Voices of Storytellers:
The Role of Prosody in Bilingual Mexican American Narrative Practices

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of prosody in narration as a function of Labovian narrative structure and stancetaking in identity performance. This study is both (1) an extension and enhancement of preliminary work that looked at a handful of prosodic features in Mexican Spanish narratives, and (2) a novel investigation into discursive acts expressed through narrative prosody. Previous work has established that speakers use prosody in socially meaningful ways in discourse (House, 2006). At the same time, research in narrative inquiry has provided unique insight about the ways in which speakers systematically construct oral narratives (Labov, 1997, 2013; Labov & Waltetzky). Still, many questions remain open regarding the interface of these realms and the function that prosody plays in narrative construction, especially in language contact settings where bilingualism is the norm for speakers. In addition, while many scholars have touched upon identity as a fluid sociological entity, there is yet to be any insight as to how prosody can reveal the underpinnings of dynamic identity performance in narration.

Drawing on and expanding preliminary work, I examine Mexican American bilingual narratives as a means to observe patterns of prosodic content and function to provide answers for both of these theoretical questions. Narratives are analyzed through (1) discourse analysis informed by a Labovian structural framework, and (2) Spanish ToBI analyses to measure pitch accent realization and intonation patterns. Both of these facets are conducted with the goal of outlining the relationship between prosody and (1) narrative structure as well as (2) performativity of Mexican/Hispanic/Latinx identities via style shifting and stance. This study can offer insight in how prosody can be comprehensively incorporated with Labov's framework of narrative analysis, as well as how speakers in language contact utilize prosody to varying degrees

depending on discourse content and positionality. Additionally, this study provides insight into how prosody may vary in its usage in language contact situations.

Findings from both studies demonstrate rich use of prosody in a variety of narrative contexts, related to personal experiences, family stories, and identity navigation. Notably, speakers use intonation contours to index narrative structure and different epistemic stances in identity, with observations being noted in the difference between falling and non-falling (e.g., uptalk) contours. Pauses and syllable lengthening also have narrative and discourse-specific purposes, including the enhancement of intonation contours, signaling stances of certainty and uncertainty, and modulating the interaction to index open vs closed dialogic continuation in identity work. The purposes that these prosodic features carry may often overlap or be difficult to interpret based on the context. Nonetheless, the results of this dissertation reveal the importance of prosody in both narrative discourse generally and specifically within bilingual contexts common to the Mexican American community.

Esta tesis se la dedico a mi familia y a mi comunidad

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1. INTRODUCTION

Prosody serves many important roles in linguistic interaction. Various scholars have pointed to the use of prosodic patterns in establishing meaningful features in the space of interaction between language users in both text and speech (Cole, 2015; House, 2006). Of particular interest in this study is the role that prosody plays in language contact situations, with much of the literature highlighting the directionality of prosodic variation (Flege, 1995; Sichel-Bazin et al., 2015). Language contact presents a distinct and relatively understudied point of observation of spoken discourse prosody; it is well established that language users in contact situations exhibit evidence of contact influence. For example, Van Coetsem (2016) designs a framework that divides contact-induced influences into two distinct categories: *borrowing* and *imposition,* with the contact process type depending on the speaker's L1 and language use. Within the realm of narrative inquiry, Labovian frameworks have been highly influential in providing continued insight about narrative construction and purpose (Labov, 2013, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Although Labov defines and identifies generalized tendencies in how narrators construct and outline their stories, evidence points to variation on the sociocultural level (Coffrey & Atkinson, 1996). What remains to be thoroughly examined is how prosody correlates with sociocultural constructions of narration, especially through the lens of Labovian frameworks, which this dissertation addresses.

In addition to the question of how prosody serves constructive processes, this study explores the question of how narrators strategically utilize prosody to achieve acts of fluid identity performativity and position themselves in relation to their identities within narration. Prior work suggests that language users are adept at using spoken prosody in a variety of ways for many purposes, such as to index discourse-salient information, or to provide narrative-

relevant information such as emotion and stance (Brazil, 1997; Gumperz, 1982; Pickering et al., 2009). In terms of language contact, research not only shows dynamic processes of linguistic change and influence in contact situations (Romera & Elordieta, 2020), but also indicates that speakers utilize prosodic features potentially influenced by contact to express socially meaningful positions in interaction (Newmark et al., 2016). As work continues in this realm of interactive prosody, one ongoing question is this: how do speakers attend to prosody and phonetic contour distinctions in contact contexts when discourse meaning relies on the interpretation of said distinctions? Given the growing evidence of contact-based change in prosody, a key point of interest here is how language users negotiate their stances in interactive spaces and strategize the use of contact-induced prosody for a variety of discursive moments.

Results demonstrate a diverse range of functions that different prosodic markers are employed to achieve in narration. In terms of narrative structure, markers such as intonation and pauses tend to be correlated with thematic directionality and serve as useful cues of *finality* in narrative structural output. Narrators employ other features to enhance these cues, such as syllable lengthening. In terms of identity discourses, prosody functions in dynamic ways as a set of tools for stance expression, with narrators often relying primarily on intonation contours to demonstrate complex emotions and different degrees of their perspectives when it comes to engaging with sociopolitical discourses that concern identity in the Mexican American community.

1.1 MEXICAN AMERICAN CULTURAL CONTEXT

1.1.1 History of the Mexican American Population

Prosody in narrative practices of the Mexican American community is the primary focus of this dissertation, with particular emphasis on how speakers employ prosodic variation in different ways for thematic construction and identity performance work. To that end, especially in the latter goal, it is important to understand the historical context that continues to culturally inform modern Mexican American identity, performativity, and self-expression. This section outlines the historical factors that have shaped and continue to shape identities associated with being *Mexican* in distinct senses (e.g., Mexican national, being of Mexican descent, culturally Mexican, etc.).

Much of these identity processes can be traced to the groundwork that initiated nationalist causes in the early twentieth century, particularly with the formation of a unique Mexican national identity under the *Indigenismo* movement, which attempted to consolidate modern Mexico's legitimization on the basis of an ongoing connection to a pre-colonial Indigenous past (Dawson, 1998; Knight, 1990). In the wake of the revolutionary period (1910-1924) that overturned dictator Porfirio Diaz's regime, a continuing wave of nationalism spurred primarily by Mexico's intellectual sector spread across the sociopolitical landscape of the Republic and engendered a mass cultural shift towards a unified national identity (Morris, 1999). Much of this nationalist reformation became heavily invested in the *mestizaje* concept, promoting a mytho-history rooted in the cultural narrative of a hybrid European (Spanish) and Indigenous (*Mexica* or *Aztec*) past that uniquely defined what it meant to be *Mexicano* and what was considered part of the novel Mexican cultural sphere (Alonso, 2004). This was supplemented by the *Indigenismo* movement, sparked primarily by Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio, who emphasized a relationship between the Mexican nation-state and the various indigenous communities of the

colonized territory (Brading, 1988). Promoters of a united *mestizo* or 'mixed' identity established this notion by generating a national memory myth of an Aztec past, in which Mexico, as a political and cultural entity, originated with the *Mexicas* as the "first Mexicans", which not only appropriates Mexica communities but also furthers the erasure of other non-Mexica Indigenous communities. Though the terms *mestizo* and *mestizaje* originated in the colonial structure of the Spanish caste system meant to delineate sharp racial differences, scholarly discourse affirms that these terms, in modern usage, are often used to refer to cultural admixture which informs other terms (e.g. *Latinidad*) on the basis of a social memory of historical 'cultural mixing' in Latin America (Pérez-Torres, 2012).

Additionally, it was around the same time period that Mexican philosopher José Vasconelos's ideologies of *la raza cósmica* or 'the cosmic race' began to spread within Mexican society (Vasconcelos, 1966). The original notion behind this philosophical movement envisioned a future 'cosmic race', emerging among the people of Latin America, that represented an amalgamation of European, Indigenous, and African racial admixture and an eventual transcendence of humanity, meant to go beyond "old world races." This idea firmly cemented *mestizaje* into the Mexican cultural psyche and continues to emerge within social discourse and eventually informed future discourses among Chicanx thinkers, such as Gloria Anzaldúa (Busey & Silva, 2021). Many scholars have criticized both Vasconcelos's *la raza cósmica* and its cultural legacies for their adherence to racist ideologies, including objectifying Indigeneity as an elevated symbol for non-Indigenous folks in the name of achieving a cosmic racial destiny, simultaneously erasing actual Indigenous communities (Busey & Silva, 2021; Manrique, 2016).

In any case, out of the rapid political shifts of the twentieth century, Mexican nationalism sprung forward to define a cultural entity that would continue to inform the spectrum of

individuals who align with Mexican identity, both within the Mexican Republic and in the diaspora. Lomnitz-Adler asserts that, amidst the political conflicts and resulting social shifts after the end of the Mexican Revolution, the Mestizo individual manifested as the national hero and ultimate symbol of Mexicanness (1992). The dynamic nature of being Mexican as a form of conscious identity across time is something to note, and we can consider that the notion of being Mexican or belonging to a cultural sphere equated with all things Mexican is only a relatively recent phenomenon (Lomnitz, 2001). This is relevant in the sense that it may apply to how present-day individuals of Mexican descent and anything with self-conscious affiliation to the Mexican cultural sphere (i.e. Greater Mexico), which in turn may inform how cultural practices, including narration, are shaped and situated.

Though this study deals with narration practices of the *Mexican American* community rather than Mexicans in Mexico, it is important to remember that the rise of Mexican nationalism and *mestizaje* all come together to inform current practices of self-identified Mexican individuals, including those who live in diasporic and migratory spaces. Within the realm of nationalist identities, there are notions encompassing the imaginary lines that geographically demarcate nation-states from their surrounding neighbors: *fronteras* or borders. The subject of Mexican American migratory patterns across borders has been the subject of academic discourse for decades (Arzipe, 1981; Henderson, 2011; Saenz et al., 2007). What stands out, in connection to this study, is how this discourse defines and sets up the migratory landscape indexed sharply by the politically established U.S.-Mexico border, reinstating a discursively perceived separation between Mexican Americans and homeland Mexicans.

Beyond this, there is also a sense of not wholly belonging to either cultural entity for many Mexican Americans--and Latinx folks in general (Anzaldúa, 1987; Castro-Salazar &

Bagley, 2010; Fránquiz & del Carmen Salazar-Jerez, 2007). Within this *in-between* space, sometimes referred to as *nepantla*, situated in a nation historically defined by nativist hostility and assimilationist attitudes, Mexican Americans of the 1960s-1970s set out to redefine their own identities and cultural narratives against Anglo assimilation--otherwise known as the Chicano Movement (Gutiérrez, 2010). One of the key ideas behind *Chicanismo* (the state of *being* Chicanx, encompassing the ideologies of the Chicano movement) is a distant indigenous ancestry that serves to reject Anglo-American assimilation and European-based cultural affiliation, instead fashioning a self-legitimizing identity tied with a broader southwestern-based homeland--often referred to as *Aztlán*, the traditional homeland of the *Mexica* (i.e. Aztec rulers) people as well as several other Nahuatl-speaking groups, before their purported southward expansion and settlement in central Mexico (Gómez-Quiñones & Vásquez, 2014; San Miguel, 2005). Though a key feature of the original movement trends in the 1960s, Aztlán nationalist attitudes gradually died out as Chicanx discourse began to redefine itself, intersecting with reflexive attitudes about transnational (i.e. borderland) experiences and becoming more informed by queer feminist scholarship (Anzaldúa, 1987; Watts, 2004). From an outward perspective, the changes in Chicano identity exhibit the dynamic nature of self expression and definition as a transforming phenomenon constantly informed by both past and present context.

As part of ongoing trends in how U.S. Latin American communities position themselves in relation to the surrounding fluid socio-political environment, the rise in a pan-Latino (and later, *Latinx*) identity has, more than likely, also shaped identity performance and cultural practice among many Latin American descended populations, including Mexican Americans. Common use of the term *Latino* arose during the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century as a way to designate a large diverse population of Latin American descended groups

who shared some sort of perceived historical affiliation (García, 2020; Hayes-Bautista & Chapa, 1987). Although use of terms like *Latino* aimed to engender unity among these U.S.-based populations, there has been ongoing debate and questioning about the use of this term, especially in regard to its relationship with whiteness and the continued erasure of folks who do not fit under the racialized umbrella of U.S. *Latinidad* (García-Louis & Cortes, 2023; Planas, 2020). In addition, recent uptake of the term *Latinx,* in an attempt to practice inclusivity for non-binary identities, has sparked some division and debate about how to best describe a unified community on the basis of perceived historical, cultural, and linguistic similarity (Salinas Jr., 2020).

In any case, these trends, complex in their own ways, are bound to influence, no doubt, individuals affiliated with the Mexican American community in terms of identity expression, positionality towards other communities with perceived cultural ties as well as their own internal communities, and language practices, such as Spanish language maintenance (Rivera-Mills, 2012). With this in mind, a review of these trends and historical factors provides the sociocultural basis within which Mexican Americans find themselves situated. The ways in which these factors may influence Mexican identity performativity and language practice is more likely than not to intersect with oral traditions and storytelling practices.

1.1.2 Mexican American Identities: Performance through Storytelling

The second direction draws upon previous work and scholarly discourse investigating identity practices in Mexican American cultural spaces, how language becomes utilized in identity performance, and how various identities of the Mexican American community may be informed by historical and current factors including Mexican nationalism, borderland discourses,

mestizaje/indigenismo, and modern trends stemming from the Chicano and pan-Latinx identity movements.

Given the historical changes–including relatively recent events–that have rapidly occurred over time within this community across multiple borders defined by geography, politics, culture, and social norms, it may come as no surprise that dynamic identity is a mark of bilingual users in this community as they continue to situate and reposition themselves in both micro and macro sociocultural contexts. Finally, how individuals of Mexican-background and descent position their identities and practices in relation to Spanish language norms, combined with natural variation as a result of continuous English-Spanish contact, may influence how they use their repertoires both generally in multiple contexts and specifically during storytelling.

1.1.2.1 Current Discourses on Identity in the Mexican American and other Latinx Communities

The analysis of identity stems from a gap in the literature that looks specifically into how prosody figures in the dynamic navigation of identity discourses and constructions of stance in relation to certain identity practices and expressions. Common notions of identity expression have been undergoing change in U.S. Spanish-speaking communities for several decades. While ethnic identification practices depend greatly on both historical and local contexts, such as labels like *Nuevomexicano* being common in New Mexico for the obvious fact that it applies to Mexican Americans living in that state (Salgado, 2020), there are historical trends that we can generalize across the greater U.S. community. For example, in the decades leading up to the 1990s, it was more common to navigate identity through labels such as *Mexican (American), Hispanic,* and *Chicano* (Bernal et al., 1990; Fairchild & Cozens, 1981). Later on, as mentioned in section 1.1.1, the use of *Latino* permeated across community spaces (García, 2020; Hayes-

Bautista & Chapa, 1987), receiving both acceptance and criticism. Still, around this time, many Mexican American community members self-identified through their national/ethnic origins, referring to themselves as *Mexican* and/or *Mexican American* (Schecter & Bayley, 1997).

In more recent years, the use of gender-neutral terms, *Latine/Latinx*, has come about through active linguistic innovation in collective efforts to do away with what is argued as masculine-centering morphological forms that invisibilize non-binary identities and subtly position the masculine as the default form (Salinas Jr., 2020; Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2015; Slemp, 2020; Vidal-Ortiz & Martinez, 2018). Additionally, ethnic identity labels that were once more common are falling into greater disuse and social critique, such as the term *Hispanic,* which is argued to relate directly back to Spain as a colonizing force (Martínez & Gonzalez, 2021). Another key factor to consider in the dynamic ways that identity is negotiated and enacted stems from community reactions to political trends and important events in the political sphere, such as the 2020 Presidential Election that witnessed how the generalized *Latino vote* was leveraged and called upon for different political purposes (Soto-Vásquez & Gonzalez, 2022).

While the current literature does not encompass all aspects of ongoing discourse regarding Latinx identities and the ways in which community members conceptualize certain labels, the literature overview presented here indicates an ongoing practice of negotiation and points of discussion that may have personal relevance for members of the community. Taking this sociocultural context into account, the main question asked in the second study of this dissertation is: how do Mexican American speakers utilize prosody, in addition to or in conjunction with other tools in their linguistic repertoire, to shape out their attitudes towards this type of discourse? As conversations surrounding identity continue in both personal cultural spaces and within mainstream discourse (e.g., social media, news outlets), the ways in which

narrators set up their stances and work through identity performance has continued relevance; how prosody figures into these practices may help us better understand the diversity in identity practices and provide more insight about the role of prosody in different social contexts.

1.1.3 Mexican American Oral Traditions

Oral storytelling traditions in communities of Mexican descent have been widely shaped by the complex nature of Mexico's history, and that of its diasporic communities. These histories, in turn, are characterized dramatically by the legacy of ongoing politico-cultural clashes, from the inception of Spanish invasion to the ongoing racial and ethnic tensions occurring in both Mexico and the United States. Considering the fact that Mexican society has been shaped by this history in the frame of cultural contact, we can begin to ascertain how current storytelling practices have developed over time and continue examining the role that narration plays in Mexican cultural spaces. As a result of Mexico's history, much of Mexican oral tradition has developed out of integrations of different cultural practices across time (Taggart, 1982), transforming and adding to the multitude of practices that span the Mexican cultural landscape. It may come as no surprise then that Mexican American Spanish-English bilinguals carry on the legacy of these practices in contact settings.

The literature on Mexican oral traditions notes a abundant set of practices, including the employment of different story genres and the practice of sharing *consejos* 'tips/advice', *corridos* 'folk ballads', and *dichos* 'sayings' (Alviso, 2011; Espinoza-Herold, 2007; Reese, 2012). *Dichos* are especially known for the important role they assume in discourse within Spanish-speaking families. Barajas (2005) asserts that the use of Spanish *dichos* is to mitigate the potentiality for social discord, extend socio-cultural conventions, and negotiate the avoidance of potentially

sensitive topics. Along with this, scholars have also noted the extensive ways in which Latino storytelling traditions can engage with multiple practices, such as childhood literacy development (Reese & Gallimore, 2000; Riojas-Cortez et al., 2003), the preservation of sociocultural knowledge (Morales, 2013), family bonding and access to cultural resources (Espinoza-Herold, 2007), and identity construction (Reese, 2012). Considering this, it becomes apparent that narrative practices in Mexican households serve more than the function of sharing a story; oral narrative discourse forms a grand part of sociocultural meaning-making practices that Mexican families constantly engage in.

Oral storytelling as a localized family practice is important to consider within this study, given the relevance of *familismo* as a cultural concept that permeates heavily within Greater Mexican spaces (Smith-Morris et al., 2013). The idea that Mexican communities are very family-oriented is a common outsider stereotype that is used as a primary trait in describing our community. And it may be true that *familismo,* as a holistic set of ideas, attitudes, and norms about family structure and practices, informs our decisions and outlooks as Mexican Americans. But, as Smith-Morris and colleagues note, *familismo* is not just about family-centeredness and affection--it manifests as a discursive tool that intersects with other forms of self-expression and cultural practice, such as nostalgia for homeland spaces (2013). Important to note as well within this same study, narrative analysis was the primary methodological tool to gain qualitative understanding of *familismo*, showcasing how much of these cultural positionalities and norms are dialogically manifested within storytelling practices.

In addition to exploring narrative traditions in a family home context, there has also been a lot of interest in detailing the broad narrative practices as they are performed in Mexican communities situated outside of Mexico proper. For example, Farr's extensive ethnography

(2006) examines ranchero communities, a group she refers to as positioned between the rural and urban classes of Mexican society. She examines the discourse performances among rancheros taking place in *Greater Mexico*, which includes geographical territories once historically under Mexican governance (e.g., the western U.S.). In her study, she identifies three different styles speakers construct and engage with in their discursive practices: *franqueza* (frankness), *respeto* (respect), and *relajo* (humor). Each of these styles are analyzed for how they are utilized in addressing social norms, demonstrating that *relajo* is especially used to reverse traditional family and gender hierarchies, which allows women to securely engage in discourses questioning traditional gender roles.

In a similar approach, Limón (1994) also looked at folk practices of Mexican Americans living in South Texas, investigating folk practices and their sociopolitical positionality against more dominant Anglo practices. The case at hand in Limón's ethnography is the performance of resistance and self-questioning replicated among working class Mexican Americans and how these performances intersect with race and historical political ideology. A point of interest that Limón explores is the critical discourse that men, in particular, ritualistically engage within the context of power and class relations. In some sense, these men, whose practices are heavily shaped by machismo values and hegemonic discourses of oppression, not only utilize their interactional language as a means of replicating resistance against Anglo culture, but also as a means to make self-directed inquiries about their own positions as the "Other" in a societal context directed by majority Anglo powers.

Gathering these ethnographies together, both Limon (1994) and Farr (2006) have comprehensively explored discursive practices occurring in a place of contact—contact between different cultures and languages which ultimately leads to the performance of perceived power

differences. Pratt (1991) also refers to this as the *contact zone,* where cultural groups confront each other in the same space, often in the context of hierarchical differences. Within these contact zones, hierarchical structures emerge through ideologically charged practices and attitudes, such as raciolinguistic violence on the part of White Americans, that further the elevation of whiteness and debase minoritized communities (Alim, 2016). With this in mind, many narrative practices among Mexican American communities may reflect these historical and ongoing power relations that characterize the clash between the minority and the majority. In addition, the linguistic contact between English as the variety of Anglo power and Spanish as a minoritized variety could play a role in the translanguaging practices that Mexican Americans perform. Translanguaging here is defined as the way in which language variety choice and usage varies and exhibits fluid forms of use that run against normative ideas about language, changing according to social, political, and cultural dynamics in spaces of interaction (Baker & Hope, 2019). Translanguaging practices can be connected to practices responding to legacies of oppression and identity. These practices are then enacted through narration, as seen in this dissertation.

1.2 NARRATIVE INQUIRY

1.2.1 History and Development of Narrative Studies in Linguistics

The act of storytelling encompasses a wide range of unique cross-cultural practices that serve to relate and bring collective understandings of human experiences. A story emerges out of a series of events and the desire to relate said events to another individual for the purpose of processing and understanding how our daily lives are shaped by our realities and interactions

with the world. In pursuit of fully examining how speakers shape events of personal experience into stories, narrative inquiry emerged during the mid-20th century as a broad field that encompasses different theoretical and methodological perspectives. As such, many points of disciplinary interest can inform research into narratives and the linguistic-based scope taken here is just one of many forms of inquiry. Many approaches aim to address unique and distinct questions about narrators and their stories in practice, ranging from narration as a social form of interaction to the ways in which narrative events are temporally constructed. Of particular interest in this dissertation is Labov's work on narrative structure, which aims to address how narrators thematically shape their stories (e.g. *abstract, orientation, evaluation,* etc.) (Labov & Waletzky, 1967). Other approaches to narrative inquiry are explored here and may offer additional theoretical insight into the study at hand.

Since the time of this foundational work by Labov and Waletzky, the field of narration has developed extensively to incorporate a wide range of contexts and interdisciplinary perspectives. Considering the commonality of narration in daily human interaction, compartmentalizing a vast array of experiences that we all live and share, the inclusion of narrative inquiry is a relevant and continuing source of methodology. Many different disciplines employ narrative analysis within interfaces of other contexts outside of linguistic construction, such as narratology (Prince, 1982, 2012), medical experiences (Bleakley, 2005; Gordon et al., 2015; Happel-Parkins & Azim, 2016; Viljoen et al., 2016; Womack et al., 2013), disability and patient studies (Sparkes & Smith, 2002; Smith & Sparkes, 2008), legal discourse, (Olson, 2014), human cognitive and social studies (Fabry, 2018; Herman, 2009; Kleres, 2011; Young & Saver, 2001), education and pedagogy (Huber et al., 2013; Schaefer, 2013), and digital-based interactions (Brushwood Rose & Granger, 2013; De Fina & Gore, 2017; Vásquez, 2017). Much

of this work explores various interdisciplinary topics using narrative inquiry as the primary methodology, expanding beyond Labov's original linguistic goal and elevating narration as a tool for a multitude of teleological purposes. One site of academic discourse that brings these insights together is the journal *Narrative Inquiry*, which has housed a wide range of studies that pertain not only to narration as a practice in and of itself, but also how narration serves to reveal other forms of human experience, such as sociocultural modeling and contextualization, especially within recent issues (Andrus, 2021; Handford, 2022; Minami, 2021).

In short, narrative inquiry has established itself over the decades as both a reputable field and an important site of interdisciplinary innovation in methodology. Much of this scholarship can be broadly categorized in two types of inquiry: (1) that which examines narratives as a linguistic/sociological phenomenon, interested mainly in narration as a practice, and (2) that which examines other themes, subjects, and questions *through* narrative analysis. The uptake of narration as a reputable methodology of examination for non-linguistic disciplines highlights the relative significance of researchers recognizing narratives as valuable sites of sociocultural information. The range of disciplines that employ narrative analysis in various efforts can serve to highlight the importance that narration has in our daily lives, as each narrative reveals something different not just about events, but about narrators themselves and how they view themselves in the midst of various global events and their own constructed realities.

1.2.2 Narrative Frameworks

Bruner's work looks at narratives primarily through a functional lens, forging a framework that emphasizes the various role(s) narratives play for narrators themselves (1987). More specifically, Bruner sets up a binary framework that divides cognition processes into: (1)

paradigmatic inquiries, and (2) narrative-based inquiries. While both processes deal with the interpretive strategies, the former is what empirical interpretation practices are based on. In contrast, the latter is classified as the quotidian form of event interpretation, which essentially includes storytelling of personal experiences. Extending Bruner's cognitive approach, Polkinghorne proposes a binary set of methodological techniques that researchers can use to classify narrative data: (1) *paradigmatic-type narrative inquiry*, focusing on narrative data for the purposes of deducing patterns across stories and generating categorical classifications, and (2) *narrative-type narrative inquiry,* which is concerned primarily with the exposition of a story's events and content. In this way, Polkinghorne provides further basis for researchers to analyze in two broad ways, based mainly on the purpose of their disciplines. In addition, Polkinghorne also asserts that researchers should be aware of contextual information that informs the narrator and influences a narrative overall, cultural context, authorship embodiment, and the relationships between the narrator and other figures as they relate to the goals of a narrative act (1995).

More closely approaching the framework of the study at hand, Gee's influential work examines the relationship between linguistic cues and interactive discourse practices. Gaining inspiration from Hymes (1977), Gee's work demonstrates the linguistic strategies that speakers utilize in narrative production via discourse marking (1986). Within this same framework, Gee's work deals primarily with the act of narration as a form of social interaction (Riessman, 1993), simultaneously involving the observation of linguistic cues that interlocutors use within narrative formation. Gee additionally formulated a framework for examining different forms of *discourse,* namely "big d Discourse" and "little d discourse" (Gee, 1990; Gee, 2015). According to Gee, Discourse with "big d" refers to community-specific engagement with sociocultural practices

combined with language use, while discourse with "little d" refers solely to language use. Through this framework, Discourse can be understood as the site of identity meaning-making as it pertains to socially constructed norms of being and interacting with others, all done through language use. In the context of my study, Gee's work on discourse types and linguistic cues in narrative discourse can inform my interpretation of discursive practices and events that speakers perform in a narrative. Although I do not subscribe to all aspects of Gee's framework, his notion of 'Big d' Discourse can sometimes be relevant when interpreting common tendencies in how bilingual Mexican American Spanish speakers go about using narrative language to enact identity performance and position themselves in social space heavily defined by historical and present sociocultural contexts. It is important to note too that there will be variations at different levels in how members of a community realize these discourse practices.

As mentioned earlier, Labov and Waletzky co-created a framework designed to capture the most common structural features found in narratives (1967). The authors do state that this framework was designed with English narratives in mind (p. 12), and not necessarily for cross-linguistic comparisons. With this limitation in mind, this study could add insight to the body of literature on narrative inquiry explored in non-English contexts. In any case, the framework lists six major points in the overall structure of narratives (Table 1).

Table 1

Narrative Structure based on Labov's Framework for Narrative Analysis

Narrative Section	*Description and Function*
Abstract	A brief summary of the narrative, often providing the purpose for narration.

Orientation	The beginning clauses that detail the setting of a narrative event, giving information about the time, place, and individuals involved in the story.
Complication	The series of temporal events that led up to the main event of the story.
Evaluation	The section which serves to signal the importance that the narrative events have for the narrator, answering the 'so-what' factor. In other words, evaluation functions to express the narrator's own personal emotions and attitudes towards the events of the story,
Resolution	This section functions to bring the events of the narrative to an end.
Coda	The very last section of a narrative defined by how the narrator changes the verbal temporality and brings the story back to the present.

Labov and Waletzky clarify that these features do not have to always be present and narrative structures are subject to variation among individual speakers. In any case, this framework served as a useful model of narrative analysis and allowed scholars to feasibly examine many linguistic features (e.g. verbs, modals, tense, etc.) as they function in particular sections of a story. Nearly four decades later, Labov furthered these investigations by exploring narrative formation, arguing pre-construction as a cognitive process which begins once the narrator decides to relate a reportable event (2006). While there are multiple interpretations on what socially may constitute an event's reportability, Labov asserts that an event is reportable for a narrative if it is marked as unusual or unexpected among other quotidian events (p. 2). After

determining reportability, the narrator begins constructing backwards in time, temporally linking preceding events in a causal series. This process continues until the narrator arrives at an unreportable event, which Labov explains as the beginning event that is not out of the ordinary and does not require explanation on the part of the narrator.

More recent work by Labov addresses additional questions of how a narrator's experiences and perspectives are projected in narration with a focus on identity performance (2013). Labov discusses novel techniques in narrative analysis meant to investigate this overarching question and examines how the prototypical narrative author's identity and performance are portrayed and executed in a story. This work is noteworthy for providing an updated methodological framework of inquiry that can aid in studying not only narrative structure and construction, but the role that narrative authorship identity plays in interaction with structure.

1.2.3 Cross-linguistic Narrative Analysis and Spanish Narration

The realm of narrative inquiry has provided insight into how narration processes can vary as a function of situational and linguistic factors. Fleischman's (1990) exposition of grammatical structure in narrative contexts through a diachronic lens has been important in providing insight about the situational aspect of narrative grammar. In her examination of narratives spanning from medieval narratives to modern day fiction, Fleischman notes distinctive grammatical patterns in tense-aspect usage that are markedly different from other contexts, with specific attention paid to tense switching in Romance languages. Similar research also highlights linguistic patterns in other languages when it comes to narrative construction, such as the use of present tense in Spanish when recounting narratives of past events (Bonilla, 2011). In other aspects of grammar,

studies note the use of distinctive discourse markers such as within in the poetic construction of Native American oral narratives (Hymes, 1977).

As an additional aspect of the literature related to the study at hand, research has noted the extensive ways in which Spanish speakers can mark narration through grammatical distinctions in tense and aspect (Sebastián & Slobin, 2013). As an anecdotal example, there is a clear distinction in nuance of meaning provided by the past tense forms *hubo* and *había*, which could both be translated into English as 'there was/were.'

(1) No ***había*** *forma de informarles de lo ocurrido.* (imperfect)

There wasn't a way to inform them about what happened.

(2) No ***hubo*** *forma de informarles de lo ocurrido.* (preterite)

There wasn't a way to inform them about what happened.

Both of these sentences above could have the same translations into English. The distinction in Spanish between preterite and imperfect forms, however, provides the listener/reader with an extra nuance of meaning in regards to the completion of the event. On the one hand, (1) could be interpreted as an event that began some time in the past but was not necessarily completed; there was no way to inform a group of people, but the listener does not know if this state of affairs changed at some point. On the other hand, the preterite form of *haber* in (2) suggests that this state of there being no way to provide information was set and completed, with no implicated change being established afterwards. In the context of a narrative,

the choice of either utterance could serve as a plot device for the narrator, depending on the intended meaning and series of events.

Other studies have provided insight into how Spanish speakers use grammar to delineate and demarcate structural elements of narration, both at the phonological and syntactic levels. For example, Bonilla observed that Spanish speakers tended to use the conversational historical present--use of present tense verb markings--when describing a past event in complicating action sequences (2011). Additionally, some work suggests that situational and linguistic constraints can affect the realization of referential markers, with gradual distinctions noted across different age ranges of Spanish speakers (Kail & Lopez, 1997). For example, Kail and Lopez found that indefinite determiners (e.g., *un/una*) are more frequent in contexts where the speaker and the interlocutor do not share the same mutual knowledge.

1.3 PROSODY

This study examines the use of spoken prosodic and phonetic cues in narrative and spoken discourse among Mexican American Spanish speakers. Prior work has established the importance of prosodic contours in discourse (House, 2006), showing that speakers may use intonation in a variety of ways to both index discourse boundaries and signify contextual information. For example, studies show that speakers use pauses and intonational contours to delineate boundaries between prosodic units (Swerts & Geluykens, 1994; Swerts, 1998). Conversely, these same studies also report on listeners' attentiveness toward prosodic cues. Speakers use other features, such as hyper-articulation or , to facilitate interactional goals like comprehension, stancetaking, and presenting new information (Buz et al., 2016; Freeman, 2014).

Despite the work that has shown the importance of prosody and acoustic cues in conversation, there is not an entirely clear way about how to best define prosody and what counts as prosodic content. As such, researchers may consider several definitions under different criteria. For example, some scholars propose that prosody may be defined as communicative strategies in which supplementary contextual information is conveyed without changing the morphemic structure of a phrase. Considering form though, prosody may also be defined as a specific set of features (e.g., pitch, stress, and pauses) that occur at the suprasegmental level (Cole, 2015). Ferreira (2007) notes that prosody can be classified into two distinct categories: metrical prosody and intonation prosody. Metrical prosody concerns with features that compose the rhythmic structure of a phrase, while intonational prosody deals with information conveyed via changes in pitch. Taking these approaches together, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will simply refer to prosody as particular features occurring at the suprasegmental level which can be utilized by speakers to convey conversationally contextual information to their interlocutors. While I rely on this definition throughout my own analyses, I will also provide an overview of various perspectives on prosody.

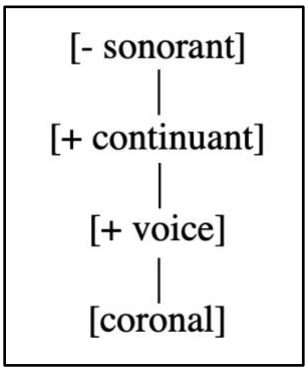
In spite of some debate in definition, research has shown prosody to be an important salient feature in delivering contextual information such as discourse meaning (Cole, 2015; Gumperz, 1982; Holliday, 2021). This information signals other linguistic structures, is conveyed in a multilayered fashion, from the lexicon to the discourse level (Cole, 2015) and can even help listeners distinguish speech style, such reading and spontaneous speech (Blaauw, 1994). In any case, what is important in the context of this study is that prosody is used by speakers to convey important aspects related to the conversation, which can range from how the

speaker identifies themselves, the speech style the speaker is taking on, and what the speaker intends with their message.

Various frameworks and theories have emerged to formalize intonation and other suprasegmental features in conjunction with other phonological phenomena. Notably, Goldsmith's theory of autosegmental phonology, proposed in his MIT thesis (1976), provides a non-linear approach to the formal analysis and representation of pitch segments. In this theory, representation of pitch consists of a multi-tiered matrix, with each tier consisting of a distinct feature represented through a binary +/- system. For example, in describing voiced alveolar fricatives like /z/, the autosegmental representation may look like that shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Traditional autosegmental representation of voiced coronal fricatives.



As shown in Figure 1, each tier represents a distinctive feature with +/- symbols signifying the presence or lack of each respective feature. A key part of this theory is the *well-formedness condition*, which governs the configuration of association lines between tiers and specifies certain repair processes in the case that a configuration violates the rule that association lines may not cross each other.

Work on autosegmental phonology has extended greatly beyond Goldsmith's original theory and has informed further theoretical developments. Further work allowed for greater

insight and theoretical development in the incorporation of intonation into representational analyses, starting with Pierrehumbert's analysis of English intonation patterns (1980). This work, providing much of the foundational basis for *autosegmental-metrical theory,* coined by Ladd (1996), was later refined and advanced with further cross-linguistic observations (Beckman & Pierrehumbert, 1988). Autosegmental-metrical theory consists of several core tenets, mainly that (1) prosodic tones are autosegments that act above the lexical level, represented schematically by L, M, and H tones, and (2) these tones can function metrically, or rhythmically in conjunction with lexical vowels and nuclear positions across a prosodic unit. Much of the metrical aspect of this theory was incorporated from Liberman's work looking at English intonation and stress patterns (1975).

The initial proposal and implementation of autosegmental-metrical theory as a legitimate theoretical lens through which to consider phonological intonation and stress patterns has undergone several developments in light of various criticisms and novel insights. Critically, this theory aimed to propose a representational framework of intonation primarily from a functional *paradigmatic* standpoint, or how factors like tones or phonemes could be analyzed in their relationships with other features that can occur in the same segmental position (e.g., the choice between /k/ and /m/ in *c*at and *m*at). That is, early autosegmental frameworks, like those proposed and enhanced by Goldsmith (1976) and Pierrehumbert (1980), established a phonological overview that was mainly concerned with segmental features that indexed lexical contrast and polarity, while largely bypassing the relevance of *syntagmatic* relationships, which emphasized the linear relationship and sequential influence between segmental elements (e.g., Spanish /d/ in intervocalic position is lenited to [ð], influenced by the surrounding sonorous phones). Further work has demonstrated the obvious interplay between these two functional

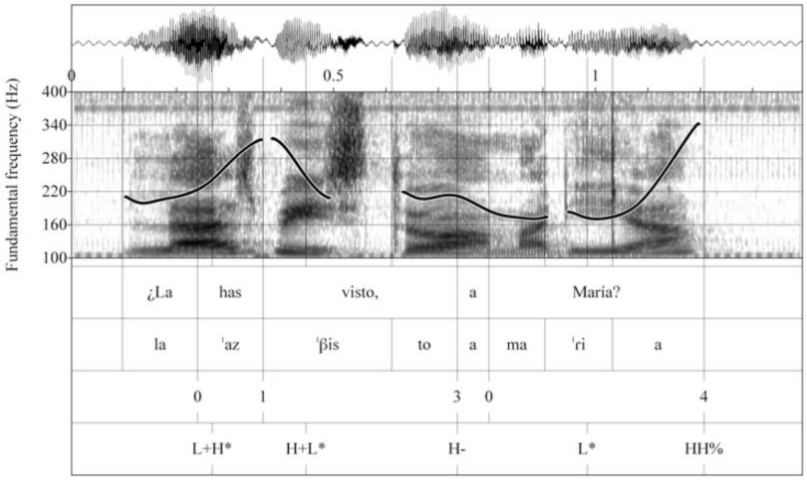
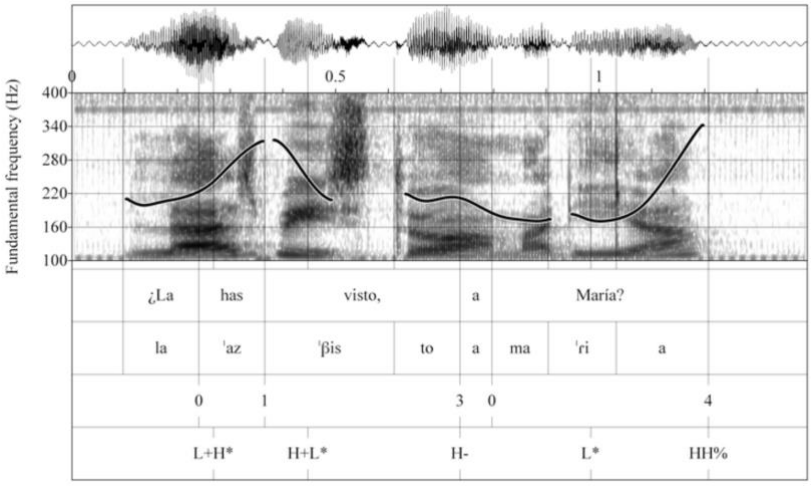
relationships in many languages (Cole, 2015). Taking this into account, recent theoretical innovations have led to the development of an enhanced autosegmental-metrical theory (often stylized as AM^{+}), incorporating both paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships in the examination and representation of tonal patterns (Dilley & Breen, 2018).

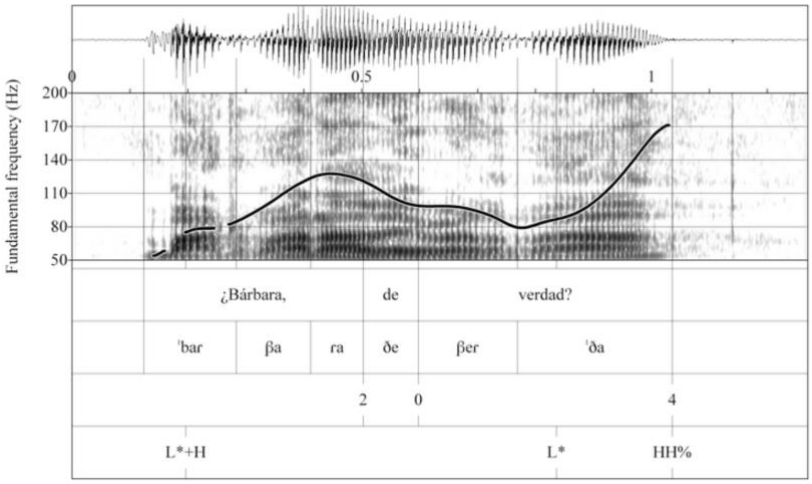
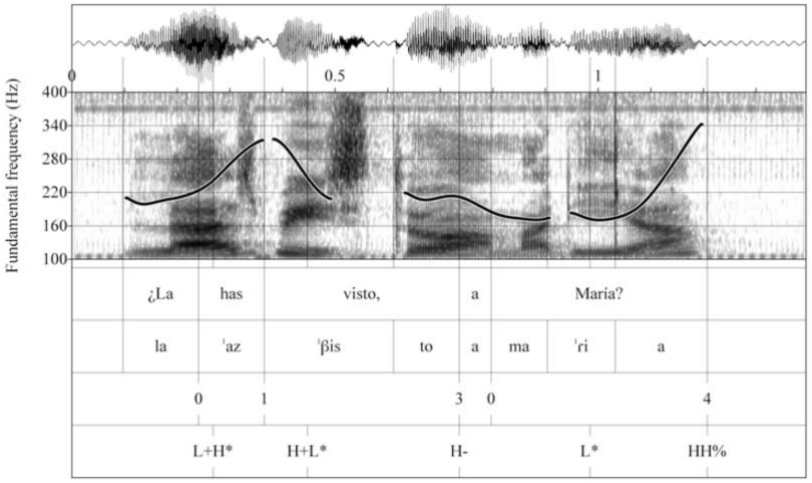
This system was later used to inform the well-established ToBI (tones and break indices) system. Silverman et al. (1992) provides a model of systematically transcribing prosody for linguistic analysis. While this system was designed for the analysis of English prosody, linguists and researchers examining prosody have developed similar ToBI-based conventions for other languages, such as Dutch (Gussenhoven, 2005), Japanese (Venditti, 2005), Greek (Arvaniti & Baltazani, 2000), and, germanely, Spanish (Beckman et al., 2002). Additionally, there is a theoretical limitation in that ToBI relies on pre-established sets of abstract elements and categories which can overlook individual, community-based, and regional variations (Ahn et al., 2019). In spite of this, ToBI does come in handy for my study in manually generating visualizations of intonation across a prosodic unit, with tiers specified for word, syllable, pitch accent, and gloss. Of particular interest here, both theoretically and methodologically, is the Sp_ToBI system first designed and proposed by Beckman and colleagues (2002), and later refined by various researchers (Estebas Vilaplana & Prieto, 2009; Face & Prieto, 2007).

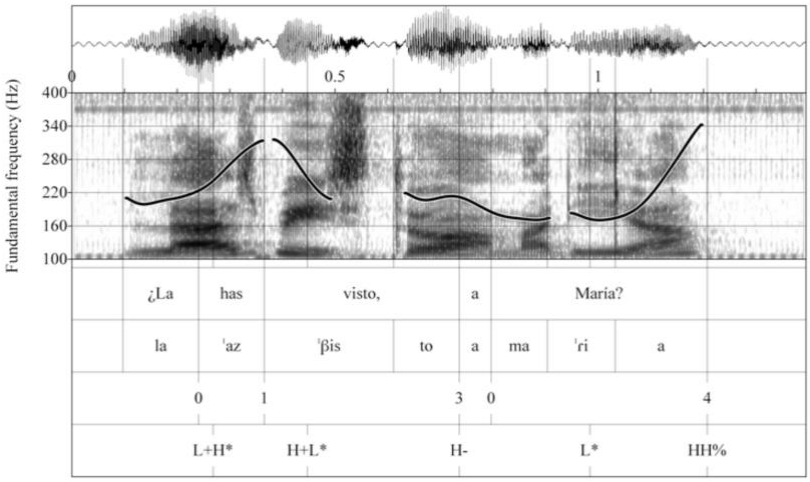
While many researchers have adapted and reinforced ToBI to fit language-specific needs, the basic components consist of a tonal tier specifying pitch accent and a break indices tier specifying prosodic and lexical boundaries. In the tonal tier, schematic representations of pitch accents such as H and L may be used in various ways to denote monotonal and bitonal accents. The break indices tier utilizes numbers 0-5 to indicate distinct types of boundaries dependent on the prosodic and lexical relationship of the phrase, listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Break Indices Schemata and Respective Boundary Descriptions for Spanish

Break Index	*Description & Pitch Accent*	*Example*
BI 0	Marks cohesion between orthographic words - signaling one prosodic word Associated with **one** pitch accent	 (Aguilar et al., 2009).
BI 1	Marks boundary between prosodic words Prosodic words separated by BI 1 show different pitch accents	 (Aguilar et al., 2009).

BI 2	Marks perceived disjuncture with no apparent break cues OR perceived metrical boundary with no tonal cues.	 (Aguilar et al., 2009).
BI 3	Marks boundary between *intermediate* phrases, or the end of minor prosodic units	 (Aguilar et al., 2009).

BI 4	Marks the boundary between *intonational* phrases, or the end of major prosodic units	 (Aguilar et al., 2009).

Note. The existence of BI 2 is still debated for Spanish. It is included in this table as part of a general overview of Sp_ToBI conventions.

Table 2 above shows the basic break indices used to demarcate various lexical and prosodic boundaries. Given that Sp_ToBI break indices are based on English ToBI conventions and the subject of this study is mainly Spanish language intonation, examples of break indices in transcription and labeling were included in the table. This system, based on the autosegmental-metrical framework, provides a systematic way of transcribing and labeling intonational patterns for various analyses. For this study, labeling pitch accents and boundaries between prosodic and lexical (orthographic) words may aid primarily in interpreting how intonation works across a prosodic unit in relation to both narrative structure *and* discursive performance on the speaker's part. Recent studies have demonstrated that ToBI may be useful in research interfaces of intonational phonology and discourse analysis. For example, Holliday examined identity performance of Black and biracial men via contour analysis methods (2016), finding that

speakers varied in their L+H* peak delay durations based on race of interlocutor, with longer durations with Black interlocutors.

1.3.1 Spanish Language Prosody

Though English is the dominant sociopolitical language of the U.S., Spanish has been spoken in various regions of the present-day continental U.S. since the early 16th century. The literature on Spanish dialectal variation in the U.S. is vast and spans more than a century of descriptive work, beginning notably with Espinosa's examination of New Mexican Spanish varieties (1911). Later studies aimed to document various Southwestern and non-Southwestern varieties of Spanish (Post, 1933). Of particular interest for many linguists has been the history of Spanish in California varieties, with recent work suggesting the emergence of a variety unique to Los Angeles Chicanx speakers that could potentially stem from the Alteño variety situated in Jalisco, Mexico (Andrade, 2012). In line with work on U.S. Spanish varieties, other studies look at patterns of Mexican Spanish, notably that of the capital (De-la-Mota et al., 2010). While these studies provide valuable insight in the realm of Spanish phonology, many questions remain as to how this affects bilinguals in contact situations. The previously mentioned work by Andrade concerning an emerging variety specific to Los Angeles Spanish speakers is highly notable in suggesting that current contact between English and Spanish in Southern California has slowly generated a novel variety that can be acquired by many U.S. Chicanos (2012).

There is a vast amount of literature that has developed comprehensive accounts of Spanish prosody, while considering the wide range of dialectal variation that exists among peninsular and the widespread Latin American varieties (Armstrong, 2010; De-la-Mota et al., 2010; Contreras, 1980; De la Mota Gorriz, 1997; Estebas Vilaplana & Prieto, 2010; Gabriel et

al., 2010; Hualde, 2014; Ortiz et al., 2010). From a general perspective across all varieties, Spanish is a syllable-timed language that employs lexical stress, which can be used to differentiate meaning for certain word pairs (e.g. ***pa****so* 'I pass' vs. *pa****só*** 'it happened'), and a wide range of intonational patterns discussed here (Hualde, 2014). While all content words have lexical stress--typically on one of the last three syllables--Spanish is generally characterized by the fact that the last tonic accent in a phrase carries the most prosodic *prominence* (Beckman et al., 2002; Hualde, 2014). Often referred to as the *nuclear accent* of a phrase, this stress position acoustically tends to correlate with longer nuclear rhyme duration, higher relative intensity, and lower f0 pitch rise. Tonic syllables that come before the nuclear accent can be referred to as *prenuclear accents*. Despite forms of intonational variation, the robust nature of Spanish nuclear pitch accents can be observed across most varieties. For example, Beckman and colleagues, in their examination of metrical stress between Peninsular (Castilian) Spanish and Venezuelan Spanish, note the difference in prenuclear accent contours for the phrase, *le dieron el número de vuelo* 'they gave her the flight number.' This difference diminishes in the nuclear accent, shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2.

Beckman and Colleagues' Prosodic Visualization of the Sentence, "Le dieron el número de vuelo" (Beckman et al., 2002).

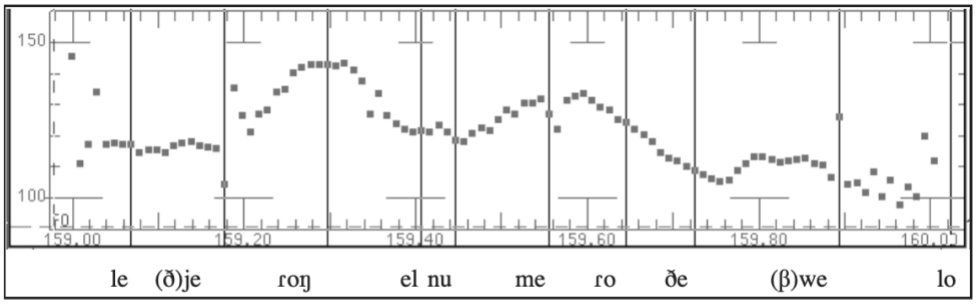


Figure 2a. <md_s1> *Le dieron el número de vuelo*. 'They gave her the flight number.' Response to *¿Qué le dieron a María cuando fue al aeropuerto?* 'What did they give María when she went to the airport?' Speaker MD, Venezuelan Spanish. Cursors demarcate syllable boundaries.

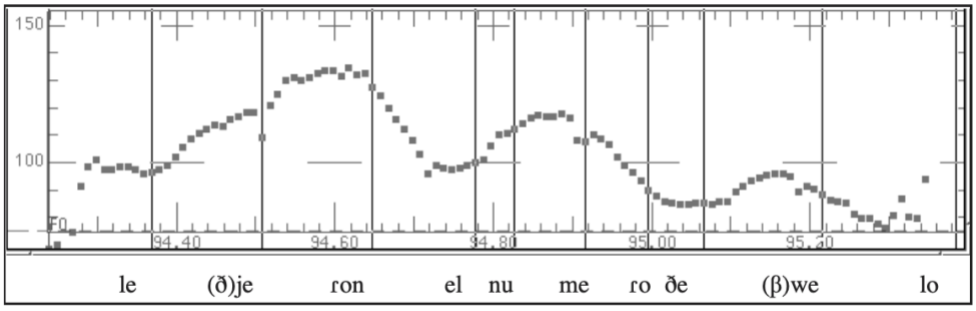


Figure 2b. <jih_o1> Same sentence and context as in Figure 2a, produced by JH, male speaker, Castilian Spanish.

In Figure 2, the Venezuelan Spanish speaker exhibits longer prosodic plateaus that extend past the tonic rhyme onset in the prenuclear accent positions of the words *dieron* and *número*. By contrast, the Castilian Spanish speaker exhibits rising intonation contours that begin right around the onset of these syllables. This prosodic distinction diminishes in the last tonic syllable (placed on the last word, *vuelo*), in which both speakers produce rising pitch accents that begin before the rhyme onset. Beckman and colleagues suggest that this is because of the nature of Spanish generally placing the heaviest metrical prominence on the last tonic syllable in a phrase (2002).

This tendency becomes important if we consider how Spanish speakers index and highlight discourse-relevant information, which is often characterized by syntactic reordering and placing the word with intended focus in nuclear accent position, as shown in the example below:

*(3) La profesora está ha**BLAN**do.*

‘The professor is SPEAKING.’

*(4) Está hablando la profe**SO**ra*

‘The PROFESSOR is speaking.’

In the example above, the difference in focus can be observed between English and Spanish in the phrase *the professor is speaking.* In English, a speaker can shift the nuclear accent to the verbal element ‘speaking’ or the noun ‘professor’ if they wish to emphasize either of these elements in the sentence. Conversely, in Spanish, a speaker will have to adjust the syntactic ordering of the constituents since nuclear accent placement is generally fixed on the last tonic syllable (Bolinger, 1954; Hualde, 2014). For the purposes of narration, this can be relevant if we consider how Spanish bilinguals wish to highlight thematic information in a prosodic unit, which may involve strategically placing the constituent with focus in the last tonic position to receive nuclear accent.

It is important to note that, although this tendency to place nuclear accent on the last tonic syllable appears to be the general case across most Spanish varieties, observations do actually show the capability of Spanish speakers to shift nuclear accent in otherwise prenuclear positions, similar to English (Hualde, 2014). For example, in response to the question, *María nos va a*

acompañar, ¿no? 'Mary is going to join us, right?', if the speaker wishes to express a contrastive response to this affirmation seeking question, they might employ one of two utterances, shown below.

(5) *No, nos va a acompañar JUAN.*
'No, JUAN is going to join us.'

(6) *No, JUAN nos va a acompañar.*
'No, JUAN is going to join us.'

The presence of this variation in shifting nuclear accent position could have implications for this study, since it closely mirrors English focus placement strategies. In other words, bilinguals in contact with both English and Spanish-speaking domains might be adept to employ both types of prosodic productions depending on linguistic background and individual speaker variation. In any case, this study does not aim to make claims about how bilingual U.S. Spanish speakers go about systematically operationalizing these productions, but rather acknowledge the possible existence of this kind of variation within these populations. Based on results that will be discussed further, there is some variation when it comes to prosodic patterns overall across US speakers which can be initially explained by social factors.

While Spanish intonation is characterized by a wide range of pitch contours, confounded heavily by regional variation, several generalizations can be asserted about different sentence types on the basis of known versus new information (Hualde, 2014). Typically, Spanish

declarative sentences that present new discourse information are produced with falling pitch contours (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Spanish declarative intonational pattern of the sentence, "Mariana miraba la luna", 'Mariana was looking at the moon." (Hualde, 2014).

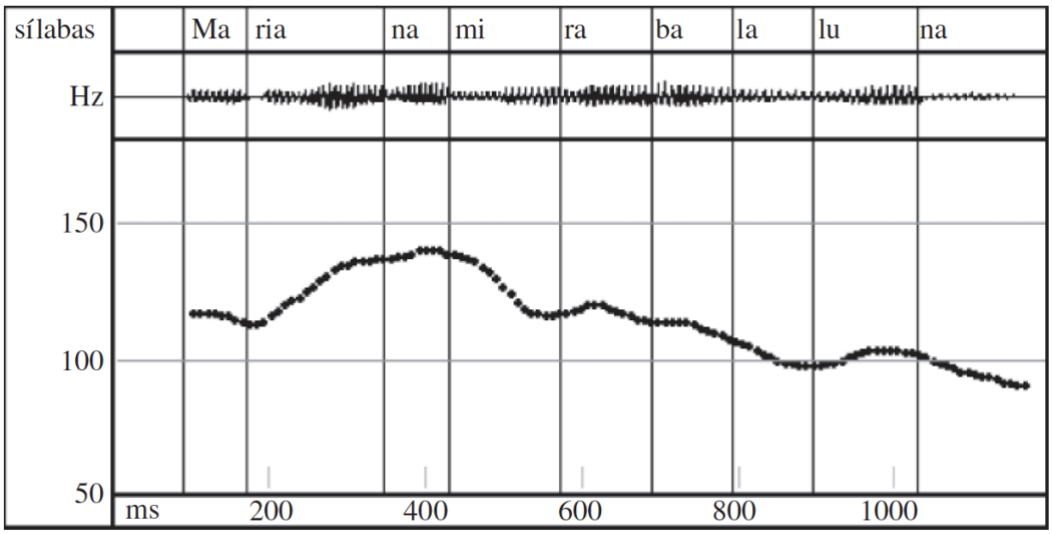
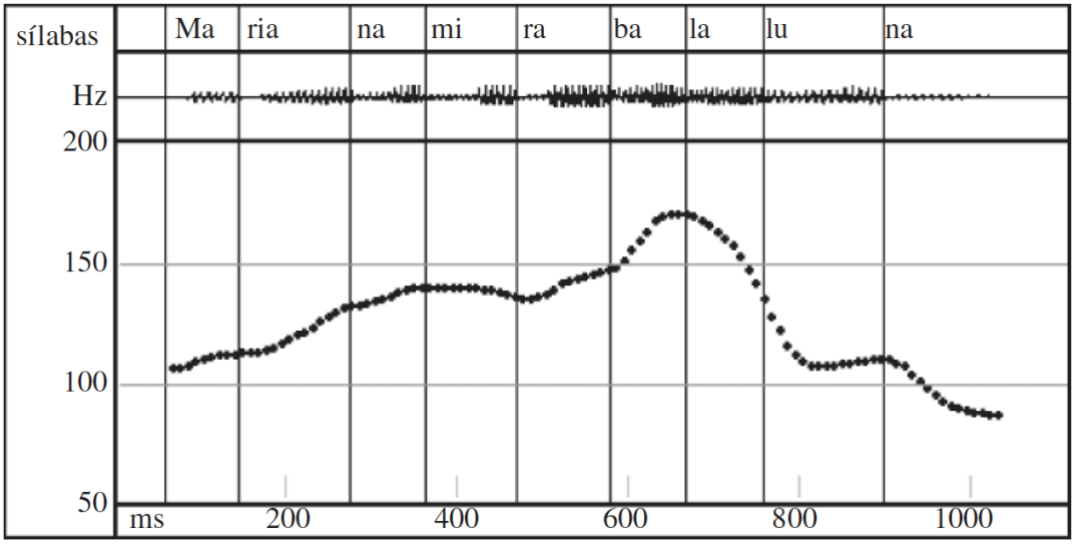


Figure 3 displays *downstepping*, in which the overall contour descends across the sentence, with small rising peaks produced for the tonic syllables in each word. In comparison to this, declarative sentences that present older discourse information are characterized mainly by rising intonation, that is, until the new information is uttered (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Spanish declarative intonational pattern of the same sentence as in Figure 3 (Hualde, 2014).



In Figure 4, a rising contour is observed up until the high peak at the rhyme of the post-tonic syllable in *miraba*, signalling a shift in information status. After this peak, new information is presented and the intonation is then characterized by falling pitch.

In the case of interrogative sentences, certain distinctions are noted for polar interrogatives, alternative interrogatives, and wh-questions. In traditional accounts of Spanish prosody, polar interrogatives (e.g. *¿Ya llegó Natalia?* 'Did Natalia arrive yet?') are generally characterized by falling-rising intonation patterns while wh-questions (e.g. *¿Quién se comió mi torta?* 'Who ate my sandwich?') typically exhibit falling intonation, similar if not identical to declarative sentences (Escandell-Vidal, 1998). In the case of alternative interrogatives (e.g. *¿Prefieres comer menudo, o pozole?* 'Do you prefer to eat menudo or pozole?), the first alternative is characterized by a general rising contour, followed by a pause, and falling contour

on the second alternative. Hualde also describes exclamatory sentences, including imperatives and statements that assert an obvious truth or surprised emotion (2014). Imperative sentences do not deviate much from regular declarative sentences in that speakers often produce them with falling intonation. On the other hand, sentences asserting an obvious stance or shock tend to exhibit falling-rising intonation patterns.

Returning to the Sp-ToBI system briefly discussed in the previous section, many scholars have contributed to providing a detailed account of Spanish prosody in terms of pitch accents, boundary tones, and nuclear configurations that characterize the general patterns of Spanish intonation (Beckman et al., 2002; Estebas Vilaplana & Prieto, 2009; Face & Prieto, 2007). Based on this scholarship, Sp_ToBI, as it currently stands, provides the following descriptive account of Spanish intonation: (1) 7 pitch accents (2 monotonal and 5 bitonal) or contour productions that occur across IPs, (2) 7 boundary tones at the end of IPs, and 7 boundary tones marked at the end of intermediate phrases (ips), and (3) 19 attested nuclear configurations, which are pitch accents combined with boundary tones (Aguilar et al., 2009). Exemplary visualizations of pitch accents, boundary tones, and nuclear configurations are provided in Figures 5-9. It should be noted that this corpus data is based on observations of the Northern Peninsular Spanish variety, and, as such, may not reflect all dialectal specifications.

Figure 5

Waveform, spectrogram, and f0 trace for Bebe una limonada 'Drink a lemonade,' showing a monotonal L pitch accent (Aguilar et al., 2009).*

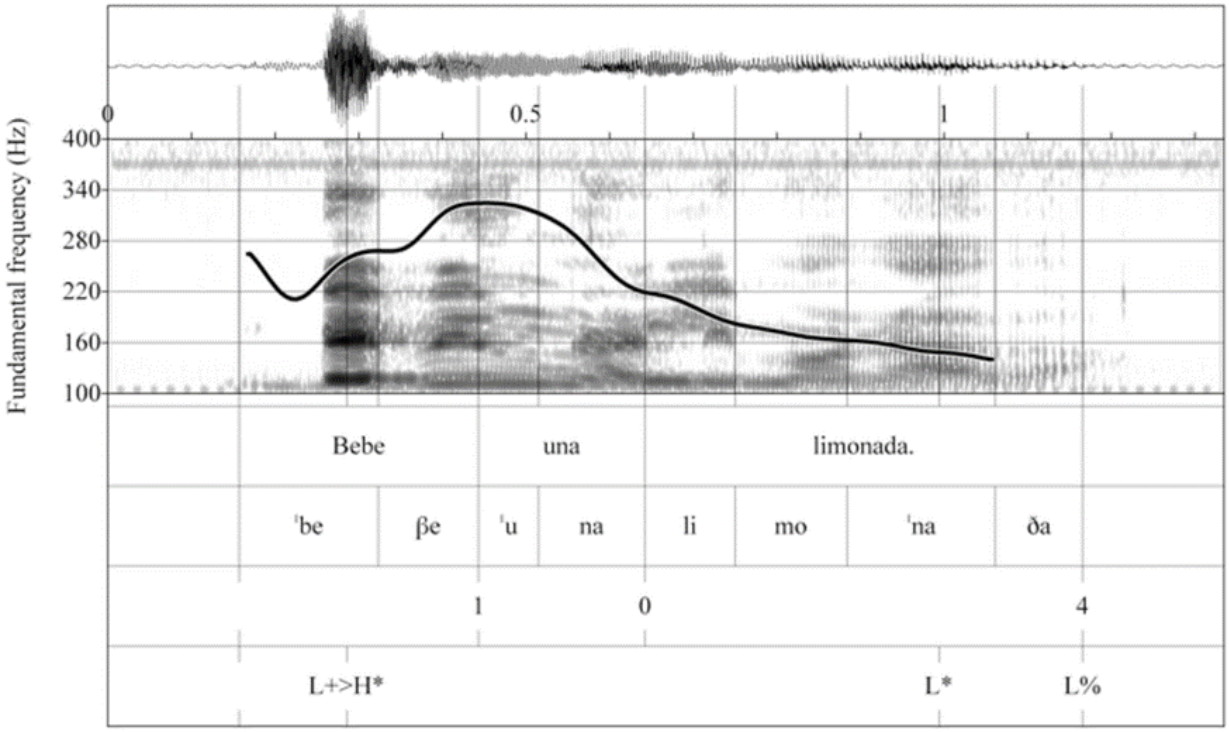


Figure 6

Waveform, spectrogram, and f0 trace for ¿Le dieron el número de vuelo? 'Did they give her the flight number?' showing a posttonic bitonal rising pitch accent L+H in dieron (Aguilar et al., 2009).*

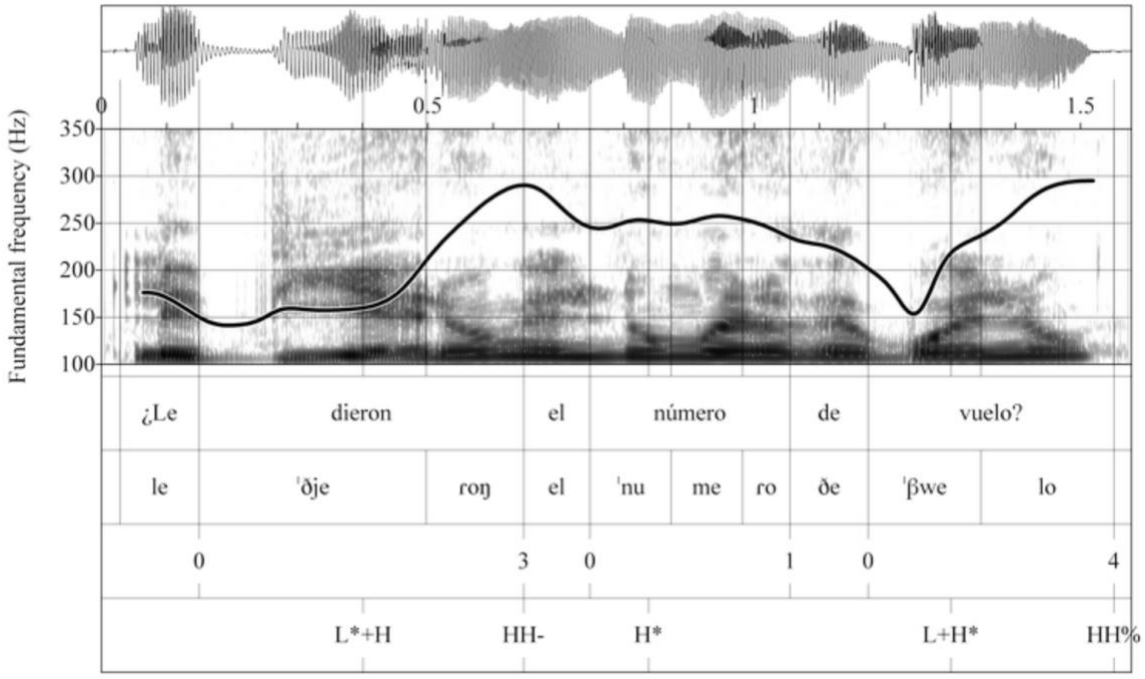


Figure 7

Waveform, spectrogram, and f0 trace for Estaban María, Bárbara, Ana, Eva… 'There were María, Bárbara, Ana, Eva…' showing a mid target boundary tone M% at the end of the intonational phrase in the posttonic syllable in Eva. (Aguilar et al., 2009).

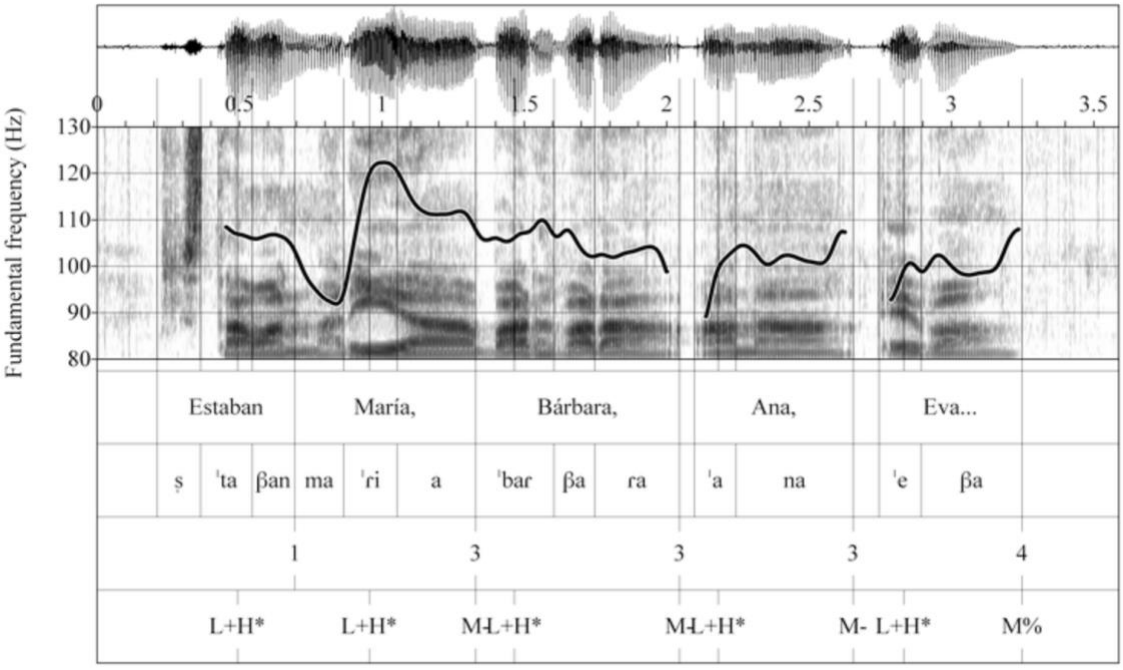


Figure 8.

Waveform, spectrogram, and f0 trace for Leche merengada y helado de vanilla 'Merengued milk and vanilla ice cream' showing a rising boundary tone H- at the end of the intermediate phrase in the posttonic syllable in merengada (Aguilar et al., 2009).

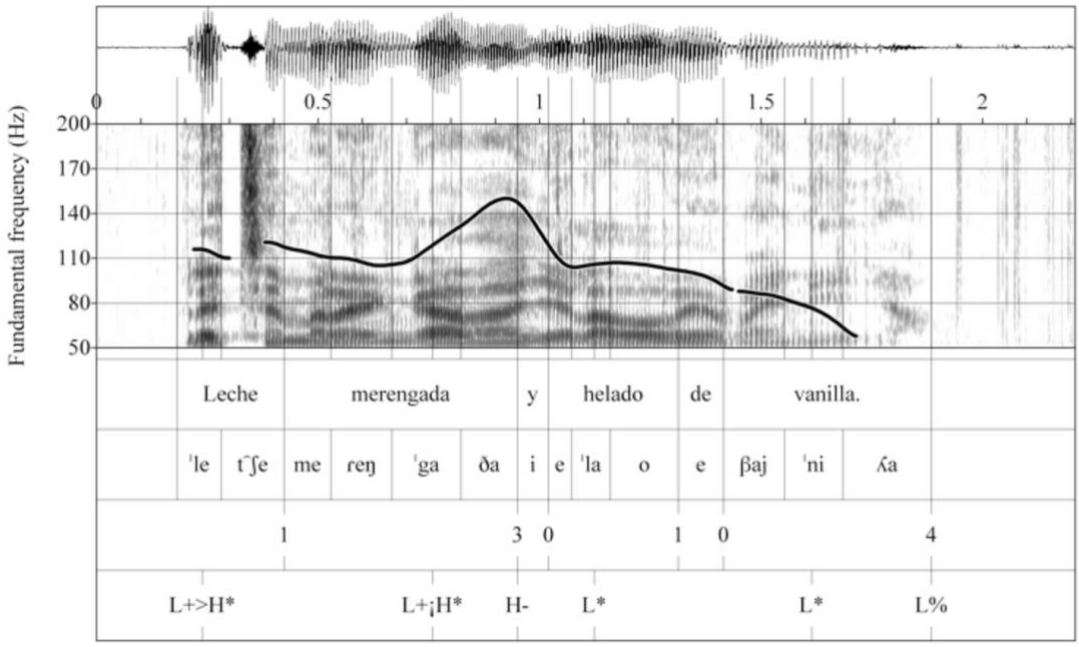
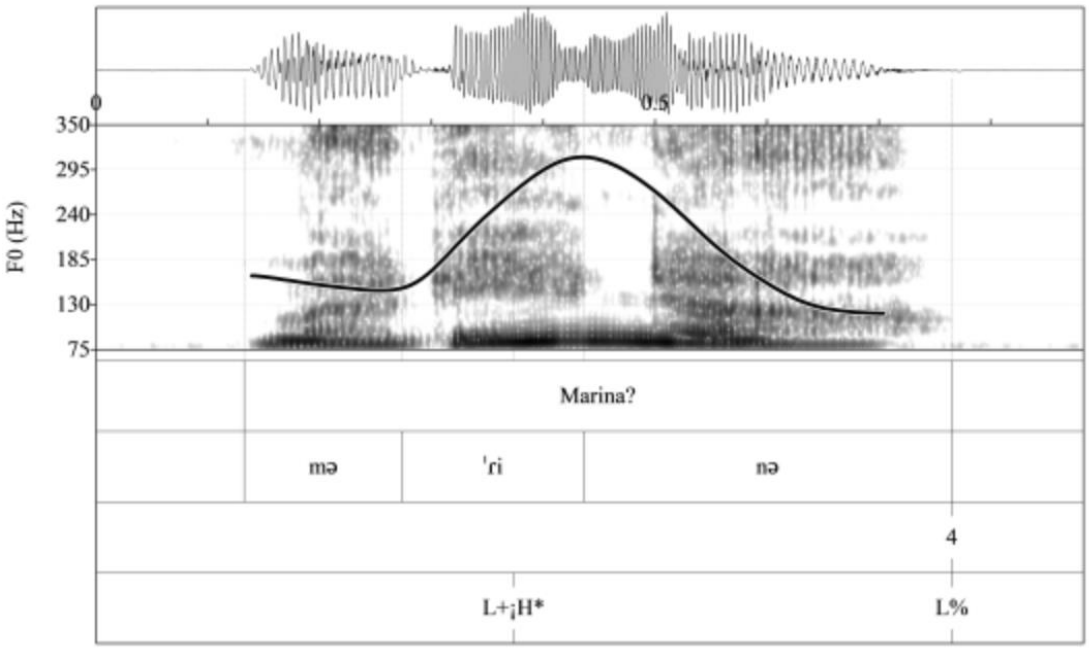


Figure 9

Waveform, spectrogram, and f0 trace for Marina? 'Marina? Showing a bitonal rising pitch accent L+¡H in the last accented syllable (penultimate) followed by a falling boundary tone L% at the end of the intonational phrase (Aguilar et al., 2009).*



Figures 5-9 serve to showcase not only the range of intonational patterns that exist and have been accounted for in spoken Spanish, but also the development of Sp_ToBI in describing these contour patterns. While these are general tendencies for different types of Spanish sentences, it is important to note still that there may be regional variation depending on the dialect for some of these contours (Escandell-Vidal, 1998). Since Mexican Spanish and Mexican-based varieties of U.S. Spanish are of interest in this dissertation, the next section discusses intonational variation both within Mexico and in Mexican American communities.

1.3.1.1 Mexican Spanish Prosodic Variation

Mexican Spanish refers to a set of several regional dialects originating from and situated primarily in Mexico, as well as some varieties commonly spoken in parts of the United States. While Spanish prosody from a generalized and comparative standpoint has received large focus in the literature, there is less work looking specifically at Mexican Spanish intonation and prosodic variation (Brehm et al., 2014; De-la-Mota et al., 2010; Hualde, 2014; Willis, 2002). De-la-Mota and colleagues (2010) outline a comprehensive account of common intonational patterns characteristic of both statements and questions in Central Mexican varieties, specifically that of Mexico City (Figure 8-9). Of relative peculiarity in this dialect is the unique circumflex pattern, schematically L+¡H*, observed and described by various scholars and consisting of a rising-falling contour with the high peak occurring in tonic position, followed by a sudden fall (Butragueño, 2004; De-la-Mota et al., 2010; Hualde, 2014). De-la-Mota and colleagues' outline of tonal observations in their corpus of Central Mexican Spanish.

Table 3

Central Mexican Spanish monotonal pitch accents (De-la-Mota et al., 2010).

Monotonal pitch accents		
	L*	This accent is phonetically realized as a low plateau at the minimum of the speaker's range. In our corpus, it is found in the nuclear position of broad focus statements, contradiction statements, information-seeking yes-no questions, echo yes-no questions, imperative yes-no questions, polite invitation or request yes-no questions, echo wh- questions and vocatives.
	H*	This accent is phonetically realized as a high plateau with no preceding F0 valley. In our data, it is attested in prenuclear position in broad focus statements, contradiction statements, confirmation yes-no questions, wh- questions and invitation wh- questions.

Table 4

Central Mexican Spanish bitonal pitch accents (De-la-Mota et al., 2010).

Bitonal pitch accents		
	L+H*	This accent is phonetically realized as a rising pitch movement during the accented syllable with the F0 peak located at the end of this syllable. It is commonly found in the nuclear position of broad and narrow focus statements, exclamative statements, statements of the obvious, wh- questions, echo wh- questions, exclamative wh- questions, imperative wh- questions, commands, gentle requests and vocatives.
	L+>H*	This accent is phonetically realized as a rising pitch movement on the accented syllable with the F0 peak aligned with the postaccentual syllable. In our corpus it is attested in the prenuclear position of broad focus statements, exclamative statements and imperative yes-no questions.
	L*+H	This accent is phonetically realized as a F0 valley on the accented syllable with a subsequent rise on the postaccentual syllable. In our corpus, it is attested in the prenuclear position of counterexpectational echo yes-no questions and echo wh-questions.
	H+L*	This accent is phonetically realized as a F0 fall within the accented syllable. In our data, this accent is found in prenuclear position in imperative wh- questions.

Table 5

Central Mexican Spanish Monotonal boundary tones (De-la-Mota et al., 2010).

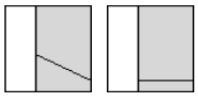
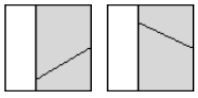
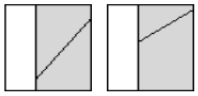
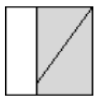
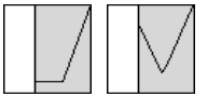
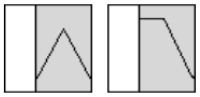
Monotonal boundary tones		
	L%	L% is phonetically realized as a low sustained tone or a falling tone at the baseline of the speaker. It is attested at the end of broad and narrow focus statements, exclamative statements, exclamative wh- questions, imperative wh- questions, commands and vocatives.
	M%	M% is phonetically realized as a rising or falling movement to a target mid point. It is found in exhortative wh- questions, uncertainty statements and vocatives.
	H%	H% is phonetically realized as a rising pitch movement coming from a low or high pitch accent. It is attested in confirmation-seeking yes-no questions.

Table 6

Central Mexican Spanish bitonal boundary tones (De-la-Mota et al., 2010).

Bitonal boundary tones		
	HH%	HH% is phonetically realized as a sharp rise at the end of the phrase usually attaining the highest level of the speaker's range. It is typical of polite invitations and request yes-no questions.

	LH%	LH% is phonetically realized as a F0 valley followed by a rise. It is attested in information-seeking yes-no questions, echo yes-no questions and imperative yes-no questions.
	HL%	HL% is phonetically realized as a F0 peak followed by a fall. It is found in contradiction statements, wh- questions, requests and vocatives.
	LM%	LM% is phonetically realized as a F0 valley followed by a movement to a target mid point. It is found in statements of the obvious.

Despite some recent descriptions of Mexican Spanish, most of these studies only describe a few particular dialects, largely bypassing the diversity of linguistic backgrounds that exist within the greater Mexican community. In any case, this inventory of pitch accents and boundary tones helps establish an intonational baseline when it comes to analyzing and interpreting Spanish prosodic content. Speakers inevitably adhere to and deviate from these contour patterns in complex ways, especially given the nature of contact with English and emerging forms of Mexican American Spanish that may introduce new ways of producing intonation.

1.3.2 Intonation in Narratives

The examination of intonation in narrative settings includes a set of established work that has yielded important insights into how speakers use contours dynamically to achieve all types of discursive and conversational purposes (Hudson et al., 2022; Selting, 1992; Oliveira, 2001; Queen, 2006; Wennerstrom, 2001). The role of intonation has received some attention in Spanish language contexts, including work examining bilingual speaker patterns (Fenton et al., 2020; Henriksen, 2013; Henriksen et al., 2010) and the specific pragmatic and conversational functions that intonation repertoires carry (Armstrong, 2017; Escandell-Vidal, 1998). While these studies

provide valuable insights into the contextual purposes of intonation contours, there is still a lack of understanding regarding the exact discourse-based purposes that intonation patterns fulfill in the varieties of bilingual U.S. Spanish speakers, including among Mexican American speakers.

This dissertation examines two main types of intonation patterns: rising and falling contours. While there are other contours to account for and this does not capture the full range of prosodic content that pitch excursion productions show in spoken speech, the technical outline of common methodological tools (i.e., ToBI) makes this analysis of *rising* and *falling* contour variables more feasible. Regarding the analysis of rising contours in particular, there is a particular interest in investigating an observed feature, uptalk in non-declarative sentences, of Mexican Spanish varieties that resembles some regional patterns of English intonation. The next subsection provides an overview of this feature and the theoretical motivations for incorporating an emphasized analysis of it in this dissertation.

1.3.2.1 Uptalk in Mexican Spanish

Uptalk (sometimes referred to as *high rising terminal*) refers to a specific intonational pattern characterized mainly by a rising pitch towards the end of declarative sentences. This pattern has been widely studied and observed, primarily in English language varieties (Fletcher et al., 2005; Gorman, 1993; Linneman, 2013; Ritchart & Arvaniti, 2014; Shokeir, 2008; Warren, 2016). For example, uptalk is well documented in Southern California, where it has socially become a stereotypical hallmark of *Valley Girls* speech (Ritchart & Arvaniti, 2014) and as a "childlike" form of speaking (Armstrong et al., 2016). Recent studies have examined both acquisition patterns (Armstrong et al., 2016) and perceptual effects of uptalk (Asano et al., 2020; Tomlinson & Fox Tree, 2009).

Concerning the presence of uptalk in Spanish, Vergara (2015) presents prosodic evidence pointing to the existence of uptalk, though it should be noted that this data largely came from a European Spanish television show. Keeping in mind basic dialectal differences among multiple Spanish language varieties warrants further work into whether this intonational pattern exists and, if so, how it functions. Previous work has long established the existence of an uptalk-like intonation pattern in Central Mexican Spanish suggesting historical prosodic influence from Nahuatl (Matluck, 1952). Further work corroborates this in much more detail (De-la-Mota et al., 2010) and Barranco Marquéz (2015) even specifically refers to this phenomenon in Mexican Spanish as actual uptalk. Relevant to the current study, there has been minimal work examining the use of uptalk pitch accents within heritage speaker varieties in the U.S. Kim and Repiso-Puigdelliura (2021), in particular, investigate the usage frequency of various rising terminal accents (notably L*(H)H% and L+H*!H%) among heritage speakers. This work presents an important seminal foundation in researching prosodic patterns among bilingual speakers in the U.S. and warrants a continuation of investigations into said phenomena. With more scholarly emphasis having been placed on Chicano English prosody and the presence of uptalk-like contours (Fought, 2003; Warren, 2016), future work in this area could benefit from first examining the exact nature of uptalk in Mexican American Spanish.

1.3.3 Pauses in Narratives

Pauses have been subject to empirical examination since the early days of narrative inquiry as a field, with a large focus placed on their role in providing structure to oral narratives (Gee & Grosjean, 1984; Swerts, 1998; Oliveira, 2002). The nature of pauses, and silence in speech overall, has warranted careful attention to the specificity of how pauses are counted and

whether or not a period of silence counts as a discursive pause (Oliveira, 2002). Oliveira states that pause placement and duration appear to directly correlate with narrative boundaries, and are useful to bring structure to the organization of oral narratives. Further work has examined social implications and cross-linguistic differences with pauses, observing similarities in how pauses work between native and non-native speakers (Matzinger et al., 2020), and that duration rates may influence perception of *naturalness* of a non-native speaker's speech rate (Liu et al., 2022). Across the literature examining the role of pauses in spoken discourse, various descriptions and analyses have contributed to the conclusion that pauses are very salient prosodic features and that narrators often make varied use of pauses according to multiple factors, such as one's personal attitude towards the story's events, level of certainty, structural unit segmentation, and discourse connectivity. There may be other factors involved, such as orientation towards the interlocutor and social register, along with the identity of the narrator as a native or non-native speaker. In any case, the relevance of pauses here is informed by their use in narrative boundary marking and personal attitude towards a narrative's different parts.

Descriptions of pauses in Spanish have been mainly examined in comparative inquiries of Spanish and English or other varieties, such as L1-L2 transfer patterns and comparisons between monolingual and bilingual children, and mostly in tandem with other prosodic factors (De Johnson et al., 1979; Gras et al., 2021; García-Amaya et al., 2023). While these studies have gathered evidence on the vital role pauses play in spoken speech and narration, the work is limited in scope and warrants further investigations into the nature of pauses as they occur in oral Spanish and bilingual narratives.

1.3.4 Syllable Lengthening in Narratives

Variable syllable length is another prosodic feature to be investigated in this study, based on understandings of prior work and, at the same time, an existing gap in the literature that leaves questions regarding a fuller understanding of how syllable lengthening contributes to discourse and stancetaking in identity work. For this study, and for most of the literature, this refers to longer duration of a syllable rhyme, as gathered from the listener's point of view. Of interest in this study is the role that syllable lengthening plays when it occurs at or near IP unit boundaries, accompanied by other prosodic features. Syllable length has been investigated to various degrees in the realm of narrative inquiry and spoken discourse, with insights pointing to its usefulness in boundary placement and supplemental role in boundary tone production (Kentner et al., 2023). Other work has highlighted the use of syllable lengthening as a measurable factor with discursive functions (e.g., emphasis) both by itself and in combination with other features like pauses to distribute discourse information across spoken speech units (Ferré, 2014; Frazier et al., 2006).

Closer to the realm of narrative inquiry, previous research has observed and corroborated positive associations between prosodic unit boundaries with final syllable rhyme lengthening in languages like Dena'ina (Lovick & Tuttle, 2012). Another recent study on Diné Bizaad narratives found that speakers used syllable lengthening often to mark narrative juncture and this acted as a signal for upcoming discursive transition across narrative events (Palakurthy, 2019). In terms of its use in Spanish, prosodic examinations have revealed the use of syllable lengthening not just as a feature that occurs often in phrase final locations, but also as being correlated with discursive patterns such as thematic continuation, especially when employed in conjunction with shorter pauses (Rao, 2010). A full outline of the discursive purposes of syllable lengthening is

yet to be established for Spanish varieties, especially for bilingual speakers' repertoires. This dissertation provides a starting point for further analyses of prosodic cues like syllable lengthening to better understand the purpose of their manifestation in identity performance and discourse navigation.

1.3.5 Performativity & Prosody

1.3.5.1 Performance Theories

The second part of this dissertation examines the use of acoustic and prosodic markers to indicate dynamic identity shifts during the act of constructing and telling a narrative. In observing how narrators position their identities within stories in variable ways, studies focusing on performativity via language use become highly pertinent in this regard. The idea of language as a theoretical vessel for *performing* action rather than merely serving to report or provide information stems from Austin's seminal work in the 1940s/1950s on performing action through *performative utterances* (1975). In this theory, performative utterances are linguistic utterances that serve not to just report or describe a social act, but rather *enact* the act itself and set in motion some sort of change to the local discursive reality. For example, the utterance, "I name this fortress, *Castillo de Chapultepec,"* is performative in the sense that the very act of *naming* something sets in motion a perceived change to reality (i.e. *unnamed fortress* becomes *Castillo de Chapultepec*). These ideas would later constitute the basis of what linguists understand as Speech Act Theory. Working within Austin's realm of thinking is Searle's reformed position that speech acts can be described and analyzed using rules of language and that performative utterances--or illocutionary acts--can be classified into five distinct types: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declaratives (1969). These ideas would become the

basis for further discourse sparking interest and innovation in how language is used in performative ways.

Expanding on this line of work and largely seminal to the field of performativity itself is Butler's work on the performance of gender in language use, essentially positing that norms like gender and sex are social constructs performed actively through language and other forms of social action rather than constituting any prediscursive biological origin (1990). Of course, Butler's work on performativity extends beyond this to form a large foundation upon which performative studies at many interfaces would expand (1990; 1993; 1997). We can extend this to expressions of other identities as forms of performativity that take place within a culturally designed social model.

Scholarly discourse on notions of fixed versus fluid identity formations and expressions stem mainly from sociological accounts that represent ongoing shifts in theoretical thinking towards such performances (Hall & Du Gay, 2006; Easthope, 2009; Sayer, 1997). This discourse mainly positions itself in actively counteracting notions of identity as fixed entities originating from natural sources, rather than as social constructs constantly generated and repurposed in social interaction (Sayer, 1997). Informing much of this literature is how performativity is enacted through various acts of discursivity that enable speakers to position themselves in relation to their own identities, those of their interlocutors, and other entities that become relevant in the context of the discourse they engage in. Scholarship looking at positionalities and the relationship between a speaker's internal position and another discursive entity (e.g. identity, ideology, a particular discursive voice, etc.) has utilized the notion of *stance-taking* as a way to address questions about performance and provide frameworks surrounding the idea that speakers can discursively situate themselves and their attitudes towards various sociocultural subjects

(Miller, 2014; Podesva, 2016). Additionally, there is a vast amount of scholarship that examines how discourses become established in *dialogic* zones, in which discursive practices are framed as being informed by and responding to a wide array of *voices*, whether metaphorical or literal (Bakhtin, 1986; Vitanova, 2013).

Overall, what this suggests is that identity is both performative and fluid, influenced heavily by local space and context. In relation to this study, the ways in which narrators perform a sense of self can be observed through a narrative. One question at hand is how do narrators perform the narrator identity in dynamic ways that break free from notions of stable and essential identity positionalities? But, beyond that, the main question is how can *prosody* allude to such fluidness in performativity? While previous studies observe the relationship between prosody and discursive acts (e.g. identity performance, stance-taking, style formation, etc.) (Holliday, 2016; Holliday et al., 2020; Newmark et al., 2016; Pillet-Shore, 2012), there is relatively little work that examines fluid forms of identity performance within narration. Labov's seminal work is the basis for defining the narrative as integral to a storyteller's autobiography (1967; 2013) and has provided the groundwork for decades of qualitative research in the realm of narrative inquiry. Of particular importance and interest to this study is how the storyteller's self-positioning is carried out and changes throughout the narrative. The relationship between narration and identity is very much well established and heavily explored in various scholarly realms (Bruner, 1994; De Fina, 2015; Taniguchi, 2010). Within the scope of identity, these studies have pointed out how the narrative is essential to positioning the storyteller within a set time and place and establishing themselves within a particular sociocultural context that informs the overall purpose, actions, decisions, and result of the narrative. Considering oral narratives in

this light, it may come as no surprise that spoken prosody figures heavily into how storytellers position themselves to their audiences.

Because I situate this study within the context of Mexican American narratives, cultural identity becomes a salient topic as it may figure prominently in how Mexican American speakers construct themselves in their narratives via prosody, relative to other forms of sociocultural narration. In this way, I begin to explore how Mexican, Mexican American, Chicanx, and other cultural identities shared within this community are constantly constructed through the process of narration. The notion of cultural identity construction suggests that narrators may situate themselves as possessing a *fixed* identity that is shared with other individuals, in contrast to an individualized identity (Baquedano-López, 1997; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; De Fina & King, 2011). In this way, narrators may express solidarity and shared worldviews that forge and reinforce the basis for a community or a group that shares a particular experience. Related to this concept of sociocultural modeling and convergence to a fixed identity, Langellier and Peterson examine the complex web of identity formation that occurs in storytelling practices of Franco-American families, showcasing that group identities and individual identities are constantly shifting against perceived notions of fixed essence and ontological origin (2003). In any case, what stands out is that identity as it becomes tied to group membership is not carried out in a fixed manner, but is always changing and evolving in line with social evolution and cultural remodeling.

In terms of cultural identity construction and prosody, many studies have looked at the linguistic resources that speakers utilize in establishing a sense of self that fits within a cultural model. For example, Bucholtz and Hall examined identity performance and stance-taking acts of self-described *nerd girls* in spoken discourse, observing that stance can be achieved through

various prosodic and lexical tools that mark one's social and affective position in relation to others (2005). Similarly, Archakis and Papazachariou examine the role of prosodic intensity in Greek womens' discursive acts of social involvement and power stances, showing that acoustic cues such as volume changes can be harnessed to communicatively index social stance and position (2008). What these studies suggest is that narrators are quite adept at using linguistic markers to perform identity at the group and individual levels of cultural position. What stands out for the purpose of this study is how identity is *not* fixed but rather is subject to continuous change, even within one narrative. By examining Mexican American narratives, I observe the ways in which storytellers' identities become realized and are reassessed throughout an oral narrative of experience via prosody. Given that narration is seen as a primary site of individual and cultural performativity and bringing a human experience from the past and into the present, observing and considering subtle shifts through linguistic markers of a story may provide insight as to how narrators consider their positions individually both throughout narrative events and within the present context in which they are telling a story. Prosodic markers may be revealing in how narrators view these events and themselves as they verbalize experiences in a contemporary setting. In the web of social interaction that is constantly informed by shifts of whatever model it is framed against, identity shifts within narration could showcase how individuals see themselves in light of social evolution, group membership, cultural mythos, and power dynamics that inform and discursively affect their daily lives and interactions. Gee's seminal work on discourse units and prosodic markers in narration (1986) is highly relevant to this part of my thesis and I will incorporate it into my analysis of narrative identity shift.

1.3.5.2 Identity Labels in Mexican American Communities

Because this dissertation tackles the link between prosody and identity performance, an overview of the history and current trends of identity in Latinx communities is warranted. Current investigations and conversations on identity in U.S. Latinx/Spanish-speaking communities are concerned primarily with performance and the ways in which systemic forces play a role in how members of these communities express themselves culturally (Mora et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2012). These discourses become especially important in the face of various factors such as the contentious linguistic innovation of *Latinx/Latine* identity markers in activist attempts to both decenter the gendered linguistic structure of Spanish that marks masculine forms as the default and provide a morphological form to include non-binary identities (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2015; Slemp, 2020; Vidal-Ortiz & Martinez, 2018), with their use being more common in LGBTQ+ practices of the U.S. (Scharrón-del Río & Aja, 2020).

Within more recent years, questions surrounding how Latinx community members identify themselves have yielded a few observations, including differences between immigrant Latinxs and U.S.-born Latinxs, who seem to use more pan-ethnic labels like *Latino* to identify themselves (Corona et al., 2017). Additionally, during a recent wave of increased socio-political tensions, sparked primarily by the inauguration of Donald Trump in 2016, and the 2020 Presidential Election (Soto-Vásquez & Gonzalez, 2022), the issue of identity among self-identified members of the U.S. Latinx community becomes increasingly more relevant and warrants further research into how community members are currently navigating their identities. Such events in the political landscape may also speak to emerging trends in the preference for terms like *Latino* over *Hispanic*, due to their constructed associations with certain political ideologies (Martínez & Gonzalez, 2021)

Prosody is one avenue that can provide valuable insights into how speakers not only discuss their identities as they relate to socially-relevant discourses and respond dialogically to sociocultural voices, but also how speakers in general use prosody to index key points about their stances in relation to identity. Because prosody is already an understudied feature, this dissertation not only provides better insight on prosody, but also offers a better understanding of the importance of prosody as a salient feature in conversations on important issues such as identity.

1.3.5.3 Prosody and Epistemic Stance

The literature on language socialization theories and perspectives informs the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology applied to this study. Scholars of this realm investigate the ways in which sociocultural competence (i.e., the building and negotiating of identities) is acquired alongside linguistic competence, which can be described as how the social use of language is acquired (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Of particular interest in this body of work is how linguistic novices (i.e., language learners) acquire *communicative competence* in different settings (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011), including newer perspectives aimed at challenging traditional notions of socialization based on monoglossic norms and bringing in community-centered approaches (De León & García-Sánchez, 2021). In other avenues, the ways in which speakers' orientations, often defined through terms like *stance,* emerge through linguistic choices has been a focal point (Cook, 2011; Takei & Burdelski, 2018) informing current scholarship in discourse analysis and the relationship between language and identity work.

Terms like *stance* and *stancetaking* refer to discursive practices that can be examined to observe conversational framing and social positioning of oneself and others. There are variable

definitions of *stance* that not all researchers may agree on (Kiesling, 2011; Lempert, 2008), and differing approaches to the incorporation of stance may be taken according to whatever the relevant investigation calls for. Du Bois's notable *Stance Triangle* is a model that defines stancetaking as a set of interconnected relationships between a speaker, the discourse object, and the interlocutor (2007). In this model, social evaluations of a discourse object lead to the positioning of oneself and of one's interlocutor, all while both subjects align themselves to each other, whether that be through convergence, divergence, or an ambiguous state. Kiesling identifies some possible aspects of stance, such *affect* (i.e., emotional alignment) and *investment* (e.g., how invested the speaker is in the discourse object) (2011). In other seminal work, Ochs refers to *epistemic stance* (i.e., particular social postures based on knowledge production, usually based around levels of certainty) and when arguing for how speakers utilize language in different ways to express their flexible social alignments to topics of discourse (1993). *Epistemic stance* here is the most relevant term to be considered and applied in this dissertation. Considering different working definitions and the goals of the current study, I assert that *stance* here refers to the socially meaningful position that a discursive actor (i.e., a narrator) may take in relation to the discourse topic at hand, with postures certainty and hesitation being highlighted for my analyses.

The relationship among stance and phonetic correlates has been of recent interest in studies examining communication and phonetic patterns (Freeman, 2019; Ward et al., 2017), with implications that warrant further research into the nature of correlations between discourse stancetaking and prosody. In English-based discourses, quantitative investigations have yielded valuable insight demonstrating strong correlations between certain prosodic cues and different stances, such as discourse softening, weak-agreement expressions, and rapport-building

(Freeman, 2019). Similar investigations have been conducted into Spanish language practices, in distinct directions but nonetheless with key insight that speak to the intricate relationship between prosodic cues and discourse practice (Beach, 2020; Escandell-Vidal et al., 2014; Estellés-Arguedas, 2015). The investigative interests that have been applied to this line of work extends to this dissertation as well, with a novel focus on bilingual settings that have yet to be generalized. The work that this dissertation realizes may not only reveal key insights about how narrators navigate identity via prosodic cues, but also how those prosodic cues work in other contexts of discourse.

1.4 PROSODY & NARRATION IN BILINGUAL SETTINGS - METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While narrative inquiry has enjoyed a growing stance of research in the field, there are relatively fewer studies examining narration from a coalesced approach that incorporates both theories of narrative inquiry and prosodic frameworks. This is especially the case for narration in Spanish language and bilingual English-Spanish contexts common in the U.S. Some prior studies, however, have generated noteworthy findings relevant in this line of work, revealing that speakers do employ prosodic features for a variety of structural and functional purposes in oral narratives (Queen, 2006; Schleef, 2003). Oliveira's thesis was influential in this regard, examining prosodic strategies that speakers employed to delineate narrative boundaries, defined through a Labovian framework which resembles the methodological approach of this dissertation (2000). While these studies provide valuable insight, nevertheless, the many questions remain open about the precise links between prosody and narrative composition. Examining Mexican

American Spanish narratives in particular can add to this growing body of literature and may help inform scholars about the linguistic outcomes of language contact situations.

This review indicates one important aspect of the current literature on narration and prosody in Mexican American discourse contexts: there is a lack of such work that has examined Mexican American narratives and prosody together. While previous work has looked at Spanish language discourse patterns, the connection between bilingual Spanish prosody and narrative structure is yet to be established and carefully observed. This study identifies those links and adds more to the literature about how prosody is used to convey information and corresponds to the structure of an oral narrative.

1.4.1 Language Contact and Prosody

As mentioned earlier, studies in language contact have focused largely on the development of frameworks aimed at describing directionality of influence and distinct types of transfer. One of the more sophisticated of these frameworks is Van Coetsem's work (2016), emphasizing two main types of transfer, *borrowing* and *imposition*. Both of these transfer types exhibit influence from a *source language* (SL) to a *recipient language* (RL), while the main difference depends on the agent speaker identity. In the case of *borrowing*, the RL speaker is the agent, defined mainly by the literal act of borrowing from the SL. For example, an English speaker may borrow Spanish words (SL) while speaking English (RL). *Imposition*, on the other hand, is categorized as an SL speaker being the agent of transfer. In this case, for example, a German speaker (SL) may impose German phonology while speaking French (RL). Out of this framework, both processes of transfer could be relevant to studies related to this dissertation's

findings, with prosodic imposition as one major point of interest in terms of how bilingual Spanish speakers may or may not impose Spanish intonation while speaking English.

Much of the literature on language contact asserts the consensus that minority and heritage language speakers exhibit a gradual shift towards the dominant language (Thomason & Kauffman, 1988; Winford, 2003). Although these trends are common cross-contextually, studies suggest more nuanced and complex forms of contact shift and influence. In particular, some scholars suggest that minority language prosody may not always shift and become replaced, but rather can serve as an extra set of discourse-oriented features for bilingual speakers (Bullock, 2009). Other studies point to generational shift patterns, with older speakers retaining much of their L1 prosody while younger speakers display convergence patterns (Carter & Wolford, 2016). In addition, research suggests the effect of additional social factors in orienting prosodic shift trends, including attitudinal behaviors (Elordieta & Romera, 2020).

In connection with this, previous work has aimed to explain prosodic patterns largely unique to Mexican Spanish-speaking populations and Chicano English speakers. For example, Fought observes the use of intonation in Chicano English speakers and asserts that this arose from early colonial Spanish contact with Classical Nahuatl (2003). Fought has also examined phonetic changes among Chicano English-speaking populations as a result of contact with regional American English varieties (1999). In terms of Spanish, less work has been done in looking at current prosodic patterns among bilingual Mexican Spanish speakers. While there is an existing line of research that has begun to investigate various facets of prosodic production in these populations (Kim & Repiso-Puigdelliura, 2021), there still remains more to discover and examine, both within the realm of prosodic variation and outside of that. This dissertation looks into both aspects, with an overview of different prosodic patterns that may be then generalized

for the larger Mexican American bilingual population, and how those patterns figure into discourse and narrative contexts.

1.4.1.1 Translanguaging in Contact

Given the contact situation of Mexican American bilinguals, it comes as no surprise that much of this dissertation will explore not only how bilingual narrators thematically formulate stories via prosodic strategies, but also how the *holistic* use of one's linguistic repertoire (e.g., the use of perceived distinct linguistic systems as one whole system in action) plays into the narration process. The term *translanguaging* stems from the original Welsh term *trawsieithu*, first coined by Cen Williams from the Welsh term "*trawsieithu*"—then translated into English (Baker, 2001)—in his unpublished thesis about bilingual pedagogy strategies (1994). In this original educational context, translanguaging describes the vast ways in which bilingual students draw upon their linguistic repertoires to achieve understanding and establish communication. Beyond this context, translanguaging as a concept of bilingual studies has emerged to become applied in a more general sense to describe bilingual practices (García, 2009; Lewis et al., 2012). In this sense, translanguaging differs from terms like *code-switching*—the act of switching between two or more languages within the same utterance—to instead encompass practices *such as* code-switching. In particular, translanguaging can be defined as the ways in which bilinguals utilize their language resources in a holistic sense to convey meaning and establish communication, relating back to concepts of bilingualism that reject the notion of separate languages but rather embrace the cognitive interconnectedness of the bilingual mind (Grosjean, 1987). This can include not just what people define as discrete languages, but also dialectal varieties, L2 forms, interlanguages, etc.

Translanguaging as a pedagogical approach has become the subject of debate within education for quite some time. Within the realm of applied linguistics, Wei establishes translanguaging as the usage of one's whole linguistic repertoire without any regard to ideologically discursive notions about the separation between named languages (2018). In this sense, translanguaging can be thought of as the entirety of such practices, however they occur, such that bilinguals establish and achieve a sense of communication. This aligns with prior established theories that sought to *deconstruct* notions about languages as forming separate entities (García & Otheguy, 2014; Otheguy et al., 2015). In this sense, using terms like *English* and *Spanish* to define separate cognitive linguistic entities emerges from a complex set of historically political notions about what a community (i.e. group, tribe, nation, etc.) speaks. More specifically, speakers construct and perform their own notions about languages, regardless of how linguistic structure operates at the cognitive level.

In contrast to this, MacSwan argues that translanguaging can be defined in three different ways - *conceptual, pedagogical,* and *theoretical* (2020). In this framework, MacSwan argues against the deconstructivist theory of translanguaging and insists that this is antithetical and in opposition to issues of language rights. In other words, if languages are only social constructs, then the value of multilingual rights across various marginalized communities is at risk of being expunged for the argument that languages "do not exist." MacSwan asserts his advocacy instead for a novel view of translanguaging, which he calls the *Multilingual Model of Individual Bilingualism* (2017), that incorporates sociolinguistic concepts, such as the validity of multilingual variation at the individual level, and arguing for the acknowledgement of separate linguistic grammars that function together to form a *singular* repertoire in the cognitive domain of the bilingual speaker.

Because of the differences in meaning and contextual use between terms like *translanguaging* and *code-switching*, I prefer the term *translanguaging* to encompass all the linguistic practices that each participant might engage in—which may or may not include code-switching. Although this dissertation does not primarily aim to inform pedagogical studies, where most of the translanguaging literature is situated and ongoing, it is my hope that incorporating theoretical notions of translanguaging and of fluid repertoire practices may inform the reader's understanding of the linguistically diverse nature of the Mexican American community and bilingual population. This community, of which I claim membership, presents a complex range of practices that stem beyond a preconceived idea of solely using English or Spanish in exclusive contexts. Specific to this dissertation, an understanding and incorporation of this theoretical position will account for the unique experiences of each individual speaker and their own choices that determine how they engage in their own language practices within narrative settings. These choices may include code-switching, more use of Spanish or English in one context over another, and the use of different registers, dialectal varieties, and style-shifting choices in their repertoires.

1.4.1.2 Linguistic Diversity and Translanguaging of the Mexican American Community

Given that terms like *bilingual* and *heritage speaker* constitute a wide range of speaker experiences and linguistic backgrounds (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007), it is important to discuss how this study takes such variation into account, especially for recruitment and data collection methods. As discussed in the previous section, translanguaging encompasses a wide range of practices that pertain not just to experience, but also to speakers' individual choices given the dynamic interactional contexts that bilinguals find themselves in. Applied in this context, a

translanguaging model can inform my research looking at a diverse population of speakers whose identities are tied on the basis of shared culture, ethnicity, or history, by framing all linguistic practices in this community as valid and falling under the scope of legitimate practices. Narrowing this down to specific proficiency levels or enacting a perspective that only focuses on static and homogenous language use (i.e., monoglossic), I imagine, would only capture a small and negligible range of practices that only relate to a specified portion of the population at hand and might not speak to the high variability of contact experiences.

In previous sections, I discussed recent work on Mexican Spanish intonation, which mostly looked at specific central dialectal patterns common in the present-day Republic (De-la-Mota et al., 2010). Because my study is situated within the U.S. and looks at U.S.-based ways of speaking, the issue of linguistic continuity between Spanish-speaking practices in Mexico and those here in the U.S. becomes highly relevant. There is some work that touches on this subject, observing a pattern of similarity and continuity in prosody between Mexican Spanish varieties and Mexican American Spanish (Congosto Martín, 2019). This should come as no surprise, of course, but it is another facet to account for when holistically considering the history of the Mexican American community, and the larger Hispanic population, having a long-lasting presence in much of the western/southwestern U.S. Congosto Martín's findings, however, are framed in such a way as to not allow for any kind of emerging uniqueness among the U.S. (primarily in Los Angeles) varieties (2019). One could argue that this claim only functions as a finding generated from a comparative study of intonation, rather than a comprehensive holistic account of the grammars of Mexican American Spanish and Mexican Spanish in Mexico. It should also be noted that Congosto Martín looked *only* at homogenous Spanish contexts, rather than taking into account full bilingual practices. In contrast with Congosto Martín's study,

Andrade's observations yielded the claim that a new variety specific to Los Angeles Chicanx Spanish speakers is emerging, partly influenced by the Alteño dialect of Jalisco, Mexico, and also partly influenced by contact with English varieties (2012). Although I take Congosto Martín's claim as partly valid on this subject and stemming from real-world Mexican Spanish language observations, there remains quite a bit of natural language variation within this community relative to that of Mexico. Additionally, since I do not plan to frame this through a monoglossic, or Spanish-only, perspective, both in theory and methodology, the claim of near static continuity between Mexican Spanish and Mexican American Spanish is mostly expunged.

Hugely relevant to this discourse--and this specific study--is Santa Ana's work that proposes a model of multilingual practices and frames the Chicano community as a continuum of speakers, encompassing not just monolingual Spanish and English practices, but also diverse bilingual practices, *Caló* argot, codeswitching, contact with non-Chicanx speakers, etc. (1993). For the purposes of linguistic research on the Chicanx community, this model aims to account for all practices without the constraints of normative/standard ideology and attitudes that deem practices like code-switching to be "vulgar" or exhibiting "lack of proficiency." This model is applied in my methods design for recruitment, namely in considering how narrow I define the *ideal* participant based on personal identity and language use. For one, under this model, anyone who identifies as a bilingual speaker belonging to the Mexican American and/or Chicanx community was invited to participate, such that the scope of observation was not focused on an idealized linguistic persona that does not speak to everyone's individual experiences. Second, this model informs my analytical and interpretation practices, since I did not examine only Spanish utterances. Rather, I employed a methodology aimed at holistically incorporating all linguistic productions to account for the variation of language practices that realistically define

our community. Although this will generate limitations in that not all speakers can be compared equally due to idiolectal tendencies, I assert that it does speak to the broad and diverse nature of language use and narration that individuals within this community engage with.

1.5 MAIN QUESTIONS - SYNTHESIZING DISCIPLINARY REALMS

This dissertation presents two examinations of prosody in narration: (1) the role that prosodic cues play in signaling structure and discursive flow in a narrative of personal experience, and (2) how narrators use these same cues when performing identity and interacting dialogically with greater cultural discourses that touch on the use of different identity labels.

The overview of the literature informing this dissertation presents the amalgamation of several distinct fields of inquiry to address several questions regarding the nature of narration among bilingual Mexican Spanish speakers in the U.S. For one, the exact relationship between prosody and narrative construction among bilingual speakers remains unclear and this analysis works to shed light on this interface and provide more scholarly insight in that regard. Outside of this scope as well, the question of how different theories of narrative inquiry, such as Labov's original narrative structure framework, fit cross-linguistically is another ongoing question that this dissertation aims to address. Lastly, examining how narrators perform identity in dynamic ways can offer a better appreciation of how prosody, in conjunction with other linguistic levels, is a valuable tool used by speakers to navigate complex dialogic spaces that influence identity practices. Within this examination, translanguaging emerges as an important lens through which bilingual speakers' narration processes can be framed in order to be inclusive of how practices are actually realized in the community. Stepping away from common notions that frame language use through a monolingual and monoglossic perspective, this dissertation positions all

linguistic choices made by bilingual speakers as valid and natural. Such a theory remains inclusive to all speakers' backgrounds and repertoires and avoids limiting the scope down to a specific subset of speakers to achieve some sort of artificial basis for speaker's linguistic usage similarities.

Mexican American community experiences are shaped by a multitude of historical and current factors such as, Mexican nationalism (which informs current Mexican ethnic identity discourse), notions of *Indigenismo* and *Mestizaje* (both of which situate themselves in how Mexican individuals may identify with or align to an Indigenous heritage), the Chicano Movement, intersecting with notions of Indigenous ancestry/heritage and informing current modes of performativity as they are realized in modern-day Mexican American spaces, and a vast array of diasporic experiences that may allow self-identified members of this community to position themselves in different ways to each other and within the historical migratory space demarcated by geopolitical and cultural borders. It may come as no surprise then that, finding themselves situated in such a complicated landscape, surrounded by distinct norms, attitudes, and obligations--all of which surely intersect with language practice--Mexican American bilingual narrators may use oral storytelling practices in unique ways to index and highlight their own individual positionalities, stances, and identities as they relate to the dynamic cultural sphere around them. Analyzing prosody may not only be a methodological step forward in looking at identity as a constant shifting entity of discourse, but also may help offer insight about how Mexican Americans see themselves in daily interactive settings while relating a personal experience and how they relate to the overarching social plane they find themselves situated in.

Overall, this dissertation can contribute broadly to the field of linguistics by providing a comprehensive account of the complex role of prosody within interaction and in contact

situations. Given the globalization of our modern world, it becomes increasingly pertinent to understand how language evolves in rapid ways as influenced by many volatile factors, mainly natural language variation and dynamic sociocultural forces. The reader may inquire as to how narration fits into this context. It is important to remember that narration encompasses a multitude of practices ultimately aimed at relating our everyday experiences. Narratives outline relationships between events, provide the basis for both how we perceive ourselves in reality and how we might change that reality, and present our internal goals, dreams, and emotions. Prosody in a story can reveal all of this in different ways. As such, this work represents one point of research aiming to highlight how suprasegmental cues figure into our discursive practices and demonstrate the interconnectedness between what is linguistically observable and what becomes constructed in our social spaces.

2. METHODS

This study examines the role of prosodic features, namely intonation, pauses, and syllable lengthening, in the Labovian-defined construction of oral narratives told primarily in Spanish. Discourses of identity are also examined throughout the second portion of this study, with a focus on how these prosodic features are used by speakers to signal different stances towards questions of identity labels and historical processes involved in modern-day understandings of Latinx/Mexican identity.

Considering the overview of literature, this study investigates two questions addressing unanswered fields of work, (1) how do bilingual speakers of the U.S. Mexican community utilize prosody to construct oral narratives, defined through a Labovian perspective? And (2) how do these same speakers utilize prosody in identity discourses? The first question examines a growing field of research that is yet to be fully explored, given some of the methodological difficulties with prosodic investigation and the variance among researchers in the conventions taken. Nonetheless, this thesis aims to establish a broader understanding of different prosodic features in bilingual narratives and, in particular, a variety of Spanish commonly spoken in the U.S.

2.1 POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

This dissertation examines language patterns in a minoritized bilingual community that has emerged out of a complex sociocultural context and continues to grapple with ongoing dynamics shaping out a wide range of implications and consequences. Additionally, as the author of this work, I carry my own complex connections with the community and with the discourses

being examined. An overview of my relationship with this research is necessary to forge a better and more holistic understanding of the research setting, background of all members involved, and the experiences that shape our understanding and decisions in each step of the way.

To start, I identify myself as a member of the community being worked with, growing up in the Mexican American community in both southern Arizona and northern California, with familial connections in the Los Angeles area and Central Mexico. As such, this work touches on many personal aspects of my cultural background that I align with and that I feel an emotional affinity to. The narrative sessions presented here mirror my own familial experiences, growing up and listening to stories about my family and about our family history in Mexico and the U.S. It is my constant hope that this work and future related work will highlight the depth of our practices and the importance of storytelling as a dynamic space where knowledge is co-created, passed down, and shared across generations and between trusted peers.

In addition to my cultural and ethnic background, I also identify myself as a White person of mixed-race ancestry. My physical presentation as a White Latino man immediately grants me a set of social privileges that many members of my community do not have access to. My status as a researcher already sets up a power imbalance, informed by colonial legacies of academia, and this is enhanced even further by my racial identity. Understanding my position as both a person with white privilege and as a member of the Latinx and Mexican American communities, I see it as my responsibility to remain constantly aware about potential feelings of discomfort from my participants and community members and the vulnerability they may see for themselves while narrating stories of personal experience. This has informed my decisions in the methodology of this work, including the constant use of pseudonyms, providing non-specific information about their spatial backgrounds, and avoiding the presentation of potentially

sensitive information. It has also meant being explicit with participants about their agency in this work, and reminding them that they have the right and power to rescind their participation in this study.

I also identify as a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English, with much of my linguistic use incorporating a wide range of fluid practices, such as code-switching, and the use of lexical and grammatical features associated with U.S. varieties of Spanish and Chicano English. In this sense, I am immediately familiar with many of the linguistic practices that my participants demonstrate in their narration processes. Knowing that I myself engage in these same practices, I have designed my methodology to incorporate an inclusive perspective on fluid bilingual practices, breaking away from monoglossic attitudes and traditional ideas that frame the cognitive and social separation of languages such as English and Spanish as the norm. This dissertation ideally enhances other voices within my disciplinary camp and related fields that work to bring more critical awareness about our rich linguistic practices and to build up social recognition about the validity of common forms of language use that fall outside the categories of *proper, academic*, and *correct* language use. I carry an understanding of my position as an *academic* and, in the perceptions of many folks, as someone who may work to uphold standardized norms of speaking. This may inevitably influence the work I do as a sociolinguist, as participants may feel the need to speak a certain way or to conform their language production to what is socially constructed as "suitable". Being aware of this, I work to remind my participants at different points of the study that this dissertation is not about speaking "correctly" and that I prefer that all members in this space speak as naturally and as comfortably as they feel, without any regard for how I feel as the researcher. While this may not ultimately expunge all feelings of discomfort, it is one step that I take to mitigate those potential imbalances.

2.2 STUDY I: PROSODY IN NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

2.2.1 Participants

Eighteen speakers participated in this study, all of whom self-identified as: (1) a bilingual speaker of English and Spanish, and (2) with a background as Mexican/Mexican American or Latinx with Mexican roots. Regarding the second factor, many of the participants had diverse origins, with some having grown up primarily in the U.S., while others grew up in Mexico and lived in the U.S. for a certain amount of years. Others divided their time between Mexico and the U.S. and felt close to both places. Speakers' backgrounds were categorized into three distinct categories: (1) U.S.-born Latinxs, mostly all children of immigrants, (2) pre-adolescent immigrants, or those who were born in Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. before adolescence (before 12 years old), and (3) adult immigrants, those who immigrated after adolescence (>16 years of age) and had been living in the U.S. for at least ten years. No participant immigrated between the ages of 13 and 16.

Participants were recruited through network connections and social media outreach. All participants consented to participate in an audio-recorded interview conducted primarily in Spanish, but designed to be inclusive of all linguistic practices and modes, including code-switching, Spanglish, Chicano English, and other varieties common across the community.

Table 7

Study 1 Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age (at time of interview)	Background	Region of Residence
Antonio	Man	77	Adult Immigrant	Southern California

Citlalli	Woman	25	US-born	Southern California
Dolores	Woman	24	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Northern California
Esteban	Man	24	US-born	Northern California
Estefania	Woman	24	US-born	Northern California
Eulalio	Man	28	US-born	South Texas
Fernanda	Woman	77	Adult Immigrant	Northern California
Gerardo	Man	40	Adult Immigrant	District of Columbia
Isabel	Woman	54	Adult Immigrant	Northern California
Juan	Man	25	US-born	Northern California
Lina	Woman	51	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Arizona
Lucía	Woman	54	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Northern California
María	Woman	29	US-born	Northern California
Marta	Woman	24	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Northern California
Pedro	Man	43	US-born	Southern California
Ricardo	Man	30	US-born	South Texas
Rosa	Woman	50	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Southern California
Thalia	Woman	50	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Northern California

2.2.2 Procedure

In the elicitation of narratives for prosodic Labovian structural analysis, participants were prompted in Spanish with two specific genres:

1. ¿Me cuenta(s) por favor una historia espantosa, sobre un evento del pasado en el que se asustó/te asustaste? *Could you please describe to me a scary story, about a past event in which you were scared?*
2. ¿Me cuenta(s) por favor una historia alegre, sobre un evento del pasado que te trae alegría al pensarlo? *Could you please describe a happy story, about a past event that brings you joy when you think about it?*

This is based partly on traditional sociolinguistic methods of language elicitation, put forth primarily by Labov, who proposed the classic *danger of death* prompt to elicit the most linguistically natural form of production from speakers (1972), assuming that speakers would default to their most comfortable speech patterns when thinking about events that have impacted them. With data collection occurring throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, strict precautions were taken to ensure that both participants and I remained safe from potential infection. Some interviews were completed remotely via Zoom, which presented some methodological challenges in analysis, the greatest of which was technical analysis of pitch modifications in computerized recordings. In spite of this, my personal knowledge of Spanish intonation sufficed as an aid in the examination of prosodic patterns.

2.2.3 Analysis

Following data collection, audio recordings were transcribed using methods based on previously established conventions (Du Bois, 1992) along with self-designed approaches to fit within the scope of the study[1]. Since the main focus of this study is prosody, conventions were amended to allow for a central focus on certain features (i.e., contours, pauses, lengthening, and

[1] See appendix for full overview of transcription conventions

intensity). Narratives were manually segmented into intonation units or intonation phrases (IPs), defined as chunks of utterances bounded often by one main intonational contour and often followed by a pause. The exact boundaries between IPs were determined through both definitions of intonation units delineated often by prosodic cues such as final syllable lengthening and a pause, and my own knowledge as a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English. This involved a few particular challenges as IPs are not always well defined, nor do they show up in neat succession throughout a narrative. I included an extra set of conventions that allowed for the marking of filler words and false starts which at times contributed to the irregularity of IP segmentation. Not all units could be considered full intonation units, and truncated and filler units were transcribed as well.

Alongside prosodic analysis, narrative IPs were also annotated according to Labov's framework of narrative structural elements (e.g. *abstract-coda*) that surround a reportable event (1967; 2013). All intonation units were tagged with specific structural markers to delineate thematic sections within each narrative, except for those that contained only filler words.

Table 8

Narrative Transcription Acronyms

AB	Abstract - pre-narrative summary; purpose of narrative
OR	Orientation - detailing temporal and spatial setting; contextual information; character background
CA	Complication - main story events leading up to most reportable event
EV	Evaluation - narrator's present-day reflection and judgements on narrative relevancy
RS	Resolution - closing statements of narrative; events after the most reportable event
CD	Coda - final closure of narrative

The segmentation of narratives with the implementation of both prosodic analysis and Labovian-based frameworks was realized with the goal of observing any correlations between the use of certain features in particular parts of a story based on Labov's definition of oral narrative. The overall narrative transcription analysis resembled in figure 10:

Figure 10

Narrative transcription observing prosodic cues and narrative structure

13	*OR* Rosa	Cuando <este:>\... *When um*
14	*OR*	se iba a casar/ *She was getting married*
15	*OR*	la primera vez/ (1.4) *The first time*
16		Um…
17	*OR*	mi mamá y yo andábamos buscando una iglesia para\ *My mom and I went out looking for a church to*
18	*OR*	ca/sarla\ *Marry her*

A mixed-methods approach was conducted following transcription of narratives. Transcribed intonation units were tokenized so that each unit carried the following social and discursive information:

1. Gender of speaker
2. Age group
3. Immigrant background

4. Pitch configuration
5. Presence of rising vs falling intonation
6. Pause duration (ms)
7. Syllable lengthening occurrence
8. Thematic section (e.g., *orientation, complication*)

While the majority of this study was conducted through a qualitative lens, upon completion of narrative transcription, a mixed-methods approach was applied across narratives to ascertain from different perspectives how speakers were making use of prosody in their stories. From a qualitative perspective, narratives were manually analyzed across different segments and observations were conducted to ascertain any commonalities or salient production patterns.

2.3 STUDY II: PROSODY IN IDENTITY NARRATIVES

2.3.1 Participants

Narratives were collected from the same set of participants listed in the first study participant section. However, due to the later inclusion of this portion of the dissertation, not all participants were able to provide identity narratives. As such, only the following individuals produced identity narratives that are examined later in this dissertation:

Table 9

Study 2 Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age (at time of interview)	Background	Region of Residence
Citlalli	Woman	25	US-born	Southern California

Estefania	Woman	24	US-born	Northern California
Eulalio	Man	28	US-born	South Texas
Gerardo	Man	40	Adult Immigrant	District of Columbia
Isabel	Woman	54	Adult Immigrant	Northern California
Lina	Woman	51	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Arizona
Lucía	Woman	54	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Northern California
María	Woman	29	US-born	Northern California
Pedro	Man	43	US-born	Southern California
Ricardo	Man	30	US-born	South Texas
Thalia	Woman	50	Immigrated pre-adolescence	Northern California

2.3.2 Procedure

The procedure for this study followed the same methods as the first study mentioned in the previous section. In order to ascertain and describe the role of prosody as a tool for fluid identity performance in narration, I elicited narratives from my participants with a focus on the narrator's own sense of self and changes to this sense over time. Elicitation began with the following prompts:

1. ¿Cómo te identificas/se identifica culturalmente/étnicamente en cuanto a la comunidad mexicana aquí en Estados Unidos? ¿Diría(s) que eres/es mexicanx, latinx, chicanx, hispano, tejanx, u otro término? ¿Por qué? *How do you identify yourself culturally/ethnically in relation to the Mexican community here in the US? Would you say that you are Mexican, Latino, Chicano, Hispanic, Tejano, or another term? Why?*

2. ¿Tiene(s) alguna historia relacionada con tu/su identidad que describa la razón por la cual te/se identifica(s) así? *Do you have a story related to your identity that describes the reason why you identify yourself as such?*

In order to establish a comfortable and flexible linguistic setting, in the sense of removing rigid monoglossic practices (i.e. speaking *only* Spanish), I often employed code-switching and forms of Spanglish to generate a sense of unrestrained allowance for my participants to engage in their own linguistic practices however comfortable they were and saw fit. Most participants chose to continue narrating in Spanish or variable forms of Spanglish with greater narration in Spanish, while one narrator in particular (Estefania) narrated mostly in English. In-person narrative sessions were recorded through *Audacity*, while virtual meetings were recorded through a cellular device. Cellular recordings were then transferred to an Audacity folder alongside all other narrative recordings.

2.3.3 Analysis

For this study, I incorporated a qualitative-driven approach in my analysis, though Sp_ToBI (Aguilar et al., 2009) came into play at different points to aid in the identification of different pitch contours. After narrative collection, identity stories were transcribed in similar methods from the first study, without the examination of Labov's thematic structure. Rather, narratives were transcribed via self-designed conventions to measure the three main prosodic categories (intonation, pauses, and syllable lengthening) across intonation units.

Upon narrative transcription, a critical discourse analysis was conducted to examine relationships between narrators' epistemic stances and discourse content, and how prosody

alluded to or expressed various sentiments related to identity navigation. Given my own background as a Mexican American Spanish speaker, personal connections to some of the narrative themes that participants expressed emerged. With this in mind, I worked to ensure that my personal knowledge and community-insider expertise could aid in the examination of social dynamics while also not impeding my interpretation of what narrators were expressing and navigating in their discourse. This required a constant sense of self-awareness as both a researcher and personal community member and co-collaborator in the discourses surrounding identity in the Latinx community.

3. STUDY I: PROSODY IN NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

3.1 FINDINGS

Oral narratives can take on many kinds of structural outlines, depending on the narrator's intentions, the social context, and whatever themes are being discussed prior and during the narration process. Taking that into account, it comes as no surprise that many of the narrators interviewed for this study demonstrated different types of structural organization patterns. Abstracts were negligible and not always present in each narrative. Additionally, while virtually each narrative, by virtue of how narratives commonly work, had orientation and complication sections, the structure of each did not necessarily follow a linear pattern where a set of orientation units came before a set of complication units. Some narrators alternated between orientations and complication clauses describing more of the context as needed. Instances of evaluation depended on each speaker, with these types of segments not always appearing in narratives. Some narrators included instances of reasoning to describe their value judgments of their narratives. Each participant orally narrated at least one full story of personal experience. Upon data collection, narratives were manually transcribed to capture prosodic use across intonation units. Intonation units were then tokenized with social and discursive factors for any quantitative measures. Informed by a mixed methodology of Labovian narrative analysis and discourse prosody, each narrative was examined to ascertain how narrators used prosodic features to delineate and shape narrative boundaries. While prosody is holistically examined, intonation is the primary factor that is examined across all parts of this study, with pauses,

syllable lengthening, and other prosodic cues being examined as secondary aspects of each narrative.

3.1.1 Intonation

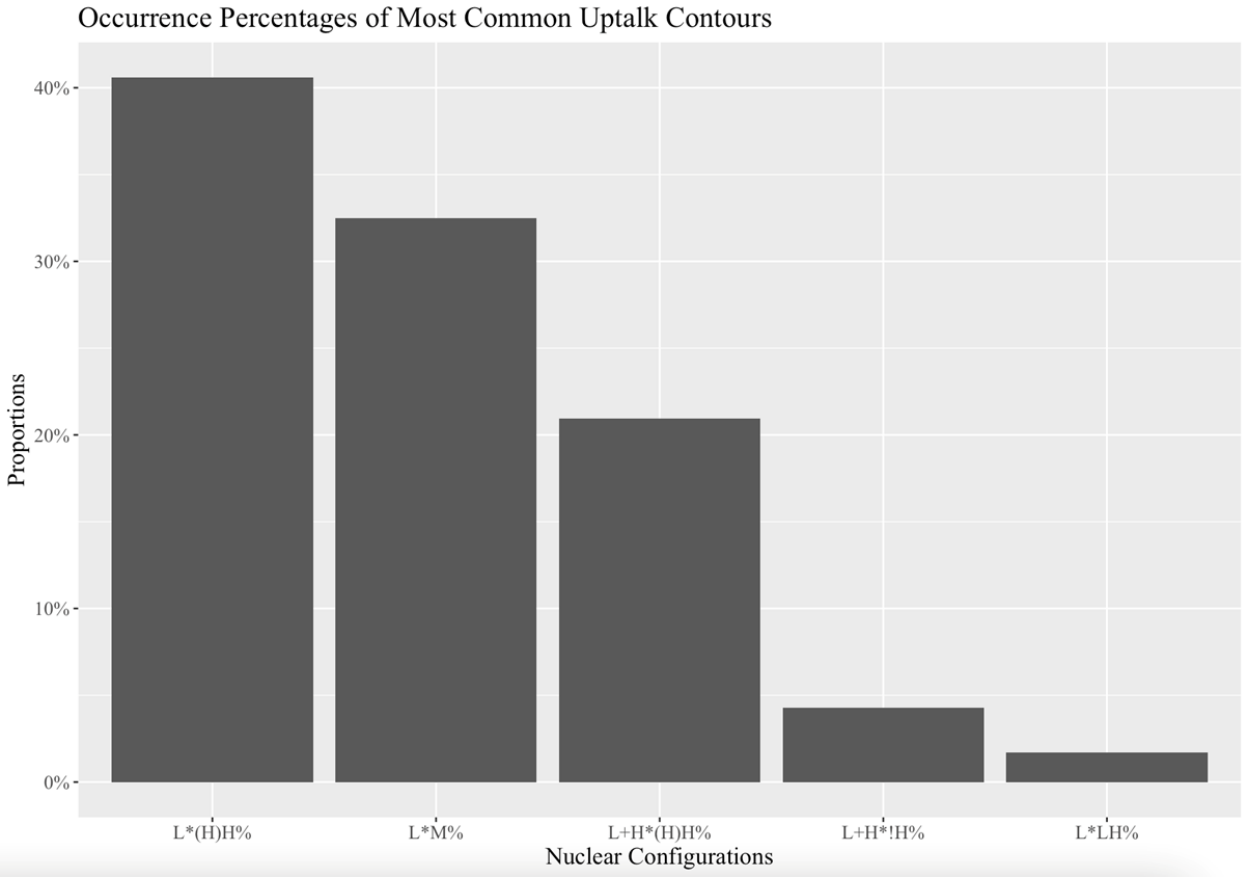
3.1.1.1 Statistical Overview of Intonation in Oral Narratives

The purpose of this section is to (1) provide an informed basis for the predictable variation in the use of intonation observed across oral narratives, and (2) corroborate prior work while also introducing novel insight into the intonation patterns of the US Mexican community. While the main focus of this work is to assess the use of prosody in narrative structure, it is important to understand first what kind of variation will be observed across oral discourse, in order to provide a well-informed assessment and carefully explain observations that may appear complex. Particular attention was focused on the social factors for each participant, along with the discourse traits of narrative intonation units. For social predictors, effects included (1) **Gender**: *men* and *women* (2) **Age Cohort**: *18-35, 40-60,* and *over 65,* (3) **Immigrant Background**: *US-Raised* and *Adult Immigrant,* (4) **Mexican Regional Background** - *Central* and *Northern,* and (5) **US Region** - *California* and *Texas*.

After careful transcription of narratives, a set of tokens consisting of intonation units was gathered to ensure that at least one narrative from each participant was used for the social model output. Overall, 769 tokens were analyzed, with about 341 of those units ending in a rising contour.

Figure 11

Occurrence proportion rates of most common uptalk configurations



Many different types of rising contours were observed. Out of these configurations, post-stress rises (L*(H)H%) were observed to be the most common just over 40%, followed by post-stress plateaus (L*M) and stress rises (L+H*(H)H%) at around 30% and 20% respectively (Figure 11). This partially corroborates previous work looking at common uptalk configurations among heritage speakers by Kim and Repiso-Puigdelliura (2021), whose study also observed L*(H)H% rises to occur at the highest rate (34% of all occurrences) among bilingual heritage speakers when compared to monolingual speakers. Contrary to my work, the second highest uptalk configuration in their study was L+H*(H)H% which occurred in 31.2% of all occurrences.

Additionally, they observed L*M% to only occur in about 6.8% of all occurrences. In any case, differences between our studies are noted (e.g., different sample size, distinct population requisites, etc.) and may account for slightly different measurements. Still, these observations show the variety of uptalk configurations that speakers of this bilingual community exhibit in their prosodic production patterns, speaking to a certain level of variation that may appear distinct in observations based on how focused the methodological examination is. In contrast to previous work, my dissertation takes a holistic approach in examining prosodic factors across the Mexican American community, investigating patterns across multiple generations and personal backgrounds.

In the first analysis of social predictors, a generalized linear mixed-effects regression model was designed using the *lme4* package in R to assess the effect of the aforementioned social factors in relation to the use of rising contours across narratives, along with by-subject random effects. A description of the model is provided below:

*Rising Contours ~ Gender + AgeGroup + Background + Gender*AgeGroup +*

*Gender*Background + Gender*AgeGroup*Background + (1|Subject)*

An analysis of variance test indicated that this model was more reliable in predicting correlations between fixed effects and variable output (Pr(>Chisq=0.02939*)). The model results are shown in Table 10 below.

Table 10

GLMER results for social predictors of rising contours

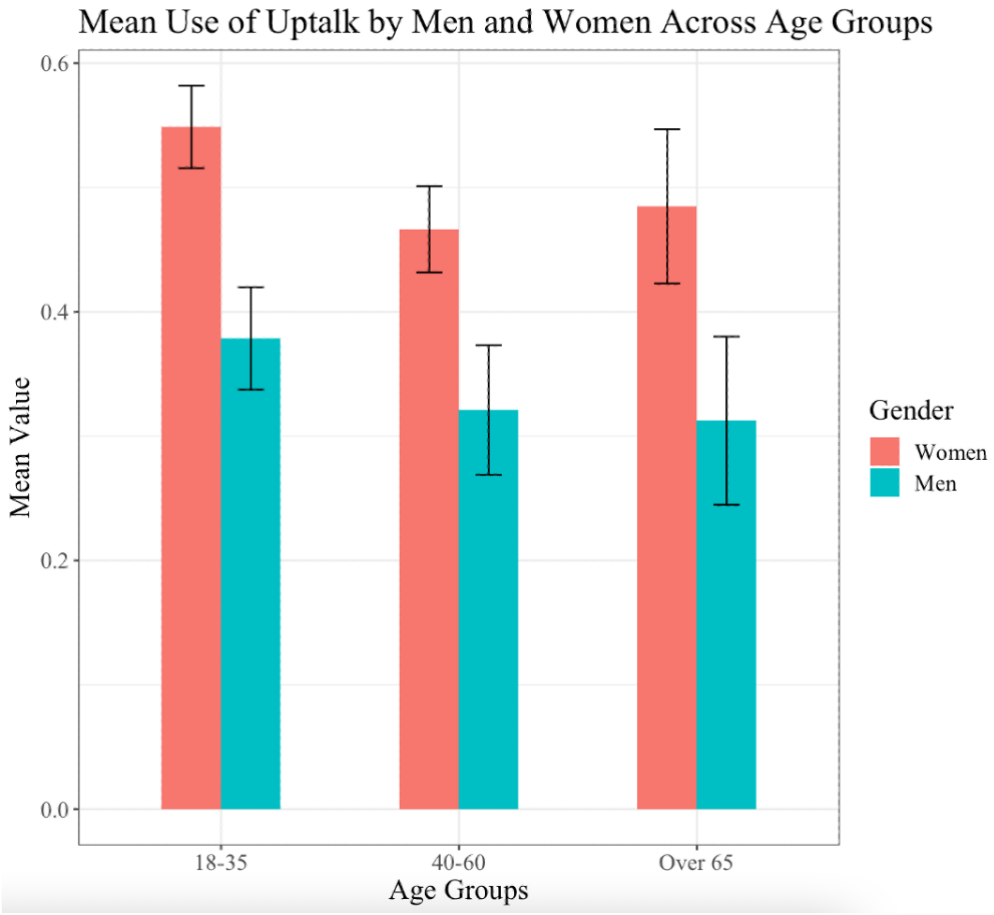
	Estimate	Std. Error	Z-value	Pr(>|z|)
(Intercept)	0.1861	0.1446	1.287	0.19810
Men	-0.6753	0.2357	-2.864	0.00418**
40-60 years old	-0.2148	0.2134	-1.007	0.31406
Over 65 years old	0.6429	0.5511	1.167	0.24332
Adult Immigrant	-0.8898	0.4600	-1.934	0.05308 .
Men x 40-60 years old	-1.0343	0.6956	-1.487	0.13705
Men x Over 65 years old	-2.1791	0.9651	-2.258	0.02396*
Men x Adult Immigrants	2.1248	0.8343	2.547	0.01087*

Results indicate that overall, men use less uptalk than women (Estimate=-0.6753; Pr(>|z|)=0.00418), along with speakers who immigrated to the US as adults to a lesser degree (Estimate= -0.8898; Pr(>|z|)=0.05308). For interactions, men in the 40-60 age group used fewer rising contours to a significant degree (Estimate = -2.1791; Pr(>|z|) = 0.02396), while men who immigrated to the US as adults were more likely than the rest to use rising contours (estimate = 2.1248; Pr(>|z|) = 0.01087). These results are not entirely novel, when examining uptalk cross-linguistically as rising contours in non-interrogative statements are often socially associated with women, especially in English (Guy et al. 1986; Linneman 2013). In any case, given that investigations of uptalk have been limited in Spanish, these results on gender-based variation provide a clearer overview of social differences in the use of uptalk among Spanish-English bilinguals in the US. Data here is limited and partially imbalanced, with more women (11) than men, along with only 2 adults in the over-65 age cohort. This study does not claim to make large-

scale generalizations for the entire US Mexican population, but is instead presenting an observation of what these sample speakers are producing in relation to the rest. The results stand out nonetheless and provide insight into the types of variation that is observed across the oral narratives generated for this dissertation.

Figure 12

Mean Use of Uptalk for Gender by Age Interactions

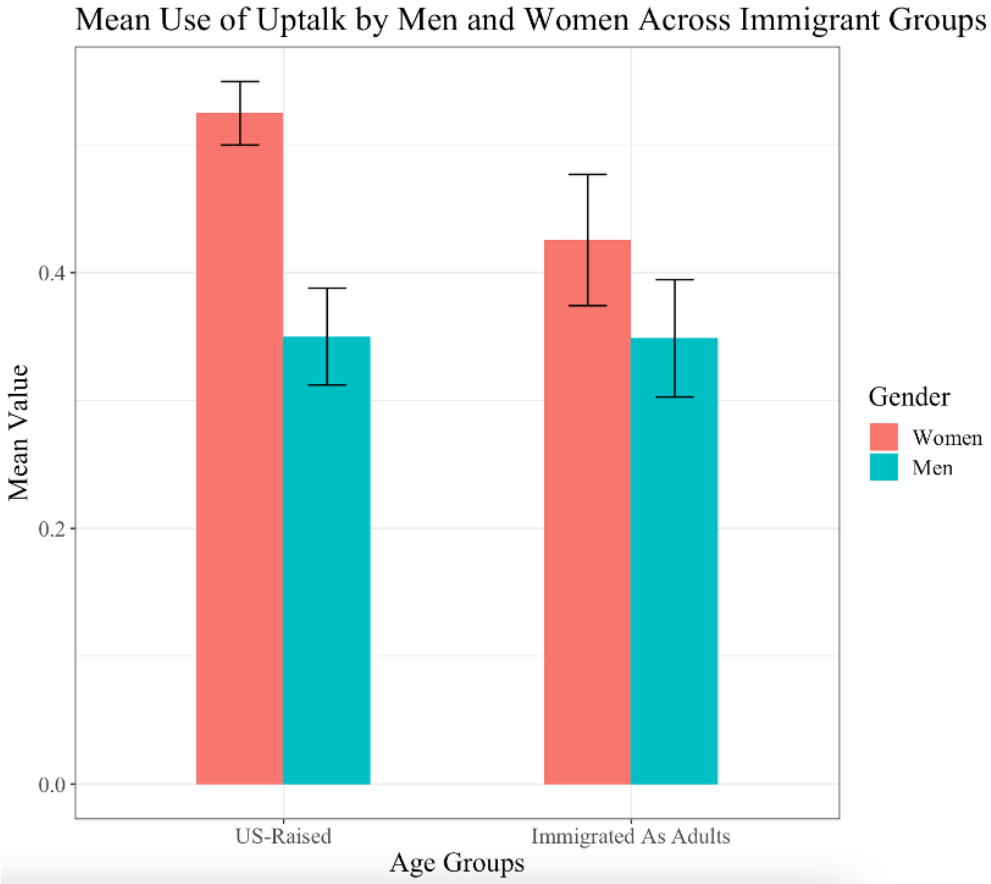


The previous figure shows the average use of rising contours at unit boundaries, highlighting the interactions between gender and age cohorts. The most observable feature is that women use uptalk more than men, as supported by the prior regression model, and that the greatest difference between gender use of uptalk is observed in the youngest age cohort. There

appear to be slight differences in the other age cohorts, with women using more uptalk than men to smaller degrees. The younger cohort also appears to be using rising contours much more frequently in their narratives, though this is not a significant effect when only counting age-based differences.

Figure 13

Mean Use of Uptalk for Gender and Immigrant Background Interactions



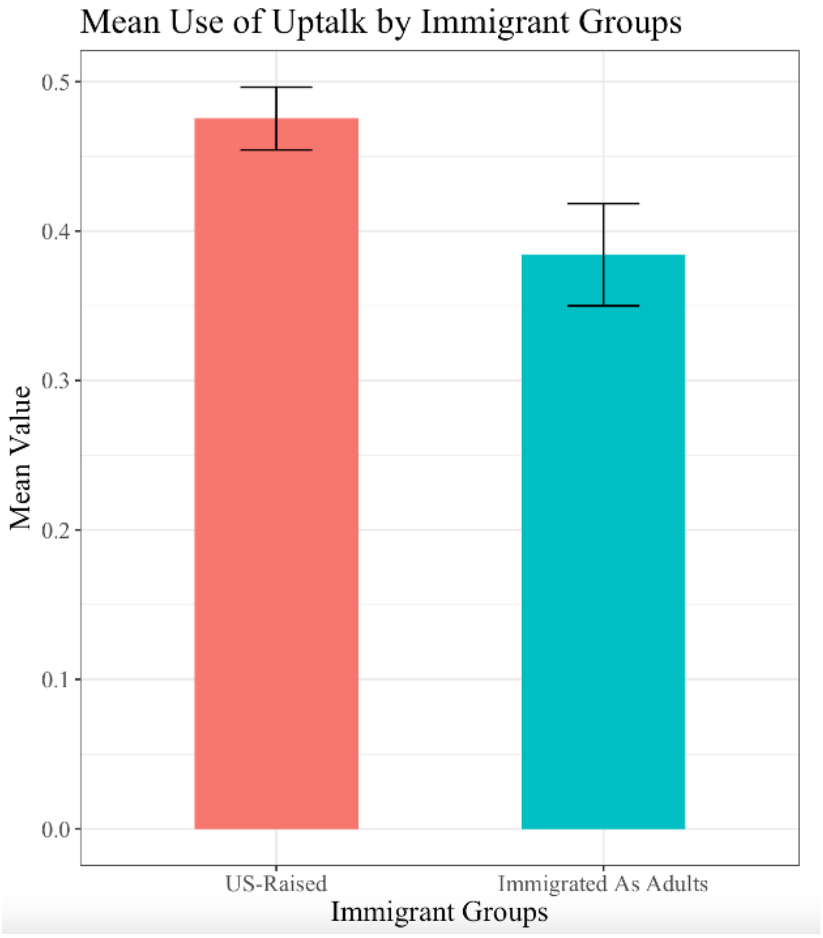
The previous figure above shows the average value of uptalk use by the two immigrant generation categories, with interactions for gender. In addition to the women consistently using more rising contours, the greatest difference in usage rate between men and women is noted in

the U.S.-raised category. In addition to mirroring similar work on uptalk in English, these findings on immigrant generation differences also mirror sociolinguistic patterns observed in other variables, such as u-fronting among Chicanas in Southern California (Fought, 1999). Figure 14 shows these same results, with gender interactions being taken out and collapsing the differences between speakers into the two immigrant categories. This figure shows that, overall, speakers who were born in the U.S. and/or immigrated as young children and were raised in the U.S., tended to use uptalk more than those who immigrated as adults.

As far as understanding why these patterns of intonation use are observed across different social categories, one possibility is the influence of English prosody in the repertoires of U.S. bilinguals who speak both English and Spanish on a regular basis. This echoes prior research that observes similarities between the uptalk configurations used by heritage speakers in the US with the uptalk configurations that characterize various regional varieties of American English (Kim & Repiso-Puidelliura, 2021).

Figure 14

Mean Use of Uptalk Across Immigrant Categories



The regression model output and supporting data visualizations show that there is some socially-based variation occurring in the intonation patterns used by bilingual speakers of the U.S. Mexican community, with gender differences being the most notable across nearly all other social categories. Further analyses of the ways in which prosody and intonation are used in narration will take into account these points of variation, and these findings may provide a more informed set of insights into the differences that are noted between speakers as they construct their narratives. Additionally, some of these findings may inform current investigations

interested in the surrounding influence of American English varieties on U.S. Spanish speakers and those of Mexican immigrants living in the U.S. (Fuller and Leeman, 2020; Waltermire, 2014). While this dissertation does not aim to settle those research questions, results here do provide better insight that can be applied in that avenue of work. The next section presents a qualitative exploration of the use of intonation patterns across narratives, with some key emphasis on the relationship between phrase-final intonation and structural boundaries interpreted through a Labovian perspective.

3.1.1.2 Discourse Analysis of Intonation in Oral Narratives

Narrators used prosody in different ways to mark boundaries, not only between intonation units, but also between what we can interpret as thematic segments through a Labovian-perspective. The difference in contour directionality at the end of an intonation unit appeared to mark the narrator's continuity intention, with rising intonation (i.e., uptalk) and non-falling plateaus signaling coherence with the following intonation unit. On the other hand, falling intonation signaled finality of temporal sequences.

Here is one example of this pattern from an interview with Rosa, a 51-year-old female heritage speaker, at the time of this interview. Rosa was born and lived with her family in Mexico until they moved to the U.S. when she was 5. In this sequence, Rosa discusses a childhood memory in which her parents had employed a young woman as her babysitter while still living in Mexico. In this particular narrative, Rosa sets the scene to discuss how this caretaker stole a pair of gold earrings from her after bathing her. The following narrative units showcase different contours at certain key points in her narrative:

1 *OR*	Rosa	No me acuerdo:/…(1.04) *I don't remember*
2 *OR*		todos los días/ *Every day*
3 *OR*		pero sí me acuerdo de <es-> de esta:~...(1.27) *But I do remember this one*
4 *OR*		ocasión que:~...(0.88) *Occasion in which*
5 *OR*		me tenía que dar un baño\ *She had to give me a bath*
6 *OR*		ella\...(1.56) *(she - emphatic)*
7 *OR*		y:\..(0.39) *And*
8 *OR*		yo tenía:~ *I used to have*
9 *OR*		unos aretes de oro:/…(0.79) *these gold earrings*
9 *OR*		que siempre los traía yo puestos\…(1.01) *that I would always wear*

In this beginning part of her narrative, Rosa utilizes rising and other non-falling contours in units 1-4, and 8-9, with the rest ending in falling contours. A key observation that is later noted in other narratives is that rising intonation occurs in contexts where the same type of intonation unit–defined through terms from Labov's model of narrative structure–occurs after the unit in question. In other words, the discursive flow of information is continuing from one unit to the next, with no large break or transition point. In the units where Rosa produces falling intonation (units 5-7 and 9), she is transitioning in her information structure, and moving from one narrative segment to another. In this particular part of her narrative, she switches from

discussing her caretaker, stating that she remembers when this character in her story had to bathe her one day (unit 6: *ella*\), ending that phrase in a falling tone. She later repeats the same pattern when discussing a pair of earrings she used to own, ending that description in a rising tone and signaling continuation of the information setting (unit 9: *oro/*). This unit is then followed by a phrase that ends in falling intonation (unit 10: *puestos*\).

Another example showcasing the use of rising and falling contours to distinguish continuity comes from this interview with Pedro, a male heritage speaker. In this narrative, Pedro sets the tone to describe the fear he and his family felt upon learning that one of their family members was battling cancer.

1 *AB*	Pedro	<Uh>…pos /miedo miedo:~...(0.71) *Well…fear fear…*
2 *AB*		Yo creo es <este>…(1.63) *I think um…*
3 *AB*		Perder un familiar/ *Losing a relative*
4 *AB*		sabiendo que vas a perder a tu familiar\…(0.85) *knowing that you're going to lose a relative*

In the first intonation unit, Pedro produces a high plateau coupled with vowel elongation at the end of the repeated *miedo.* In the following unit, he produces a falling contour although this can be interpreted as a moment of hesitation to think about his next utterance rather than thematic finality. The use of the filler *este* (i.e., "um") expresses this hesitation. In the third unit, Pedro uses rising intonation over *familiar*, followed by a falling contour at the end of the fourth unit. This suggests a finality of a discourse segment and coincides with the end of the abstract of Pedro's narrative.

Later on in the same narrative, Pedro makes use of rising and falling contours to mark distinctions in his intent to demarcate boundaries between narrative segments and to demonstrate to the listener continuation versus finality of a thought process. A notable finding here is the use of rising contours alongside elongated vowels in syllables at the end of units, such as in *decirle* and *ella*, suggesting the intention of continuing along the same narrative discourse–in this case, the struggle of coping with the reality of a relative's imminent passing. Toward the end of this portion of the narrative in line 26, Pedro uses a falling contour alongside a relatively longer pause after *tema*, signaling discursive completion.

22 *CA*	Como:..no sabíamos..cómo de/-ci:rle:..(0.48) *Like…we didn't know how to tell her…*
23 *CA*	^Este^ *Um*
24 *CA*	Teníamos miedo de…(1.30) *We were scared of*
25 *CA*	Cómo iba a ser nuestra vida sin /-ella:...(0.76) *How we were going to live without her..*
26 *CA*	Entonces mucha ansiedad sobre..sobre ese tema\…(0.81) *So a lot of anxiety about..about that issue*

Extensive uptalk intonation was recorded in one narrator, Citlalli, a 24-year-old heritage speaker who grew up in Southern California within a homogenous Mexican American community. In this narrative, Citlalli discusses a recent distressing experience in which, during a trip for her sister's graduation, covid started spreading within the family.

8 *OR*	Citlalli	e:m so:..(0.14) *Um so*

9 *OR* se acaba de recibir mi hermana\
My sister just graduated

10 *OR* de su universidad/..(0.47)
From her university

11*OR* hace como:\..(0.11)
About like

12 *OR* sí una semana y media/
A week and a half prior

13 *OR* y después de eso fuimos/
And afterwards we went

14 *OR* a Nueva York/
To New York

15 *OR* ella y yo/…(0.72)
Her and I

16 *OR* so habíamos visto\
So we had seen

17 *OR* um…(0.75)
um

18 *OR* tod- a- los-
all-uh-the

19 *OR* familia\
family

20 *OR* o sea mis papás fueron allá/
My parents came as well

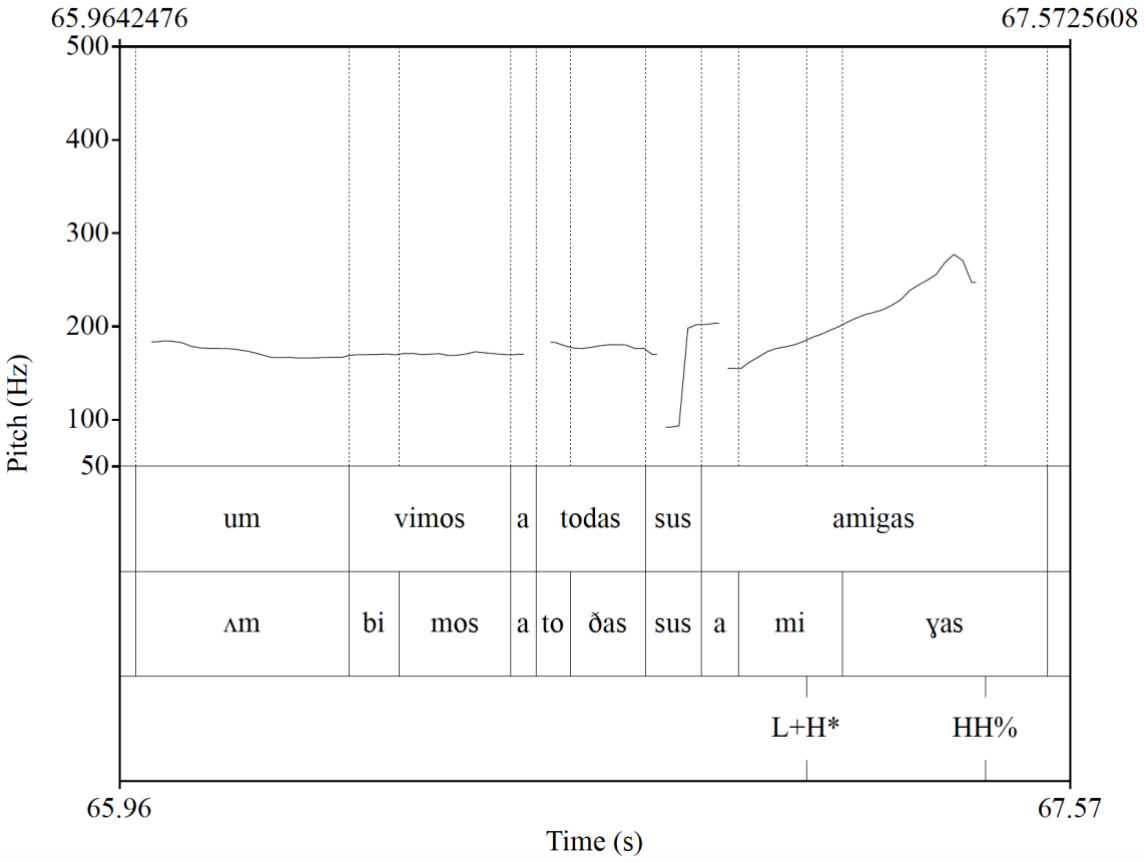
21 *OR* y luego\...(1.26)
And then

22 *OR* um vimos a todas sus amigas/…(0.63)
Um we saw all of her friends

As shown in the above sections, rising intonation is recorded at IP unit boundaries at 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, and 22. A visual representation of unit 22 is shown below, in which the narrator produces a nuclear configuration of L+H*HH%, showcasing a continuous rising contour from the last accented syllable to the unit boundary.

Figure 15

Spectrogram and f0 trace of vimos a todas sus amigas from Citlalli's narratives.



Another set of examples of pitch contour use for boundary marking and structural coherence comes from an interview with Gerardo, a 40-year-old speaker who grew up in Mexico and has lived in the US for over 20 years. In the narrative sections below, Gerardo narrates a pleasant memory of his experiences working with a baile folklórico group and the emotions that

he felt upon returning to public performance after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. In the initial parts of the narrative, Gerardo responds to my prompt asking him to narrate a happy or fulfilling experience, with an abstract summarizing the theme of the story, followed by an orientation situating the context.

1	*AB*	Gerardo:	Yo creo que fue cuando regresé a bailar\ *I think it was when I started dancing again*
2	*AB*		yo bailo folklórico..Tyler…(1.14) *I do folk dance..Tyler*
3		T:	Mhm
4	*OR*	Gerardo:	estoy en un grupo folklórico aquí que iniciamos el año 2017..(0.47) *I'm in a folk dance group here that we started in 2017*
5	*OR*		<eh>..empezamos a crecer *Eh..we started to grow*
6	*OR*		<P y: P> cayó la pandemia en/ton/ces..(0.69) *Then the pandemic happened*
7	*CA*		este verano/..(0.49) *This (past) summer*
8	*CA*		regresamos a bailar al [redacted] Theatre/…(1.20) *We came back to dance at the [redacted] Theatre*

In the above units, especially in the orientation section in which he provides background information, Gerardo produces a somewhat consistent pattern of either rising tones or mid-high plateaus at unit boundaries, followed by brief pauses. Similar to previous examples, this pitch pattern demonstrates a cohesive nature between the orientation units, signaling continuation of the background description and a connectivity in the information that Gerardo presents during the narrative.

The previous examples demonstrate similar patterns of pitch use to indicate continuation at the boundary points of intonation units, with rising and mid-high plateaus indicating discursive cohesion between units, and falling tones more often indicating finality or the presentation of new information. From a Labovian perspective, while many of these contours were present across narrative sections, it is worth noting that many narrators utilized these contours, in conjunction with pauses, during orientation sections. Orientation sections are methodologically designated as the portion of the narrative that provides background information, including temporal and spatial settings. In many of the orientations that this study's narrators construct, they also outline previous events that are relevant in setting up the context of the plot at hand.

Another narrative section that displays both similar and unique contour patterns at unit boundaries is the *complicating action* or *complication*. According to Labov, this refers to the portion of a narrative devoted completely to reporting the main events of the story (1967). The rest of the narrative is typically devoted to providing the context and evaluating the significance of the complication events. Several pitch contour patterns appear in the process of boundary formations throughout the complications of several of the narrators for this study. Lucía, a 51-year-old female heritage speaker at the time of this interview, narrated an instance from her childhood in which one of her uncles pranked her and her siblings while they were watching a vampire horror film. The section below constitutes the complicating action section of the narrative.

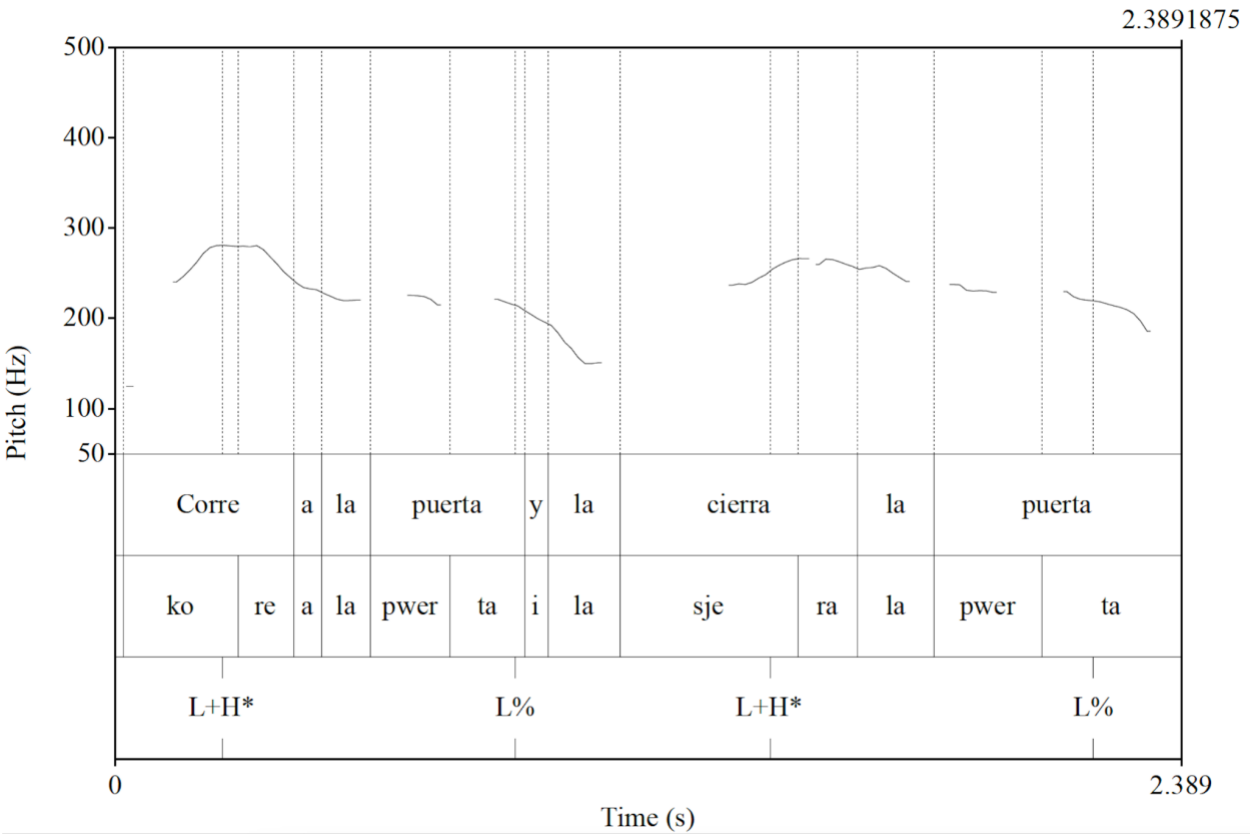
28 *CA*	Lucía:	y: de repente~ *And all of a sudden*
29 *CA*		uno de mis tíos se le<FvanF>ta~ *One of my uncles gets up*

30	*CA*	de la..del sillón\ *Off the..off the couch*
31	*CA*	<y:..> y:..co/rre a la puerta\ *And…and..he runs to the door*
32	*CA*	y la cie/rra la puerta\ *And he shuts the door*
33	*CA*	y de afuera nos dice\ *And from outside he tells us*
34	*CA*	<Q va a salir el vampíro~ *The vampire is gonna come out*
35	*CA*	de la: tele~ *Out of the TV*
36	*CA*	y se los:\..(0.21) *And he's gonna*
37	*CA*	los va a chupar la sangre\…(0.95) *He's gonna suck your blood*

In the above sections, Lucía describes her uncle's actions as she and the other children were sitting and watching the film. As she transitions to describing his actions, she produces a unique pattern of rising contour before and right over the intonation unit verbs (i.e. *corre, cierra*), followed by a falling pitch realization. Her relatively higher average pitch (max. ~280 Hz) across these two contours appears to serve as a way to illustrate a sense of urgency, aiding in the description of the narrative's events that occurred in rapid succession according to Lucía's memory. Figure 16 shows the pitch contour of *corre a la puerta y la cierra la puerta* with pitch and boundary tones marked across the units. In this specific case, Lucía produces the same contour type as she describes the key events in the narrative's complication.

Figure 16

Spectrogram and f0 trace of "corre a la puerta y la cierra la puerta" from Lucía's narratives.



While many narratives contained complication sections similar to Lucía's, in which events occurred in a specific instance and were characterized with prosodic contours that suggested urgency, narrators utilized other contour types and in distinct ways. María, a 29-year-old female heritage speaker, related a set of stories from her childhood and other narratives passed onto her by her parents, most of which consisted of hauntings and mysterious encounters. In the narrative below, María specifically describes an event that her parents experienced from time to time. The complication of this narrative differs in the sense that it describes a habitual event.

17 *OR*	María	y: segú:n~..(0.25) *And supposedly*
18 *OR*		que en la noche/:...(0.83) *At night*
19 *CA*		veían como una lucecita en la pared/…(0.81) *they would see like a little light on the wall*
20 *CA*		<uh:> < P it would just like P> <F mo:ve~ F>..(0.25) *Uh it would just like move*
21 *CA*		y:..no sabían~ *And..they didn't know*
22 *CA*		de dónde venía la <F /luz~ F> *Where the light came from*
23 *OR*		because\...(0.51) *Because*
24 *OR*		They were in the middle of <F nowhere~ F> *They were in the middle of nowhere*

In the above units, María explains that her parents used to see an unexplainable light on the walls at night, while they lived on a ranch in northern Mexico. Because of the relative seclusion from others in the rural area, it was never discovered what caused the light to appear. In describing this, Maria utilizes a generally consistent pattern of rising intonation at the boundary of each unit, over words like *noche, pared, luz,* and *nowhere.* She also produces a plateau at the end of unit 20, over *move*, which is also uttered with greater intensity and extended vowel length. I interpret the use of these contours as (1) signaling discursive continuity across the information presented in each unit, similar to previous examples, and (2) holding the floor. This serves as a way to signal connection between key events, and to also pragmatically alert the listener that the discourse is in continuation.

Another notable example of intonation signaling discourse connectivity across narrative boundaries is shown in the units below, taken from a recorded session between four friends sharing mostly childhood stories.

1 *AB*	Marta	Hablando de roba:\..(0.15) *Speaking of stealing*
2		(laughs)
3 *AB*		nuestros papás decían como\ *Our parents used to say like*
4 *AB*		<Q oh si te portas mal/ Q>..(0.21) *"Oh if you don't behave"*
5 *AB*	Marta	<Q [te va a robar\] Q>...(0.67) *"You're going to get robbed"*
6	Esteban	[te va a robar/] "*You're going to get robbed?"*
7		[Yea:h]
8	Dolores	[Oh s]í: *Oh yes!*
9 *AB*	Marta	O te va a llevar el ropavejero or whatever/…(1.43) *Or the ropavejero is going to take you or whatever*
10	Dolores	Sí: el ropaveje:ro: hom[bre\] *Yes! The ropavejero, oh man*
11 *OR*	Marta	[en mi:] *At my*
12 *OR*		En mi escuela~ *At my school*
13 *OR*		cuando estaba en México/ *When I was in Mexico*
14 *OR*		había un señor que es-no estaba bien en la cabeza/

There was a man who wasn't mentally well

15 *OR* y le decían el <P frutis\ P>
And they used to call him "El Frutis"

The main narrator of this story is Marta, a 24-year-old native speaker, but input is observed from her three other interlocutors at different times. In her abstract units, Marta begins with falling boundary tones, before switching to an uptalk contour in a quotative unit (4-5). As she begins her orientation units, she employs rising contours in unit 13 and 14 before arriving at a definitive point where she mentions a central character of her narrative, finishing unit 15 with a falling tone accompanied by a quieter intensity of voice. A few key observations can be generalized from these units. First, Marta employs a somewhat consistent falling intonation pattern before quotative units. Second, her use of rising intonation or uptalk appears in units that do not precede quotatives and are part of her orientation units, describing the spatial setting. The continuation of this narrative is shown below.

23 *OR* <@ y @> me acuerdo que mi papá\...(0.67)
And I remember that my dad

24 *OR* siempre lo decía like\
Would always say like

25 *OR* <Q oh el frutis/ Q>..(0.14)
Oh el frutis

26 *OR* <Q se robaba a mis compañeros Q>
He would steal from my classmates

27 *OR* porque mi papá estudió en la misma [primaria-]
Because my dad went to the same elementary school-

28 Everyone [(laughs)]

29 Dolores <@ Oh my go:d @>

30 *OR* Marta <@ él estudió [en-] @>
He went to-

31 Esteban <@ [se ro]baba a mis compañeros @>
He would steal from my classmates

32 Marta (laughs)

33 *OR* él estudió en la misma primaria\
He went to the same elementary school

34 *OR* que yo había estudiado/..(0.36)
That I had studied at

35 *OR* todavía en México\...(0.83)
While still in Mexico

36 *OR* y me decía\
And he would say

37 *OR* <Q oh se robaba a mis compañe:ro:s/ Q>
Oh he'd steal from my classmates

38 *OR* <Q cada vez que se portaban /ma:l~ Q>..(0.32)
Every time they'd misbehave

39 *OR* y mi mamá también me decía\
And my mom would also say to me

40 *OR* <Q mi:ja si te portas mal/ Q>
Honey if you misbehave

41 *OR* <Q te va a llevar el @ [fruti:s] @Q>
El Frutis is going to take you

42 Dolores [(laughs)]

43 Esteban [(laughs)]

44 *OR* Marta Y yo ahí bien traumada mil/..(0.33)
And there I was all traumatized

Similar to the previous set of units in Marta's story, the use of falling intonation before quotatives is observed in units 24, 36, and 39. Marta also exhibits less uptalk compared to other

narrators, though a few instances appear in quotative sections, suggesting a particular additional discursive role that rising intonation may carry for narrators.

This analysis examines the use of intonation in bilingual narratives among members of the US Mexican community, with special attention paid to the use of both rising and falling tones, along with other noteworthy findings that occurred across oral narratives. A regression analysis was conducted to capture levels of social variation in the use of pitch contours and inform the narrative analysis thereafter. The findings on gender variation in the use of rising intonation in particular corroborate prior work showing that men tend to use rising contours much less than women (Linneman, 2013; Shokeir, 2008) and provide a clearer overview of uptalk trends in bilingual Spanish-speaking communities of the US. This remained the case even when analyzing interactions between gender and other social factors, such as age group and immigrant background of each speaker. While it is not fully understood why these patterns of variation exist, they do emerge in observable ways in the narratives that speakers provided.

Regarding the qualitative discourse analysis of narratives, a holistic examination of the previous examples demonstrates extensive use of intonation contours in boundary marking, with some noticeable variation across individual narrators in their use of tone types, contour directionality, and how the effect of these contour productions were enhanced by other features (e.g., pauses, intensity, etc.). Overall, I observe that contours serve as a discursively relevant tool to mark not just intonation boundaries, but to also provide narrative structure by signaling *finality* and *non-finality* in relation to the thematic content of the narrative. Narrators often used uptalk and similar non-falling contours to signal non-finality in their narratives, providing the listener with a cue that the continuation of discursively-relevant information was forthcoming or connected to the following units. In contrast, falling contours often appeared in units that

represented a transition in the main events of a story, shifting between one set of events to another set of events. The application of these contours within many of the orientation and complication sections, in particular, indicate a unique form of prosody use to outline event sequences and context-based descriptions. Narrators who are relating a series of events within a complication might rely on rising and high plateau tones to mark connectivity in the succession of those events. Likewise, within orientations, rising contours are useful to indicate the continuation of descriptive phrases outlining the temporal and spatial context of the narrative's main events.

It should of course be noted that there was a notable degree of variation in how narrators employed intonation across units and what types of contours appeared at boundary units. Most notably, men did not use as much rising contours compared to women, across nearly all other social categories including age group and immigrant background. When uptalk did emerge though among some male speakers, their usage mirrored similar findings that were found among the female speakers, with non-finality being an observed function of rising tones. It was also observed that men tended to employ different types of rising contours in relation to women, with relatively fewer excursions, or changes in pitch. While many narrators utilized instances of both rising and falling intonation in similar ways, not all IP units could be compared to one another with a degree of predictability.

In relation to the literature, this adds to prior work by offering further insight to previous observations on the use of intonation in delineating narrative boundaries and possibly outlining a hierarchy of information across story units. Additionally, this analysis offers further insight into specific research discussions surrounding the nature of intonation, and prosody generally, within

U.S. Spanish-speaking populations. The next sections examine the employment of pauses and syllable lengthening, including some interactions with intonation patterns.

3.1.2 Pauses

3.1.2.1 Statistical Overview of Pauses in Oral Narratives

Pauses are a common feature that narrators may use to signal narrative structure. The literature on pauses suggests that awareness of the audience-listener plays an important role in the dissemination of pauses across structural boundaries (Gee & Grosjean, 1984). Pause duration appears to be of particular importance in how thematic hierarchy is constructed throughout narration (Al-Badri & Al-Zubaidi, 2023; Palakurthy, 2019). Notably, longer pauses are important in marking the end of narrative IPs, delineating segmented components of information within each narrative segment. Long pauses appear especially after longer story units, such as the end of an orientation or complication, suggesting an important role in signaling boundaries between sets of narrative information.

To examine the use of pauses in narrative structure, breaks of speech following intonation units were measured in milliseconds. Following prior work on similar effects, pauses less than 100ms were excluded (Palakurthy, 2019). Careful attention was paid to ensure that prosodic pauses were recorded, and momentary periods of silence due to production correction and utterance repetition were not included in this analysis. Across all subjects, pauses of different durations were observed through quantitative means to ascertain any social-based variation, followed by a qualitative analysis to determine discursive functions. Out of the 769 tokens that were collected and used for quantitative analysis, 320 pause tokens were analyzed to assess duration patterns distributed according to Labovian-defined narrative sections, and narrative

finality. This latter predictor presents a novel methodological examination, with finality status of intonation units being marked according to my own interpretation of the information structure presented in narration. This includes information about preceding and following segments, and topic of the discourse at hand. It was observed that topic finality corresponded with what would be considered the end of a full sentence in written language, with non-final units including units that ended in conjunctions and words introducing subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases, and adjectival phrases. An example of this marking in one narrative is shown in the figure below.

Table 11

Example of Tokenization of Narrative Units to Measure Pause Duration

Subject	Narrat	Section	Unit	Durati	Gender	Finality1
Antonio	M	OR	2 posiblemente tenía unos	1490	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	3 unos..tres o cuatro años/	2600	Men	final
Antonio	M	OR	4 cuando:\	1810	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	6 en el en un racho/	970	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	7 donde nací/	1810	Men	final
Antonio	M	OR	8 en el <este> se llamaba\	311	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	9 San Rafael\ (1.8)	1820	Men	final
Antonio	M	OR	10 y era/~ (1.0)	960	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	11 un rancho/~..	260	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	12 en el municipio de Dolores Hidalgo del E	3240	Men	final
Antonio	M	OR	13 y me acuerdo que:\ (1.3)	1350	Men	non-final
Antonio	M	OR	14 vivía en una casa muy gran:de:\~ (1.0)	650	Men	final

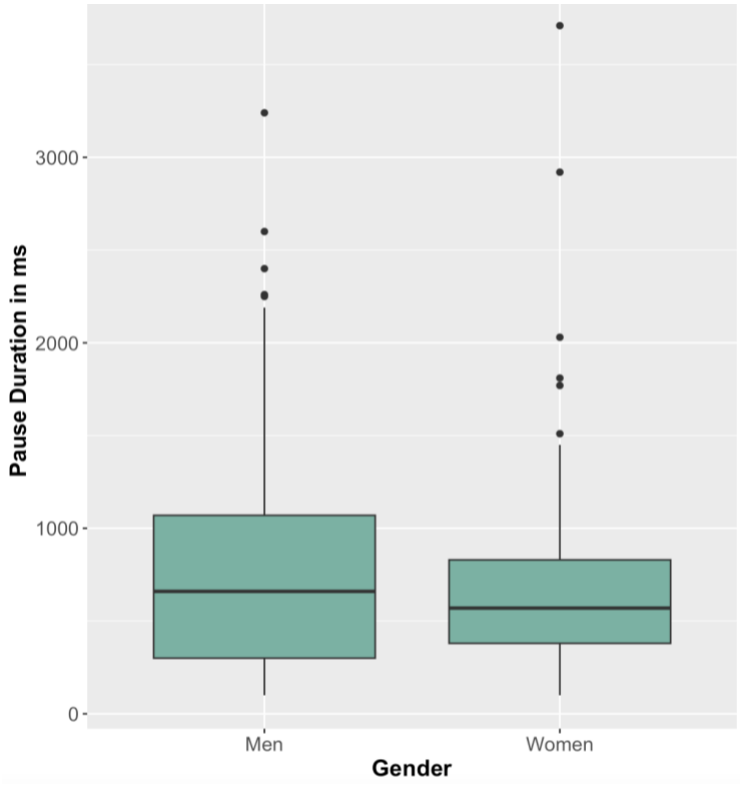
Pause duration distributions were also analyzed with the following social factors: (1) gender, (2) raised in the US vs raised in Mexico, and (3) generation cohort. The next series of data visualizations show the distribution of pause duration in ms according to the three aforementioned social and discourse factors. Figure 17, 18, and 19 show this distribution by gender, age cohort, and childhood country respectively. Figures 20 and 21 show the distribution

of pause duration in ms according to narrative section (orientation vs complicating action) and narrative finality (final vs non-final statements).

Results show that the difference in pause duration between men and women is negligible, though women appear to use less variety of duration times compared to men. Both men and women use, on average, the same pause duration in their narratives.

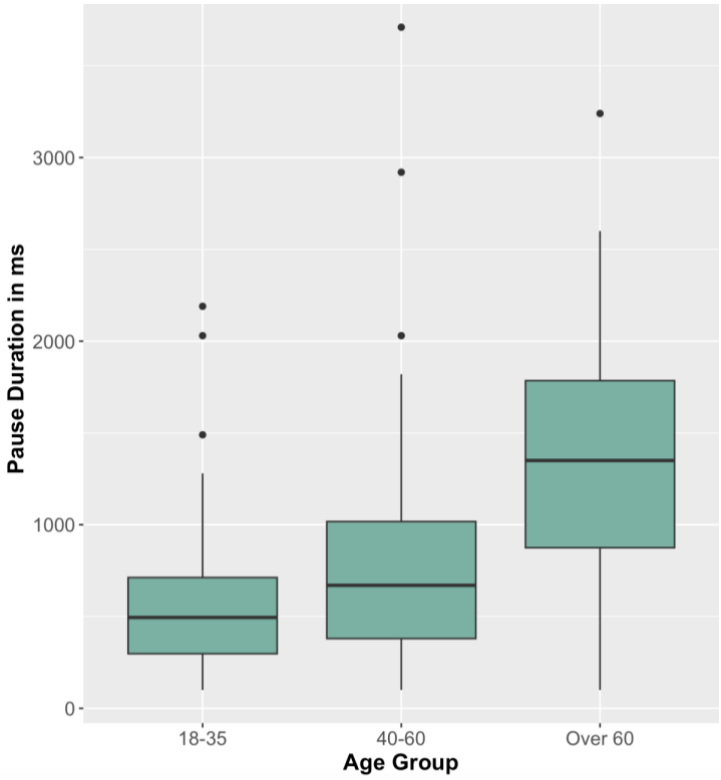
Figure 17

Pause Duration (ms) by Gender



Figures 18

Pause duration (ms) by Age Cohort



Figures 19

Pause duration (ms) by childhood location

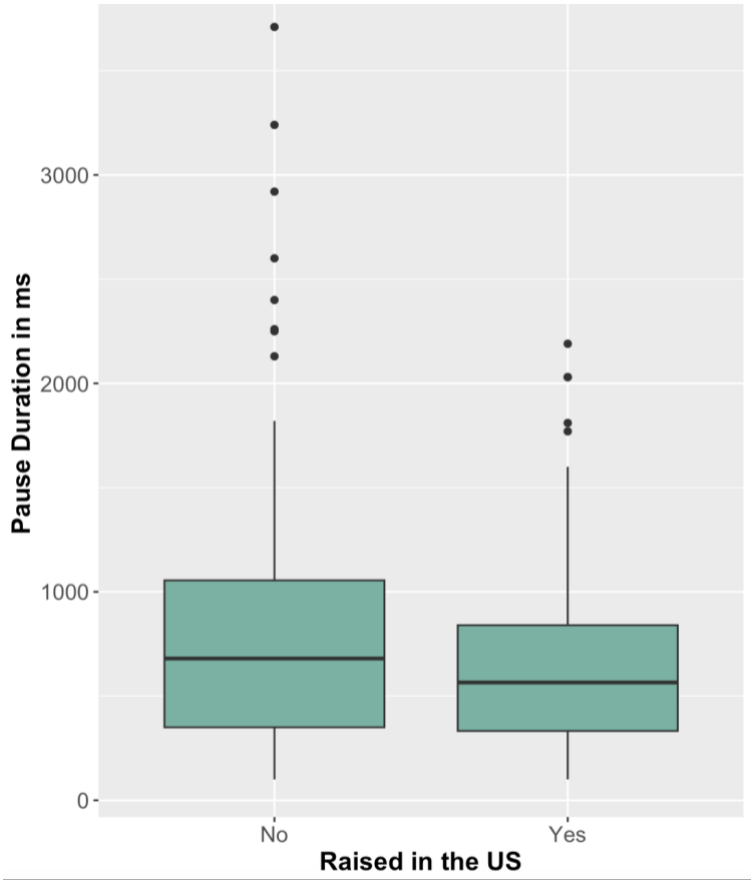


Figure 19 also shows a negligible difference in pause durations between groups of participants based on where they grew up, either in the US or in Mexico before adolescence. Those who were raised in Mexico for their childhood demonstrate a wider variety of pause durations, and a slightly higher average duration time relative to those who grew up in the US. Figure 20 shows larger differences based on age cohort, with younger participants using shorter pause times, compared to participants over 40 years of age. The source of this difference is uncertain, but may be due to the settings in which narrative elicitation took place. For example, some participants produced narratives in a group setting, which, at certain points, made for lively

discourse and correlated with faster speech rates as participants exchanged phrases back and forth.

Figure 20

Pause duration (ms) according to intonation unit finality status

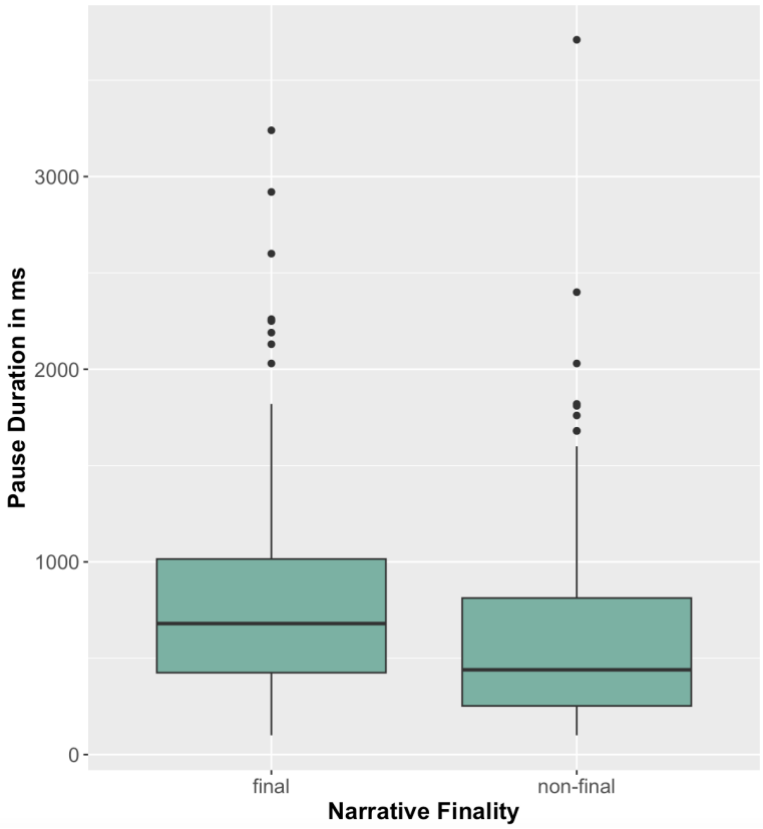
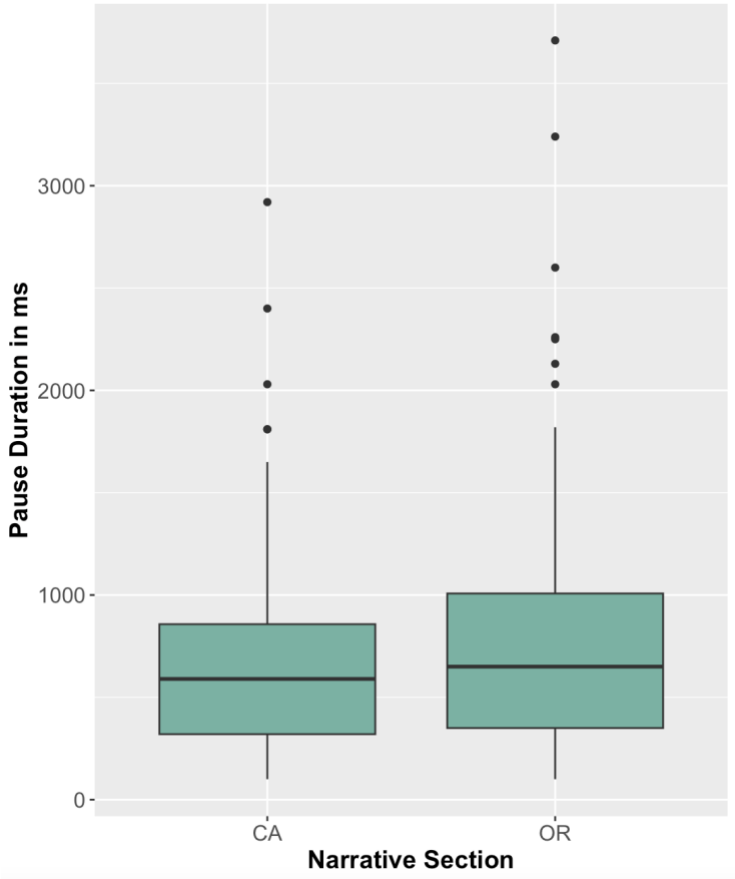


Figure 21

Pause Duration (ms) according to Narrative Section (Orientations vs Complications)



Analysis of pause distributions according to the topic structure of intonation units yielded a visible difference in duration times. Notably, intonation units marked as *final* in their contribution to the information structure of a narrative segment showed on average longer pause time durations (~800 ms), while those marked as *non-final* showed shorter duration times (~589 ms). While this finding is not surprising considering that shorter pause durations occur at points in narratives where the topic at hand is not finished, these results contribute to the body of literature showcasing the function of pauses as useful prosodic markers of narrative turning

points, signaling to the listener that the narrative is about to change direction or enter a new phase of the story.

The difference in pause durations between orientations and complications was not as notable, with both narrative sections yielding similar duration measurements. In any case, orientations did have a wider variety of pause duration times, with slightly longer average pause times. As far as what these results tell us about narrative structure, it is difficult to ascertain if pauses play a significant role in delineating boundaries with noticeable differences between orientations and complications. Nonetheless, more data collection may provide further insight into potential distinctions and the emerging duration differences observed here are still noted.

3.1.2.2 Discourse Analysis of Pauses in Oral Narratives

At the phrasal level, pauses appeared to indicate very efficiently the ends of IP units, which corroborates prior work on the role of pauses in mapping discourse structure (Palakurthy, 2019). It was observed that pauses seemed to appear more in orientation phrases, and relatively less so in complication phrases. Returning to María's narrative from before about listening to her parents' stories during childhood, María notably utilizes more pauses, and of longer duration, in her orientation phrases.

3 *OR*	María	o había huracanes/..(0.38) *Or there were hurricanes*
4 *OR*		y..se iba la luz~…(0.74) *And the lights would go out*
5 *OR*		y me acuerdo que~…(0.92) *And I remember that*
6 *OR*		<uh> nos juntábamos en la sala~..(0.18)

		Uh we used to get together in the living room
7	*OR*	y mi-y mi papá nos contaba historias/ *And my-and my dad would tell us stories*
8	*OR*	porque mis papás crecieron en~..(0.41) *Because my parents grew up on*
9	*OR*	en el rancho:/…(0.74) *on the ranch*
10	*OR*	en Tamaulipas/…(0.79) *In Tamaulipas*
11	*OR*	<P so just across the border\ P>…(0.55) *so just across the border*
12	*OR*	<P from where I grew up~ P>..(0.44) *from where I grew up*

In the above section, María explains the setting in which her family storytelling would take place and provides further context using her parents' background. Seven IPs end in pauses, with four of those ending in pauses lasting between 0.5 and 1.0 seconds. This contrasts with the complication that María describes in the next section:

19	*CA*	veían como una lucecita en la pared/…(0.81) *They would see like a little light on the wall*
20	*CA*	<uh:> < P it would just like P> <F mo:ve~ F>..(0.25) *Uh it would just like move*
21	*CA*	y:..no sabían~ *And..they didn't know*
22	*CA*	de dónde venía la <F /luz~ F> *Where the light came from*
23	*OR*	because\...(0.51) *Because*
24	*OR*	they were in the middle of <F nowhere~ F>

They were in the middle of nowhere

Continuing within the same narrative, María makes less use of pauses as she describes the main point of the story her parents would tell her growing up. Overall, this suggests that pauses tend to figure less in complication settings, where the discursive movement of events may increase in pace, and the use of pauses decreases in use.

Returning to the narrative by Lucía from the previous section, there is a difference in pause use between her orientation and complication units:

10 *OR*	cuando era:~ *When I was*
11 *OR*	chiquita\ *very little*
12 *OR*	y vivíamos en: México:/…(0.81) *And we lived in Mexico*
13 *OR*	^uh^ vivíamos con:\..(0.17) *Uh we were living with*
14 *OR*	una familia grande/ *a big family*
15 *OR*	mis tíos~ *My uncles*
16 *OR*	y mis tías~…(0.88) *And aunts*
17 *CA*	y me acuerdo que una vez~ *And I remember that one time*
18 *OR*	yo tenía como:\..(0.40) *I was like*
19 *OR*	como cin/co años de edad~...(0.80)

About five years old

20 *CA* y me acuerdo que uno de mis t- tíos\...(0.70)
And I remember that one of my uncles

20 *OR* <este> le gustaba espantarnos\...(0.96)
Um he used to like to scare us

21 *CA* y: estaban:~
And they were

22 *CA* ellos viendo una película~..(0.42)
And they were watching a movie

23 *CA* de vam<F pí/ros\ F>...(0.86)
About vampires

24 *CA* y: todos los niños estábamos sentados\
And all of us kids were sitting

25 *CA* en el pi/so\
on the ground

26 *CA* viendo la: película~
Watching the movie

27 *CA* en la tele/…(1.10)
On the TV

In this series of IP units, Lucía makes frequent use of pauses between 500-1000 ms while she describes the setting and context in which the story takes place. This contrasts with the narrative's complication, where she describes the specific event of her uncle scaring her and her cousins.

28 *CA* Lucía: y: de repente~

And all of a sudden

29 *CA* uno de mis tíos se le<FvanF>ta~
One of my uncles gets up

30 *CA*	de la..del sillón\ *Off the..off the couch*
31 *CA*	<y:..> y:..co/rre a la puerta\ *And…and..he runs to the door*
32 *CA*	y la cie/rra la puerta\ *And he shuts the door*
33 *CA*	y de afuera nos dice\ *And from outside he tells us*
34 *CA*	<Q va a salir el vampíro~ *The vampire is gonna come out*
35 *CA*	de la: tele~ *Out of the TV*
36 *CA*	y se los:\..(0.21) *And he's gonna*
37 *CA*	los va a chupar la sangre\…(0.95) *He's gonna suck your blood*

In the above units, Lucía makes very little use of pauses in her IP boundaries. Additionally, this occurs in tandem with the previously mentioned higher pitch rate across her IP units. This suggests that the shorter IP boundary transitions are used as salient features to mark urgency and emphasis in the information structure of a narrative, where the main plot events would presumably carry the most weight.

Eulalio is another narrator of the younger generation cohort. 28 years old and born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley, he relates a story from his childhood about an accident during his fifth year birthday party, which resulted in him having to go to the hospital to be treated for a head wound. In this narrative, Eulalio produces pauses of various durations at certain key moments:

1	*AB*	Eulalio	Recuerdo yo:~..(0.19) *I remember*
2	*AB*		<uh> personalmente\ *Uh personally*
3	*AB*		cuando cumplí cinco años/…(0.72) *when I turned 5 years old*
4	*AB*		<eh: era> era: mi fiesta de cumpleaños/…(0.58) *Uh it was my..my birthday party*
5	*AB*		que:\ *that*
6	AB		me hice esta cicatriz/..(0.12) *That I got this scar*
7	*AB*		que tengo aquí/…(0.74) *That I have here*
8	*OR*		<eh> estábamos jugando a freeze tag/ (0.93) *Uh we were playing freeze tag*
9	*CA*		y: yo y mi primo:\..(0.17) *And my cousin and I*
10	*CA*		pues dimos la vuelta al auto/ *We went around the car*
11	*CA*		y no:s\ *Ran around the car and we*
12	*CA*		chocamos de cabeza/..(0.12) *Ran our heads into each other*
13	*CA*		y recuerdo:\...(0.52) *And I remember*
14	*CA*		<eh>...ver puro rojo~ *Just seeing blood*
15	OR		<sa-> verdad/ *right?*

16 CA pura sangre perdía:~...(0.48)
I was just losing blood

17 CA y:\...(0.42)
And

18 CA <s-> o sea me cargó:~
So they carried me

19 CA mis padres/
My parents

20 OR mi apá y mi amá…(0.86)
My dad and my mom

21 CA y me llevaron al hospital y:\...(0.88)
And they took me to the hospital

22 *CA* y recuerdo:\
And I remember

23 *CA* que solo/
That (only)

24 *CA* veía la luz verdad del hospital~
I could (only) see the hospital light (right?)

25 *CA* sobre la mesa y\..(0.4)
Over the table and

26 *CA* y solo me vendaron la cabeza/…(0.90)
They just bandaged my head

27 *RS* <eh:> y fue todo y:\
And that was all and

28 *EV* y pues\..(0.28)
And well

29 *EV* recuerdo eso por la cicatriz/
I remember that because of this scar

Notably, Eulalio produces pauses in units 1, 3-4, 6-9, 12-13, 16-17, 20-21, 25-26, and 28. The segmentation of these intonation units through Labov's framework reveals that, in most but not all cases, Eulalio uses pauses at transition points when he discursively moves from one type of section to another. For example, he begins his narrative with a 7-unit abstract, summarizing the main event of the story, and ending it with a pause of 740 ms. He then begins the orientation and complication of the narrative, with short pauses (~120 ms) or virtually no silence in between his utterances. He briefly switches to an orientation utterance when talking about his parents, followed by another longer pause of 860 ms, after which he switches back to the complication. While pauses do not appear at every discursive transition point, the fact that Eulalio produces pauses at some of these points is a finding to take into account, and suggests that pauses of longer durations (e.g., longer than 500 ms) are employed to signal transitions more than shorter pauses or virtually no silence.

Returning to Rosa's narrative, similar observations in the use of pauses to mark transition moments between Labovian narrative sections are noted here:

32 *CA*	Entonces~ *So*
33 *CA*	Seguimos buscando/ *We kept searching*
34 *CA*	y luego\..(0.43) *And then*
35 *OR*	veníamos por:~..(0.43) *We were passing through*
36 *OR*	la (audio cuts)/ *La (unknown)*
37 *OR*	me parece que era/

I think it was

38 *OR* y por:~...(0.51)
And by

40 *OR* la mountai:n\
the mountain

41 *OR* por esa área~…(0.77)
Somewhere around there

42 *OR* no estoy seg-muy segurita~..(0.33)
I'm not super sure

43 *OR* <uh> dónde está:~
Where (it) is

44 *OR* ahorita la:~..(0.21)
Now the

45 *OR* la:/…(0.57)
The

46 *OR* esas calle:s/
Those streets

47 *OR* pero por esa área andábamos\...(1.06)
But we were looking around that area

48 *OR* y:..había una iglesia <P muy P> grande:\...(1.28)
And there was a church

49 *CA* y le dije a mi mamá~
And I told my mom

50 *CA* <Q oh mira\ Q>...(0.87)
"*Oh look"*

51 *CA* <Q esa iglesia no la conocemos/ Q>
"We haven't seen that church before"

52 *CA* <Q pero parece que Q>...(0.86)
"It looks like"

53 *CA* <Q que <um> Q>..(0.26)
"Like um"

54 *CA*	<Q ahí <uh> Q> *"Over there uh"*
55 *CA*	<Q parece que tienen salones Q>...(1.50) *"It looks like they have rooms"*

In the previous narrative units, Rosa switches between orientations, and complications as she describes the events leading up to her and her mother inquiring about a potential venue for her sister's wedding, only to later find out that they were not in a Christian church. She begins with an ongoing complication and switches to an orientation segment in unit 35 until unit 48, when she returns to complications. This transition is marked by a 1280 ms pause. Interestingly as well, although these units are interpreted as being part of an orientation, she transitions to a brief moment of uncertainty in her memory of events, the end of which is also marked by a 1060 ms pause in unit 47.

While not all the pauses of Rosa's narrative presented here are used in transition moments, the ones discussed in the previous paragraph do carry that specific function. This is additional evidence of the use of pauses as a prosodic tool to signal discursivity and finality vs non-finality in narratives. The exact duration parameters are yet to be determined, but it does seem that longer pauses signal transitions, which are more easily interpreted through Labov's framework.

As was observed in some of Rosa's narratives, it should be noted that there was variation in the use of pauses in different narratives even by the same narrators, for what seemed like either idiosyncratic tendencies or the fact that pauses carry multiple functions and distinct interpretations of pausal use may derive from some mild ambiguity. In particular, while María was observed to use more pauses in her orientation sections of other narratives, in this narrative

below, she actually used more pauses of relatively longer duration in her complications, as shown below:

29 *OR*	María	y luego mi mamá\..(0.33) *And then my mom*
30 *OR*		dijo que mi papá se iba~…(0.55) *Said that my dad would go*
31 *OR*		a trabajar en el día~ *Go to work during the day*
32 *OR*		y ella se quedaba sola:\..(0.37) *And she'd be alone*
33 *OR*		y que nomás estaba:~..(0.30) *And she would just be…*
34 *OR*		(tsk)..u:m..(0.37) (Tsk!)..*um..*
35 *OR*		afuera lavando ropa/…(0.72) *Outside washing clothes*
36 *CA*		y que <P escuchó <Q Carla: Q> P>...(0.58) *And she heard "Carla!"*
37 *CA*		su nombre <P <Q Carla: Q> P>...(0.61) *Her name, "Carla!"...*
38 *OR*		<F Pero F>..it was in the middle of nowhere~..(0.21) *But..it was in the middle of nowhere*
39 *CA*		So..no sabía:~..(0.45) *So..she didn't know..*
40 *CA*		de dónde..venía/..(0.29) *Where..it came from..*
41 *CD*		y segú:n/..(0.25) *And according to*
42 *CD*		<u:m>..mi papá:\...(0.64)

	Um my dad…
43 *CD*	la leyenda dice: (laugh)...(0.75) *The legend goes…*
44 *CD*	Que:\..(0.39) *That*
45 *CD*	cuando:\..(0.18) *When*
46 *CD*	hay un tesoro enterrado/…(0.73) *here's buried treasure*
47 *CD*	Que: <P pasan cosas como:..scary P> *That scary things happen*

In this set of IP units, María relates a story told to her by her mother. As she describes the complication in which her mother heard her own name being called by a mysterious voice, she makes use of pauses with durations that could be compared with the orientation pauses of other narrators. Although these pauses occur within what is interpreted as the main set of the story's events, their appearance suggests that pauses of 500-1000 ms durations may occur more frequently in units where the thematic content is marked as habitual, progressive, and unbounded by temporal markers, rather than completed events that happen in rapid succession. It is also possible that her use of pauses in these sections is to provide some sense of tension or suspense, with the story having to do with scary events.

This analysis contributes to the literature on prosody by providing further insight into the role of pauses in narrative settings, leading to a greater understanding of how durations of silence work within structure outlining, especially in both Spanish and bilingual contexts. Overall, findings here suggest that pauses work in two different ways for narrative structure: (1) as part of a set of prosodic signals that mark main events in quick succession within complications, and (2)

a key feature that is used to mark finality of intonation units. Pauses may serve other narrative or discursive purposes and the variation measured for social factors such as gender and age may explain observed points of difference between narrators. In any case, the diverse backgrounds and intersection of social identities of each participant supports this work in the start of generalizing larger-scale patterns common across the Mexican American community as a whole.

3.1.3 Syllable Lengthening

Prior work has provided limited observation on the use of lengthened syllables in narratives to mark boundary placements and transitions between story units. In this line of research, syllable lengthening is often produced in conjunction with other prosodic cues to provide more time for the production of phrase-final intonation contours, which can be perceived as the main signal for determining discourse structure and speaker stance (Palakurthy, 2019).

Many examples of lengthening were found before pauses, often either at the ends of IP units or in medial unit position. The discursive nature of lengthening is not entirely clear due to the variety of reasons for which a speaker will use it, but in many cases, as shown in the following units, lengthening appeared to correspond with orientation shaping (i.e., providing new contextual information), with the presence of lengthening suggesting an ongoing effect in the construction of information relevant to the context. A lack of lengthening, in some cases, may signal the opposite effect.

13	*OR* Rosa	Cuando *When*
14	*OR*	<este:>..se iba a casar/ *Um she was about to get married*
15	*OR*	la primera ve:z/… (1.4)

	The first time
16 *OR*	<um>... mi mamá y yo andábamos buscando una iglesia para\ *My mom and I went out looking for a church to*
17 *OR*	ca/sarla\ *Marry her*
…	
21 *CA*	y:.. *And*
22 *OR*	<y> me acuerdo que fuimos/ *I remember we went*
23 *OR*	<uh> andáb-andábamos/..(0.18) *Uh we were going around*
24 *OR*	en áreas que no conocíamos muy bien/ *In areas we weren't really familiar with*
25 *OR*	pero vivíamos en Montclai:r~… (1.20) *But we lived in Montclair*
26 *CA*	y: andábamos buscando una pa- por allá/… (1.30) *And we were looking around that area*

In the above units, Rosa begins describing an ominous encounter she had with her mother at an apparent church site while searching for a venue for her sister's wedding. I observe a difference in the context of when lengthening is used versus when it is not used. In this case, syllable lengthening appears in orientation contexts where the speaker provides background information and describes the setting. Crucially, in two units that are characterized as transition points in the narrative's structure, Rosa does *not* utilize syllable lengthening.

This effect of syllable lengthening is supported by other examples from other narrators, such as Antonio's story. Antonio, a 77-year-old man who immigrated from Central Mexico to

California in his mid-twenties, describes a childhood memory in which he suffered an accident from a large door handle at his family's ranch.

1 *OR*	Antonio	me acuerdo que:~ *I remember that*
2 *OR*		posiblemente tenía unos\...(1.49) *I was possibly around*
3 *OR*		unos..tres o cuatro años/…(2.57) *Three or four years old*
4 *OR*		cuando:\...(1.94) *When*
5 *OR*		me acuerdo que <viv-> que vivía/ *I remember that I lived*
6 *OR*		<en el> en un rancho/…(0.97) *On a ranch*
7 *OR*		donde nací/…(1.81) *Where I was born*
8 *OR*		en el <este> se llamaba\..(0.31) *Which was called*
9 *OR*		San Rafael\...(1.87) *San Rafael*
10 *OR*		y era/…(0.98) *And it was*
11 *OR*		un rancho/..(0.24) *A ranch*
12 *OR*		en el municipio de [redacted] \ (3.21) *In the municipal of [redacted]*
13 *EV*		y me acuerdo que:\ (1.35) *And I remember that*
14 *OR*		vivía en una casa muy gra:nde:\...(0.99)

I lived in a very big house

15 *OR* que era la casa principal del rancho\...(1.35)
Which was the principal house of the ranch

16 *OR* el rancho pertenecía a mi abuelo\
And the ranch belonged to my grandfather

17 *OR* el papá de mi papá/…(2.29)
My father's father

18 *OR* y me acuerdo que:\...(1.78)
And I remember that

19 *OR* había unos cuartos muy grandotes\..(0.32)
There were these really big rooms

20 *OR* donde:~..(0.22)
Where

21 *OR* metían:\...(1.35)
They would put

22 *OR* el maíz que cosechaban\...(0.23)
The corn that they would harvest

23 *OR* era como una bodega~
It was like a bodega

24 *OR* y ahí metían\
And they would put in there

25 *OR* <uh eh> todo el grano d- de maíz~
Uh all of the corn grain

In the above units, Antonio produces syllable lengthening with a similar purpose as the productions from Rosa. In units 1, 4, 13-14, 18, 20-21, Antonio produces phrase-final syllable lengthening in contexts where he is producing more orientation information, and has not yet finished with the relevant section of his narrative.

There are other cases of syllable lengthening, but these appear in contexts of hesitation. Given this observation, syllable lengthening can serve as one prosodic tool in tandem with other factors to signal narrative continuation and that the speaker is providing extra information into the structure of the narrative. It was also noted that in units where a conclusive statement was made regarding both context and complicating events, syllable lengthening appeared less. Related to the hesitation context observation, this suggests that a lack of lengthening can help signal certainty in the speaker's position towards the information or event being presented to the listener, and indicate finality in the utterance. In other words, narrators may employ a feature like syllable lengthening to indicate to their audience that the sequence of events or context placement they are constructing is about to end and they will open a new sequence of units in the storyline.

Another set of examples of syllable lengthening appearing in orientation units occurs in narratives elicited by Fernanda, a 77-year-old female speaker who immigrated to Central California from Mexico well into her adult years. In this narrative, she describes an eerie incident in which her brother tried to record a musical performance program through his radio. Instead, his recording caught interference from an unidentified source, and played screams of terror. Before she arrives at the complication of these events, she sets up a relatively long orientation section of the spatial context in which this occurred. It was observed that she produced less instances of syllable lengthening relative to other narrators and her lengthening could be attributed to other linguistic factors (e.g., stress placement). Nonetheless, the production of syllable lengthening in the following units presents some key insight about the role of lengthening in structural boundaries and narrative segmentation.

18 *OR*	Fernanda	la casa d- de uno de mis hermanos/ *One of my brothers' houses*
19 *OR*		en la orilla de:l\..(0.25) *At the edge of the*
20 *OR*		del camino vecina:l/..(0.43) *Of the neighborhood road*
21 *OR*		y luego la casa de mi mamá:/..(0.19) *And then my mom's house*
22 *OR*		la casa vieja donde\..(0.47) *The old house where*
23 *OR*		crecimos\ *We grew up*

In the above units, Fernanda employs prolonged syllables in units 19-21, on *del, vecinal,* and *mamá,* with non-falling intonation on the last two units and short pause durations on all three. The presence of syllable lengthening in these phrase-final positions indicates ongoing information flow in the context-building of the narrative's main events. In this particular case, Fernanda indicates *non-finality* of these orientation units through the interaction of syllable lengthening and intonation.

Esteban, a 24-year-old male speaker who grew up in California, is another narrator whose syllable duration is of interest here. Mirroring the previous examples, Esteban's production of syllable lengthening as a way to indicate relevant setting-building, in tandem with other cues like intonation, emerge clearly in the following units:

10 *OR*	Esteban	y yo cada vez que voy a:..(0.11) *And everytime I go inside the*
11 *OR*		a los cuartos/

The bedrooms

12 *OR* <tengo> tengo la:\...(0.50)
I have the

13 *OR* la maña de:\
The habit of

14 *OR* checar la ventana:/
Checking the window

15 *OR* a ver qué está enfrente:/
To see what's out front

16 *OR* no sé por qué~
I don't know why

17 *OR* <era> era noche\...(1.17)
It was nighttime

18 *CA* y: pues desde allá me fijé:/..(0.28)
And so from there I looked

19 *CA* y había un señor~..(0.17)
And there was this man

20 *CA* con una vela caminando
Walking with a candle

21 *CA* like al otro lado de- de la calle\...(0.53)
Like on the other side of the street

22 *CA* estaba caminando así con una vela prendida\...(1.01)
He was walking like that with a lit candle

23 *CA* so cuando lo vi dije..(0.42)
So when I saw him I said

24 *CA* <Q ah chingados Q> dije
"Oh shit!" I said

25 *CA* <Q oh shi:t\ Q>...(0.85)

In the above units, Esteban discusses the night of an apparent apparition in his family's hometown, through both orientation and complicating action units. Notably, syllable lengthening appears more in the orientation units (10, 12, 13-16), in sections where he is describing habitual actions relevant to the main events. Additionally, he employs uptalk contours in units 14-15 (*ventana* and *enfrente*), mirroring the same pattern described in Fernanda's narratives.

As with many other prosodic features, there is much left to be understood about the role of syllable lengthening through a perspective informed by disciplines such as narrative inquiry and pragmatic theories of language. The example narratives presented here demonstrate different uses of syllable lengthening as one key factor in structural outlining of narratives. While intonation appears to play the largest role in that sense, syllable lengthening may help with the perception of contours as structural markers and indicators of *finality.*

3.2 INTERIM DISCUSSION

The main question being investigated in this study is how narratives are organized by bilingual Mexican American speakers through prosody. The examination here presents certain challenges, with the primary one being that Mexican American varieties of Spanish and English are still understudied even within the realm of work currently available. Another challenge is the relatively rudimentary understanding of prosody at different levels of discourse. In spite of these challenges, noteworthy findings from the examination of prosody in narration are brought forth, through a mixed-methods approach that incorporates both quantitative measurements of sociolinguistic variation and qualitative analyses of narratives. Much of the quantitative and qualitative approaches to this dissertation are informed by a Labovian perspective that provides a relatively novel perspective on the examination of narrative prosody, by investigating the

particular relationship between prosodic features and different sections of an oral narrative (e.g., orientations, complications, evaluative statements, etc.) that have distinct purposes.

The central finding of this study is the rich use of intonation as a tool for narrative direction and a signal that narrators can employ to alert their listeners about the direction of the story. These intonation patterns are further enhanced by the use of other prosodic factors, such as pause durations and syllable lengthening. Pauses, in particular, appear in narrative intonation units with different durations depending on the finality-status of the unit in question, with shorter pauses occurring in units that represent an unfinished topic and longer pauses appearing in units where the thematic content is finished and the narrator is about to move onto the next section of the story. Syllable lengthening is observed to act primarily as an enhancer of intonation contours, but certain observations across different narratives demonstrate other discursive purposes.

4. STUDY II: IDENTITY PERFORMANCE

The second part of this study examined identity work among bilingual Mexican Americans and the ways in which speakers strategically used prosody in socially meaningful ways to refer to identity discourses, both their own and ones that they navigate in the sociocultural realm. Of particular interest is the role prosody played in signaling *epistemic stance* in narrative identity discourse. While *affect* is another important discourse component widely investigated in identity practices, it is not a focus in this dissertation. Examined widely in linguistic anthropological and sociolinguistic realms, stance can be defined as the ways in which speakers position themselves from a sociocultural perspective, with stancetaking referring to the linguistic processes by which stance is indexed or signaled (Kiesling, 2022). Variation at different levels of linguistic structure can be assigned certain contextual meanings, serving as linguistic resources for stance-taking acts (Gafter, 2016; Podesva, 2016; Traugott, 2010). The nature of prosody as a versatile tool to index positionality and epistemic stances in identity navigation is yet to be studied within bilingual Latinx contexts, particularly in an era when discourses surrounding *Latinidad* and questions about the future of Latinx, Chicanx, and other Spanish-speaking communities in the U.S. are under constant scrutiny (Garcia-Louis & Mateo-Campos 2022).

In this study, participants were asked to discuss their thoughts on Latinx and Hispanic identity in the current cultural state of the U.S., with narratives describing their relationship to these discourses encouraged as well. Narratives were analyzed qualitatively to investigate the role that prosody played in signaling the speaker's epistemic stance in relation to the thematic discourse. For each prosodic component, the presence versus absence and type of variable was

analyzed in relation to the discursive material through which it occurred, along with surrounding units that could aid in the dissemination of local stance.

4.1 FINDINGS

Speakers were all situated within the U.S. context and all had spent a considerable amount of time in the diaspora community. Not all participants were part of the second study on identity, but those who did participate engaged in very complex discourses surrounding personal cultural identity and language as a tool in signaling identity, namely the use of terms like *Latino/a/e/x* or *Hispanic*. Methodologically, narratives were collected in the same way as in the first study, with analysis mirroring much of the same steps as before. The major difference here is that prosody was analyzed not for its role in structural outline, but rather for how narrators used prosodic features in discursively relevant ways, and how these features could be used to signal speakers' own internal positionalities towards relevant themes across identity narratives. Another difference was that Labovian-based analysis was not applied to identity narratives, due to the fact that many of these narratives were not constructed in the same ways that the narratives from the first study were constructed. Additionally, the main methodological focus was solely the relationship between prosody and discourse positioning of the speaker.

Another key observation to note is that while speakers engaged in more Spanish in the first study, speakers engaged more in English and code-switching practices for the second study. There may be several reasons for this. One is that the question of ethnic identity in the U.S. immediately connects to translingual experiences in which English becomes an inevitably recognizable part of the repertoire history of the speaker. In other words, speakers may shift

more towards a *Spanglish*-type of code when prompted to reflect on experiences that they have had to negotiate as Spanish heritage speakers within an English dominant culture and as second and third generation bilinguals. This could include memories of discussions and experiences that took place in both Spanish and in English, or more so in English. Another reason could be the participants' own positions towards me, the interviewer and primary investigator. Throughout most interviews, I prompted narratives first in Spanish but, over time, began a process of translanguaging to incorporate code-switching. The objective was to allow for participants to feel more at ease in speaking their own varieties that made them feel most comfortable across the interview, but specifically when it came to questions of personal identity and their relationship to internal sentiments and outward perceptions of their own background. Relevant to this methodological approach are the ongoing discussions of traditional disciplinary boundaries that often establish separate inquiries into English and Spanish varieties of U.S. Latinx communities without consideration for fluid bilingual practices (Carter et al. 2023). As such, an additional implication of this dissertation is the contribution into a growing body of work that aims to deconstruct these disciplinary borders and forge a path for investigations that analyze fluid bilingual practices.

The interview questions used to elicit narratives on identity opened up insightful discourse that reflected current discussions in the Mexican American community when it comes to identity, and how that relates to factors such as personal history, cultural connection, and relationships with other Latinx folks. Many of the narrators aligned themselves in similar ways with each other, though there were individual and other specific differences that could be explained through shared backgrounds, generational tendencies, and immigrant backgrounds. For example, most of the younger generation members stated that they were fine identifying

themselves as *Latino/a/e/x,* though certain narrators (*e.g.,* Citlalli and Estefania) said that this was not necessarily their first choice and the use of this term was very contextual for them. The general trend among most narrators was to identify specifically as *mexicanx/Mexican,* and/or *mexicoamericanx*/*Mexican American*, whether that be expressed through a sense of national identity/background, cultural upbringing, heritage, or a mix of these senses. Additionally, there was contentious use of certain terms, such as *hispanx/Hispanic*, and little-to-no use of other terms like *Chicanx*, which was perceived as having a very specific set of sociopolitical parameters that most narrators felt they did not fit in or were not aware of.

4.1.1 Intonation

One common theme that emerged among several narrators (6 out of 11) in their identity discourses included processes of change over time and expositions of how their own personal identity terms became subject to change out of evolving personal conditions. For example, María's narratives on identity presented an interesting set of observations regarding her changing relationship with identity labels across space and time. In the narrative below, she describes her changing preferences for ways to describe her cultural and ethnic identity, depending on where she lived.

1	María	Growing up/..(0.47)
2		Me: identificaba\ *I would identify myself as*
3		Bueno~ *well*
4		Todavía me identifico como\..(0.17) *I still identify as*

5		Mexicana americana/…(1.48) *Mexican American*
6	T	Mhm
7	María	U:m
8		y luego:~..(0.14) *And then*
9		Después que:~..(0.23) *After*
10		Vivo en:~ *Living in*
11		California:~ *California*
12		Me identifico más como:\...(1.22) *I identify more as*
13		Tejana/..(0.32) *Tejana* (Texan of Mexican descent)
14		But also la-more~..(0.31)
15		Broadly Latina\…(1.21)
16	T	Mhm
17	María	More so than~..(0.48)
18		Mexicana americana\...(0.60) *Mexican American*
19	T	Ah
20	María	No sé por qué\ *I don't know why*

María's dynamic use of rising and falling intonation at boundary tones is noted across the whole of the narrative, and discursively signals different ideological stances towards the personal

experience she is describing. For example, in the first half of the narrative, she relates having identified primarily as *Mexican American* and *Tejana*, with rising contours following the identification of these labels, suggesting an ongoing plea to further describe the circumstances of her identity work. Situated within the surrounding context, in which María provides further explanation in her self-evaluation of identity, uptalk here functions to provide a sentiment of irresolution and expected addition to the current discourse. This comes about as she produces a rising tone on the last syllable of *tejana* in unit 13, signaling a stance that may be interpreted as both (1) unfinished discourse, and (2) uncertainty in identifying solely as *tejana*. This second point is contextualized in the next set of units, in which María produces falling tone at the end of unit 15, on *Latina*, signaling discursive finality and resolution on the topic of her own self-identification. An additional observation is that she produces this assertion in English, rather than Spanish, which could relate to previous experiences identifying *Latina* in English-dominant contexts and other identities in Spanish-dominant contexts. Although the way narrators modulate their repertoire use in identity work is not the main focus here, it is still an interesting point that may be examined in future work. Overall, she uses these contours in dynamic ways to assert different stances in relation to a historical self-realization that culminates in her actual identification.

This mirrors the way in which rising contours were observed in the previous chapter to signal narrative continuation and holding the floor. Having incorporated a methodology highlighting the relationship between prosody and stancetaking, the rising intonation across María's IP units suggests a degree of personal uncertainty in solely describing herself as either *Mexican American* and *Tejana* as well as a personal position to continue this discourse in an ongoing manner. Additionally, there is the possibility that her rising contours are being used to

incorporate me, as the interlocutor and community insider, into the conversation and solicit my own thoughts and perspectives on her identity work.

Near the end of the narrative, she describes herself more seemingly confidently as "broadly Latina" with a falling contour marking the definite end of that description. By employing theories of stancetaking, we can see how intonation becomes a useful tool for narrators like María to indicate her personal preference and certainty with the labels that she is negotiating throughout the narrative, signaling a unique range of implied emotions left at the interpretation of the interlocutor.

Another example of this change-over-time theme emerged in Ricardo's narratives. Ricardo narrates several key factors that have informed his personal perspective on identity and culture, including his relationship to Mexico, his use of Spanish and the perception thereof, and discovering more about his ancestry. Here, he begins with a self-evaluative aside about how his own cultural perspective changed when he attended high school.

2	Ricardo	sabes que yo no apreciaba–..(0.26) *You know I didn't appreciate*
3		mi cultura/…(0.77) *My culture*
4		<um> realme:nte:/…(0.85) *Really*
5		hasta cuando yo fui al colegio\...(0.74) *Until I went to high school*
6		Cuando yo fui al colegio\ *When I started high school*
7		yo aprendí de aprecia:r~...(0.54) *I learned to appreciate*

8	mi cultura un poco más~ *My culture a little more*
9	mi comunida:d/…(0.63) *My community*
10	y:~ (1.04) *And*
11	yo tambié:n~..(0.31) *I also*
12	pensé pos sabes qué: yo no sé mucho de mi cultura\..(0.41) *Thought well you know what I don't know a lot about my culture*
13	Um\...(1.09) *Um*
14	entonces\..(0.28) *So*
15	yo me identi- identi--..(0.48) *I identify myself*
16	to answer your question\
17	yo me:..identifico/..(0.11) *I identity myself*
18	como:\..(0.18) *As*
19	americano mexicano\...(0.88) *Mexican American*

Quite similar to the way María shapes her intonation units through intonation, Ricardo employs extensive use of both falling and rising pitch patterns at boundary tones to indicate different stances. The use of falling tones on units 5, 13, and 21 not only provide a structural outline of the information he narrates, but also, in the case of unit 21, it provides a stance of certainty in his current orientation towards how he currently identifies culturally and ethnically.

Later on in the same narrative, Ricardo discusses his upbringing and the factors that shaped his own sense of identity, including language, geographical proximity, and the relationship he formed with his peers. In one particular portion, he discusses how he did not have a close connection with Mexico, although he wanted to learn more about his cultural heritage.

51	Pero cuando yo fui al colegio/ *But when I went to high school*
52	Pues..(0.40) *Well*
53	mi mundo:..(0.33) *My world*
54	creció un poco más\ *Grew a little more*
55	verdad/ *Right?*
56	porque pos estás..(0.59) *Because well you're*
57	en el colegio/ *High school*
58	con bastantes personas *With a lot of people*

Pedro's narratives also demonstrate similar themes of changing identity over time, navigating different labels and the roles of different cultural markers depending on the conversational context taking place.

1	Pedro	Una pregunta:\... (0.83) *A question*
2		no difícil pero:\.. (0.25)

		Not difficult but
3		yo creo: mientra:s\... (1.39) *I believe while*
4		eso cambia: en las etapas de tu vida\ *That changes throughout your life*
5		yo creo\... (0.93) *I think*
6		cuando estaba:\... (1.20) *When I was*
7		creciendo:/… (0.65) *Growing up*
8	T	Mmm
9	Pedro	Yo <este:>\... (1.00) *I um*
10		Yo <este>\... (0.86) *I um*
11		estaba:\... (0.95) *I was*
12		muy metido:\ *Very involved*
13		<en> en ser mexica:no\ *In being Mexican*
14		y ser <este>... (1.35) *And being…*

For the most part, Pedro uses falling tones across this portion of his identity narrative, with one rising tone observed in unit 7 on *creciendo* 'growing up.' His consistent use of falling tone reveals an explicit stance of certainty in his relationship with his ethnic identity, as he

introspectively observes his dynamic experiences across time. He continues with falling tones in the same narrative, but also employs rising contours at certain points:

17	Pedro	Toda mi vida/ *All my life*
18		mis padres me die:ro:n <eh>... (1.78) *My parents gave me uh*
19		me enseñaban a ser~... (1.69) *They would teach me to be*
20		mexi<FcaF>no\..(0.39) *Mexican*
21		pues ellos son mexicanos nacidos en México:/…(0.72) *Since they're Mexicans born in Mexico*
…		
24		durante mi etapa de la ado- la adolescencia/ *During my adolescence*
25		y- y:..(0.87) *And and*
26		y pues- el anno d- de la: preparato:ria:/…(0.89) *And well- during my high school years*
27		yo me metí mucho la- uh- uh- a esa cultura/..(0.30) *I involved myself a lot in that culture*
28		a la cultura de:\...(0.76) *The culture of*
29		la musica norte:na:\ *Norteno music*
30		la música de banda:\ *Banda music*

Pedro's use of non-falling tones is observed in 6 of the above units, particularly in sections where finality of a discursive theme is not yet achieved. In these cases, Pedro narratively outlines his relationship with his younger self, noting his active involvement with cultural activities associated with Mexican identity. Additionally, my presence as his interlocutor and cultural insider could also be playing an important role in his identity work, motivating a sense of shared suppositions and ideas about what it means to *be Mexican* (e.g., involving oneself in cultural practices). Distinguishing these tones apart, his use of falling tone to signal discursive certainty and a strong stance of affiliation towards his own identity experience is noted again in unit 20. It is observed that not only does he use an unequivocal falling intonation on *mexicano*, but his intensity is prominent on the penultimate syllable, much more than what would be perceptually anticipated. This combination of intensity and intonation indicates a strong sense of affirmation towards how Pedro made sense of his own ethnic identity while growing up, and how this identity came about due to his parents' active decisions in his cultural upbringing.

The theme of identity related to other factors such as geographical location to Mexico, community demographics, and the change of identity across time informed by important life phases, is echoed in Citlalli's narratives. In her previous narratives, she uses extensive rising contours more noticeably than other speakers across the study. The same effect occurs in her identity discourse, with noticeable differences in the use of both rising and falling intonation depending on the discursive focus. In the first part of her narrative, she navigates the question I ask her about how she identifies herself culturally and ethnically, and what terms she uses to express her identity explicitly to those around her.

1	Citlalli	Sí: creo que ya: hace mucho tiempo:/..(0.20) *Yes, I think that a while back*

2		o creo que todavía~...(0.62) *Or I think still now*
3		yo creo que mis papás también/ *I think my parents also*
4		prefieren este término Mexican American/…(0.70) *Prefer that term, Mexican American*
5	T	Mhm
6	Citlalli	<u:m>...(0.87)
7		pero sí es complicado\ *But yes it's complicated*
8		y también o sea/..(0.40) *And also um*
9		cuando llegué a Berkeley:~..(0.35) *When I got to Berkeley*
10		de nuevo:~ *Again*
11		tuve que:~ *I had to*
12		<como> reevaluar mi identida:d/…(0.54) *Like, reevaluate my identity*

As shown in the narrative segments above, Citalli begins with a statement of preference, similar to the previous narrators. She then moves on to discuss how her identity expression has changed across time, and was most recently informed by her shift to an undergraduate college setting from her hometown. Noticeably, she employs a rising tone on unit 4, *Mexican American,* followed by a falling tone in the next discursive unit, *complicado*. This signals an ambiguous degree of openness and uncertainty to the term *Mexican American,* with an emphasis on the complex nature of identity that she has to work through. She continues with her discourse by

discussing her hometown, describing its proximity to Mexico and the homogenous environment she grew up in.

13		porque yo vengo de~..(0.32) *Because I come from*
14		de una parte de San Diego:~ *A part of San Diego*
15		<o sea> muy fronteri:za:/…(0.84) *Um very close to the border*
16	T	Mhm
17	Citlalli	Está como muy cerca de la frontera:/ *It's very close to the border*
18		como unas- *Like around*
19		tres millas o algo así:/..(0.38) *Three miles or something like that*
20		se puede ver Tijuana: desde:~...(0.69) *You can see Tijuana from*
21		no mi calle/ *Not from my street*
22		pero si <n- nos- no-> si estuviéramos en el techo\ *But if we were on the roof*
23		se pudiera ver Tijuana:/ *You could see Tijuana*
24		o si subimos la misma calle poquito/ *Of if we went up the same street a little*
25		se puede ver Tijuana/ *You can see Tijuana*
26		<so>..de verdad muy cerca:/…(0.77) *So really close*

27 E:m…(0.97)

28 entonces hay como\
So then there's

29 sí pues una mezcla/..(0.21)
Well yes a mix

30 no hay muchos latinos de o:tro:-
There aren't a lot of other Latinos

31 de otro:s países aquí:/
From other countries here

32 nomás somos puros mexicano:s/…(0.84)
Mostly just pure Mexicans

In these narrative units, Citlalli employs rising contours in a fashion similar to the analysis described in the narrative structure section. Here, she uses her uptalk to signal an ongoing effect.

33 Um:..(0.47)

34 y bueno sí es-...(0.82)
And well yes it's

35 sí para mí:/
Yes for me

36 el término lati:no:/…(0.63)
The term Latino

37 o sea lo escucho mucho usado/
Um I hear it used a lot

38 como por el gobierno federa:l/
Like by the federal government

39 y eso/
And all that

40 pero siento que~..(0.47)
But I feel like

41 actualmente mi comunidad~
My community right now

42 no usa mucho el término:/
Doesn't use that term a lot

43 latino:/…(1.37)
Latino

44 o sea nomás como para\..(0.23)
Or only to just like

45 hablar de algo del gobierno\
Talk about the government

46 como:..
Like

47 <Q sí: los latinos en los estados unidos son así\ Q>...(0.88)
"Yes, Latinos in the U.S. are like this…"

48 <um> si estamos hablando como de
Um if we're talking about

49 la identida:d/
Identity

50 latina:/
Latinx identity

51 pero\..aún no prefiero eso/
But..I still don't prefer that

52 el término no se me hace tan específico/
The term doesn't seem as specific

53 como\...(0.57)
As

54 Mexican American/
Mexican American

55 <o sea>...(0.86)
Um

56 <um>...(1.01)
Um

57 para mí ese- eso describe mejor mi identidad/
For me that- that describes my identity better

In the above portion of her identity discourse, Citlalli explains further the differences between the use of terms like *Latino* and *Mexican American*, the latter of which is what she prefers in self-identification. The use of uptalk in the final portions of this narrative unit signal an ongoing introspection of her preference for *Mexican American*. She asserts that this is a better descriptor of her background, based on her community history, but through her intonational effects, she appears to still be actively engaging with this ongoing discourse. As with other narrators, it is also possible that she is also engaging with me and soliciting my own thoughts as her interlocutor and someone who shares a similar cultural upbringing.

Citlalli and other narrators utilize intonation in discursively meaningful ways to index not necessarily identity, but to shape their positionalities towards identity. Notably, rising and uptalk contours are used in these discourses to generally demonstrate an ongoing ambivalence and lack of personal settlement on ethnic and cultural identity labels, or more broadly, a certain flexibility towards multiple forms of self-identification depending on context and interlocutor. Important in this discourse analysis is a prior understanding of each participants' own personal background and how their experiences relate to their social performances in identity, which can become influential even if not directly mentioned by the narrator in the moments they specifically discuss identity.

4.1.2 Pauses

Although pauses are, no doubt, an important aspect of conversation and oral speech structure, their function in stancetaking acts and performativity work is not as well noted in relation to intonation patterns. In any case, the nature of silent points and the discursive signaling they present is worth further observation in multiple narrative contexts. Within the scope of this investigation into identity work, observations generally indicated the presence of pauses as secondary features that correlated with other features, mostly intonation, at structurally important boundary points. While the exact nature and reason for silence between intonation units cannot be fully ascertained, through a combinatory examination of discourse content and juxtaposition with other analyzed features, it was observed that narrators employed pauses in discursively useful ways when discussing their relationships to identity. Overall, pauses functioned in tandem with intonation to enhance stancetaking acts that emerged through narrators' expositions on their own journeys of realization and evolution in how they self-identified culturally and ethnically. The use of pauses of certain durations in many of these narratives signaled stances on a binary between hesitation and certainty in relation to the content under discussion. Additionally, it is possible that some use of pauses at certain points was due to the narrators taking time to formulate their utterances.

Returning to Ricardo's identity narratives, pauses of certain durations emerge at temporal points where identity relations are negotiated and declared. As mentioned previously, Ricardo affirms his self-designation as *mexicano-americano* or Mexican American, for which his stance is marked as certain and in full resolution through not just his falling intonation, but his deliberate pause (880 ms), which in this discourse signals a sense of confidence that does not require an immediate clarification.

14		entonces\..(0.28) *So*
15		yo me identi- identi--..(0.48) *I identify myself*
16		to answer your question\
17		yo me:..identifico/..(0.11) *I identity myself*
18		como:\..(0.18) *As*
19		americano mexicano\...(0.88) *Mexican American*

Comparing this to María's narratives, examined in the previous section, I observe a similar pattern that is established through both intonation and a relatively longer pause duration.

12		Me identifico más como:\...(1.22) *I identify more as*
13		Tejana/..(0.32) *Tejana* (Texan of Mexican descent)
14		But also la-more~..(0.31)
15		Broadly Latina\…(1.21)
16	T	Mhm
17	María	More so than~..(0.48)
18		Mexicana americana\...(0.60) *Mexican American*
19	T	Ah
20	María	No sé por qué\

I don't know why

In this narrative, Maria makes use of longer pauses to express a similar stance as Ricardo, which is a full confidence in her discursive decision to identify as *Tejana* more than Mexican American.

Not all narrators employed pauses in the same exact way. Some instances suggest further functions for pauses such as hesitation or active discursive construction in the moment, in which the narrator is making decisions about how to best build their narrative and express their stances on identity. Thalia, a 50-year-old woman who immigrated with her family from Central Mexico to California as a child, is one narrator whose pauses sometimes function in these ways. In her identity narratives, she expresses a preference for the term *Hispana* or *Hispanic*, over other terms, though she later on declares that she will sometimes identify herself as *Mexicana* when she feels that it is necessary to clarify her cultural roots.

1	Thalia	Bueno\ *Well*
2		como:/..(0.47) *As*
3		yo como hispa:n-/ *Me being Hispanic-*
4		realmente no estoy:~ *I'm actually not-*
5		no sé así mucho de la diferencia de:\..(0.46) *I don't know much about the difference between*
6		si dices hispa:na o latina\ *When you say Hispanic or Latina*
7		o lo que sea pero\..(0.45)

		Or whatever but
8		his/pana\ *Hispanic*
9		yo sé que soy: *I know I am*
10		mexicana:/ *Mexican*
11		pero s-\...(0.85) *But-*
12		you know\
13		cuando alguien me pregunta/ *When someone asks me*
14		<soy- les-> contesto que soy his/pana\ (0.6) *I say that I'm Hispanic*
15	T	Mhm

In these units, Thalia expresses a clear stance about identifying as *Hispana*, and that this is her typical response when asked about her background. The only particular point where she employs a longer pause of around 600 ms is in unit 14, after which she changes the discourse and begins describing different encounters in which people have attempted to physically and racially categorize her based on her phenotype. She employs pauses in units 2, 5, and 7, during which she constructs a full stance characterized by an assertion towards the label, *Hispanic*, and some possible uncertainty towards other common labels, such as *Latina*, or the current discourses on differentiating both of these terms. In these particular units her hesitancy towards other labels is marked by the, "*no sé así mucho de la diferencia*." In this same context, her pauses signal dialogic continuation; she is continuing with her discourse about how identity works for her and is taking careful consideration into detailing her views on it.

A similar observation of pauses being employed to provide temporary moments of consideration during identity expression construction, and even possibly another function of opening the space for interactional retrospection, emerges in Gerardo's narratives. Gerardo is a 40-year-old man who immigrated to the U.S. from Northern Mexico in his teenage years, ultimately finishing his high school degree after migrating to California, continuing in higher education, and relocating to the East Coast, where his current community has influenced his present-day thoughts about how he views himself and how he performs his own cultural identity. Gerardo offers a detailed overview of his journey in identity formation from his time in Mexico up to the present moment, influenced by various factors such as societal forces of exclusion and oppression in the U.S., navigating his queer sexuality, and his discursive interactions with common cultural discourses pertaining to how certain terms of self-expression work (e.g., *Chicanx* being largely a political identity based in the U.S.).

1	Gerardo	cuando llegué a estados unidos/ *When I came to the U.S.*
2		empecé a ser racializado:~..(0.16) *I started to be racialized*
3		excluido et cetera/…(0.91) *Excluded, etc.*
4		y aquí en DC:\ *And here in DC*
5		sí me identifico como:\...(0.54) *I do identify myself as*
6		tsk como:~...(0.66) *Like*
7		latino/ *Latino*

8		o latinx:\..(0.47) *Or Latinx*
9	T	Mm
10	Gerardo	Ademas de..Mexican\ *In addition to Mexican*
11		no/ *No?*
12		I assume that identity\
13		porque mi comunida:d/ *Because my community*
14		pues es la comunidad latina\...(1.26) *Well it's the Latino community*
15		and I prefer too:/…(0.69)
16		Um that term to Hispa:ni:c~...(1.69)
17	T	[Mhm]
18	Gerardo	[no/]
19		este:\ *Um*
20		<y:> y chicanx/ *And and Chicanx*
21		um:\...(0.73)
22		I don't- I don't identify myself as- as\
23		as Chicano~..(0.74)
24		<um> precisely because I was not born here\

Gerardo produces phrase-final pauses of varying durations in units 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 14-16, 21, and 23. The common observation among these productions is that pauses are employed in

contexts where the narrator is actively constructing his stance and his identity preferences. Additionally, Gerardo's use of pauses in this context may be due to a combination of both internal hesitation towards his response and careful consideration of his identity discourse, similar to conversational *softening* of an utterance. A similar effect appears in units 14-16, during which Gerardo asserts that he prefers the terms *Latino/Latinx* over *Hispanic.* The co-production of pauses over 100ms and non-falling contours in the final two units signals some type of discursive mitigation; Gerardo does not produce his units with falling intonation and short pauses as this could be interpreted as taking on a stronger stance in his lack of preference for *Hispanic.*

Another set of examples in which a narrator may use pauses to both indicate full certainty in their social performance along with active construction comes from Lucía's narratives on her identity. Lucía is a 54-year-old woman who immigrated with her family from Central Mexico before her teenage years, settling in California. As mentioned in the previous section, she positions herself as *Mexicana*, asserting a sense of pride that brings about an emotional reaction as she ponders on her family's experience in migration. In this next set of units, she also discusses other terms of identity, particularly *Latina.*

44	Lucía	Yo pienso que es~ *I think that it's*
45		es muy: este\...(0.52) *It's very um*
46		que es muy:~ (0.39) *That it's very*
47		muy bien usar esos términos\..(0.44) *Fine to use those terms*
48		yo: a veces~ *Sometimes I*

49	cuando la gente me pregunta:~ *When people ask me,*
50	<Q <eres> qué eres\ Q> *"What are you?"*
51	<Q eres latina:/ Q> *"Are you Latina?"*
52	yo digo/ *I tell them*
53	<Q Sí\ Q> *"Yes."*
54	<Q soy latina\ Q>...(0.77) *"I'm Latina."*

Lucía produces pauses at the ends of units 45-47, and 77. In the first three, she employs durations of silence while she is actively constructing her stance on the use of terms other than *Mexicana*. I interpret the pauses here as indexing her openness to this discourse, as a lack of pause would more likely suggest previously established certainty. This contrasts with the pause produced at the end of unit 54, in which she asserts through her quoted voice that she is Latina. The pause in unit 54 is also relatively longer than the three earlier pauses, at around 770 ms in full duration.

Other noteworthy observations of pause production in stancetaking contexts come from Eulalio's narratives on identity. Eulalio is a 28-year-old man who grew up in Rio Grande Valley of South Texas, maintaining some connections with his parents' hometowns in Northern Mexico. In this set of narrative units, he discusses his common practices in identity performance.

20	<eh:>..siempre: *Um always*

21		cuando me preguntan/ *Whenever someone asks me*
22		verdad~ *Right?*
23		<Q de dónde eres/ Q> *"Where are you from?"*
24		o- you know-
25		<Q cuál es t- tu:~ Q> (audio cut off) *"What is your-"*
26		eh: sí:~ *Um yeah*
27		suelo~..(0.36) *I tend to*
28		contestar: que soy: Mexican American\..(0.23) *Say that I'm Mexican American*
29		[verdad/]...(0.82) *Right?*
30	T	[Mhm]
31		<eh eh->...(1.1)
32		So: depende yo creo en el contexto:\ *So I think it depends on the context*
33		<y-> y quién me está haciendo la pregunta:/..(0.19) *And on who is asking me the question*
34		<eh:>...(0.57)
35		pero:\..(0.37) *But*
36		like overarchi:ng/
37		<I->.. I do:
38		you know\

39	identify as Latino:~...(0.54)
40	Um:...(0.79)
41	Hispanic\...(0.5)

Eulalio produces pauses in units 28-29, 31, 33-35, and 39-41. Very similar to the other narratives analyzed in this section, Eulalio's use of pauses signal an ongoing stancetaking act in his orientation towards the use of certain terms of identity, especially in the final units (39-41). In these units, Eulalio pauses between his intonation units, including within a filler context, all of which collectively indicates an ongoing construction practice, in which he is considering openly in that specific moment how he identifies and what labels he is comfortable using.

Prior to this, in units 28 and 29, he produces pauses at the moment that he declares his common tendency to identify himself as *Mexican American* when asked about his identity. While the first pause of 230 ms could be interpreted as signaling resolution and certainty in this stance, he follows up with an interactional agreement-seeking unit (i.e., *right?*) that ends with a longer pause measured at 820 ms. The contextual environment in which this pause occurs means that pauses overall do carry different roles, and it is up to the listener to interpret the effect of these cues in interactional narrative settings.

The examination of pauses in this section sheds some light on the use of non-intonation signals in identity performance, examined through a lens that incorporates theories of stancetaking and is informed by current cultural discourses surrounding identity in Latinx community of the U.S. While it is clear that pauses are employed for different reasons in different instances, the examples here reveal some new information about their use in two different ways: (1) to construct a stance of certainty and full assertion in the expression of an

identity, and (2) a marker of active consideration and slight hesitation or ongoing introspection regarding the discourse at hand. Regarding the latter observation, some narrators may understand the lack the pauses to signal complete certainty and closure in the dialogic space, and, in order to avoid that, they may employ pauses of varying durations to give themselves time to consider their stances and index ongoing openness in a dialogic interaction.

4.1.3 Syllable Lengthening

In the previous chapter, I observed both pauses and syllable lengthening as mainly secondary features that worked to enhance the effects of intonation, based on a general holistic methodological focus that looked at the interrelationships between prosodic features. In a similar fashion, intonation in identity discourses appears to play a primary role in the dissemination and expression of stance, with narrators employing other features in part to support the perception of contours for discourse purposes. As such, the analysis presented here is relatively much shorter, though not without notable observations that have implications for the realms of discourse and identity performance. In spite of the primary focus on intonation in this chapter, syllable lengthening is also examined for possibilities of its sole functions outside of intonation enhancement, notably in stancetaking. Of particular interest in the use of syllable lengthening over certain elements, which are then analyzed for their relationship to the larger discourse occurring through narration.

Narrators often used syllable lengthening at certain key points in narration that informed their epistemic stances, often coinciding with salient intonation contours. In one example of Citlalli's narratives on identity, as she discusses her hometown and the community demographics, she employs syllable lengthening at the end of these units:

30	Citlalli	no hay muchos latinos de o:tro:- *There aren't a lot of other Latinos*
31		de otro:s países aquí:/ *From other countries here*
32		nomás somos puros mexicano:s/…(0.84) *Mostly just pure (i.e., only) Mexicans*

These lengthened syllables occur in *otro, aquí,* and *Mexicanos,* and also additionally in *otros* of unit 31, before the end of the unit. While the lengthening effect occurs partly in tandem with rising contours, it also appears in a particular section where Citlalli highlights how her hometown demographics shaped her outlook on her personal identity. Based on this observation, it appears that she is employing lengthened syllables to place discursive emphasis on contextually-relevant elements, providing a perceptually noticeable reference point that signals her stance on identity as being directly related to her hometown environment.

Similar to Citlalli's narratives above, Lucía examines her emotional relationship to her identity as a *mexicana* and familiar circumstances that inform her current stance. Lucía, a 54-year-old speaker who immigrated with her family from Mexico before adolescence, describes a sense of pride (i.e., *orgullo*) for her identity and relates this to the experiences her parents went through while constructing a new life in California.

14	Lucía	yo siempre: he tenido mucho orgullo:\..(0.26) *I've always been very proud*
15		de decir que yo\...(0.76) *To say that I*
16		nací en México:\ *Was born in Mexico*

17		y soy mexica/na\... *And I'm Mexican*
18		y co–y–pero m- me crié..(0.37) *And but I grew up*
19		mis padres me criaron en California\ (1.23) *my parents raised me in California*
20	T	Uh-huh
21	Lucía	porque yo:\...(0.86) *Because I*
22		pienso que los mexicanos trabajamos..muy duro/…(0.62) *Think that us Mexicans work..really hard*
23	T	mhmm
24	Lucía	y tengo mucho orgullo de- de mis- padres\ *And I'm really proud of…of my parents*
25		porque ellos han trabajado <F muy/ F> muy duro\…(1.54) *Because they've worked really really hard*
26		(1.6) cuando <P primero llegaron a P>..California~ *When they first came to California*

In the previous narrative sections, Lucía employs syllable lengthening over the final lexical elements in units 14, 16, and 21. In these units, syllable lengthening serves as markers of ongoing internal evaluation, in relation to personal stances on identity. Lucía here engages in an active examination of her own sentiments, with the combination of syllable lengthening and pauses suggesting a previously uninspected set of emotions that she is now expressing out loud.

Returning to Eulalio's narratives as well, in this set of units he tackles the question of how he identifies himself culturally and what brought him to that decision, for which he wonders out loud about the effect of his educational background.

1	Eulalio	<Eh> pero me identifico:...(0.59) *Eh but I identify*
2		Mm:...(3.04)
3		o sea me identifico como Latino/ *Well I identify myself as Latino*
4		pero\...(0.55) *but*

… (A brief break occurred in discourse here due to audio issues. Narrator was asked to repeat the original point) …

5		que me identifico:/ *That I identify*
6		como latino:/ *As Latino*
7		pero:~ *But*
8		especificamente como hispano:/..(0.14) *Specifically as Hispanic*
9	T	[Ah] okay
10	Eulalio	[verdad/]...(0.71) *Right?*
11		<eh> y: no se si eso\ *Uh I don't know if that*
12		tenga que ver con mi educació:n/..(0.11) *Has anything to do with my education*
13		porque *Because*
14		yo solia:...(0.71) *I used to*

15	Eh:...(0.95) *Uh*
16	identificarme:\ *Identify*
17	como hispano:~ (0.15) *As Hispanic*
18	pues <uh>..(0.48) *So uh*
19	like with certainty:/

In the above units, Eulalio expresses his preference for the cultural marker, *hispano*, while wondering out loud if this is due to his tendency to identify as such in his earlier school years. In these narrative units, he employs syllable lengthening in the final syllables of certain keywords, such as *identifico, latino,* and *hispano*. The prosodic production over these syllables, intersecting with the other examined cues, helps express a stance formed in mild certainty about personal identity, with lingering evaluations pertaining to the reasons for this. Similar to the ways in which syllable lengthening was observed in the previous chapter as an enhancer for intonation cues, especially when it came to rising contours that signaled non-finality, syllable lengthening here appears to serve a similar purpose. In the context of Eulalio's narrative, his use of syllable lengthening and non-falling contours in units 5, 6, 8, 12, 17 and 19, index a stance of ongoing evaluation over his own personal cultural identity expression, similar to the ways in which prosody is used by other narrators in this dissertation.

The use of syllable lengthening in different ways to index personal stance towards identity labels is observed throughout Lina's narratives. Lina, a 51-year-old woman who immigrated from Mexico City to California with her family before adolescence, describes her

preference for self-identifying as Hispanic, and then indirectly Mexican through the naming of her birth city. In these units, she employs syllable lengthening for different discursive motives.

2	T	Cómo:~ *How*
3		te identificas/ *Do you identify yourself*
4		<qué término:> qué palabra usas para~ *What term- what word do you use to*
5		describirte a ti mism- a ti misma\ *Describe yourself*
6		cuando la gente te:\ *When people (ask) you-*
7	Lina	His- Hispana:/…(1.40) *Hispanic*
8	T	Hispana:/ *Hispanic?*
9		Okay\
10	Lina	I mean yeah:/
11		Hispana:~ *Hispanic*
12		si me preguntan y luego:\...(1.26) *If they ask me and then*
13		cuando no entienden que:\..(0.17) *When they don't understand that-*
14		cuando les digo\ *When I say*
15		que soy hispana/..(0.26) *That I'm Hispanic*

16	me dicen\ *They ask me,*
17	<Q <d- de-> de dónde ere:s/ Q> (0.74) *"Where are you from?"*
18	les digo del:\.. *And I tell them I'm from*
19	del DF:/…(0.99) *From the Federal District*

Lina produces phrase-final syllable lengthening at the ends of units 7, 10-13, and 17-19. Up until unit 16, she discusses her common preference to describe herself as *Hispana* when asked by others about her ethnic and cultural background. After that, she dialogically sets up an interaction between herself and another generalized speaker asking her further questions about where she is specifically from, given the vagueness in declaring oneself as *Hispanic.* A couple of noteworthy observations are presented here regarding the functions of syllable lengthening in her identity discourse. First, in her initial responses she collectively employs not just lengthened syllables, but also a rising contour and a pause of 1410 ms, which taken together points to her dialogically opening the interaction for further inspection, without full certainty in her stance. While Lina's use of a rising contour is the factor that more likely achieves this discourse positioning, her phrase-final lengthening also aids in this as it occurs over the term of discourse, *Hispana*.

Interestingly, she does not employ syllable lengthening a few units later when she repeats this identity label, in unit 15, during which she discusses common interactions she becomes part of when asked about her specific background. She still employs uptalk and a phrase-final pause, albeit much shorter in duration (260 ms). The lack of syllable lengthening in this example over the label, *Hispana,* suggests more established certainty in how she discusses her identity with

others in generalized contexts, with the rising contour more likely acting as a discursive cue signaling continuity in the content being discussed.

The same pattern of syllable lengthening appearing in contexts with established narrator certainty for their identity occurs in Isabel's narratives. A 54-year-old woman who immigrated from Mexico to California as an adult, Isabel identifies strongly as being Mexican, linked with her national origins and does not prefer other terms of identity.

1	T	Como se identifica: *How do you identify*
2		usted *(you)*
3		culturalmente:\ *Culturally*
4		etnicamente:\ *Ethnically*
5		o sea como\ *O like as*
6		Latina:/ *Latina*
7		Mexicana:~ *Mexicana*
8		His[pana: y porque] *Hispanic and why*
9	Isabel	[mexicana\...] (1.05) *Mexican*
10	T	Ok\
11		mexicana:/…(1.15) *Mexican*

12	<eh eh l->.. para mi el latino es en general\ *Eh for me 'Latino' is in general*
13	verdad/ *Right?*
14	Pero:\..(0.43) *But*
15	pero mi nacionalidad/ *But my nationality*
16	es mexicana\ *Is Mexican*
17	<y- y-> el latino\ *And and Latino*
18	es de diferentes- *Is from different*
19	<um>..paises~ *Um countries*
20	<de:> de habla hispana\...(0.83) *Of the Spanish-speaking world*

While Isabel only employs syllable lengthening in units 11 and 14, the lack of lengthening overall suggests a stance of certainty in her views on identity labels and what the use of those labels suggests.

4.2 INTERIM DISCUSSION

The analysis of stance, affect, and other discursive acts in narration of identity experiences presents some very pertinent implications both within and beyond the realm of prosody and narrative inquiry. While prosody remains a relatively understudied field with differing perspectives on best approaches, there is a general agreement that prosody is a very

important aspect of daily discourses and that how our utterances are shaped by prosody is key to signaling exactly where we stand in relation to a topic of conversation and an aspect of current cultural conversation (Freeman, 2019; Ward et al., 2017). Additionally, certain prosodic features, most notably uptalk, remain largely understudied in terms of their discourse functions within Spanish speaking practices (Kim & Repiso-Puigdelliura, 2021). It remains unclear whether discourse patterns associated with uptalk mirror those observed in North American English practices. As mentioned in previous sections, one study asserts that Mexican Spanish uptalk acts as a politeness and social convergence strategy (Holguín Mendoza, 2011), somewhat similar to that of North American English uptalk. The possible influence of English on U.S. Spanish varieties is yet to be established as an overall phenomenon, and recent investigations have demonstrated that, among bilinguals in the U.S., uptalk in Spanish does tend to mirror American English traits.

The narratives on identity presented here suggest an ongoing network of interconnected conversations aimed at tackling what ethnic and cultural labels are useful and personally relevant to one's sense of self. Reactions and stancetaking acts towards common terms like *Latinx, Chicanx,* and *Mexican American* are socially connected to the broader patterns and changes occurring across the sociopolitical landscape, informed by other entities and voices (e.g., government presence, community background, generational differences, etc.). While the segmental content points directly to what narrators are discussing and how they outwardly shape their identities, prosodic and other suprasegmental content allows us to better understand how narrators *feel* in relation to these identities, and what their dispositions are regarding other *voices* that they are interacting with.

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

5.1 PROSODY IN MEXICAN AMERICAN NARRATIVES

The main objectives of this dissertation were: (1) to understand how prosody correlates with spoken narrative structure and discursive movement, and (2) to examine the ways in which prosody is used by narrators in different ways to signal epistemic stance in their construction of ethnic/cultural identity. This dissertation incorporated a relatively novel methodological approach to the study of prosody in narratives, characterized by a mixed-methods examination of intonation, pauses, and syllable lengthening that was informed by an interdisciplinary perspective based on Labovian narrative inquiry, discourse analysis methods, and theories of stance. The motivation for this approach was to better understand how prosody and narrative structure are linked in ways that may be observable and predictably variable across speakers of a community sharing a cultural and ethnic identity.

5.1.1 Summary of Findings

Through a mixed-methods approach guided by a set of multidisciplinary perspectives, including narrative inquiry, prosodic studies, and discourse analysis, the findings here present substantial use of prosodic features in narratives of personal experience and identity discourses. In particular, intonation is a main feature in the expression of both information structure and discursive stances, while other factors such as pauses, and syllable lengthening may either help enhance intonation productions or be employed by narrators to serve similar functions.

Additionally, there exists a degree of quantifiable social and discursive variation that, in future studies, may further explain differences in prosodic use.

In terms of intonation, rising contours and falling contours present different expressions of thematic structure. Narrators employ rising contours (i.e., uptalk) to mark: (1) non-finality in structure, and (2) stances of irresolution and hesitancy in solidifying a discursive decision on identity. The common theme that connects these two interpretations is the use of uptalk as a signal for *continuity* in multiple aspects, while falling contours are employed more or less to signal *resolution* in various senses, including structure and a confidence of certainty in identity work. These contours do not often emerge solitarily, as examples from different narrators show that pauses and syllable lengthening are often also produced in conjunction with certain contours, depending on the narrative and discourse decision of the speaker.

5.1.2 Narrative Structure

As discussed in Chapter 1, a general overview of the literature on prosody in narration shows that there is much work to be done still in achieving a full understanding of the intricate role that prosodic cues play in narratives, from different perspectives. While there exists a disciplinary consensus that prosody is, indeed, an important linguistic feature that provides pragmatic information in different contexts (Cole 2015; Mello et al. 2012), more work is needed on prosodic repertoires, especially in non-English varieties and within contexts that fall outside traditional prescriptive standards that elevate monoglossic practices as the norm. The findings in this dissertation, specifically in Chapter 3, provide further insight into the role of prosody in narrative discourse in bilingual Spanish-English practices, with a particular focus on markers that provide structural information and the thematic flow of a narrative. Intonation, in particular, has

a salient effect on the interpretation of structural directionality (i.e., *finished* vs *unfinished*), with most falling contours indicating some type of finality in narrative discourse, and a closed space in the thematic content of a narrative segment. Uptalk, plateaus, and other non-falling contours, on the other hand, are produced in contexts where the structural outline remains open. In these cases, narrators use prosody to extend their thematic detail of a narrative and to signal a type of unfinished nature to the narrative at hand.

General qualitative analyses of pauses and syllable lengthening reveal that these prosodic features mostly act as secondary cues to intonation patterns, working to enhance the perception of different contours for the listener. However, pauses also appear to work in unique ways beyond an interrelated function to intonation, being employed by narrators in such a way that resembles the structural functions of intonation. This supports earlier quantitative measurements that show longer durations of pauses appearing in contexts where *finality* is a characteristic of the intonation unit and the discursive content of the narrative. Pauses of shorter durations appear elsewhere in narrative segments. When it comes to syllable lengthening, observations here reveal that this feature acts as a perceptual enhancer of intonation. In other words, narrators use lengthening to give themselves more time to produce contours that are contextually important in providing structural boundaries and signaling discursive directionality. Additionally though, it may be the case that it carries other functions as well that are not examined here but could be observed in future work.

5.1.3 Identity Performance

As discussed in Chapter 1, the discourse on identity labels in Latinx communities is ongoing and presents a decades-long history of change and innovation. Recent conversations

surrounding identity may be influenced especially by the political atmosphere brought on by certain events such as the 2020 Presidential Election (Soto-Vásquez & Gonzalez, 2022). Prosody, being already an understudied feature in most dialects, presents a novel avenue for discussing the use of language in identity performances because of its saliency and how listeners rely on it for different reasons (Cole, 2015; Holliday, 2021).

Narrators in this study expressed different cultural identity preferences and indicated various reasonings, both historical and current, for how they chose to situate and connect themselves to the cultural community at hand. Notably, many narrators expressed an agreement on their allegiance to *Mexican* and *Mexican American* identity, including Citlalli, Ricardo, Estefania, Lucia, Pedro, and Gerardo. With the exception of Gerardo who moved to the U.S. when he was 17, all of these narrators grew up in the U.S. (born and/or raised from pre-adolescent age) and were of either the younger or middle-aged generation cohorts. Other narrators, including Eulalio, Maria, and Thalia constructed stances towards their identities and certain labels such as *Mexican, Latina,* and *Hispanic*. Maria, in particular, having grown up in South Texas along the border, described her current identity as primarily *Tejana* while also acknowledging her background as Mexican and the more general *Latina*. In this expression, she relates her identity with a stance that indicated an ongoing discursive change informed by her locational situation (i.e., living in California after having grown up in Texas) and other sociopolitical discourses concerning Latinx identities. This is realized both through the content of her narrative and the prosodic cues she employs throughout her intonation units. Thalia, on the other hand, expresses her identity as *Hispana*, primarily, with *Mexicana* serving as a secondary clarification should the occasion arise. Within her prosodic content, she expresses some mild hesitation and uncertainty in the other types of identity expressions, but her declared stance on

being *Hispanic* and identifying as such is made clear through her utterance and the prosodic cues that she employs.

As mentioned in previous chapters and sections, intonation takes a major role in this regard, with many narrators exemplifying the use of rising contours as one way to signal open dialogic space and an indicator of continuity in discursive constructions surrounding identity. For example, in María's narratives, she asserts that she currently identifies with the term *Tejana*, with an uptalk contour that signals an ongoing disposition in the identity work she constructs. She immediately finalizes that point with a falling contour as she declares that she more "broadly" identifies as *Latina.* This example of a falling contour demonstrates one type of use of prosody to indicate a closed dialogic discourse, in which the narrator modulates their attitude towards the relevant thematic content of the utterance, indicating a type of resolution and certainty in their position on the subject.

Pauses and syllable lengthening are other features analyzed in this part of the dissertation. While not as notably abundant in their discourse-related uses like intonation, pauses and lengthening do play key roles in how narrators present their epistemic stances on identity. Pauses, in particular, appear to suggest modes of certainty and hesitation when a speaker discusses a particular label. A limitation of this interpretation is the fact that while pauses may play a role in these stancetaking acts, they could also suggest other states of the narrator, such as pausing to plan or hesitating on what to say next. In that regard, it is a bit difficult to ascertain the exact nature of pauses in these narratives. Nevertheless, the results presented here demonstrate that pauses offer important expressions of speaker attitudes and internal positionalities, and the interpretations here motivate further research on understudied features.

The same interpretation is given to syllable lengthening. Just like pauses, syllable duration does not appear to carry the same range of use as intonation does in stancetaking expressions. Its observed use still does correlate with epistemic stances of certainty and personal affirmation or acceptance towards identity labels. This mirrors another pragmatic study that examined the use of syllable duration in conjunction with other prosodic features in marking stance differences (Beach, 2020). Considering the observations discussed in this dissertation along with previous research, future work warrants closer investigation of less-studied features like syllable duration in marking epistemic stances and other pragmatic variables.

5.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The findings presented in this dissertation constitute novel work that informs multiple fields at different intersections. While data analysis in both quantitative and qualitative settings provides a broad scope of insight, there are methodological limitations to consider in data interpretation along with future directions based on this work.

Methodologically, prosodic analysis can be approached in different ways and researchers do not always agree in the interpretation of suprasegmental features like intonation (Ahn et al., 2019; Holliday, 2021; Ladd, 2022). Given that, the analysis presented in this study is open to further discussion on how to improve certain aspects of the prosodic measurements. More novel approaches may supplement the findings established in this work, as well as present different interpretations of similar data results. For example, the emerging use of the *Polar Labels* system (Ahn et al., 2019), over more traditional tonal marking systems like *ToBI* is gaining traction and presents novel perspectives on measuring prosody that may provide further insights in data interpretation.

One limitation to consider in this study is the focus on fewer than twenty participants. While narrative elicitation yielded several hours of oral language data, the results only speak to what these eighteen individuals produce in their narrative practices. In spite of this, I assert that this cohort of participants is a closer representation of the relevant community population, with different age groups and immigrant backgrounds being represented in both studies. As such, there is an advantage to this methodological decision. Additionally, while heterogeneous social differences among each participant aided in the measurement of prosodic variation on the basis of social factors, the inherent variation in participant backgrounds may have yielded differences of prosodic employment to various degrees. For example, three of the participants, María, Ricardo, and Eulalio grew up in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. This area is well known for its own linguistic diversity and variation unique to the bilingual population there (Anzaldúa, 1987). As such, further research could examine key differences between groups of speakers who grew up in different states and geographical communities such as South Texas, Northern California, and the Los Angeles region.

Another set of methodological limitations to fully consider concerns the methodological scope and data collection. While qualitative research yields very important results, interpretations of prosodic content may differ even among speakers of the same variety. As such, future research could ameliorate this condition by conducting this type of work in a collaborative setting, where multiple investigators can provide their own interpretations and compare their findings for similar results, as well as different observations. Additionally, this dissertation only examines three prosodic features, intonation, pauses, and syllable lengthening. While these features cover a wide range of prosodic content, there may be other variables to consider, such as voice intensity, voice quality, and pitch reset. Further work examining these features and more

examples of prosody may provide a more holistic image of prosody in narration, focusing on the interrelationships between different factors and the decisions that narrators make in their use of different prosodic cues.

This dissertation presents a starting point for further work into the intersection between discourse analysis and bilingual prosody practices. Previous work has begun looking into bilingual prosodic repertoires, mainly focusing on those of younger bilingual generations in the U.S., often referred to as heritage speakers (Kim, 2019; Kim and Repiso-Puigdelliura, 2021). This work adds to that growing body of research through a more generalized approach that looks at other generations, and takes into account differences in age, gender, and discursive factors of intonation. Additionally, including the relationships between intonation and other prosodic cues is a novel direction in this social context. Future work could look further into prosody in narration with more robust analyses that take social and discursive variation into account on a wider level for the Mexican American community. This may include an additional quantitative approach to the measurement of syllable lengthening, similar to previous work in the same realm (Palakurthy, 2019). Alongside a wider scope, future directions may incorporate the employment of prosodic features not just at the end of intonation units, but also across intonation units and with a focus on the lexical level, such as the use of syllable lengthening in certain words across a unit and the production of factors depending on their morphological location. Additionally, prosodic variation predicted by the regional origins of the speaker's family may also present a novel direction for future research.

Regarding future work on prosody and identity, the link between prosodic features and stancetaking is one that continues to warrant continued research. While epistemic stance was of interest in this dissertation's observation of identity narratives, other types of stancetaking acts

such as affective stances could be analyzed in future work. This may shed light on the type of personal certainty that narrators feel towards important topics like identity expression, but also what their emotional attitudes are towards these discourses. The implications of this type of work could be useful in other areas of research, such as education, where interrelated topics of community and identity become very relevant and key to equitable initiatives for Latinxs.

Additionally, this work may inform other disciplines, such as bilingual cognition and second language pedagogy, as few scholars have raised questions about the role of prosody in second language classrooms (De-la-Mota, 2019; Ros García, 2014). While we do not yet have a full understanding of its role, prosody as a linguistic phenomenon is a key level of linguistic structure that provides discursively-relevant information and is inevitably present in all linguistic interactions and utterances. In spite of this, researchers have noted the lack of pedagogical methods that incorporate full overviews of prosody in language teaching. The findings here may inform researchers of this realm in building curricula that can inform students about the rich purposes that Spanish language prosody may serve, especially for the varieties that students will often come into contact with in the U.S. In terms of cognition, this work may provide some informative background knowledge concerning how bilingual speakers process prosodic cues when code-switching and actively using their repertoires in holistic ways, as many of the narrators in this dissertation demonstrated. Further work could replicate methodological approaches that have looked into cues into code-switching, to observe and measure predictable patterns of prosodic cue marking.

Despite some of the aforementioned limitations, this dissertation sheds light on the diverse ways that bilingual narrators of the Mexican American community utilize their prosodic repertoires to both assemble their narratives and to signal their internal evaluations of identity

and express their orientation towards the discourse of identity labels and relevant contexts for different ethnic and cultural terms. Intonation emerges as a focal point, in particular, being employed as a versatile prosodic tool in the repertoires of all narrators to communicate structural outline, discourse-related attitude, and personal affect. While there is more work to be done in this field, this dissertation illuminates the use of prosody as a tool in narration settings, and the participants of this study demonstrate a wide range of practices common within our bilingual spaces. Storytelling is a practice that permeates across time and space, and the work here demonstrates the rich level of linguistic detail that goes into the creation of stories that relate narrators' personal experiences and their relationships to the sociocultural context that they navigate.

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APPENDIX

Transcription Conventions

.. - < 0.5 second pause

… - > 0.5 second pause

(1.0) - pause duration in seconds

/ - rising pitch on previous segment

\ - falling pitch on previous segment

~ - midtone contour on previous segment

<P P> - quiet speech

<F F> - louder speech

<@ @> - laughing speech

(*text*) - crying, yawning, etc.

: - long vowel/consonant

<Q Q> - quoted speech

-- - interrupted/incomplete speech

(?) - incomprehensible speech

[ ] - author's note