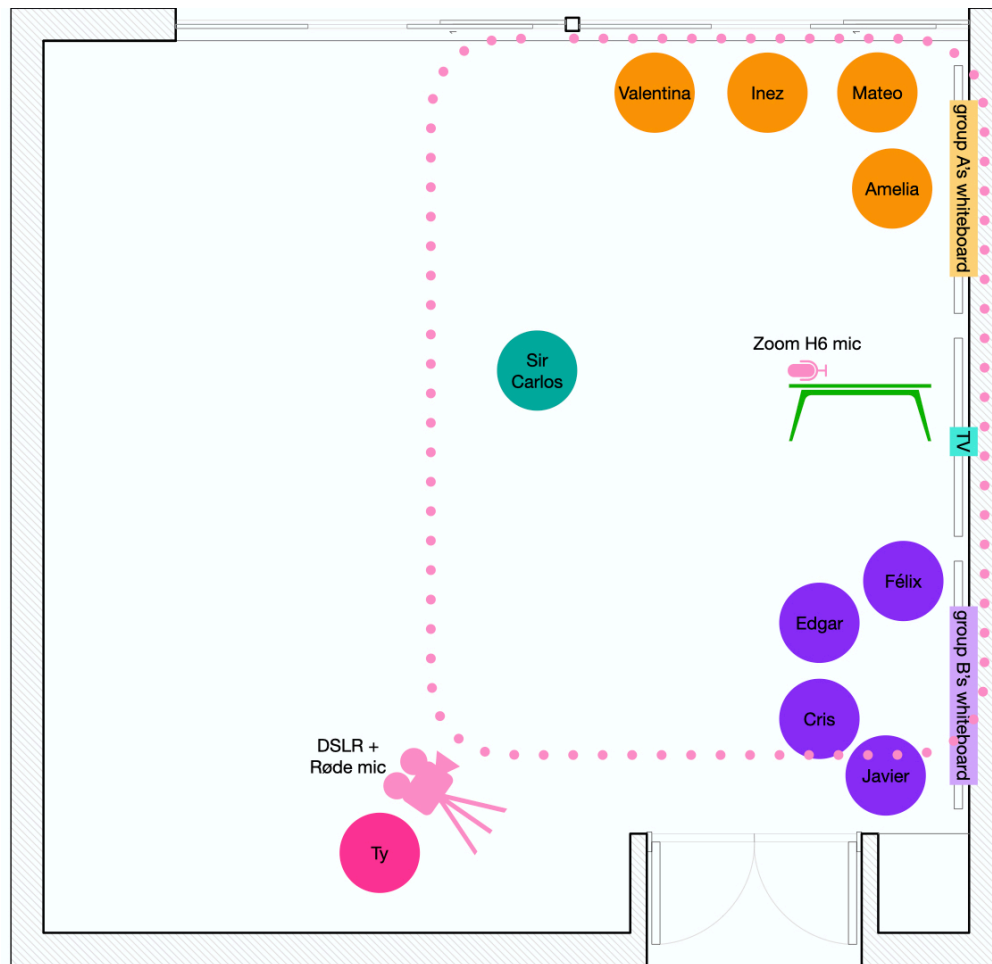


Figure 3.1: Classroom layout²²

Overall, the audio quality from the Zoom H6 was better than the DSLR's Rode mic, so I synced H6 audio with video recordings in Final Cut Pro. While transcribing, I frequently referenced both the Rode and Zoom H6 audio files, which was especially helpful for clarifying overlapping and otherwise hard-to-hear speech.

²² Thank you to Alexis Quinteros for helping me make these classroom layouts and the drawings later in this chapter.

3.0 Fire

Sir Carlos split the class into two groups (*Figure 3.1*) and directed them to create timelines of events leading up to and since the onset of the *estallido social*. Throughout the activity, the teacher monitored students' discussions, identified problems in how they described events, and initiated corrections by questioning the language that they used. Section 3 examines one such corrective routine where Sir Carlos orients students' attention to language used in the media to describe a building fire that occurred on the first night of the *estallido social*.

Below, I introduce the fire and its relevance to the uprising (3.1), before delving into the student-teacher interaction. The first part of my analysis (3.2) attends to participants' use of multimodal resources (linguistic, paralinguistic, embodied, and material) to negotiate attention to the fire, and it considers how Sir Carlos's intense semiotic emphasis on linguistic form inculcates a metalinguistic awareness (Silverstein 1981; Mertz and Yovel 2009) that positions discourse about the *estallido social* as a locus of political power. In the second part (3.3), I argue that in his deployment of a language ideology that emphasizes communicative 'clarity', the teacher asserts an aesthetic preference (Debenport 2015: 58) over future discourse produced by individuals in elite positions of political power—the kinds of positions that students at The Private School are expected to pursue after graduation.

3.1 The Enel fire

The fire in question took place in an office complex occupied by Enel Chile S.A.²³, a private energy corporation that provides services to most of Santiago and much of the country. That afternoon student protestors staged *evasiones masivas* in metro stations across the city,

²³ S.A. (*Sociedades Anónimas*) is the equivalent of *Inc.* (Incorporated) in English.

especially concentrated in busy stations in Santiago's city center. Police responded by criminalizing and attacking student protestors in attempts to quash the civil disobedience actions. Violent clashes between police and students ensued, eventually escalating out of the metro and into the streets, while manifestations expanded across the city (Garcés 2019).

As the evening went on, the effervescent chaos gave way to a haze of mass confusion. It was difficult to know what to pay attention to—was this still about the metro? TV news stations broke the story about the Enel fire just before 10pm, and it immediately dominated our screens (Figure 3.2). The flaming Enel building became a beacon for collective attention, and national media coverage of the fire heightened a sense of social and political instability.



Figure 3.2: “Intentional fire in the Enel Building” Tele 13 breaking news

Sir Carlos worried about how the uprising was being talked about in the media, and the potential for irresponsible journalism and political leadership to proliferate mass panic (cf. Arendt 1976; Ho *et al.* 2019). In the interaction below, we will see that he found the media's

portrayal of the Enel building engulfed in flames particularly troubling. In fact, no news station knew at the time whether the fire was spontaneous or premeditated, and later investigations failed to identify arsonists or a motive (Batarce and Ayala 2022). Furthermore, the incident was far less devastating than it seemed in those breaking news stories. The building itself wasn't on fire at all: flames primarily affected the emergency stairs scaling the outside of the structure. The edifice suffered minimal damage and employees were safely evacuated. Perhaps the most damaging thing about the fire was its significant role in fanning the flames of mass panic.

3.2 Organizing attention to language

Linguistic anthropological research on the organization of attention reveals culturally situated practices, values, and ideologies that structure how novices are socialized into attentional regimes (Brown 2011; de León 2023). Sir Carlos's reflexive attention to language used to describe the *estallido social* resembles discourse practices that Elizabeth Mertz observes in her study of law schools in the United States. Mertz finds that law students' socialization into legal epistemology involves fundamental changes in how they attend to language. As they acquire the discursive competencies of attorneys, students come into a "distinctive, legal metalinguistic orientation" ubiquitous in the profession (Mertz 2007: 45). One way that future attorneys are socialized into new forms of attending to language is through professors' use of the Socratic method of teaching. This includes practices such as, "extended questioning of a single student about a case assigned for that particular day, frequent interruption, few (if any) answers provided, an insistence on close attention to the language of the case, a challenging, if not hostile, tone" (*ibid.*: 44).

Like the law professors in Mertz's research, Sir Carlos makes use of the Socratic method as a pedagogical resource for orienting students' attention to linguistic form, prompting a

metalinguistic awareness of *estallido social* discourse. These practices urge students to attend to abstract forms related to the uprising, and thus talk about it using language presumed to be objective and neutral (Mertz 2007: 5), *i.e.*, affect neutral, politically neutral. In the following examples, Sir Carlos engages in interactional practices that draw students' attention to linguistic form, thereby challenging them to identify what is wrong with the media's representation of the Enel fire on their own.

3.2.1: “Se quemó el edificio Enel” [the Enel building burned]

Group A is discussing where to add President Piñera's October 19th State of Emergency announcement to their timeline. Mateo (MAT) is on his iPhone researching events online.

Reading from the screen, he tells his groupmates that the Enel fire happened before the State of Emergency (*Ex. 1*).

Ex. 1²⁴:

- 1 MAT: ante- pero antes del estado de emergencia-
 bef- but before the state of emergency
- 2 se quemó el (.) edificio Enel ↓
 the Enel building burned

This description, “*se quemó el edificio Enel*” [the Enel building burned] (line 2), is consistent with how the fire was described in much of the breaking news coverage about the incident on the night of October 18th.

Mateo's statement is overheard by everyone in the classroom, and both the teacher and members of Group B are eager to engage. Sir Carlos (PRO²⁵) indicates that he wants to reflect on

²⁴ The full transcript and translation for the Enel fire interaction can be found in Appendix A.

²⁵ ‘*Profesor*’ [teacher].

this information, “*ah bien bien bien*” [ah good good good] (line 3, *Ex. 2*), but he is in competition for students’ attention. Across the room two members of Group B, Félix (FEL) and Edgar (EDG), pivot away from their own timeline and adamantly disagree with the chronology presented by Mateo (line 4). These shifts in attention, embodied orientations, and speaker/listener roles establish the participation framework (Goffman 1981; C. Goodwin and M.H. Goodwin 2004) that organizes the interaction analyzed herein.

Ex. 2:

- 3 PRO: *ah bien bien bien-*
ah good good good
- 4 EDG: *no: // se quemó después*
no it burned after
- 5 PRO: **sú:***per preciso eso ↓*
super precise that
- 6 AME: *no no no fue antes ↓*
no no no it was before
- 7 PRO: *a ver a ver a ver a ver ↓*
look look look look
- 8 EDG: *en serio ↑*
really ↑
- 9 PRO: *a ver a ver a ver ↓*
look look look
- 10 MAT: *si fue antes de la-*
yes it was before the-
- 11 AME: *si si fue antes ↓*
yes yes it was before
- 12 PRO: *sh sh sh:*
- 13 *escúchame ↓*
listen to me
- 14 *escuchase lo que están diciendo ↓*

listen to what you are saying

15 porque es fundamental (.)
 because it's fundamental

16 para poder resolver esto que está pasando (.)
 to be able to resolve what is happening

17 que seamos **súper correctos**
 that we be super correct

18 en las pal**abras** que estamos ocupando (.)
 in the words that we're using

19 y en intencionalidades ↓
 and in intentionality

The fire is established as a conversational topic among all participants in the classroom. However, the teacher and students attend to the information shared by Mateo for different reasons. While members of Groups A and B go back-and-forth debating the order of events (lines 6, 8, 10, and 11), Sir Carlos attempts to shush their conversation (lines 7, 9, and 12). As the interaction unfolds, we will see that Sir Carlos is not interested in chronological order, but how the Enel fire is described in the media, and specifically the scope of the fire. He positions “*se quemó el edificio Enel*” [the Enel building burned] as a misleading synecdoche: the building did not burn, the emergency staircase attached to the side of the building was on fire. Rather than directly reveal what is wrong with the media’s representation, the teacher engages students in a pedagogical routine that prompts them to reflect on linguistic form and semantic meaning.

Once Sir Carlos achieves students’ attention with the command ‘*escúchame*’ [listen to me] (line 13), he immediately orients listeners toward linguistic form. Referring to the ongoing civil unrest, the teacher explains that to resolve what is going on it is fundamental that they be “*súper correctos en las palabras que estamos ocupando y en intencionalidades*” [super correct with the words that we’re using and in intentionality] (lines 15-19). This reveals an explicit

language ideology: social stability depends on the careful and correct use of language.

Alternatively, mass chaos can result from unintentional, incorrect communication. Here, Sir Carlos invokes a relationship between language, intentions (*cf.* Duranti 2015), and truth, and he imparts a moral responsibility upon students to be careful with their choice of words because of the implications that misrepresenting information can have for social stability.

3.2.2 Correction through metalinguistic emphasis

Sir Carlos directs Mateo to return to what he just said (line 22, *Ex. 3*). The student displays a careful attention to the words on his iPhone by staring directly down at the screen and pointing to it with a capped whiteboard marker (*Figure 3.3*). This environmentally coupled gesture (C. Goodwin 2007a) directs listeners' attention to the digital source on the phone. Mateo's gaze, deictic marker, and careful lector style are mutually elaborating resources that help "create a public, shared focus of visual and cognitive attention" (*ibid.*: 57) around the piece of media as an authority on the Enel fire.

Ex. 3:

- 22 PRO: vuelve a decir lo que dijiste recién ↓
repeat what you just said
- 23 MAT: día antes de que se decrete—
the day before the decree—
- 24 PRO: ya ↑
- 25 MAT: el estado de em—
the state of em—
- 26 de excepción
of exception
- 27 o de emergencia ↓
or of emergency

28 PRO: ya ↑
 29 MAT: eh: s:—
 30 se quemó el edificio Enel ↓
 the Enel building burned
 31 PRO: ya ↓



Figure 3.3: Mateo reads from his phone

Mateo cautiously recites, “*día antes que se decrete—*” [[the] day before the decree—] (line 23). Sir Carlos encourages the student to continue with an affirmative nod and a “*ya*” that ends in a rising tone (H%) (line 24), questioning what comes next. Mateo continues, beginning to say “*el estado de em—*” [the state of em—] (line 25), the State of Emergency, before quickly self-correcting to “*de excepción*” [of exception] (line 26)²⁶. Mateo clarifies the amendment by

²⁶ The legal state that was speech-acted into existence (Austin 1962) with President Piñera’s October 19th decree was referred to interchangeably as *Estado de Emergencia* [State of Emergency] and *Estado de Excepción* [State of Exception]—referencing the state of constitutional exception.

suggesting that they mean the same thing, “*o de emergencia*” [or of emergency] (line 27).

Students attend to multiple visual fields (C. Goodwin 2007b) in an attempt to gauge which words Sir Carlos finds problematic, shifting their gaze between Mateo’s phone and Sir Carlos. During the *emergencia/excepción* mix-up both Mateo and Amelia glance up at Sir Carlos to check his reaction (Figure 3.4). Is this the kind of thing that Sir Carlos identifies as failing to be ‘super correct’?



Figure 3.4: Mateo and Amelia gauge Sir Carlos’s reaction

Sir Carlos indicates that Mateo should continue reading with the same “*ya*” prosodic pattern and co-speech nod as 3 seconds prior (line 28). Reassured, Mateo looks back down at the iPhone and Amelia turns back toward Mateo.

Mateo hesitates again, “*eh s—*” (line 29), before moving into the verb phrase, “*se quemó el edificio Enel*” [the Enel building burned] (line 30). Upon finishing, he moves both his eyes and

the whiteboard marker away from the phone screen and toward the teacher, signaling that he has complied with the directive and is opening the floor to Sir Carlos's feedback. The other three members of Group A, Vale, Inez, and Amelia, also turn toward their teacher in anticipation of the next conversational move (*Figure 3.5*). Sir Carlos responds with a final “ya” (line 31), this time with a falling tone (L%) that also implies the end of Mateo's conversational turn.

Sir Carlos looks toward Group B and moves his arms up and away from his body (*Figure 3.5*) in a gesture that encompass students on both sides of the room in preparation for addressing the whole class, “*todos*” [everyone] (line 33, *Ex. 4*). However, Mateo interjects just before Sir Carlos begins speaking and the two overlap (lines 32-33).



Figure 3.5: Students anticipate Sir Carlos's response

Ex. 4:

32 MAT: pero eso fue // despu  :{s}–

but that was after—

33 PRO: **todos-**
everyone

34 *esperaesperaesperaesperaespera ↓*
waitwaitwaitwaitwait

35 *quédate ahí ↓*
stay there

Mateo's interjection is an attempt to relate the news he just read from his phone to Group A's timeline by adding chronological information, "*pero eso fue después*—" [but that was after—] (line 32). Once again, he draws upon resources in the environment to index the focus of his attention. Shown in the first image of *Figure 3.6*, Mateo moves both the Expo marker and his gaze away from Sir Carlos, up and over his head, and toward the information that Amelia has written on Group A's timeline.



32 MAT: pero eso fue // despué:{s}—
but that was after—
33 PRO: todos
everyone

35 PRO: quédate ahí
stay there

Figure 3.6: Co-speech gestures

Sir Carlos quashes the attempted shift in attention, swiftly transforming the open-armed ‘*todos*’ gesture into an up-down ‘stop’ motion shown in *Figure 3.6* “*esperaesperaesperaesperaespera*” [waitwaitwaitwaitwaitwait] (line 34); “*quédate ahí*” [stay there] (line 25). Mateo pauses mid-utterance and turns back toward the teacher. With a manual gesture that mirrors his discursive stance, the student retracts the whiteboard marker and returns his hand to a neutral position, shown in the second image of *Figure 3.6*.

Up to this point, Mateo’s co-speech gestures have repeatedly indexed text as an authority (*cf.* Flamenbaum 2016) on the *estallido social*. He carefully reads the words from his phone screen and connects this information to the material included on Group A’s timeline. These embodied citational practices reflect Mateo’s epistemic stance (Lo 2004; Lempert 2008). He is certain that the Enel building burned before the *Estado de Emergencia* because he obtained this

information from an authority on the matter: someone on the internet. By citing his source and contextualizing information with respect to his group's timeline, Mateo engages in the kinds of intertextual literacy practices that students in The Private School are socialized into through academic research and writing assignments.

In contrast, Sir Carlos's open-armed '*todos*' [everyone] gesture metaphorically shifts the potential locus of authority away from the media and onto students. After quashing Mateo's attempted interjection, the teacher widens his arms again and asks if everyone agrees with what Mateo read, "*todos están de acuerdo que se quemó el edificio de Enel?*" [does everyone agree that the Enel building burned?] (lines 36-37, *Ex. 5*).

Ex. 5:

- 36 PRO: todos están de acuerdo (.)
does everyone agree
- 37 que **se quemó**: el edificio de Enel ↑
that the Enel building burned
- 38 MAT: no lo incendiaron ↓
no they set it on fire
- 39 EDG: lo // incendiaron ↓
no they set it on fire
- 40 VAL: se quemó una escalera ↓
a staircase burned
- 41 AME: se quemó una—
it burned a—

The teacher decomposes the claim shared by Mateo '*antes del Estado de Emergencia se quemó el edificio Enel*' [before the State of Emergency the Enel building burned] and reuses the linguistic material that he wants students to focus on, '*se quemó el edificio de Enel*' [the Enel building burned] (line 37) (C. Goodwin 2018). By adding emphatic stress to "*se quemó*" [it

burned], he further narrows the scope of focus to the reflexive verb, the subject and object of the sentence.

This framing strategy effectively incites a phenomenological transformation in how the class perceives the utterance. Several students respond immediately upon realizing that Sir Carlos is raising an issue of linguistic and ontological veracity, not chronological order. Wondering if the problem has to do with agency, Mateo and Edgar respond to Sir Carlos's question in unison, "*lo incendiaron*" [**they** set it on fire] (line 38). Both add prosodic stress on the third person plural *-iaron* morpheme of *incender* [to set fire→they set fire], emphasizing that the fire was started by a group of people, whereas "*se quemó*" [it burned] could be interpreted as the building burned on its own, or spontaneously burst into flames. Their response is met with non-uptake from Sir Carlos. Valentina and Amelia also answer in unison, "*se quemó una escalera*" [a stair burned] (line 38). This is the answer that Sir Carlos has been looking for.

3.2.3 Coordinating metalinguistic awareness through semiotic layering

Sir Carlos models metalinguistic awareness by being "super correct" and "intentional" about the words he uses himself, and by orienting attention to linguistic forms through an alignment of mutually elaborating features of speech, voice, and gesture (C. Goodwin 2018; M.H. Goodwin and Cekaite 2018). Drawing from Mendoza-Denton and Jannedy's (2011) work on semiotic layering, *Figure 3.7* shows how the teacher stresses linguistic form when he reiterates Valentina and Amelia's answer (lines 42-45), highlighting "*se quemó una escalera*" [a staircase burned] (line 40) as the correct representation of the Enel fire.

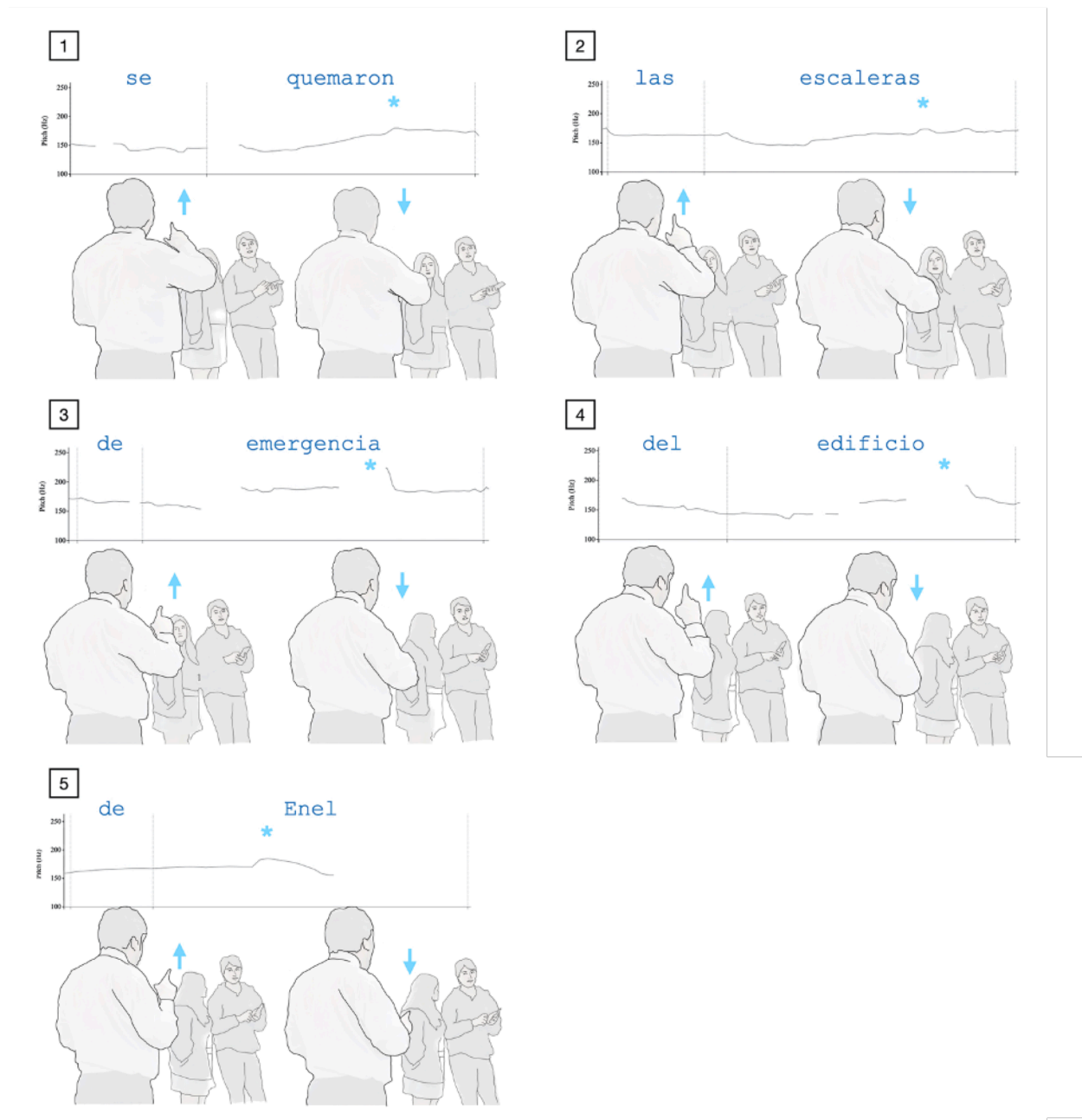


Figure 3.7: Semiotic layering

Ex. 6:

PRO: se quemaron-
las escaleras-
de emergencia-
del edificio-
de Enel ↓

they burnt the emergency stairs of the
Enel building

In *Figure 3.7* data is organized into three layers along the vertical axis of each frame. Starting at the top, you see the transcription of Sir Carlos's speech, divided into five 'syntactic units' in each frame. The middle layer shows his corresponding pitch tracks, and marks pitch accents of the five 'prosodic units'. The bottom layer highlights the manual motions that make up five 'gestural units'.

Each syntactic unit is composed of either a noun, verb, or prepositional phrase: 1) *se quemaron* (verb phrase); 2) *las escaleras* (noun phrase); 3) *de emergencia* (prepositional phrase) 4) *del edificio* (prepositional phrase) 5) *de Enel* (prepositional phrase). Phrases are divided into two parts. The first is a 'function word' that organizes the grammatical structure of the utterance (*se, las, de, del, de*), followed by a 'content word' that provides semantic meaning (*quemaron, escaleras, emergencia, edificio, Enel*). This structure repeats five times through the utterance, and it guides the organization of prosodic and gestural features across semiotic channels.

The next layer represents the segment of Sir Carlos's pitch contour that correspond with the speech transcribed above. The x-axis shows fundamental frequency over time, represented by the pitch track, and the y-axis marks his pitch range. Light blue stars mark the peak of the pitch accent on each content word of the utterance; *quemaron, escaleras, emergencia, edificio, and Enel*. Sir Carlos's accentization of every other word is especially salient since Spanish only requires one pitch accent per utterance (see Beckman *et al.* 2002). All the examples shown in *Figure 3.7* are bitonal L+H* pitch accents, with 'high' targets (see Oritz *et al.* 2010 for a description of intonation in Chilean Spanish).

Pitch accents in this example draw perceptual attention to each content word. In an utterance such as this one where a teacher is repeating a student's answer back to the class to highlight correct information, we might expect to see emphasis on the new information. And

indeed, even though all content words are accented, *emergencia* is more prominent. This is achieved through lengthening (the stressed syllable lasts 0.41 seconds), and a delayed peak (Ortiz *et al.* 2010: 258) that occurs at the beginning of the post-accented syllable—which sounds a bit like Sir Carlos is singing the information back to the class. The extra-emphasis on *emergencia* thus highlights that the fire did not just happen on any stairs in the Enel building, it happened on the emergency stairs outside of the building. Although the location of the fire is prosodically marked as especially important, use of pitch accents throughout the utterance effectively marks each content word as an object of focus.

This semantic and prosodic information is further intensified through a combination of co-speech manual gestures. First, Sir Carlos points in the direction of Group A, connecting what he is saying to Valentina and Amelia's response (lines 40-41): the fire was on the stairs. Similar to Mateo's use of the whiteboard marker to reference text, Sir Carlos's deictic gesturing here is an embodied citational practice. By pointing toward Vale and Amelia he cites students themselves as experts on the Enel fire. The deictic gesture is combined with a series of beat gestures (McNeill 1992), wherein Sir Carlos moves his arm up and down along with the rhythm of the co-occurring speech. The light blue arrows in frames 1-5 highlight these shifts in direction.

Sir Carlos's upward arm movements correspond with what Kendon (1980) identifies as the 'preparation phrase', where the body comes into alignment in preparation for the emphatically meaningful phase of the gesture. In these examples, preparation phases align with the function words, *se*, *las*, *de*, *del*, and *de*. The syntactic structure of the utterance and the physical structure of the gestures are in semiotic alignment. While function words support grammatical relationships in the utterance, the preparation phase supports the spatial arrangements necessary for the more meaningful segment of the gesture. The 'stroke phase'

(Kendon 1980) is the dynamic peak, or the most forceful movement (Cartmill 2022: 459) in a gesture. The stroke phase corresponds with Sir Carlos's downward arm movements, which are aligned with the content words of the utterance.

Research on intonation and gesture finds that the stroke phase of a gesture frequently aligns with pitch accented words (McClave 1998; Jannedy and Mendoza-Denton 2005; Mendoza-Denton and Jannedy 2011; Im and Baumann 2022). Looking at this phenomenon in closer detail, Loehr (2004; 2012) finds that the 'apex' of a gesture (the goal of the stroke motion) tends to align with pitch accent targets, suggesting a relationship between peaks in kinetic energy across modalities. In the current example, we can't know for sure if pitch accents and gestural apices are perfectly aligned due to the camera angle (the stopping point of the downward stroke occurs in front of Sir Carlos, which is not in view). However, it is still clear that intonation and manual gesture are in close temporal and structural alignment.

Semiotic layering of emphatic prosodic and gestural cues with semantic information fortifies Sir Carlos's point that students should pay close attention to language used to talk about the Enel fire. He carefully orients listeners to the words he uses, *se quemaron las escaleras de emergencia del edificio de Enel* [the emergency stairs of the Enel building burned]. Multimodal metalinguistic emphasis grounds his discursive representation of the Enel fire in epistemological truth—the fire happened on the emergency stairs of the Enel building, not the Enel building itself, like journalists had reported.

Reiterating the details of the Enel fire back to the class orients students' attention to linguistic form. Semiotic layering of intensities across verbal, prosodic, and manual modalities imbues Sir Carlos's metalinguistic emphasis with even more intensity: it is very important to use correct language to describe the fire.

3.3 Ethical register

Sir Carlos's close attention to linguistic form emphasizes a relationship between careful use of language and truthful representation (Silverstein 1996; Mertz 2007), promoting a language ideology (Schieffelin *et al.* 1998; Kroskrity 2000) that casts a moralizing gaze upon the media for its (mis)representation of the Enel fire. His use of corrective routines throughout the class period reflects students' socialization into an ethical register, "a style built around the idea that proper concealing and revealing are central to the constitution of moral action" (Debenport 2023: 494). My analysis of this last excerpt from the Enel fire interaction highlights this ethical register as based in anxieties about the spread of misinformation (*cf.* Hodges 2019; Murphy 2023).

Looking back down at his phone, Mateo reiterates what he read earlier: "*acá sale incendio que afecta el edificio Enel*" [here it says the fire that affects the Enel building] (lines 46-47). He modifies the information with *afecta* [it affects], emphasizing that the fire still concerned the Enel building, even if it was confined to the stairs. The student lets out a weak laugh (line 47), perhaps suggesting a weakened alignment with the media source. Sir Carlos is annoyed. The tone of the conversation immediately changes, signaled by his use of the extra-informal, second person singular, mixed verbal *voseo* form '*te dai*' (Torrejón 1986; 1991) in the phrase "*te dai cuenta Mateo?*" [you know what Mateo?] (line 49, *Ex. 6*). The Socratic method of teaching flies out the window for a moment, and Sir Carlos blatantly reveals his take on public discourse about the Enel fire.

***Ex. 6*²⁷:**

49 PRO: te dai cuenta Mateo que-

²⁷ In this example I have removed parts of the transcription from a background conversation between students in order to highlight Sir Carlos's speech. The full transcript can be found in the appendix.

do you realize Mateo that

50 lo que pasa es que-
what's happening is that

51 acá hay una **serie** de malentendidos ↓
here there is a series of misunderstandings

54 hay una **serie** de malentendidos-
there is a series of misunderstandings

56 que está *generando en la practica-*
which is generating the practice

57 *que no-*
that we're not

59 *nos estemos escuchando-*
listening to each other

61 y no vamos a resolver **na:{da}** ↑
and we won't resolve anything

62 *sí no nos escuchamos ↓*
if we don't listen to each other

63 *sí no tenemos el .h le-*
if we don't have the-

64 el **ex~a~cto** det~**alle~** (.)
the ex~a~ct det~ail~

65 *de lo que está ocurriendo ↓*
about what is happening

Sir Carlos reveals the motivation behind his intense focus on linguistic detail: there have been misunderstandings (lines 51 and 54) caused by an inability to listen to one another (line 59). He stresses the importance of effectively communicating the *exacto detalle* [exact detail] about what happened during the fire because, he believes, that without truthful representations of events “*no vamos a resolver nada*” [we won't resolve anything] (line 61).

False information has always permeated large-scale crises, but concerns about its proliferation have become especially relevant in recent years due to technological advancements

that quickly shifted how people share and access news (*e.g.*, social media and the 24-hour news cycle). Caroline Jack notes that misinformation is particularly likely to occur during an unfolding crisis, “news organizations have a duty to keep people informed, especially when public safety may be at risk. However, they also compete for the public’s attention. This gives them an incentive to publish information quickly, to “scoop” competing news outlets” (2017: 2). In societies with free media, consumers expect that facts about the world presented through reputable sources, such as Chile’s major TV news channels, are gathered, validated, and presented according to journalistic rituals and industry commitments to ‘objective truth’ (Tuchman 1972). The propagation of misinformation may lack the kind of malicious intent to manipulate the public undergirding intentional disinformation campaigns. However, in a sociopolitical environment where ‘truth’ itself is up for debate, there is concern that misinformation from reputable new sources can undermine trust in established democratic institutions (*cf.* Hodges 2019).

In the following example, Sir Carlos asks the class to discern what the problem was with how the Enel fire was represented.

Ex. 7:

67 PRO: acá lo que pasó en definitiva es que-
here what happened definitively is that

68 las escaleras de emergencia se incendiaron ↓ (0.5)
the emergency stairs caught on fire

69 // qué ocurrió: ↑
what happened

70 VAL: pero al final- //
but ultimately

71 PRO: y qué pasó para el mundo-

and what happened for the world

72 cuál fue la foto que (.)
 what was the photo that

73 todo el mundo vio ↓
 the whole world saw

74 MAT: como el edificio °[quemando] ↓
 like the building burning

75 PRO: el edificio en lla//mas ↓
 the building in flames

76 AME: no era una parte-
 no it was a part

77 MAT: pero ósea: era como una esquinita si ↓
 or like it was a little corner yeah

78 pero no:-
 but no-

79 PRO: si pero subió por afuera ↓
 yeah but it climbed the outside

80 MAT: pero +[uno desde afuera] no sabe-
 but from the outside one doesn't know

81 que es (la) escalera de emergenc//ia ↓
 that it is (the) emergency staircase

82 PRO: **bien** ↓
 Good

The teacher re-establishes the truth about the fire: the emergency staircase burned (lines 67-68). He then asks *qué pasó para el mundo?* [what happened for the world?] (line 71), and makes reference to the images of the fire that circulated in the media (lines 72-73). Mateo responds *como el edificio quemando* [like the building burning] (line 74), which Sir Carlos confirms *el edificio en llamas* [the building in flames] (line 75). The class collaborates with Sir Carlos to discern the details. Amelia notes the building wasn't on fire, just a part (line 76). Mateo plays down the severity even more, *era como una esquinita* [it was like a little corner] (line 77).

Sir Carlos adds that the fire climbed up the outside of the building (line 78). Mateo notes that from the outside you could not tell that the fire was on the emergency stairs, and Sir Carlos agrees (lines 79-80).

Ex. 8:

83 pero cuál es la labor de los periodistas ↑
 but what is the job of the journalists

84 (0.9)

85 AME: informarse má{s} ↓
 to be more informed

86 (0.8)

87 PRO: decir que lo está ocurriendo de verdad ↓
 to say what is really happening

88 porque sí no está llamando +[a la-]
 because if not it's calling for

89 al caos // (0.6) público ↓
 public (0.6) chaos

Sir Carlos asks students what journalists should have done in that situation (line 83), and Amelia replies that their job was to be more informed (line 85). Adding to this, Sir Carlos says that it is the media's responsibility to truthfully report on what was happening (line 87). A failure to tell the truth, he notes, can (and arguably did) result in public chaos (lines 88-89). Here we see the logic of ethics undergirding the language ideology that Sir Carlos commits to throughout this class period: journalists were not "super correct" in how they used language when reporting on the Enel fire, contributing to the escalation of chaos across the country.

It is clear from the last moments of this interaction that while Sir Carlos is critical of the media's portrayal of the Enel fire, his pedagogical approach to socializing students into meta-linguistic awareness reflects an investment in maintaining the integrity of institutions such as

national media. From across the classroom, Edgar calls out *la tele miente* [the TV lies] (line 90, Ex. 9)—a phrase that is commonly seen written on the sides of buildings and in memes in Chile, especially during periods of civil unrest.

Ex. 9:

90 EDG: la tele miente-
the TV lies

91 PRO: no no estoy diciendo eso ↓
no I'm not saying that

92 yo estoy diciendo simplemente (.)
I am saying simply

93 AME: **no** pero si: ↓
no but yeah (you are)

94 PRO: yo estoy simplemente diciendo-
I am simply saying

95 que hay una labor fundamental-
that there is a fundamental job

96 de parte del esta{d}o-
on behalf of the state

97 y de periodistas en particular para informar-
and the journalists in particular to inform

98 oport**un**amente ↓
in a timely manner

Sir Carlos denies the implication that he is accusing TV news organizations of lying (line 91)—his criticisms of reporting on the Enel fire are about misinformation, not disinformation. Instead, he tells the class that both the state and the media have a “fundamental job” of informing the public (lines 94-98). He implies that while these institutions have fallen short on their ethical obligations, they are not beyond redemption.

4.0 Tear gas

By the time The Private School resumed classes on October 24th, a few students had attended protests in Santiago Centro. One of those students is Edgar, who went to demonstrations with his older sister, a law student at a local university. In an interview the following week, Edgar told me that he chose to participate in protests (against his mom's wishes) because he was angry about the military deployment and violence against protestors.

In the interaction studied in this section, Edgar reports to Sir Carlos that he was tear gassed at a protest the day before. Sir Carlos (over-)corrects the language Edgar used to describe the experience and linguistically mitigates the intensity of his relationship to the teargas. Whereas in the previous section I focused on attention to language as an intensely embodied multimodal project, the current section highlights how Sir Carlos socializes students into a discursive 'decorporealization', relevant to the production of intellectual labor (Boyer 2005). I analyze the teacher's corrections as linguistic distancing practices (Conley 2013; 2015) that reflect a social distance between Private School students and the uprising, promoting a dispassionate objectivity in how they orient to the *estallido social*.

4.1 Tear gas context

Tear gas is a chemical weapon used by state agents in many parts of the world for crowd control. Before the *estallido social*, use of teargas in protest contexts was not uncommon in Chile, though the amount of the gas deployed during uprising was especially intense. The term 'tear gas' refers to several chemical compounds, but the one used in the 2019 protests was chlorobenzylidene malononitrile (CS gas). In Chile, tear gas is typically dispersed as aerosolized particles through grenades and canisters (*Figure 3.8*), or it is sprayed from a tank-like police vehicle known as a *zorrillo* [skunk]. It can also be mixed with water and launched from a water

cannon vehicle, known as a *guanaco*²⁸. The immediate effects of tear gas exposure include eye and respiratory irritation, coughing, vomiting, skin irritation, and psychological distress. Skin contact with tear gas-infused water can lead to chemical burns, and impact with canisters and grenades can cause heat burns and other forms of serious bodily injury. The effects of tear gas are only supposed to last 10-20 minutes²⁹, but in some areas it was used so heavily that toxic chemicals could be felt in the air for hours. This was especially true in the part of Santiago Centro considered *zona cero* [ground zero] of protests. One study³⁰ of tear gas canisters deployed in *Plaza de la Dignidad* on December 20th (two months into protests) counted 596 canisters within 4 hours, and 82 in a 10-minute window during the peak of the protests.



Figure 3.8: Empty tear gas canister I found in Santiago Centro, November 2019

Chile's National Human Rights Institution registered over 3,700 injuries between October 2019 and February 2020. Most were caused by police and military projecting objects into crowds: 2,114 injuries from various types of shot wounds (51 bullets, 190 pellets, 1,681

²⁸ Guanaco is a species of camelid, related to llama and alpaca. The water cannon vehicles are called this because, like the animal, they violently spit water. Similarly, *zorrillos* are referred to as such because, like the skunk, they spray chemicals.

²⁹ The effects of tear gas are thought to be more severe for vulnerable populations. For example, a study of hospital visits in Concepción found a significant increase in respiratory illness-related emergency room and urgent care patients among infants and elderly populations during the *estallido* (Huerta et al. 2023).

³⁰ This investigation was conducted by the organizations Forensic Architecture and No+lacrimógenas. They created a video about the study, which can be found here: <https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/tear-gas-in-plaza-de-la-dignidad>

rubber bullets), and 271 from tear gas (INDH 2020). The *estallido* constitutes the largest incident of ocular trauma cases ever recorded (Rodríguez *et al.* 2021), with 427 eye injuries reported by February 2020. In a well-known incident in November 2019, then-36-year-old Fabiola Campillai³¹ was struck in the face with a tear gas canister while waiting at a bus stop. The police officer who fired the canister was only 50 meters away from Campillai, and the impact caused her permanent loss of smell, taste, and vision in both eyes.

It's also not uncommon for students in some of Chile's public schools to experience tear gas on their school campuses. To cite some examples from the 2019 academic year prior to the *estallido social*³², a student from Instituto Nacional Barros Arana was seriously injured when a tear gas canister hit him in the face (April 2019); another student suffered a head injury from a tear gas bomb outside of Liceo N°1 Javiera Carrera (August 2019); and there was an especially newsworthy incident at Instituto Nacional where special forces deployed tear gas into classrooms of students and teachers (June 2019). These examples are all cited in an unsuccessful September 2019 motion in the House of Representatives to prohibit the use of chemical compounds for riot control in schools (Camara de Diputados 2019).

In light of growing tensions between politicians, public school students, and police during the 2019 school year, administrators at The Public School field site introduced a “*Protocolo de Evacuación Ante Enfrentamiento de Estudiantes con Carabineros*” [Protocol of Evacuation in the Event of Confrontation Between Students and Police], which outlined an evacuation plan in the event of confrontations with police that involve weapons. The Private School has never been tear gassed.

³¹ Fabiola Campillai became a political figure and nationally known activist following this incident of police brutality. She was elected to Chile's senate in 2021.

³² There were many more incidents once public schools re-opened in November 2019.

Prior to the *estallido social*, I think that most students were aware that things like this happen in other schools because of media coverage, as well as videos shared on social media. During the 2019 school year I overheard several conversations in The Private School about confrontations between police and students at Instituto Nacional. As part of the Spanish Literature curriculum that year, 2° medio students read the graphic novel *Al Sur de la Alameda* (Larra & Reinamontes 2014) about students' experiences of a school occupation during the 2006 student movements—and a Private School student messaged me at the beginning of the 2019 uprising to say that he found that book useful for understanding what was happening. But, while student protests and police tear gas deployment are so pervasive in some schools that there are institutionalized protocols developed around it, those schools are physically, economically, and socially distant from The Private School.

4.2 The tear gas interaction

This interaction occurs primarily between Edgar and Sir Carlos, with Félix joining in at the end. The other two members of Group B, Cris and Javier, turn toward Sir Carlos and Edgar, and are ratified overhearers in the unfolding interaction (Goffman 1981). Most members of Group A are working on their timeline in the background of the frame; however, Amelia turns and listens to the first half of the conversation between Edgar and Sir Carlos. Shown in *Figure 3.9*, Sir Carlos is sitting at a table in the front of the classroom between the two groups. The teacher is working on presentation slides for the group discussion later in the class period when Edgar addresses him, which is where the 30-second interaction begins. I analyze the conversation below in 3 parts (4.2.1-4.2.4)³³.

³³ The full transcript can be found in Appendix B.

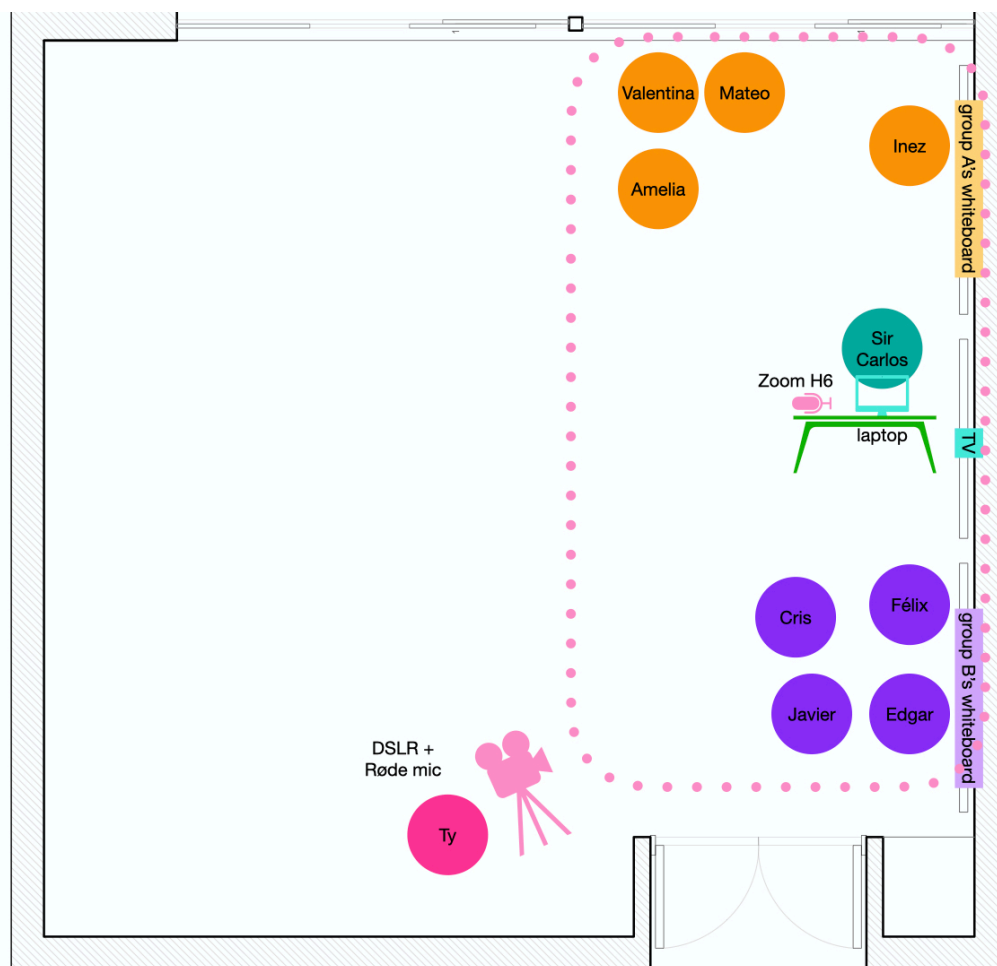


Figure 3.9: Classroom layout during the tear gas interaction

4.2.1 “profe ayer me llegó una lacrimógena” [teacher yesterday I got tear gassed]

Edgar calls to Sir Carlos in a whining prosody (line 1, *Ex. 10*), indexed through exaggerated pitch range and word lengthening (*cf.* M.H. Goodwin and Cekaite 2018; Butler and Edwards 2018). Whining is an embodied means of ‘doing complaining’ (Schegloff 2005) and is a communicative register (Agha 2004) typically associated with small children. Beyond early childhood, whining in conversation functions as a means of aligning the self with certain affective qualities associated with the register (*cf.* Mendoza-Denton 2011; Pratt 2023), *i.e.*,

helplessness, childishness, innocence. In the current example, Edgar reports that yesterday he was tear gassed (line 2), and use of whining voice invokes a victim/aggressor relationship wherein protestors are victimized by the people who deployed the tear gas, the police. Sir Carlos looks up from his computer and, without hesitating, replies, *no puedes decir eso* [you can't say that] (line 4).

Ex. 10:

- 1 EDG: ((whining)) [pro::fe:
teacher
- 2 ayer me llegó una la:cri:mó::ge:na::] ↓
yesterday I got tear gassed ((a tear gas arrived to me))
- 3 ((Sir Carlos looks up from computer))
- 4 PRO: no puedes decir eso ↓
you can't say that
- 5 EDG: por qué ↑
why
- 6 PRO: no estarías acá ↓
you wouldn't be here
- 7 EDG: si me llegó una lacrimógena ↓
yeah I got tear gassed ((a tear gas came at me))

Sir Carlos initiates a correction, but it's not immediately clear what he is correcting. Is it what Edgar said (*i.e.*, you can't say that because it didn't happen), or how he said it (*i.e.*, you can't say that, linguistically)? Edgar is perplexed, asks why (line 5) and repeats himself (line 7). To make sense of Sir Carlos's correction, I provide a gloss³⁴ of Edgar's utterance, then discuss Edgar's intended meaning vs. the meaning that Sir Carlos responds to.

³⁴ Interlinear gloss key: 1SG=first person singular, REFLEX=reflexive pronoun, 3SG=third person singular, PASTPR=past preterit tense, INDEF=indefinite article, F=feminine gender inflection

ayer	me	llegó	una	lacrimógena
yesterday	1SG.REFLEX	arrive.3SG.PASTPR	INDEF.F	tear-gas(-canister)
yesterday	(to) me	arrived	a	tear gas

The subject of the sentence is *una lacrimógena* [a tear gas]. Edgar's use of the article '*una*' implies that the tear gas exists, at least initially, as a bound object (it's a count noun). The tear gas was dispersed from a grenade or, more likely, shot out of a police officer's canister gun; not via a water cannon or a *zorrillo*. '*Una lacrimógena*' implies proximity to the object because Edgar could at identify that it came from a single source, something like the artistic rendering shown in *Figure 3.10*.

profe ayer me llegó una lacrimógena
 teacher yesterday I got tear gassed



Figure 3.10: Edgar's intended meaning

During the *estallido social*, it was nearly impossible to evade tear gas in Santiago Centro, even in areas where police and protestors were not actively fighting, because the toxic chemicals spread and lingered. Stumbling into some tear gas around the peripheries of a protest is unpleasant, but it is a very different experience of being close to an active tear gas canister. Therefore, '*una lacrimógena*' also imbues the experience with an intensive quality.

The verb of the sentence is *me llegó*. Indirect object pronoun *me* indicates that the speaker, Edgar, is the recipient of the tear gas's action. The action, *llegar*, can be interpreted in several ways, and Sir Carlos exploits this ambiguity when challenging Edgar's account of the event. *Llegar* can be translated in English as 'to arrive', 'to come', or 'to reach'. It is clear from the full interaction that Edgar uses *me llegó* to describe a scene where a tear gas canister 'reached him' in the sense that it landed near him, and he therefore suffered the effects of being near a canister actively dispersing tear gas. This is a typical way of describing the experience of being near an active tear gas canister, and it is unlikely that Sir Carlos did not understand that this is what Edgar meant.

An alternative interpretation of *me llegó* is 'it hit me'. So, *ayer me llegó una lacrimógena* could also be understood as 'yesterday I was hit with a tear gas [canister]'. This is the meaning that Sir Carlos reacts to when he responds with *no puedes decir eso* [you can't say that] (line 4) (Figure 3.11).

me llegó una lacrimógena
I got hit with a tear gas [canister]



Figure 3.11: Sir Carlos's interpretation

The experience of being physically hit with a hot, smoking, projectile is a very different experience than just being in the vicinity when a canister lands. It is likely something that would land a person in the hospital, and people were indeed being seriously injured from tear gas canister impact wounds during the *estallido social*.

Research in educational settings frequently finds that teacher-student language corrections arise from investments in standard language ideologies (Jacobs-Huey 2007; Friedman 2010; Howard 2009; García-Sánchez 2010; Rosa 2016; Curzan *et al.* 2023). In The Private School, students are accustomed to being corrected for their use of colloquial forms in class. Sir Carlos's reaction here is confusing because Edgar did not say anything non-standard—*me llegó una lacrimógena* is a legitimate way to describe being near an active tear gas canister,

as well as to describe being hit with a tear gas canister. Still, Sir Carlos's correction is a standardization practice in that it that problematizes linguistic ambiguity. Advocates of the standard promote an ideological relationship between "clarity of expression" and "truthful" denotational meaning (Silverstein 1996). In this framework, Edgar's statement is subpar because it is not maximally clear. Sir Carlos claims *no puedes decir eso* [you can't say that] because, according to him, Edgar has inaccurately represented the reality of his relationship to the tear gas.

4.2.2 "te llegó el efecto del gas lacrimógeno" [you got the effect of the tear gas]

Sir Carlos brings this linguistic ambiguity to Edgar's attention by asking, *te golpeó una?* [one hit you?] (line 9, *Ex. 11*). Unlike *llegar*, *golpear* [to hit] unambiguously indicates contact. Edgar denies that he was hit and reiterates, *no me llegó una* [no it came at me] (line 10). In response, Sir Carlos feigns that he has just realized what Edgar meant, *ah*, and hypercorrects the statement—*te llegó el efecto del gas lacrimógeno* [you got the effect of the tear gas] (line 11). This invokes a greater distance between the tear gas canister and Edgar, demoting the students' experience of being near an exploding canister to just a sensation of tear gas's effects (crying, coughing, *etc.*). The tear gas canister implied in '*una*' *lacrimógena* is not in the picture anymore. Neither is the gas, just its effects (*Figure 3.12*).

ah, te llegó el efecto del gas lacrimógeno
oh, you got the effect of the tear gas



Figure 3.12: Tear gas effects

Ex. 11:

- 8 PRO: se te lleg-
it came at-
- 9 te golpeó ~una~ ↑
one hit you
- 10 EDG: no: me // llegó: una ↓
no it came at me
- 11 PRO: **ah** te llegó el e:**fe**:cto del gas lacrimógeno ↓
ah you got the effect of the tear gas
- 12 EDG: °si
yes
- 13 igual hubiera venido
I still would have come ↓
- 14 PRO: pero das cuenta que la dif-
but you realize the diff-

- 15 la diferencia es—
 the difference is
- 16 EDG: °pero si te llega uno es un moretón gigante no más~ ↓
 but if you get hit with one it's just a giant bruise
- 17 es súper importante ↓
 it's super important
- 18 súper importante la diferencia ↓
 super important the difference

At first, Edgar quietly agrees with Sir Carlos's point that he experienced the effects of tear gas (line 12) but disagrees with the linguistic and physical distance between himself and the tear gas canister implicit in the teacher's correction. In defiance, the student claims that he still would have come to school if he had been hit with a tear gas canister (line 13). He quietly follows up with, *si te llega uno es un moretón gigante no más* [if you get hit it's just a giant bruise] (line 16), suggesting that he would not have been seriously injured had been physically hit with a tear gas canister. This 'tough' stance (Mendoza-Denton 2011; Lawson 2013; Kiesling 2022) on tear gassing is very different from the affective helplessness Edgar displayed when he began the conversation (line 1). Sir Carlos continues to focus on the linguistic problem, arguing that there is a "super important difference" between what Edgar reported and what actually happened (lines 14-15, lines 17-18).

4.2.3 “*me llegó el gas de la bomba lacrimógena*” [I got the gas of the tear gas bomb]

Edgar begins delivering a modified version of the teacher's corrected utterance, *me llegó el gas de la—* [I got (hit with) the gas of the—] (line 19, *Ex. 12*). Sir Carlos interjects to correct him again, *el efecto del gas* [the effect of the gas] (line 20), and the student finishes, *bomba lacrimógena* [tear gas bomb] (line 21).

Ex. 12:

19 EDG: m:e llegó: el ga:s de la-
I got the gas of the-
20 PRO: el efecto del gas-
the effect of the gas-
21 EDG: bomba lacrimógena ↓
tear gas bomb
22 PRO: bien bien ↓ ((looks down at computer screen))
good good

In this modification, Edgar stands up for himself by reframing the statement about his experience using a more standard description to appease Sir Carlos, *me llegó gas de la bomba lacrimógena* [I got the gas of the tear gas bomb] (lines 19 and 21). This is a small act of resistance against the oppressive regime of standard language because it highlights Edgar's embodied experience with the teargas: teargas wasn't just floating around in the air, it was directed at (crowds of) people, and it directly impacted his body. Also it came from a bomb, which is a much more affectively loaded word than just 'teargas' or even 'canister'. Furthermore, referring to the device as a *bomba lacrimógena* [tear gas bomb] (line 21) invokes imagery of an explosion, and thus greater danger (*Figure 3.13*).

me llegó el gas de la bomba lacrimógena
I got the gas of the tear gas bomb



Figure 3.13: Edgar's re-framing

Sir Carlos begins correcting Edgar again (line 20), but ultimately agrees with the student's linguistic re-framing of his relationship to the tear gas (line 22).

4.2.4 “sentí la lacrimógena” [I felt the tear gas]

Making fun of the language game that has emerged in this interaction, Félix chimes in with a new variation: *ayer sentí la lacrimógena* [yesterday I felt the tear gas] (line 24, *Ex. 13*).

Ex. 13:

24 FEL: ayer **sentí** la lacrimógena ↓
yesterday I felt the tear gas

25 EDG: *hhh

Edgar laughs at his classmate and Sir Carlos does not respond. Félix's contribution is humorous because it highlights the significant shifts in meaning that have unfolded over the course of this interaction, especially the way that Edgar's affective experience has been dampened through Sir Carlos's corrections. Whereas Edgar and Sir Carlos struggled over meaning related to Edgar's proximity to the tear gas canister, Félix eliminates the issue of proximity altogether by removing the source of the tear gas from the utterance. Instead, Félix turns Edgar into the agent of the utterance—he acts upon the tear gas [I felt it], rather than the tear gas acting upon him—eliminating the aggressor/victim relationship (*Figure 3.14*).

ayer sentí la lacrimógena
yesterday I felt the tear gas



Figure 3.14: Edgar acts upon the tear gas

Ayer sentí la lacrimógena follows Sir Carlos's criteria for a legitimate statement about being exposed to tear gas, but it mocks the negation of affective intensity that has resulted from his corrections. 'To feel tear gas' as opposed to 'to be hit with tear gas' implies that tear gas is

something that one casually perceives, such as a slight shift in air quality, rather than a painful chemical agent deployed by the state to repress political dissent.

4.3 Linguistic and social distance

Both the Enel fire and the tear gas interactions represent larger institutional goals of socializing students into ‘objective’, dispassionate, analytical stances. Throughout this interaction, Sir Carlos’s corrections emphasize the importance of pragmatic structure over semantic content (*cf.* Mertz 2007: 58). The teacher never engages with what Edgar said, only how he said it. His corrections also assert a distance between Edgar and the tear gas, which we could interpret in a couple of ways.

Perhaps Sir Carlos is simply negating Edgar’s experience, *i.e.*, you can’t say that because it did not happen. Alternatively, we can understand it as Sir Carlos attempting to emphasize social distance between students’ own experiences of the uprising and the more-violent realities of how it was being experienced by others. Whereas Edgar experienced tear gas after choosing to Santiago Centro to attend a protest, in many lower-class neighborhoods people couldn’t escape tear gas. Hundreds of people had been hit with the objects that police and military were using against protestors, including tear gas canisters, and many suffered severe injuries—something Edgar proved naïve to when he claimed that getting hit with a canister would merely cause a bruise. The fact that this interaction happened at all points to the Private School’s distance from the ongoing riots and protests, as it was one of only a small group of Santiago schools that were able to safely re-open during the State of Emergency.

5.0 Conclusion: Dangerous things

This chapter examined classroom interactions about dangerous things: fire and tear gas. However, the ‘dangerous thing’ that Sir Carlos was most concerned with when The Private School returned to classes during Santiago’s State of Emergency was not a physical threat, but the dangerous discourse of misinformation.

Students at The Private School are socialized into social and communicative competencies associated with Chile’s professional class. Among these competencies is the ability to perform the types of intellectual labor that are valued in politically, economically, and socially powerful institutions—such as the media, government, courts of law, and academia—which compel a dispassionate objectivity in pursuit of ‘truth’. While students in The Private School experienced the *estallido social* along with the rest of Chile, the intensity of the uprising was certainly mitigated on this campus by geographic, social, and economic distance. Sir Carlos’s deployment of a moralizing ethical register attempts to prepare students in The Private School for future roles as responsible influencers of public discourse.

The Public School

*Seguramente Radio Magallanes será callada,
y el metal tranquilo de mi voz
no llegará a ustedes.
No importa.
Lo seguirán oyendo.*

*Surely Radio Magallanes will be silenced,
and the calm metal of my voice
will no longer reach you.
It does not matter.
You will continue hearing it.*

—Salvador Allende (September 11th, 1973)

Chapter Four:

Protest contours

1.0 Introduction

Chapter Four considers how students in The Public School come into political stances against state violence through participation in student movements and socialization into historical memory. I introduce ‘protest contours’ to invoke a relationship between a material feature of language, pitch, and the contours of past and contemporary student resistance movements. Methodologically, the chapter combines linguistic anthropological attention to vocal and embodied practice, ethnographic research in The Public School, and engagement with a historical consciousness that links contemporary political, social, and economic struggles to political repression, human rights violations, and neoliberal reforms during Chile’s military dictatorship³⁵. The chapter’s arguments are organized into two parts corresponding to the themes encompassed by the contour metaphor: voice and history.

Section 2 approaches vocal practice as a site for ethnographic investigation (Feld and Brenneis 2004) to consider how speakers make use of prosodic variables in the semiotic configuration of embodied political stances. Data comes from narrative accounts by students at The Public School about their experiences of police brutality at a 2016 protest for education reform. I focus on dynamic intonational contours that occur at points in the narratives where the

³⁵ For ethnographies of Chile that similarly links dictatorship violence to present political struggles see Paley 2001; Han 2012; Bruey 2018; Pérez 2022.

students construct an oppositional stance (M.H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin 2000) relative to the actions of police. ‘Protest contours’ here are analyzed as heightened displays of affect that make visible speakers’ assessments (*ibid.*; M.H. Goodwin *et al.* 2012) of police brutality: indignation.

Section 3 contextualizes the students’ indignation as relevant to Chile’s post-dictatorship memory project. Here, the concept of ‘protest contours’ draws attention to historical contours of state repression and opposition movements in Chile. Insights in this section are based in ethnographic research in the Public School. I focus on ways that students are socialized into a historical memory of human rights violations committed during Chile’s military dictatorship (*cf.* Gómez-Barris 2009) and demonstrate how memory is mobilized to protest contemporary forms of state violence.

2.0 Contours of voice

Arguments in Section 2 draw from two audio-recorded interviews conducted in August 2016 with *1° medio*³⁶ students in The Public School on the topic of a protest for education reform held earlier that year. In these interviews the students, Antonia and Stiven³⁷, describe their participation in the protest, and both emphasize police brutality targeting themselves and their peers. Data analysis highlights Antonia and Stiven’s use of L+H*L-(L%)³⁸ intonational contours (low-high-low pitch movements) with relatively extreme excursion toward the pitch accent; that is, the speakers’ pitch starts low, rises rapidly, then falls (shown in *Figure 4.1*).

³⁶ *1° medio* is the first year of secondary school, and the equivalent of 9th grade in the U.S. education system.

³⁷ Pseudonyms chosen by participants.

³⁸ Tones and Break Indices (ToBI) is a phonological system for coding intonational movements in speech (Beckman and Hirschberg 1994).

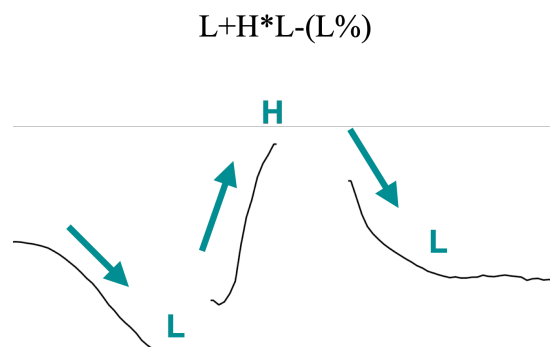


Figure 4.1: Protest contour shape

I refer to these pitch movements as ‘protest contours’ because they occur at points in the students’ narratives where they protest police violence by stylizing oppositional stances in their accounts of what happened.

The section is organized as follows: First, I describe the 2016 student protest and Antonia and Stiven’s participation (2.1). Then, I introduce the theoretical frameworks used to attend to protest contours as examples of embodied stances against political repression (2.2). Data analysis in 2.3 focuses on protest contours, and 2.4 embeds these vocal practices within a larger political struggle.

2.1 The protest

The protest took place on May 26th, 2016. It was organized by student political coalitions to challenge then-President Michelle Bachelet’s administration for a failure to make sufficient progress toward education de-privatization reforms that were central to her 2013 election campaign—a platform developed in response to the 2011-2012 student movement for education reform. Most attendees were students from local secondary schools, and it was an unauthorized assembly, meaning that it took place without prior approval from government officials. Lack of

authorization is frequently used to justify use of police force against protestors. Protestors' plan was to meet in Plaza Italia³⁹ then march 2km down Alameda—the main avenue through Santiago's city-center—to La Moneda, the presidential palace. However, upon their arrival in Plaza Italia, students were confronted by riot police, *carabineros*, who deployed tear gas, water cannons, and assaults against the mass of mostly teenagers.

Antonia and Stiven walked to Plaza Italia together from The Public School, along with a small group of friends. When I interviewed them in August 2016, both described their participation with respect to a larger student movement for education reform. For example, Antonia begins her narrative by explaining that she went to the protest to combat the education system that 'they' (the government) want to give 'us' (the students) (*Ex. 1*).

Ex. 1:

- 1 ANT: yo—
 I
- 2: hace un tiempo
 awhile back
- 3: fui a una movilización estudiantil cachai
 went to a student protest you know
- 4: en la que participé
 where I participated
- 5: contra todo el sistema educacional
 against the whole education system
- 6: que nos quieren dar cachai
 that they want to give us you know

Antonia explains that she is fighting against “*toda el sistema educacional que **nos** quieren dar*”, the whole education system that *they* want to give *us*. The third person plural conjugation of the

³⁹ Popularly re-named ‘*Plaza de la Dignidad*’ during the 2019 uprising.

verb ‘querer’ [to want], “*quieren*” [they want], references the government (politicians, bureaucrats) perpetuating the current system. Use of first-person plural “*nos*” [us] indexes Antonia’s identification with a collective student body subjected to the public education system: students enrolled in municipal schools.

A major grievance among student protestors in 2016 was that President Bachelet had not yet made good on a promise to de-municipalize the public-school funding and administrative structure. In the 1980s, Pinochet decentralized Chile’s education system by shifting administrative control to local municipal governments. Along with privatization reforms implemented through a school-choice voucher system, municipalization is widely criticized by opponents of neoliberalism for increasing fiscal inequality, and thus perpetuating class-based disparities in access to quality education (Belleli et al. 2013; Belleli et al. 2014). During fieldwork trips in 2016 and 2017, I heard students in The Public School criticizing municipalization several times.

In his narrative, Stiven describes his experiences of police force at the protest as a collective attack on students. Except for when he recounts being personally attacked by *carabineros* (see 2.3.2), Stiven rarely uses first person singular pronominal forms when talking about his participation in the protest. Below (*Ex. 2*), he describes police marching toward students through the park next to Plaza Italia.

Ex. 2:

- 1 STI: y se vienen todos los pacos
all the cops come
- 2: así en línea por todo el parque
like that in a line through the whole park
- 3: así a cazar a—
like to hunt—

- 4: a coger a alumnos
 to catch students
- 5: y nosotros teníamos que correr no más
 and we just had to run

Stiven's use of the pronoun 'nosotros' [we] in "*nosotros teníamos que correr*" [we (the students) had to run] emphasizes his position in a group of protestors. Spanish is a pro-drop language, meaning that this utterance would have been grammatically sound if he had just said "*teníamos que correr*" [we had to run] since 'we' is encoded in the verb conjugation '-íamos'. By including 'nosotros', Stiven emphasizes running from the police as a collective action.

In the next example (*Ex. 3*), Stiven recounts a moment when they (the police) began to throw teargas.

Ex. 3:

- 1 STI: hubo un momento
 there was a moment
- 2: dónde empezaron a tirar mucha lacrimógena
 where they began to throw a lot of tear gas
- 3: y nosotros así
 and we were like
- 4: como tapándonos con limón
 covering ourselves with lemon
- 5: y todo eso
 and all of that

Again, he recounts this experience as a member of a group of students who are subjected to police force: "*empezaron a tirar mucha lacrimógena*", **they** (the police) began to throw a lot of tear gas, "*y nosotros así tapándonos con limón*", and **us** (the students) were covering **ourselves**

with lemon⁴⁰. Note that Stiven's description of tear gas as a collective punishment—police force used against a group that he was a member of—is very different from how Edgar described his experience with tear gas in Chapter Three (*me llegó una lacrimógena* [I got tear gassed]).

More than 100 people were arrested at the Santiago protest on May 26th, 2016, and most were secondary school students. Both Antonia and Stiven were independently assaulted by police officers (described in Section 2.3). Dozens of protestors were taken to the hospital, including Antonia, who suffered a leg injury. A stranger in a truck passing near Plaza Italia drove Antonia to the emergency room, and she was accompanied by a teacher from The Public School.

2.2 Voice as embodied stance

As both a physical product of the human body and a primary medium for human communication, the voice bridges the material and the symbolic (Dolar 2006). Linguistic anthropologists have turned to voice to investigate cultural practice (*e.g.*, Feld 1982; Fox 2004; Harkness 2014; Chávez 2017): highlighting semiotic relationships between voice and identity (Eckert 1989; Podesva 2007; Mendoza-Denton 2008; Pratt 2019), gesture (M.H. Goodwin 2008; Mendoza-Denton and Jannedy 2011; M.H. Goodwin and Cekaite 2018), and register (Sicoli 2010; Mendoza-Denton 2011; Slobe 2018). All forms of symbolic communication—spoken, signed, gestural, written, *etc.*—entail bodily action (Bucholtz and Hall 2016). Theorizing language as embodied action thus grounds phenomenological processes of meaning making in the material practices of language-users (Shankar and Cavanaugh 2012).

My analysis of prosodic practice as embodied oppositional stance is inspired by Antonia

⁴⁰ Lemon—specifically, sucking on lemon wedges—is thought to help with the effects of tear gas. At protests in Santiago before 2019 it was common to see people selling lemons in the street at protests. In 2019 it became more common to use a mixture of water and baking soda (see Chapter Two).

and Stiven's own descriptions of themselves as physically standing their ground against assaults from *carabineros*. For example, in Antonia's narrative she describes a situation where a police officer attempts to push her to the ground (*Ex. 4*):

Ex. 4:

- 1 Antonia: me hizo así
 he did this to me
- 2: *ph::a:::*
- 3: y como que me empujó
 and like he pushed me
- 4: y yo no me caí po cachai
 and [me] I didn't fall [po cachai]

Antonia evokes the force with which the police officer pushed her with the elongated onomatopoeia, "*ph::a:::*" (line 2). She emphasizes that she was successful in standing her ground by (1) explicitly stating that she did not fall; (2) including the pronoun 'yo', which emphasizes herself as maintaining a firm upright stance; (3) use of '*po*' an emphatic discourse marker in Chilean Spanish; and (4) '*cachai*' which is also a Chileanism whose meaning is similar to 'you know?'—emphasizing to the listener that she really did not fall when the police officer pushed her. I interviewed the two students separately, but Stiven recounted the same scene (*Ex. 5*).

Ex. 5:

- 1 Stiven: el paco llegó y la empujó
 the cop came and he pushed her
- 2: y ella no se dejó caer
 and she didn't let herself fall

In this example, Stiven also stresses that Antonia maintained her physical stance when the police officer attempted to push her to the ground, 'she didn't let herself fall' (line 2).

The protest contours analyzed below are among a constellation (Eckert 2008) of mutually elaborating semiotic resources (C. Goodwin 2000; Mendoza-Denton & Jannedy 2011) that Antonia and Stiven draw upon to stylize indignation about the police brutality that they and other students experienced at the May 2016 protest. I highlight protest contours as a vocal means of taking embodied, affective stances relative to the events that generated those experience (Ochs 1996): corporal police violence against individual student protestors, and institutional violence against a Chilean public school student body. By highlighting the sonic dimensions of Antonia and Stiven’s discursive protests, this approach situates linguistic stance-taking practices (Jaffe 2009; Kiesling 2022) in the organization of the embodied voice (*cf.* Mendoza-Denton 2011; M.H. Goodwin *et al.* 2012). The dynamism of the low-high-low pitch movements in protest contours imbues utterances with qualitative meaning: the pitch excursion is intense, lending intensity to speakers’ objections to the police violence describes in their narratives. Protest contours thus provide ‘material orientations’ (Hill 1995) toward Antonia and Stiven’s evaluations of state violence.

2.3 Protest contours

Antonia recounts arriving at Plaza Italia with friends from The Public school in a “*muy piola*” [super chill] mood, ready to mobilize against Chile’s education system (*Ex. 6*). There is a shift in her disposition when she saw a boy being beat up by a mob of special force police officers.

Ex. 6:

- 1 ANT: ya
- 2: mira yo estaba así—
 look I was like—

- 3: ese día llegué terrible piola así
 that day I arrived terribly chill like
- 4: llegamos a movilizarme
 we arrived to mobilize
- 5: pucha
 shit
- 6: fue una mañana súper cuática
 it was a super wild morning
- 7: porque llegué así
 because I arrived like that
- 8: ya fui a la marcha y todo
 and I went to the march and everything
- 9: y-y terminé guerreando po
 and-and I ended up waging war
- 10: cachai
 you know
- 11: terminé guerreando contra fuerzas especiales
 I ended up waging war against special forces
- 12: que estaban haciendo tanto abuso de poder cachai
 that were doing such abuses of power
- 13: que tenían a un loco tirado en el piso
 that they had a guy thrown on the floor
- 14: una pura persona tirado en el piso
 one single guy thrown on the floor
- 15: una pura persona tirado en el piso con-
 one single person thrown on the floor with-
- 16: no sé-
 I don't know-
- 17: 6 o 7 fuerzas especiales alrededor así
 6 or 7 special forces around like that
- 18: así pegándole
 hitting him

She describes seeing an excessive use of force: a single protestor had been thrown to the ground by police, and he was being beat up by a group of 6 or 7 *carabineros*. Upon witnessing this act of

police brutality, Antonia’s motivation for participating in the protest changed. Instead of fighting the systemic forces of the state’s education system like she had originally planned, Antonia explains that she found herself waging war against abusive state agents.

2.3.1 Protest contour 1

Continuing with the story, Antonia explains that seeing the police’s extreme use of force against “*una pura persona*” (a single person) filled her with rage, which drove her to jump on top of the group of police officers to try and help the person that they were brutalizing (*Ex. 7*).

Ex. 7:

- 1 Antonia: me frustré tanto
 I got so frustrated
- 2: que te lo juro que fui así
 that I swear to you I went
- 3: y me tire encima así
 and I threw myself on top
- 4: como literal
 like literally
- 5: pa’-pa’ que lo ~soltaran~
 so-so that they would drop him

In lines 1-3 of the speech transcribed above there is a buildup of physical action that occurs after Antonia sees special force police beating up the protestor. The discursive climax occurs when Antonia ‘literally’ (line 4) threw herself on top of the police.

The prosodic climax in this sequence occurs afterward, in line 5, when Antonia justifies her reason for jumping on the police, “*para que lo soltaran*” [so that they would drop him]. This is the first example of a protest contour, highlighted in the red box in *Figure 4.2*. Here, Antonia protests *carabineros*’ detention of the student protestor.

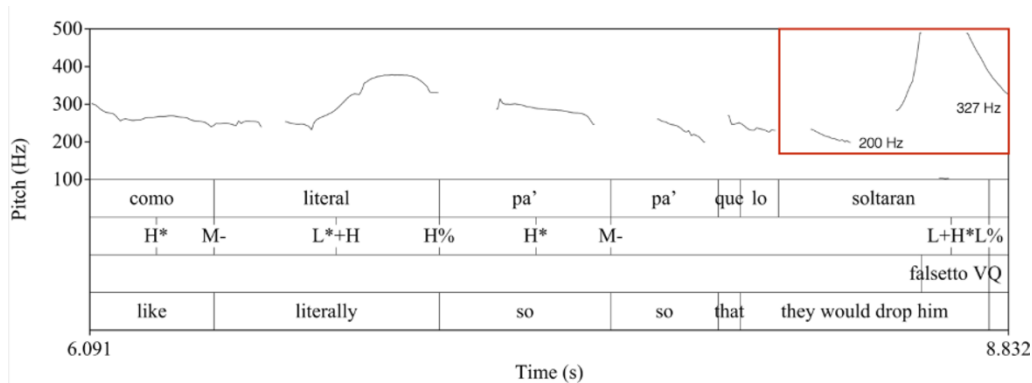


Figure 4.2: Protest contour on 'soltaran'.

The protest contour is constituted by rapid low-high-low changes in pitch that occur on the subjunctive verb 'soltaran'. At the peak of the contour, Antonia also moves into falsetto voice quality⁴¹, before dropping back down into a low boundary tone. These intense prosodic movements imbue Antonia's assessment of the protestor's detainment by the police with passionate affective meaning. She is indignant.

2.3.2 Protest contour 2

In the next example (Ex. 8), Stiven describes being caught by a group of five police officers, one of whom had grabbed him from behind and thrown him on the ground. Note that at this point in Stiven's narrative he had been separated from Antonia and the rest of the friend group, he is not the person that Antonia saw on the ground surrounded by police in the previous example.

Ex. 8:

1 Stiven: estaba así como

⁴¹ Antonia's shift into falsetto voice quality is not captured by the computer-generated pitch track, which therefore cuts off around 500Hz.

I was there

2: como tirado en el piso como
 like thrown on the floor

3: así como
 there like

4: no:::

Stiven describes himself as on the ground, looking up at the group of *carabineros* surrounding him and realizing that the odds are not in his favor. He voices his protest against what is happening, “no:::” (line 4), which co-occurs with a fast-rising movement into the pitch accent, and a steady fall through ‘no’.

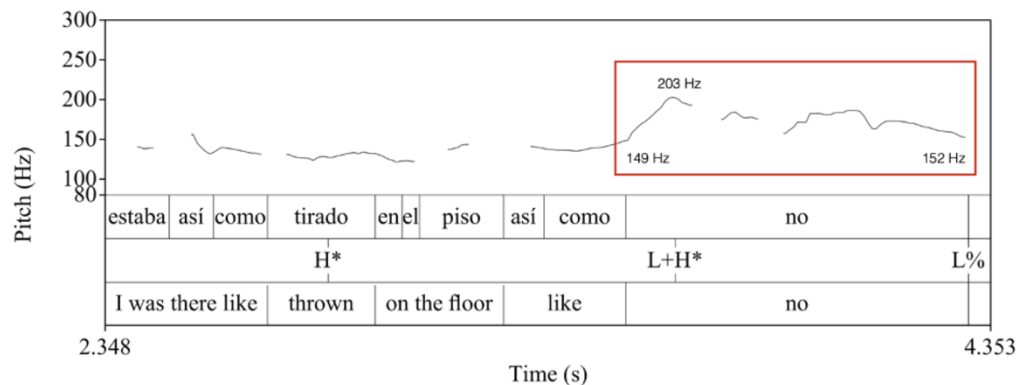


Figure 4.3: Protest contour on ‘no’.

Stiven stylizes his relative helplessness in this situation through an emphatic elongation of the vowel in ‘no’. The co-occurring protest contour emphasizes his emotional assessment of being on the ground surrounded by five riot police: this is not fair.

2.3.3 Protest contour 3

I asked Stiven if he was arrested after police threw him on the ground. He said that he avoided being detained because a friend came over, grabbed his hand, and pulled him to safety. Using another protest contour, Stiven voices his friend yelling at *carabineros* to release him (*Ex. 9, Figure 4.4*). Stiven voices the friend in lines 2-3.

Ex. 9:

- 1 Stiven: y empezó así como
and she started like
- 2: **suéltalo**
drop him
- 3: paco culiado
fucking cop
- 4: así
like that

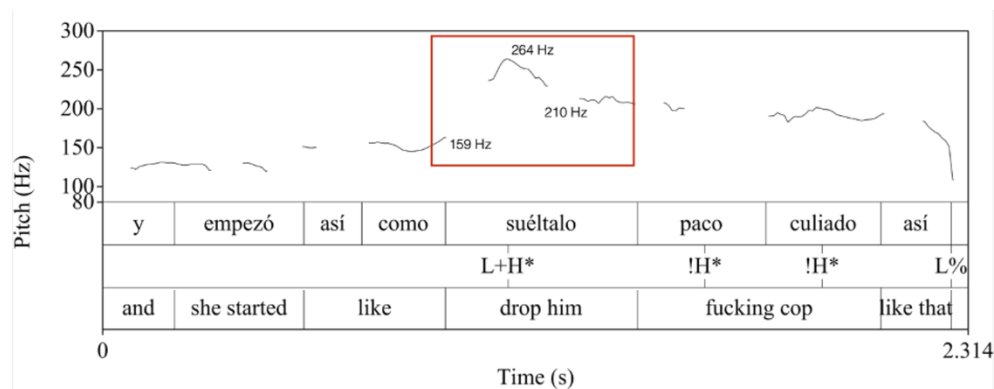


Figure 4.4: Protest contour on ‘suéltalo’.

The peak of the pitch accent here occurs on the command to the police, ‘*suéltalo*’ [drop him].

After the rapid movement toward the prosodic peak, Stiven’s pitch drops significantly and continues to fall through the rest of the statement, “*paco culado así*” [fucking cop like that]. In

this example, the protest contour that occurs through the command ‘*suéltalo*’ expresses the friend’s oppositional stance toward Stiven’s detention by police.

2.3.4 Protest contour 4

In the previous subsection (*Ex. 4 and 5*), I explained that both Antonia and Stiven emphasized that Antonia was pushed by a *carabinero*, but that she did not fall. Unfortunately, the police officer persisted. In her account of the incident, Antonia explains that after she threw herself on the group of special force officers beating up the guy on the ground, she realized that she had made a mistake and attempted to walk away. However, a *carabinero* from the group followed and pushed her. When she did not fall over, the officer tackled her, described in *Ex. 10*.

Ex. 10:

- 1 Antonia: pero la cuestión
 but the thing
- 2: es que eh
 is that um
- 3: ya traté como de hacerle cuerpo
 ya I tried to like stand my ground
- 4: cachai
 you know
- 5: y evitar de que me **bot~ara~**
 and avoid him throwing me [down]
- 6: .hh
- 7: y me tacleó
 and he tackled me
- 8: me puso el pie
 he put his foot on me
- 9: y me empujó cachai
 and he pushed me you know
- 10: y yo

and I
 11: volé
 flew

Here, Antonia describes herself as assuming an embodied stance against the police officer's attack. She explains that she tried to '*hacerle cuerpo*', or physically stand her ground.

The protest contour in this example occurs on a subjunctive verb, '*botara*' [throw] (line 5, *Figure 4.5*). In this subjunctive example, Antonia protests the idea that the police office should succeed in forcing her to the ground.

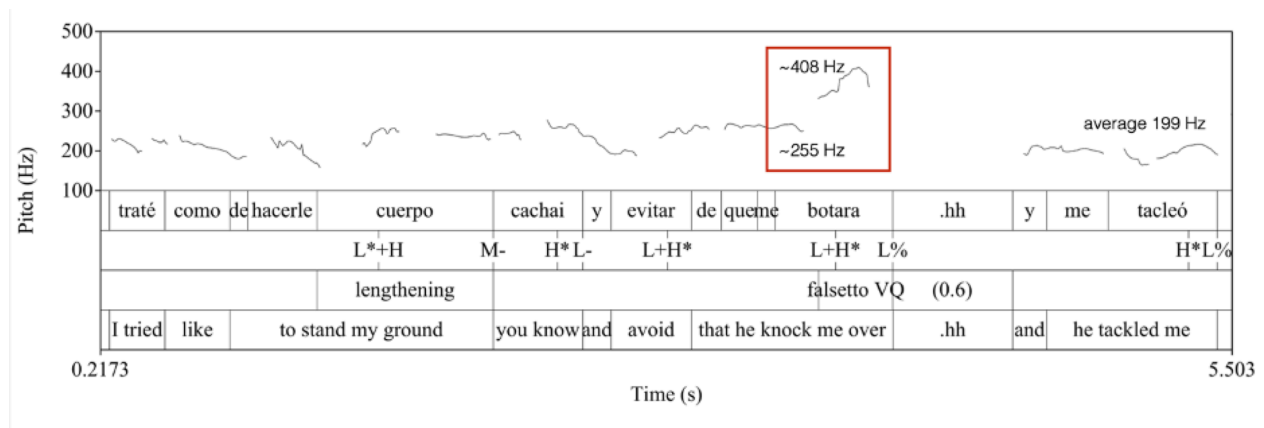


Figure 4.5: Protest contour on '*botara*'.

But he did succeed. Antonia takes a deep breath (line 6) and with a decrease in rate of vocal fold vibration that almost sounds like defeat, reveals that the *carabinero* tackled her, and she went flying (line 11).

2.4 Una lucha [a struggle]

Following the attack, Antonia was accompanied to the hospital by a teacher from The Public School. Administrators called her mom, who met them at the hospital. She reflected on

this experience at the end of the interview (*Ex. 11*).

Ex. 11:

Antonia: Y pucha. Fue terrible cuatiko para mí el tener que llegar al hospital cachai por querer contradecir al gobierno. Porque traté de hacer eso cachai y me dieron una muy mala imagen de lo que estaba pasando po cachai. Y me di cuenta de todo el abuso que estaba ocurriendo por una lucha cachai.

And shit. It was really wild for me having to go to the hospital for wanting to contradict the government. Because that's what I tried to do and they gave me a really bad impression of what was going on. And I realized all the abuse that was happening for a struggle [fight].

Antonia frames her experience at the May 2016 protest as a sort of coming-of-age story. She attended as a *1° medio* student, in her first year of secondary school, with a group of friends from The Public School, on a mission to protest President Bachelet's administration for its role in upholding Chile's unequal education system. Upon arriving to Plaza Italia, she witnessed riot police beating up a fellow protestor, which changed her understanding of what was at stake when opposing the education system. Angered by the violence, Antonia tried to help her peer by jumping on the police who were brutalizing him. This led to Antonia being attacked by a *carabinero* herself, which landed her in the hospital with a leg injury that she spent weeks recovering from.

Experiencing police brutality at an education protest gave Antonia a deeper understanding of connections between different forms of political repression (*cf.* Aretxaga 2001). Specifically, she became aware of a relationship between public education financing (which Antonia experiences as systemic violence) and state policing (which Antonia experienced as physical violence). The Chilean government's use of 'didactic violence' (Winn 2010) against student protestors such as Antonia and Stiven is a strategy with clear ties to dictatorship-era

forms of political repression (Bruey 2021). Methods used in contemporary student protests are similarly connected to historical forms of political resistance, and a historical struggle against state violence. Antonia explains that being sent to the hospital for participating in a protest against the government was a politicizing experience: “*me di cuenta de todo el abuso que estaba ocurriendo por una lucha*” [I realized all the abuse that was happening for a struggle].

3.0 Contours of history

Section 3 considers youth socialization into what Antonia refers to as “*una lucha*”—a historically-informed struggle shaped by decades of state repression and popular resistance. Here, I use the contour metaphor to conceptualize historical memory as a form of collective protest. Intergenerationally-transmitted knowledge about human rights violations, such as torture, committed by state agents during Pinochet’s dictatorship is a political project that aims to make those abuses visible (Gómez-Barris 2009) and prevent them from happening again. Based in ethnographic research in The Public School, this section examines ways that students come into a collective consciousness about state-sanctioned human rights violations in the past. I argue that historical memory structures an understanding of contemporary forms of abuse and socializes students into an enduring political struggle against physical and institutional forms of violence.

3.1 Seeing torture

Youth political resistance and state repression both came to a head in October 2019 when students protesting a metro fare increase were met with severe police brutality—sparking riots across Santiago, a military deployment, and months of protests (detailed in Chapter Two). Metro protests were organized by Santiago student coalitions, and many students at The Public School

had been participating in the protests for weeks before the escalation on Friday, October 18th.

The night that metro protests escalated, The Public School shared this on their Instagram account

(Figure 4.6):



Figure 4.6: Public School Instagram post, October 18th, 2019

“All students who are beat or tortured today should get in contact with the Department of Human Rights at @colmeed to register injuries. It is very important. [email] [phone number] (This is the number for the Popular Defense)”

The post contains a simple screenshot of a WhatsApp message (rather than a stylized photo more typical of Instagram’s platform), reflecting the urgency with which the information was circulated through social networks. The message lists contact information for the Human Rights Department of the *Colegio Médico de Chile*, a medical trade association, and it urges victims to contact the organization if they were beaten or tortured. This information was shared

in educator WhatsApp networks in response to reports of mass arrests and police brutality against students who had participated in metro pretests that day.

Circulating information on social media about how to report police brutality was a part of a collective effort among human rights organizations and institutions to document, make visible, and prosecute state abuse during the *estallido social*. The Public School sharing the message to their Instagram account reveals the urgent threat that its students faced during the uprising. It also reflects institutionalized practices that teach students to recognize forms of violence perpetuated by the state, such as police beatings and torture, as violations of their human rights (*cf.* C. Goodwin 1994).

3.2 Documenting torture

Following the definition put forth by the United Nations⁴², Chile's *Instituto Nacional de Derechos Humanos* (INDH) [National Institute of Human Rights] identifies torture as:

[A]ny act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity (INDH 2019: 43; United Nations 1984).

During the *estallido social*⁴³ INDH registered 1,234 victims of 'torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment' and 282 victims of 'torture with sexual violence' at the hands of state

⁴² United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984)

⁴³ The INDH report includes abuses registered between October 17th, 2019 and March 31st, 2020.

agents (INDH 2020). As reports of police torture began to surface during the *estallido social*, there was a proliferation of art drawing the public’s attention to the accusations⁴⁴ (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7: Torture discourse in Santiago Centro.

(1) “They are torturing”. October 2019. Artist unknown

(2) “The police torture”, image of Salvador Allende. December 2019. Artist unknown.

Documenting human rights violations committed between 1973 and 1990 has been a critical aspect of Chile’s post-dictatorship truth and reconciliation process (Stanley 2004; Santos Herceg 2020). Investigations conducted by Chile’s National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, published as the ‘Valech Report’ in 2004, recognized over 27,000 cases⁴⁵ of political imprisonment between 1973 and 1990 (Collins 2017). Most victims were detained in clandestine centers throughout Chile, and 94% of detainees were subjected to various types of torture. Extensive use of torture against leftist political activists during the military

⁴⁴ There were also projects that drew international attention to human rights abuses happening in Chile. For example, in November 2019 Chilean musician Mon Laferte walked down the red carpet of the Latin Grammys in Las Vegas with the message “EN CHILE TORTURAN, VIOLAN, Y MATAN” [in Chile they torture, rape, and kill] painted on her otherwise bare breasts.

⁴⁵ This number only includes people who gave their testimonies to the National Commission for Political Imprisonment and Torture and cases that were deemed legitimate in the investigation. Actual numbers are thought to be much higher. Many torture victims did not report to the commission (see Han 2012).

regime has led some to argue that the successful implementation of neoliberal policy in Chile depended on torture to suppress opposition to these reforms (Moulain 1997; Macias 2013).

By registering and raising awareness about the state's deployment of torture during the dictatorship, organizations and individuals defending human rights contribute to the construction of a "politically charged" mode of historical consciousness (Ralph 2013). Collective memory about human rights violations in the past also structures how people make sense of contemporary forms of police violence. This was especially clear during the *estallido social*, when the political project of identifying and circulating information about police torture was mobilized through institutionalized forms of registering abuse, as well as discourse and art that held the state accountable for its actions in real-time.

3.3 Historical memory

Historical memory about human rights atrocities committed during the dictatorship is a means of processing collective trauma, as well as a social defense mechanism aimed at preventing the same thing from happening again. The students involved in my dissertation research were born over a decade after Chile's return to democratic governance, but they are still socialized into modes of remembering political repression, violence, and trauma experienced under Pinochet's military regime. For people that do not have firsthand memories of the dictatorship, one way that socialization into historical memory happens is through institutionalized school practices, such as class assignments and field trips.

On October 17th, 2019, the day before the *estallido social* broke out, I attended a 2^o *medio* Social Studies class at The Public School. Students were working on an in-class assignment about South American dictatorships. The teacher called me over to a students' desk and asked her to show me how she had represented forms of political repression used by

authoritarian regimes in Chile and Argentina. The drawing, shown in *Figure 4.8*, includes a secret torture center, a blindfolded person, and someone being beat by police.



Figure 4.8: Student assignment.

The pedagogical goals of this assignment were poignant the next day when I saw The Public School's Instagram post.

While intergenerational transmission of knowledge about the dictatorship's human rights atrocities happens in both The Public School and The Private School (*e.g.*, through national History curriculum) (*cf.* Oteíza 2003; Oteíza *et al.* 2015), socialization into historical memory is an especially interpersonal and embodied experience in the former. For example, to commemorate the anniversary of the *coup d'état* that ended Salvador Allende's presidency and suspended democracy in Chile, every year on September 11th The Public School takes students

on a fieldtrip to a different '*lugar de memoria*' [site of memory]⁴⁶ (cf. Veneros Ruiz-Tagle and Toledo Jofré 2009).



Figure 4.9: Vigil candles for individuals disappeared, assassinated, and tortured.

Photo taken at human rights memorial site on 2° medio fieldtrip. September 11th, 2019.

In 2019 I joined the 2° *medio* class trip to a memory site in Santiago⁴⁷. The location had been used as a detention and torture center for several years during the dictatorship. Site volunteers taught us about the building's transformation from a typical urban space to a clandestine center used by the Pinochet's secret police force⁴⁸. During our tour, guides described the types of torture used against the people who were imprisoned there. They also shared stories from neighbors consulted during the site's memorialization process after the return to democracy. Neighbors recounted that they could hear screaming coming from inside the building

⁴⁶ See Schindel (2009) and Santos Herceg (2016) on detention centers as memorial sites in Chile.

⁴⁷ I am not providing specific details about the center for reasons related to the school's anonymity.

⁴⁸ *Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* (DINA).

during the period that it was used for torture, but that they were too scared to talk about what was happening at the time.

Through class assignments and field trips such as those described above, students in The Public School acquire knowledge about state abuse and political repression during Chile's military dictatorship. Institutions like The Public School and Chile's dictatorship memorial sites scaffold intergenerational interactions wherein students are socialized into discourse about human rights. Historical memory about human rights abuses is a mode of collective protest against state violence. Through these institutionalized activities, students are socialized into an understanding of connections between past and present forms of abuse, preparing them to speak out against forms of state-sanctioned violence relevant to their everyday lives.

4.0 Conclusion: Voicing state violence

Through the lens of 'protest contours', Chapter Four draws a relationship between material contours of spoken language and the historical contours of state repression and resistance movements in Chile. Examining protest contours as vocal practices in the first part of the chapter provides nuanced insight into how two students at The Public School physically voice their opposition to police brutality through heightened displays of affect in narratives about their experiences at a protest. 'Protest contours' in this section make audible speakers' indignation about police violence against student protestors. The chapter's second part contextualizes these students' political stance-taking practices as relevant to Chile's post-dictatorship historical memory project. This section reviews discourse and institutionalized practices that shape students' understanding of past forms of state repression as relevant to contemporary forms of violence. Here, 'protest contours' emphasizes historical memory as an enduring project shaped by past and present forms of state repression and resistance movements.

The Constitution



“Students of Chile against the marketization of education 12/17/2023”

Photo taken in Santiago Centro outside of Metro Los Héroes, December 5th, 2023.

Chapter Five:

Semiotic action and political movements

At the beginning of the October 24th, 2019, Social Studies class discussed in Chapter

Three, a student asked the teacher a question:

Alumna: Sir, usted opina que—de lo que está pasando ahora—como que, lo van a estudiar en el futuro?

Student: Sir, do you think that—what is happening now—that they'll study it in the future?

Profe: Si.

Teacher: Yes.

Alumna: Si?

Teacher: Yeah?

Profe: Absolutamente. Absolutamente. Lo que estamos haciendo ahora—lo que está pasando ahora en el país absolutamente tengo toda la certeza que se va a estudiar en el futuro. Y quiero que ustedes se adelanten a indicar que es lo importante de rescatar. No quiero que esto nos pase de largo. Es fundamental que nos dimos cuenta de lo que está ocurriendo.

Absolutely. Absolutely. What we are doing now—what is happening now in the country I am completely certain that it will be studied in the future. And I want you all to get ahead and figure out what is important to take away from it. I don't want this to pass us by. It's fundamental that we realize what is happening.

I assume they were thinking about the historians and political scientists who would study Chile's

2019 uprising as an important historical moment—the kind of moment written about in high

school Social Studies textbooks—and not about the linguistic anthropologist in the room

recording the interaction. However, important political moments are constituted by '*lo que*

estamos haciendo ahora—lo que está pasando ahora' [what we're doing now—what is

happening now]. That is why, in this dissertation, I have documented and tried to make sense of

effervescent semiotic practices that constituted real people's participation in, and orientation toward, important moments in Chile's recent political history.

The uprising triggered by student metro protests in October 2019 gave way to a constitutional referendum a year later. Voluntary voter turnout in 2020 was the highest seen since the 1988 plebiscite that ended Pinochet's regime. Nearly 80% of voters chose to replace the dictatorship's constitution, and they decided that the new text should be written by an assembly of democratically elected representatives. The 2021-2022 Constitutional Convention, composed of 155 constituents, commenced toward the end of Sebastian Piñera's conservative government in July 2021 and it was dissolved 12 months later. During this period, the country elected former student political leader Gabriel Boric as president. Like Boric's political platform, the proposal for the new constitution was highly progressive. However, the text was rejected in September 2022 in a national referendum with mandatory voter participation. A second attempt to re-write the constitution began shortly thereafter. This time, the Constitutional Council was composed of 50 elected constituents, the majority of whom were from political parties on the right. This assembly proposed a highly conservative constitution, which was rejected in a national referendum vote in December 2023.

President Boric declared an end to the constitutional debate under his administration, and Chile will continue to be governed by the 1980 constitution for the foreseeable future.

Appendices

Appendix A: Fire Interaction

This interaction is referenced in examples 1-9 of Chapter 3. I provide the Spanish transcription first, followed by the English translation. Line numbers in the translation correspond to line numbers in the original Spanish transcript.

Speaker Key

Speaker	Pseudonym
MAT	Mateo
PRO	Profesor Carlos
EDG	Edgar
AME	Amelia
VAL	Valentina (Vale)
FEL	Félix

Spanish

1 MAT: ante- pero antes del estado de emergencia
2 se quemó el (.) edificio Enel
3 PRO: ah bien bien bien
4 EDG: no: // se quemó después
5 PRO: **sú:**per preciso eso
6 AME: no no no fue antes
7 PRO: a ver a ver a ver a ver
8 EDG: en serio ↑
9 PRO: a ver a ver a ver
10 MAT: si fue antes de la-
11 AME: si si fue antes
12 PRO: sh sh sh:
13 escúchame
14 escuchase lo que están diciendo
15 porque es fundamental
16 para poder resolver esto que está pasando
17 que seamos **súper** **correctos**
18 en las **palabras** que estamos ocupando
19 y en intencionalidades
20 Mateo
21 resp- d-
22 vuelve a decir lo que dijiste recién
23 MAT: día antes de que se decrete

24 PRO: ya ↑
 25 MAT: el estado de em-
 26 de excepción
 27 o de emergencia
 28 PRO: ya ↑
 29 MAT: eh: s::-
 30 se quemó el edificio Enel
 31 PRO: ya ↓
 32 MAT: pero eso fue // después:{s}-
 33 PRO: **todos**
 34 *esperaesperaesperaesperaespera*
 35 quédate ahí
 36 todos están de acuerdo
 37 que **se quemó:** el edificio de Enel ↑
 38 MAT: no lo // incendiaron
 39 VAL: se quemó una escalera
 40 AME: se quemó una-
 41 PRO: se quemaron las escale:ras de emerge:ncia
 42 del edificio de Enel
 43 .h
 44 **hubo** // destrucción
 45 MAT: ah bueno acá sale-
 46 +[acá sale]
 47 i- incendio que afecta el edificio Enel *hh
 48 PRO: (bien)
 49 te dai cuenta Mateo que
 50 lo que pasa es que
 51 acá hay una // **serie** de malentendidos
 52 EDG: esa es de la izquierda
 53 VAL: ((respondiendo a Edgar))si
 54 PRO: hay una **serie** de malentendidos
 55 (0.5)
 56 que está *generando en la practica*
 57 *que no*
 58 FEL: ((inaudible, a Edgar))
 59 PRO: nos // estemos escuchando
 60 EDG: ((a Félix))no: esa noticia es de la izquierda
 61 PRO: y no vamos a resolver **na:**{da} ↑
 62 *sí no nos escuchamos*
 63 *sí no tenemos el .h le-*
 64 el **ex~a~cto** det~**alle~**
 65 *de lo que está ocurriendo*
 66 (0.9)
 67 acá lo que pasó en definitiva es que
 68 las escaleras de emergencia se incendiaron ↓ (0.5)
 69 // qué **ocurrió:** ↑
 70 VAL: pero al final- //
 71 PRO: y qué pasó para el **mundo**
 72 cuál fue la foto que (.)

73 todo el mundo vio
 74 MAT: como el edificio °[quemando]
 75 PRO: el edificio en lla//mas
 76 AME: no era una parte
 77 MAT: pero ósea: era como una esquinita si
 78 pero no:-
 79 PRO: si pero subió por afuera
 80 MAT: pero +[uno desde afuera] no sabe
 81 que es (la) escalera de emergenc//ia
 82 PRO: **bien**
 83 pero cuál es la labor de los periodistas
 84 (0.9)
 85 AME: informarse má{s}
 86 (0.8)
 87 PRO: decir que lo está ocurriendo de verdad
 88 porque sí no está llamando +[a la-]
 89 al caos // (0.6) **público**
 90 EDG: la tele miente
 91 PRO: no *no estoy diciendo eso*
 92 yo estoy diciendo simplemente
 93 AME: **no** pero si:
 94 PRO: yo estoy ((cantado))[simplemente diciendo]
 95 que hay una labor fundamental
 96 de parte del esta{d}o
 97 y de periodistas en particular para informar
 98 oport**un**amente

English Translation

1 MAT: bef- but before the state of emergency
 2 the Enel building burned
 3 PRO: ah good good good
 4 EDG: no it burned after
 5 PRO: super precise that
 6 AME: no no no it was before
 7 PRO: *look look look look*
 8 EDG: really ↑
 9 PRO: *look look look*
 10 MAT: yes it was before the-
 11 AME: yes yes it was before
 12 PRO: sh sh sh sh:
 13 listen to me
 14 listen to what you're saying
 15 because it's fundamental
 16 to be able to resolve what is happening
 17 that we be super correct
 18 in the words that we're using

19 and in intentions
 20 Mateo
 21 say-
 22 repeat what you just said
 23 MAT: the day before it was declared
 24 PRO: ya
 25 MAT: the state of em-
 26 of exception
 27 or of emergency
 28 PRO: ya
 29 MAT: ehh-
 30 the Enel building burned
 31 PRO: ya
 32 MAT: but that was after-
 33 PRO: everyone
 34 waitwaitwaitwaitwait
 35 stay there
 36 does everyone agree
 37 that the Enel building burned
 38 MAT: no they set it on fire
 39 VAL: a staircase burned
 40 AME: it burned a-
 41 PRO: ((sing-song))[the emergency stairs were burned
 42 of the Enel building]
 43 .h
 44 there was (.) // destruction
 45 MAT: oh well here it says-
 46 +[here it says]
 47 the fire that affects the Enel building *hh
 48 PRO: *fine*
 49 do you realize Mateo that
 50 what happens is that
 51 here there is // a series of misunderstandings
 52 EDG: that's from the left
 53 VAL: ((to Edgar)) yeah
 54 PRO: there is a series of misunderstandings
 55 (0.5)
 56 which is generating the practice
 57 that
 58 FEL: ((inaudible, to Edgar))
 59 PRO: we're not listening
 60 EDG: ((to Felix)) no that news is from the left
 61 PRO: and we won't resolve **anything**
 62 if we don't listen
 63 if we don't have the .h le-
 64 the ex~a~ct det~ail~
 65 about what is happening
 66 (0.9)
 67 here what happened definitively is that

68 the emergency stairs caught on fire ↓ (0.5)
69 what happened ↑
70 VAL: but ultimately—
71 PRO: and what happened for the world
72 what was the photo that (.)
73 the whole world saw
74 MAT: like the building °[burning]
75 PRO: the building in fla//mes
76 AME: no it was a part
77 MAT: or like it was a little corner yeah
78 but no:—
79 PRO: yeah but it climbed the outside
80 MAT: but +[from the outside one] doesn't know
81 that it is (the) emergency staircase
82 PRO: **good**
83 but what was the job of the journalists
84 (0.9)
85 AME: to be more informed
86 (0.8)
87 PRO: to say what is really happening
88 because if not it's calling for
89 **public** // (0.6) chaos
90 EDG: the TV lies
91 PRO: no *I'm not saying that*
92 I am saying simply
93 AME: **no**: but yeah (you are)
94 PRO: I am simply saying
95 that there is a fundamental job
96 on behalf of the state
97 and the journalists in particular to inform
98 in a timely manner ↓

Appendix B: Teargas Interaction

This interaction is referenced in examples 10-13 of Chapter 3. I provide the Spanish transcription first, followed by the English translation. Line numbers in the translation correspond to line numbers in the original Spanish transcript.

Speaker Key

Speaker	Pseudonym
EDG	Edgar
PRO	Profesor Carlos
FEL	Félix

Spanish

1 EDG: pro::fe:
2 ayer me llegó una la:cri:mó::ge:na::
3 (0.3)
4 PRO: no puedes decir eso ↓
5 EDG: por qué ↑
6 PRO: no estarías acá ↓
7 EDG: si me llegó una lacrimógena
8 PRO: se te lleg-
9 te golpeó ~una~ ↑
10 EDG: no: me // llegó: una
11 PRO: ah te llegó el e:fe:cto del gas lacrimógeno ↓
12 EDG: °si
13 igual hubiera venido
14 PRO: pero das cuenta que la dif-
15 PRO: la diferencia es-
16 EDG: °[pero si te llega uno es un moretón gig~ante no más~]
17 es súper importante
18 súper importante la diferencia
19 EDG: m:e llegó: el ga:s de la-
20 PRO: el efecto del ga-
21 EDG: bomba lacrimógena
22 PRO: bien bien
23 (0.8)
24 FEL: ayer **sentí** la lacrimógena
25 EDG: *hhh

English Translation

1 EDG: teacher
2 yesterday I got tear gassed ((a tear gas came at me))
3 (0.3)
4 PRO: you can't say that ↓
5 EDG: why ↑
6 PRO: you wouldn't be here ↓
7 EDG: yeah I got tear gassed ((a tear gas came at me))
8 PRO: it came at—
9 one hit you?
10 EDG: no it came at me
11 PRO: ah you got the effect of the tear gas
12 EDG: °[yes]
13 I still would have come
14 PRO: but you realize the diff—
15 PRO: the difference is
16 EDG: °[but if you get hit with one it's just a giant bruise]
17 it's super important
18 super important the difference
19 EDG: I got the gas of the—
20 PRO: the effect of the ga—
21 EDG: tear gas bomb
22 good good
23 (0.8)
24 FEL: yesterday I felt the tear gas
25 EDG: *hhh

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