Family interaction and engagement with the heritage language: A case study[1]

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Abstract

In this paper I closely examine spontaneous interactions between members of a tri-generation Italian American family. I argue that members show different language preferences and differing attitudes towards the family's multilingual identity but that they all demonstrate a degree of 'engagement' with the heritage language. Phenomena that I describe as illustrating engagement are speech accommodation, translations, metalinguistic comments, and attempts to speak the language that I characterize as 'probing' and 'performing.' Data come from a case study of an Italian American family living in Flushing, New York, conducted through sociolinguistic interviews and tape-recording of spontaneous interaction. All data were collected by one of the family members. The paper's main objectives are to demonstrate the vitality of qualitative paradigms for the study of language use and identity negotiations among immigrant groups, and to extend the still limited investigation of actual talk in interaction among Italian Americans.

Keywords: multilingual practices, identity, ethnicity, family interaction, language engagement, immigrant communities, heritage language, Italian American

1. Introduction

Economic migration to a new country results for most immigrants in diminished functionality of the first language, shift into the language of the country of immigration, and eventually almost complete loss of their L1 by the third generation. The significance and affective value of the heritage language varies for individuals according to generation as usually older members of a community tend to associate maintenance of their L1 to a sense of ethnic continuity, while younger members tend to

accelerate a shift into the language varieties that they use with their peers. The family is a particularly important social domain for the investigation of immigrants' language use and identity issues since it is within this domain that members of different generations come together and deal with potentially different choices and attitudes (Li Wei 1994; Rubino 2004; Williams 2008). Sociolinguistics has produced a vast body of knowledge about the general trends that characterize language maintenance or loss by ethnic groups and about the factors affecting it. However, in comparison, relatively little work has been devoted to ways in which multilingual families concretely negotiate use of linguistic repertoires in interaction, how the different language varieties of the common repertoire are employed as communicative resources, and how such uses relate to identity claims. This paper aims at answering some of these questions looking at the communicative dynamics that develop in the interaction of a multigenerational family of immigrant origin in which family members have differential competence in the varieties of the common language repertoire. I take as a case study an Italian American family living in the United States. The objective of the study is two-fold: on the one hand, I propose some reflections on the roles that heritage languages play in interactions among members of the same ethnic group as a resource in the constitution and negotiation of identities and in the communication of attitudes towards the immigrant origin. On the other hand, I aim at showing the importance of extending the investigation of multilingual groups based on micro-analysis of language in interaction to sociolinguistic inquiry into Italian American communities. As we will see, studies of this kind are still almost absent among the investigations on Italian Americans and language. Thus, before I get to the description of the study and the analysis of the data, I present some background on research about Italian Americans, discuss how relationships between language, identity, and ethnicity have been theorized in sociolinguistics and anthropology, and lay out the theoretical and methodological premises that inspire the present work.

2. Background: Italian Americans and language

Italian Americans as a community have constituted an object of interest mostly for sociologists, historians, and scholars in cultural studies. This interest is related to the fact that this community is seen by social scientists as the perfect example of an assimilated immigrant group. According to sociologists (see, for example, Alba 1985) Italian Americans have gone from being presented and constructed in mainstream discourse in the early 1900s as a mass of ignorant, poor, and unskilled laborers to having become largely accepted as members of an affluent white middle

class. Indeed, Italian Americans' income and educational attainment to-day are well within the U.S. national average and members of this ethnic group occupy important positions in the political and cultural world. This 'assimilationist' interpretation of their past has led to a very lively debate among Italian Americans about their identity and to extremely different interpretations of the way this community is perceived and constructed by out-members today and of the way its members relate to their past (see papers in Sorrentino & Krause 2000). Language has, however, figured very marginally within this picture. Indeed, with few exceptions (see Carnevale 2009) Italian American scholars have been much more involved with cinematic and literary analyses of the role that language and other semiotic systems play in the social representations of this group than with actual language use and attitudes.

Sociolinguists have not, on the other hand, filled this gap as they have produced very little research on Italian American communities. The few existing linguistic studies (see Di Pietro 1986; Haller 1987; Milione & Gambino 2009) have mostly concentrated on the macroscopic phenomena of language loss and shift into English that characterize the linguistic history of Italian Americans, and that mirror the evolution of most immigrant groups of European origins in this country. Such analyses, based on sociolinguistic interviews and surveys, provide a general picture of the linguistic repertoires of Italian Americans and of the evolution and loss of their original tongues. Italians who migrated to the United States spoke mostly their local vernaculars. Such vernaculars, called in Italy *dialetti* ('dialects' in English), are actually not varieties of the national language, but often separate languages in their own right, which are in most cases not intelligible to speakers of Italian or of other dialects. Italian immigrants until the 1940s were mostly also not literate and not fluent in Italian. Historically, language maintenance among Italian Americans has been low due to many factors, including the strong racist prejudice against them reproduced and amplified in mainstream discourses about migration until the first decades of the 1900s (see De Fina & Fellin 2010) and the explicit prohibition to speak or teach the language during the War years (Carnevale 2003). Further factors were the lack of identification of immigrants with a national language that in 1870 was spoken by less than 3 percent of the population (De Mauro 1976: 43) and the scarce interest that the Italian government devoted to immigrant communities abroad and to language maintenance among them. Sociolinguistic investigations have confirmed the existence of a general pattern that characterizes the linguistic evolution of Italian Americans and that is applicable to Italian Americans who migrated as far as the 1940s and 1950s: one that presents first generation immigrants as dominant in their dialect or in Italian, 'second generation English

dominant but with native control of Italian and third generation with only passive competence of Italian' (Del Torto 2008: 80). Indeed studies of language maintenance and shift (Correa Zoli 1980; Di Pietro 1986; Saltarelli 1986; Haller 1987) identified the presence of a number of different varieties among Italian Americans including standard Italian, dialects, English, and mixed varieties, but did conclude that language shift into English happened by the third generation. However, as I argue in this article, while the wide lenses of contact sociolinguistics are adequate instruments to provide a general picture of language varieties and repertoires spoken by Italians in the United States, the risk of focusing too narrowly on language maintenance and loss is that of looking at immigrant varieties exclusively in terms of deficit with respect to the language of origin. As noted by Lo & Reyes (2004: 116), 'it is important to recognize and emphasize the specificities of ethnic and immigrant communities in their interactions with local cultures and in their development of a unique linguistic history and profile.' In addition, macro-sociolinguistic studies working with sociolinguistic interviews and questionnaires do not allow for an emic analysis of how the varieties of the language repertoire are concretely used in everyday interaction and particularly of how they function as resources for the expression of a variety of meanings, ideologies, and identities. These phenomena can only be captured through interaction-based and qualitative perspectives. In fact, recent work, focused on the analysis of language in use in small communities and among families (see Tricarico 1991; Pagliai 1997; De Fina 2007a and b; Fellin 2008; Del Torto 2008), has pointed to the complexity of a picture that includes ambiguous and often contrasting attitudes towards Italian and Italian dialects by members of different generations, highly symbolic uses of very limited linguistic resources in Italian or Italian dialects, and a still robust sense of ethnicity among younger generations. From these studies it is clear that even minimal use of the heritage language can have a deep symbolic meaning and therefore that looking at 'loss' and 'shift' away from Italian only may be misleading. The investigation of such phenomena is in its infancy in the U.S., but it has important implications not only for Italian American studies, but more in general for sociolinguistics as it emphasizes the vitality of qualitative paradigms and their ability to capture the multiple and often subtle ways in which people construct and convey their sense of selves and their understanding of the social world in everyday practices that are revealing of attitudes, ideologies, and categories of belonging, while problematizing direct relationships between use of linguistic variables and ethnicity. I will come back to all of these points below.

3. Language, ethnicity, identity

Qualitative interaction-based sociolinguistic research has been gaining ground in the last thirty years turning into a fundamental theoretical methodological frame of reference for the study of relations between language, ethnicity, and identity. The vitality of such a relation was already well established in classic sociolinguistic work (see Fought 2002). In classic theoretical models of language contact and change, the link between these two elements was to be found in language maintenance and in attitudes related to it. For Fishman (see 1991; 1968), whose sociolinguistic theorizations in this field have been groundbreaking, for example, language maintenance is central to ethnolinguistic vitality and therefore to the preservation of ethnic identity. Fishman, who devoted most of his work to the social and psychological factors determining maintenance and shift (see also Ferguson 1968; Clyne 1991; Baker 1992), pointed to the fact that these linguistic phenomena are closely entrenched with wide social processes involving the economic, social, and cultural relations between minorities and dominant groups in society. For example, he noted that language maintenance and shift may be a function not only of wide sociocultural phenomena such as language ideologies, but also of concrete economic and social processes such as urbanization. In brief, he showed that the economic and ideological interests of dominant groups often have a direct effect on the degree to which minority languages are maintained. Thus, as Schiffman & Garcia (2006: 30) put it, '[t]he fact that language is a link to ethnicity is a constant thread in Fishman's work.'

On the other hand, literature on language ideologies (see for example Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity 1998), i.e., on implicit and explicit conceptions about the value and roles of languages in society, has also made it clear that attitudes towards languages are closely entrenched with ways of conceptualizing social relations and the social world as a whole. Indeed, while the effects of language ideologies are clear in the degree to which ethnic groups value their own languages, they are also evident in the policies that are applied towards heritage languages by governments and public institutions. Scholars who investigated minority languages in the U.S. (see, among others, Zentella 1997; Pavlenko 2002; King & De Fina 2011) have shown that negative attitudes vis-à-vis minorities embodied in public discourses and policies towards those groups are reflected and reasserted in language ideologies, which in turn strongly affect the chance for those languages of being spoken, taught, and, generally, of attaining social recognition. All this work points to the significance of language as a symbol of in- or out-group culture and values and as a prime resource for the drawing of ethnic boundaries.

The literature on language and power provides further arguments for the significance of language as a marker of ethnic identities and values in that scholars emphasize the centrality of cultural and semiotic systems in the acquisition and negotiation of social status. In Bourdieu's social theory, for example, power is seen as deriving from economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. Economic capital is accumulated through money and assets, social capital is gained through social relations and influences, cultural capital is linked with the accumulation of knowledge and the right of access to the tools for acquiring that knowledge. All of these resources may turn into symbolic power, 'which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived as legitimate' (Bourdieu 1989: 17). As language is one of the most important forms of cultural capital, it has a tremendous symbolic value, and therefore it is often used by social groups to reaffirm or establish their social positions. Thus both sociolinguistic literature and social theory have provided strong evidence for the close ties between language and ethnicity.

However, the forms that these relations may take are not straightforward as ethnic identities are not necessarily constructed, conveyed, and negotiated through the use of heritage or individual language varieties as *we codes* (Gumperz 1982) per se. A vast and recent body of work in sociolinguistics, particularly work on code-switching, identity, and style, has shown quite the contrary: i.e., that in general there is no one-to-one correspondence between in-group languages and in-group identities and that ethnic identities are often intermingled with different kinds of identities that affect language choices. In this regard, work on ethnicity, identity and style follows a more general social constructionist trend in identity studies (see Bucholtz & Hall 2005; De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006; De Fina 2011) that regards identities as plural, constructed, and negotiated in concrete social practices via symbolic processes among which indexicality is one of the most important. Indexicality allows speakers to indirectly convey identities through the use of a variety of resources ranging from prosodic traits to language varieties to styles. Early work by Rampton (1995) on code-crossing, a great deal of work on code-switching (see Meeuwis & Blommaert 1994; Auer 1998 and 2005) and further literature on identity and style (Rampton 1999; Irvine 2001; Eckert and Rickford 2001; Coupland 2007) has successfully argued that speakers of a minority language use a variety of codes and styles to convey identities, that often these styles are the result of mixing between different language varieties and borrowing from languages in which the speaker may have no real competence or fluency, and that there are profound differences in terms of identities within seemingly homogenous ethnic groups (Lo & Reyes 2004). Recent research on urban language practices (Jaspers 2008; Jørgensen 2008; Quist 2008) has also under-

scored the presence in multilingual domains of interaction, of polylingual varieties and styles that reflect a postmodern reality of contact and connection between different ethnicities.

The work reviewed above mostly investigates youth in situations of contact with peers both belonging to the in-group and out-groups. In in-group communication within families, a domain on which I focus in this article, however, linguistic creativity and freedom are definitely more constrained than in peer communication as parents and (in the case of multigeneration families) grandparents are usually either linguistically less flexible than their children, and/or ideologically more conservative. Studies that analyzed multilingual family interaction (see, for example, Pan 1995; Gupta & Yeok 1995; Lanza 2001) found that children are always prone to code-switch away from the L1 of their parents, or in any case to adopt code-switching as a communicative strategy. And qualitative case studies (Rubino 2004; Del Torto 2008; Williams 2008) also clearly point to the significance of competence in the heritage language, particularly for older generations, as a sign of ethnic loyalty and therefore to the centrality of language negotiation in immigrant families to define positions and identities. Indeed, in immigrant families use of the heritage language is often associated with belonging to older generations and therefore young people seem to always strive to define their own place in the family and in society in order to affirm their own sense of self. What negotiations about and around language imply in different communities is a matter of investigation, and this is the focus of the present study.

Following the interactionist and socio-constructionist trend in sociolinguistics, the starting point of this paper is that such research needs to focus on members' concrete linguistic behavior and on the way they negotiate the use of language varieties. One question that is of particular interest here is whether languages that have become obsolete and that are productively used only by a minority of family members still function as communicative resources and how. The analysis presented below aims at providing some answers to this question.

4. The study

The data to be discussed here come from a case study of a three generation Italian American family living in the Flushing, New York area. The research project was conceived as a pilot study that would allow for in-depth investigation of questions of identity and language use. The family was contacted through a family member (whom I will call by the pseudonym Marina) who collaborated in the research and who conducted interviews with twelve relatives and one close friend of the family, and

who also made recordings of three spontaneous interactions, two of them during lunch and dinner at Sauce day, a family tradition to which I will return below, and one during a conversation with her grandmother and mother which took place during her grandmother's interview. Interviews were focused on language uses and preference, on identity as Italian Americans and on life experiences. In addition to doing interviews, Marina kept a research log and notes.

4.1 Participants

Table 1 describes the participants in the study, detailing their relationship with Marina, their birth place, time spent in the U.S., and self-reported competence in the language repertoire of the family. In socioeconomic terms the family has a rather typical history as the first immigrants from Marina's mother's side (her grandfather and grandmother) came from a poor peasant background, but her mother, her aunt, and her uncle are all employed in middle class jobs such as teachers or federal workers. Marina, who is the eldest niece, was studying at a prestigious U.S. college at the time of the research.

As can be seen in table 1 only three members of this family who participated in the study were born in Italy, more precisely in the town of Borgetto, Sicily. In addition to the grandmother, Milena, only two of the members of the second generation (her elder son Albert and daughter Roberta) were born in Sicily as her youngest daughter Lea (Marina's aunt) was born in the U.S. Other members of this family who were born in the U.S. belonged to different immigrant generations depending on where each of their parents was born. Thus, for example Marina is second generation on her mother's side (since Roberta was born in Borgetto), but third generation on her father's side as her father's parents were born in the U.S. but his grandparents were born in Italy. Thus, in order to avoid confusion, I will use age group to classify family members by generation.

4.2 The language repertoire

Establishing language repertoires is not an easy task, as Italian Americans, particularly those who were born in the U.S., may use the term 'Italian' ambiguously either to refer to the national standard or to the dialect of their parents and grandparents. This is not the case for older immigrants born in Italy, who clearly understand the distinction between dialect and national standard and relate these two varieties to class distinctions as demonstrated in the following fragment taken from Marina's interview with her grandmother:[3]

Table 1. *Study participants*

	Place of birth	Age	English	Italian	Sicilian
Marina, (researcher).	US	23	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roberta (mother[2])	Borgetto	47	Yes	A little	Yes
Sam (father)	US	48	Yes	Very little	No
Anna (paternal grandmother)	US	75	Yes	Understands a little	Understands a little
Anthony (paternal grandfather)	US	75	Yes	Understands a little	Understands a little
Lea (maternal aunt, Vito's wife)	US	41	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vito uncle (Lea's husband)	US	42	Yes	Understands a little	
Joy (Vito's mother)	US	66	Yes	No	No
Charlie cousin (Lea and Vito's son)	US	8	Yes	A little	Understands a little
Judy cousin (Lea and Vito's daughter)	US	11	Yes	A little	Understands a little
Rosie Aunt (maternal uncle's wife)	US	56	Yes	Yes (unclear whether Italian or dialect)	Neapolitan and Sicilian
Albert (maternal uncle)	Borgetto	56	Yes	Yes	Yes
Peter (family friend)	US	51	Yes	Understands a little	Understands a little
Milena maternal grandmother	Borgetto	81	Very little	Yes	Yes

(1)

  1. Marina: <u>Uhm (.) quali lingue e dialetti sai?</u>
              [Uhm (.) which languages and dialects do you know?]
  2. Nonna: *Solo uno dialetto u dialetto borgitano @@@*
              [Just one dialect the dialect from Borgetto @@@]
  3. Marina: @@<u>Ma capisci capisci l'italiano!</u>
              [@@But you understand understand Italian!]

4.	Nonna:	**Ye** *l'taliano a me sora cu mmia un ci nesci na parola 'n*
		[Ye Italian my sister cannot speak a word in]
5.		*italiano ma io se parlo con una persona che non la conosco,*
		[Italian but if I speak with a person that I don't know]
6.		*io ci dico di lei signore signora e poi ci parlo italiano!*
		[I address them as Sir or Lady and then I speak to them in Italian!]
7.	Marina:	Uhu.
8.	Nonna:	*E veramente io aiu stu carattere.*
		[And really I have this personality].
9.	Roberta:	Yea.
10.	Nonna:	*Io insomma quando venia un signore una signora quanno*
		[I well when a gentleman or a lady came when]
11.		*lavoravo na stessa mia compagnia io ci dicevo u chiamavo*
		[I worked in my company I talked to him addressed him
12.		*signore.*
		as Sir.]

As we see in this example *nonna* ('grandmother') clearly relates use of Italian with social class describing situations in which she spoke Italian as interactions with *signori* and *signore* ('ladies' and 'gentlemen') and recounting with pride that, as opposed to her sister, she could handle them in Italian. U.S. born members, on the other hand, often appear unable to clearly distinguish between the two languages as seen in the following extract from Marina's interview with her maternal uncle:

(2)

1.	Marina:	@@Um, so, yeah, do you feel like there's a difference
2.		between your understanding of Italian dialect,
3.		Sicilian, versus standard Italian?
4.	Albert:	Uh, I probably can't tell the difference, 'cause all
5.		I really know is the Sicilian dialect.

Thus, self-reports about language competence do not necessarily correspond to actual competence as they are deeply influenced by perceptions and language ideologies. As we will see later, for example, Milena, who claims in her interview not to have any knowledge of English, understands what is being said in a conversation carried out entirely in English. Therefore, the family language repertoire and individuals' competence in the different language varieties need to be reconstructed not only based on these self-reports, but also on the transcripts. The family language repertoire includes the following varieties: English, Sicilian dia-

lect, and Italian. It must be noted, however, that even though Italian and Sicilian are different language varieties, there are lexical terms that are identical in both languages, and it is also common practice for speakers of Sicilian to code-mix by inserting chunks in Italian into their Sicilian utterances. It is therefore at times difficult to decide whether specific linguistic chunks in a conversation are in Sicilian or in Italian, but it is generally easier to assign larger units (such as series of utterances or turns) to one or the other language. Thus, in the transcripts below, I have indicated that an utterance is in Sicilian with italics and in Italian with underlining, when either the whole turn is in one of the two languages, or one of the two languages is prevalent in the turn. When ambiguous cases presented themselves I have discussed them openly (see example [6]). I have also found cases of mixtures such as Italianized English words (see example [7]), but again, I have included them in the description of the data.

Within the family language repertoire, English is the preferred language of all the members excluding Milena, whose preference goes to Sicilian instead. Milena also states that she has almost no competence in English; she also speaks Italian, although it is not clear to what degree, as most of her utterances are in Sicilian. Her daughters and son are fluent in Sicilian, but only use it with her. Marina is the only third generation member who understands Sicilian well, although she does not speak it. She is also the only member of the family who is more fluent in Italian than in Sicilian as she studied it at the university for four semesters and, at the time of the recordings, was enrolled in an advanced Italian course in sociolinguistics. She was a Political Science student, but had been studying Italian for her language requirement. As can be seen in table 1 all the rest of the family members except for one declare that they have some degree of competence (mostly passive) in Sicilian and Italian. Many of the second generation family members talk with regret in the interviews of their and their children's progressive loss of competence in the heritage languages (either Sicilian or Italian), thus showing that at least in terms of language ideologies, for them speaking those languages represents a strong symbol of Italian-ness, as demonstrated in the following exchange between Lea and Marina taken from Lea's interview:

(3)

1. Marina: Umm, which language do you prefer to speak in now,
2.   Italian or English?
3. Lea: Umm it's definitely easier for me to speak English,
4.   so I would say that I prefer that. although I don't-

5.   I feel badly about losing Italian so I would never
6.   want to lose it even though that's not my preferred
7.   language.

And, indeed, when analyzing transcripts of family talk-in-interaction, it is the case that most of the conversation happens in English and that translations are often used as a necessary communication strategy when members with different language competences interact. However, as I discuss below, an important element that emerges from the analysis is that although, as noted in the literature, second generation members are usually invested the most in facilitating and pursuing mutual understanding across languages and in emphasizing the significance of competence in the heritage language as a marker of identity, this role can also be taken up by members of the third generation, a phenomenon which has important implications for research on Italian Americans. Indeed, I will discuss how Marina, who is a member of the third generation, engages in language brokering with her peers and in frequent attempts at communication in Italian and even in rudimentary Sicilian with her grandmother. She also openly supports, in her meta-linguistic comments, a multilingual identity for the whole family encouraging use of Italian by her younger cousins. It could be argued that Marina is a somewhat exceptional case because of her interest in studying Italian and her having been enrolled in an Italian linguistics course, but then, of course, it is hard to establish what caused what: whether her interest in languages fed her positive attitudes towards Italian or vice-versa. In addition, it is reasonable to hypothesize that Italian American youth's willingness to study Italian has been a contributing factor in the dramatic increase in college enrolments in this language in the last 20 years.[4]

It is also clear that the maintenance of some (even if minimal) level of multilingualism is generally practiced by many of the family members through various strategies, which show that Italian and Sicilian are regarded as part of the family's repertoire and as markers of their collective identity. Indeed, members of the family maintain a certain degree of what I will call *engagement* with the heritage languages (both Sicilian and Italian). More specifically, the phenomena of engagement that I analyze here include:

− speech accommodation
− spontaneous translations by members of the family who are not very proficient in Italian
− displays of meta-linguistic awareness, including jokes
− linguistic performances and probing

5. Analysis

5.1 Linguistic patterns in family interaction

The examples that I discuss below are taken from Sauce Day dinner and lunch and some also from Marina's interview with her grandmother, which took the form of a tri-party conversation including her mother. Sauce Day is an important yearly family event. In Marina's own words, taken from her research notes:

> This is the one-day per year that we get together with my mother's sister's family and my grandmother to make and bottle all of the tomato sauce that we will use for the year. It is an important family tradition to us at this point and one of the traditions is that we have cold-cut sandwiches for lunch after a morning of making sauce and then the fresh sauce for dinner after we are all done. We do it in my aunt's backyard in oversized burners and pots.

Every year the whole family participates in making sauce, with the women cooking and the men helping to bottle the sauce. Participants in this case included Marina, her grandmother Milena (called *nonna* in the transcripts), her father (Sam), her mother (Roberta) her brother (Tony), her aunt (Lea), her aunt's husband (Vito), and their children (Judy and Charlie).

A common linguistic pattern in the family's multiparty interaction is parallel use of different languages with separate conversations going on at the same time in different languages. There are many instances in which Roberta or Lea speak to their mother in Sicilian, while other members of the family talk to each other in English as in the fragment below:

(4)
Parallel conversations

1. Roberta: Well, Good sauce// this time
2. Lea: //Good sauce
3. Marina: Good sauce
4. Steve: Yes we think (….)
5. Nonna: *Charlie a manciau a pasta?*
            [Did Charlie eat the pasta?]
6. Lea: *A pasta a manciau.*
            [The pasta he ate it.]
7. Nonna: *Vole compagnia iddu vuole a Tony vicino → vole a Vito vicino →*
            [He wants company he wants Tony close → he wants Vito close]

8. Roberta: **So** *chi tinni pare ra salsa ru anno ma?*
             [So what do you think of this year's sauce?]
9. Nonna: *Comu?*
             [What?]
10. Roberta: *Chi tinni pare ra salsa ru anno.*
             [What do you think of this year's sauce.]
11. Nonna: *Chista?*
             [This one?]
12. Roberta: Yea
13. Nonna: E' buonissima!
             [It's very good]

As we see in this fragment Roberta and Lea tend to talk to each other and to other family members in English (see lines 1−3), but they always talk in Sicilian to their mother (lines 6, 8, 10). On the other hand, others usually continue their conversation in English. As mentioned, however, the two daughters tend to carry out their function as intermediaries between the members of the family both in spontaneous ways, when they are trying to involve others in a conversation that is happening mainly in one language, or when they feel someone needs an explanation, and upon request by some other family member. Thus, they tend to translate for their mother from English into Sicilian and for other family members from Sicilian into English. Del Torto (2008), calls these translations *brokering*, borrowing the term from research on the role of immigrant children in communications outside the family (see Tse 1995; Valdes 2003). She suggests that bilingual members interpret brokering as 'helping' the family (p. 85) and that their frequent use of this strategy is also connected with their desire to maintain cohesion in the family. This seems to be the case here as well. As mentioned in this data there are, however, also examples of spontaneous brokering by other members of the family who are not completely proficient in Sicilian or Italian. I will discuss brokering below in conjunction with other phenomena.

5.2   Language engagement

5.2.1 Speech accommodation
Third generation members in this family have differing competencies in Sicilian and Italian, and also appear to have different roles and attitudes. As we will see below, the youngest members of the family display conflicting attitudes towards use of Sicilian and Italian ranging from rejec-

tion for being excluded to spontaneous attempts at using these languages. However, Marina, the oldest third generation member, seems to have assumed the role of an intermediary between the languages (and to a certain extent) cultures of the older and younger generations that makes her linguistic behavior more similar to that of her mother and aunt than that of her cousins. Marina has learned Italian in college and seems eager to communicate in that language with her grandmother. Marina and Milena tend to speak asymmetrically: in Italian and Sicilian respectively. However, they also alter their language varieties, i.e., they accommodate to each other's speech (see Giles & Coupland 1991 on this point) in order to facilitate their communication as much as they can. As we see below, *nonna* uses conversations with Marina to transmit family anecdotes and values, and Marina follows up with her asking for her opinion. She also often elicits such stories and explanations from her grandmother. These exchanges happen, most of the time asymmetrically, with Marina speaking Italian and Milena responding in Sicilian:

(5)

1. Nonna.:   *Marina, lo sposo da me zia Peppina, sai la zia Peppina, ni*
            [Marina, my aunt's Peppina's spouse, you know aunt Peppina]

2.   *parramo sempre da zia Ppeppina!*
            [we always talk about aunt Peppina!]

3. Marina: Uhu,

4. Nonna: *Era prima qua in America ma poi si ritiraro in Italia*
            [Earlier she used to live here but then they retired in Italy]

5.   *dice non abbiamo figghi me ne torno no nostro mio paese,*
            [she says we have no children and I'll go back to my village,]

6.   *poi ci moriu un frate cca, e vinniro pe sto' frate che è morto* (…)
            [then a brother died here and they came for this brother who died] (…)

7.   *fece a zia Peppina dice 'che fa a preparo qualcosa da*
            ['aunt Peppina said 'shall I prepare something to]

8.   *mangiare?' 'si si' dice 'preparalo' e ci dice 'brodo',*
            [eat?' 'yes yes' $\emptyset$[5] says 'prepare it' and $\emptyset$ says to her 'broth',]

9.   (…) *ma cuanno c'è di manciare disse u piatto da pasta è*
            [(…) but when one has to eat she said a plate of pasta is]

10.   *u primo scalune do paradiso*
            [the first step to Paradise]

11. Marina: @@@
12. Nonna.:   @@@ *O Capisti? //O primo scalone do paradiso*
              @@@[Did you understand? The first step to Paradise]
13. Marina: //*E 'veramente @@?*
              [//Is that true@@?]
14. Nonna.:   *U primo scalone do paradiso*
              [The first step to Paradise]
15. Marina: È vero.
              [It's true.]
16. Nonna: *Veramente tu pigghi un poco di pasta (…)*
              [Really, you take a little pasta (…)]
17. Marina: Sei d'accordo?
              [Do you agree?]
18. Nonna.:   *Cosa?*
              [What?]
19. Marina: Sei d'accordo// con questo sentimento?
              [Do you agree with this feeling?]
20. Nonna: //*Si si*
              // Yes Yes
21.   (…)
22. Nonna: *Un piatto di pasta dice è o primo scalune do paradiso.*
              [A plate of pasta she says is the first step to Paradise.]

We see in this fragment that Milena is addressing her granddaughter in
Sicilian, using an anecdote from her family history to teach her the vir-
tues of pasta, and we also note that Marina responds in Italian through-
out the fragment. However, we find that in other cases either Milena
switches from Sicilian to Italian or Marina inserts a few words of Sicilian
in their utterances. They do so in order to accommodate to each other's
preferred speech as in the following example:

(6)

1. Nonna: *@Pe' to nonno fu una vacanza l'America@@!*
             [@ For your grandpa America was a holiday!]
2. Marina: Ma anche ha *travagghiato*!
             [But he also has worked!]
3. Nonna: **Yeah**, *ha travagghiato*=
             Yeah he has worked=
4. Marina: =Molto.=
             [= A lot=]
5. Nonna: = Ye *assai i primi anni travagghiau forte, travagghiava
             cinque*

6. [= **Ye** a lot the first years he worked hard, he worked five]
    giorni 'nta costruzione, sabato e duminica s'inni ia
    [days in the construction, Saturday and Sunday he used
    to go]
7. *'nte yarde a lavorare.*
    [to work in the yards]
8. Roberta: Landscaping.
9. Marina: Ah!
10. Roberta: Yards.
11. Marina: I didn't know that.
12. Nonna: *Poi, hhhh (.) a stessa sera alle vote, che travagghiava nta*
13. [Then hhh (.) the same night sometimes, that he worked
    in the]
14. *costruzione, c'erano posti che dovevano come si dice (…)* =
    [construction, there were places that had to how do you
    say (…)]=
15. Roberta: = Demolition.
16. Nonna: *A (…) eh! (…)*
17. Roberta: (…) he would go at night he would work in the day and
    doing
18. construction and he would work at night.

The example is taken from Marina's interview with her mother, which
was more of a conversation than an interview. Before the excerpt starts,
Marina had been asking about her grandfather. She wanted to know
what his experience was like in the U.S. and how he felt about migrating.
Her grandma talks about this and then concludes that compared to what
he left in Sicily, America was like a holiday for him (line 1). Marina
responds to her grandmother mixing Italian and Sicilian, something that
is not common in her speech as she normally intervenes in Italian. In
line 2, she uses the mixed expression ha *travagghiato* ('she has worked')
in which she uses the Italian auxiliary *ha* (which in Sicilian would be
havi) and she also uses the past perfect, a tense that is little used in
Sicilian (as the latter uses a tense called 'remote past' instead) but she
employs the Sicilian word *travagghiare*, meaning 'to work.' We see that
in her next turn grandma repeats the same construction accommodating
as well since in Sicilian she would have used the remote past tense *travag-
ghiau* (as she does in line 5) or at least she would have used the auxiliary
havi. Thus, both participants try to accommodate to each other in order
to make communication easier. In this fragment we also see examples of
spontaneous brokering by Roberta. She translates her mother's utter-
ance in Sicilian 'work in the yards' (line 8) with the English word 'land-
scaping' (line 8) and then to clarify again, she translates *yarde* into
'yards' (line 10). Indeed Milena's *yarde* is a mixed word combining Eng-

lish *yard* with the Italian plural morpheme *-e*. These code-mixings are typical of her language since, although she tends to use only Sicilian, she sometimes inserts into her utterances mixed words such as *yarde, sanguiccio* ('sandwich'), etc. and a few discourse markers in English such as *ye* or *so*.

But note that Roberta's translation is elicited by Milena in line 13 when she asks her how to say 'demolition' and then again is spontaneously delivered when she translates all her mother's previous turn at the end of the fragment (lines 17−18).

To summarize, Marina's language use seems to be in accordance with the attitude of pride and identification that she shows towards the Italian language and her family's origins in her research notes and, as we will see below, in her interactions with her cousins. She both studies Italian and uses it as much as she can when she is in the family. She is ready to accommodate her language to her grandmother's competence and abilities in order to keep the communication with her alive. We also see that Milena makes the same effort when communicating with her niece.

5.2.2 Metalinguistic comments

Besides the bilingual and trilingual members that we have discussed up to this point, the rest of the family members have difficulty in communicating directly to each other because they lack a common language. Thus communication between the grandmother and the rest of the family is mostly mediated. However, we also witness in the spontaneous conversation frequent expressions of metalinguistic awareness, i.e., moments in which participants focus on their multilingual repertoire to comment on it. These are interesting moments as they often constitute occasions for members to index attitudes not only towards languages but also towards their identities as a family and as individuals. See the following example:

(7)

1.	Nonna :	*Marina, @ ci dicia sta storia e poi idda ce la contó=*
		[Marina@ I was telling her this story and then she told
2.		= *in inglese a to figghia*
		= [it in English to your daughter]
3.	Len:	Yea.
4.	Julia:	See I had no idea.
5.	Marina:	Well you just understood that //(.) did you just=
6.	Judy:	//What ?
7.	Marina:	= understood what happened?
8.		//You just understood that! See you
9.	Roberta :	//<u>Ma!</u> <u>Mamma!</u>
		// [Ma! Mother!]

10. Nonna: Eh?:
11. Roberta: *Fatti u sanguiccio e poi //vattinni dintra e mancia.*
               [Make yourself a sandwich and then // go inside and eat.]
12. Nonna: *No, un n'aio tanto pititto veramente.*
               [No, I'm not that hungry really.]
13. Vito: //What did she say?
14. Charlie: Nonna just said the situation and Judy said yeah 'cause
15.   I didn't understand (.) but she said it in Italian!
16. Vito: @@@@
17. Judy: NO because because nonna said blah blah blah blah
18.   Marina and Mari said blah blah blah <u>inglese</u> Judy@
19. Nonna: @@@@ Tosta!
20. Charlie: Blah blah blah blah!
21. Judy: Blah //blah blah hi blah blah bla hallo //bla bla bla!
22. Lea: //Charlie is (..)
23. Marina: We have to (.) we wouldn't survive as a family if we
24.   didn't, I think.
25. Judy: I guess I'm not part of// the family.
26. Marina: //I mean survive, well I just mean like you know what I
27.   mean?
28. Judy: //No.
29. Marina: //There's so, there's so many instances when it's like
30.   you clearly understand you just don't think you do.
31. Lea: Well I think yea if we all just stopped for a minute and
32.   thought about it you know what I mean?
33. Marina: Yeah.
34. Judy: @@
35. Lea: We're very quick to say I don't understand (.) but if we
36.   stopped for a second, here Charlie.
37. Judy: All I understood in that conversation was *lui* I know *lui*
38.   means boy (.) that's it.
39. Marina: He.
40. Judy: He yea you know what I mean.

In this conversation we see that grandma is commenting on the fact that
Marina has translated one of her stories for Judy. Thus, Milena is pro-
viding some more evidence for the fact that Marina brokers for her
cousins in order to make them aware of what their grandmother was
saying. At this point Judy intervenes stating that she had no idea about
what they are saying (line 4), and Marina corrects her noting that she
just understood what was being said (lines 5−7 and 8). Between lines 9
and 12 there is a side exchange in Sicilian between Roberta and her

mother. But during this exchange Vito elicits a translation about what happened (line 13) and gets a summary from Charlie who supports Marina's interpretation of the facts: i.e., that Judy understood what her grandmother had reported to Roberta in Sicilian (lines 14−15). Notice that Charlie describes his grandmother as speaking in Italian rather than in Sicilian (line 15) as he probably can't tell the difference. Judy responds reiterating that she did not understand, that she only understood the words *inglese* ('English\) and *Judy* in between *blah blah blah* (lines 17−18). At this point grandma who claims in her interview not to understand any English reacts to Judy calling her *tosta* ('naughty' in English, line 19), so demonstrating that she has been following the conversation in English. Charlie immediately starts repeating *blah blah blah* (line 20) as a form of verbal play, followed by Judy who takes him up (line 21) thus turning the family multilingual abilities into a joke. At this point Marina inserts a metalinguistic statement and a reflection about the multilingual identity of the family. She comments that they need to understand each other in order to survive in the family (lines 23−24), to which Judy retorts stating that then she is not part of the family (line 25). But Marina insists in her thesis that Judy understands much more than she wants to admit to (lines 29−30), to which her aunt adds that in fact if they stopped for a minute instead of talking all the time they would understand each other and that saying *I don't understand* is the easy way out (lines 31−32 and 35−36). However, Judy does not concede and insists that all she understood was *lui* and *lui*, which according to her means 'boy' (lines 36−37), to which Marina quickly reacts correcting her and saying that *lui* means 'he' (line 39).

There are a number of interesting things going on here. The first is that there is a collective reflection on multilingualism, on how it works and what it implies for the family. Both Marina and her aunt here describe the family identity as fundamentally defined by multilingualism and therefore posit the need for mutual understanding as a survival strategy. Judy contests this characterization of the family identity by polemically declaring that she is not part of it, thus conveying the fact that she does not regard herself as multilingual. Thus, there is a negotiation on the role that languages play in the definition of family identities. This negotiation is related to Judy's self-definition as someone who does not understand or speak Italian and therefore to her sense of indignation at being 'excluded' from such a central family identity. Another interesting process to which this fragment bears witness is that there is some, even if minimal, language teaching going on, for example when Marina corrects Judy.

The example shows that Judy does not claim a bilingual identity for herself, but also points to her attention towards language as a family and identity issue and her need to define her role in relation to it. Such attention is manifest when, a little later in the same interaction, she actively 'engages' with the language by trying to talk in Italian to her grandmother. Something similar happens with Charlie, who, as we will see in another example, also asks for translations of words he does not understand. Returning to Judy, there are other moments in which she shows that she possesses greater competence than she admits to. See the following fragment from the Sauce Day dinner, in which we have a brokering intervention by Judy and another display of meta-linguistic awareness by Roberta:

(8)

1. Sam: You want wine?
2. Marina: No, actually can I just have water Lea please?
3. Roberta: Water? Yes
4. Vito: ((talking from the kitchen)) Which wine red or white?
5. Lea: Ahhh ((coming closer)) *Vuoi russo o bianco ma*?
             [Do you want red or white mum?]
6. Nonna: *No, bianco*
             [No, white]
7. Roberta: Quale?
             [Which one?]
8. Lea: *Bianco //disse*
             [She said white]
9. Judy: //She wants white wine
10. Roberta: Hey! You understood that too!

Roberta's utterance (line 10) makes reference to the conversation they had at lunch about Judy's not understanding Sicilian that we reproduced in example (7). As is clear, both Roberta and Marina try to encourage Judy's attempts at engaging with Italian by expressing their approval every time that she makes them.

Another form of metalinguistic awareness that appears in the spontaneous conversations is joking and laughing by family members about each other's English or Italian. Joking about other member's competence or incompetence and/or teasing them are all pivotal to negotiations about identities and also important in family relations because they can become resources for constructing alignments with other members. Let us discuss a few examples:

(9)

1.	Charlie:	Mom this is just a piece of bread am I done// now?
2.	Vito:	//Pass me the mayonnaise please
3.	Nonna:	*Metitticci- (…)*
		[Put some] (…)
4.	Roberta:	*Un ne vuole cchiú*!
		[He doesn't want any more!]
5.	Nonna:	*Ehi (…) mettiticci anticchia di formaggio e tu manci.*
		[Hey (…) put some cheese in it and you eat it.]
6.	Anthony:	Mayonnaise is good but it's kind of not-
7.	Lea:	*@@@Iddu vulissi di lesto,*
		[He'd like to hurry up,]
8.	Charlie:	Mum am I done?
9.	Nonna:	*Mettiticci u formaggio e tu manci accussi dicemo me nipute*
		[Put some cheese in it and so we can say my grandson]
10.		*Charlie si fici un sanguiccio bigge*!
		[Charlie made himself a big sandwich!]
11.	Lea:	She wants to see you eat the whole sandwich.
12.	Vito:	That represents goodness.
13.	Roberta:	Sanguiccio bigge @@@
14.	Marina:	@@
15.	Nonna:	*Ca com' è sbagliato?*
		[Why is it wrong?]
16.	Roberta:	*No giusto. u viri cu sai u sai diri?*
17.		[No it's right. See that you can say it?]

In this example grandmother is trying to get Christopher to eat more. She tells him in Sicilian to put some cheese in his sandwich and eat it all (line 5). Her daughter explains to her that the boy is trying to finish quickly so he can get up (line 7). At this point, grandma repeats the utterance and adds that if he eats, then they can say that he had a whole big sandwich (lines 9−10). But she produces a mixed utterance *sanguiccio bigge* where the lexicon, in English, is adapted to Italian morphology and phonology. Lea brokers, translating for the child what his grandma said (line 11), but her other daughter jokes a little about her mother's English utterance (line 13). Nonna understands that she is being made fun of and asks whether she has said something wrong (line 15), to which her daughter responds that she did not (line 16). By laughing at her mother Roberta is in some sense distancing herself from her and indexing her own identity as a competent bilingual as opposed to her mother's incompetence. Of course she quickly denies any wrong doing when her mother asks her whether she said things incorrectly in

order not to hurt her feelings. She also encourages her mother to speak English, again taking up her role as a facilitator in family communication.

However, we see the same joking and laughing when prevalently English speaking members try their own Italian. See the following example:

(10)

1.	Lea:	The one on the top is the cheese and parsley the one on
2.		the bottom is plain
3.	Vito:	//Ahhh!
4.	Sam:	//Oh it's like a feast!(.) Fista!
5.	Marina:	@@@
6.	Vito:	Festa
		[Feast]
7.	Nonna:	Festa
		[Feast]
8.	Voices	:@@@@
9.	Marina:	@Fista@
10.	Sam:	Wow what an idiot
11.	Lea:	@@@@
12.	Vito:	Ah FISTA!
13.	Lea:	You would have said Fista!
14.	Marina:	I would have said it@ TOO, I was just laughing it was
		just funny
15.	Roberta:	All right what can I get everybody?
		(...)
16.	Judy:	She was telling me today how she was saying about-
17.	Charlie:	What does fista mean?
18.	Nonna:	*Festa.*

Here we see Sam (Marina's father) trying out his Italian. But, unfortunately for him, he uses the word *fista* (line 4) instead of *festa* (the correct Italian for 'feast'). Marina starts laughing about it, and after her we see a number of corrections by Vito and Grandma (lines 6, 7) and then laughter, and again more laughter by Marina (line 9) and the rest of the family, followed by Sam's own self deprecation (line 10). This show of incompetence on Sam's part gives the occasion to other family members like Vito and Marina to showcase their Italian and implicitly distance themselves from Sam's lack of ability in the language. We see that Lea quickly takes up the opportunity to argue with Marina that she is not that superior and that she could have made the same mistake (line 13).

Thus, implicit or explicit talk about language competence is used in this case as a resource to negotiate affiliation or disaffiliation with family members. Marina, in an apparent attempt to minimize the threat to her father's face, or at least to avoid openly disaffiliating from him, defensively answers that she just found the word funny (line 14). As we see, after a few turns, Charlie inquires about the meaning of the word *fista* with his grandmother, who translates for him in Italian (lines 17−18).

Example (10), above, illustrates how members of the family who do not speak Italian or Sicilian on occasions try to insert words or phrases in one of those languages. Sometimes these attempts are accepted and/or supported, but at other times, as in this example, they result, in mocking and laughter. Both examples (9) and (10) show that displays of ability to speak Italian, Sicilian or English may be used in interaction as occasions for different kinds of positioning by family members, for example, to highlight one's superior language ability by simultaneously downgrading someone's else claims to bilingualism, to index alignment or disalignment with other family members. We see, in example (10) that Sam's 'mistake' triggers a number of turns in which alignments are taken and negotiated. Indeed soon after Sam says *fista* Marina and other family members laugh, thus positioning him as incompetent, but later on Lea aligns with him against Marina questioning her own competence in Italian. Thus language competence in multilingual families may become an important resource to define and negotiate identities in both collaborative and non-collaborative ways depending on the relationships among individuals.

5.2.3 Performing and probing

We have seen above examples in which family members' attempts at speaking Italian result in joking or teasing by others. On other occasions individuals use Italian expressions successfully to communicate, or at least they are not challenged by other members even though they may be making mistakes with regards to standard forms. I refer to these attempts as 'probing' when family members who are not proficient in Italian simply 'try out' utterances in that language, and as 'performing' when they deliver expressions in Italian in a sort of stylized fashion as indicated by such devices as high pitch, slowing down or raising intonation. Italian phatic routines such as greetings and wishes are linguistic ventures that any of the members can easily undertake. As shown below with grandma's encouragement even Vito, whose competence in the heritage language is low, chips in Italian, although he quickly reverts to English:

(11)

  1. Nonna: <u>Buon appettito a tutti</u>
               [Bon appetit to everybody]
  2. Vito: <u>Buon appetito</u>
  3. Roberta: <u>Buon appetito</u>
  4. Vito: Happy sauce day

But, as we see in the following excerpt, Vito is willing to try out his Italian with grandmother a bit later:

(12)
PROBING

  1. Charlie: Nonna had wine?
  2. Lea: Just a little bit.
  3. Vito: You'll sleep good tonight.
  4. Roberta: @@@
  5. Vito: @<u>Dorme bene!</u>
              @[Sleep well!]
  6. Roberta: *Dici dorme bene stasira*
              [He says sleep well tonight]
  7. Nonna: (…) *veramente*
                [<u>really</u>]

Here Vito is 'probing' or trying to address grandmother directly. In Italian he should have said *Dormi bene* instead of *Dorme bene* (line 5), but his rendition is good enough. Roberta, however, still feels that she needs to translate for her mother into Sicilian (line 6).

   A little later Vito performs his Italian by using an Italian word and emphatically pronouncing it at the beginning of an utterance entirely in English:

(13)
PERFORMING

  1. Tony: //(..)Uncle Vito what time do you get home in the night?
  2. Judy //(…) always tells funny stories
  3. Vito: <u>Normalmente!</u> I don't know about, a quarter to eight? Seven
        [Normally]
  4.   thirty sometimes? it really depends on the traffic.

In the example above Vito responds to a question by Tony on the time that he gets home inserting the Italian adverb *normalmente* instead of

the English 'normally.' He does so marking the word with emphasis and slow pace thus underlining its performed nature. In all these fragments Vito is engaging with Italian trying out words or phrases in more or less emphatic ways and thus showing through his use of the language his linguistic competence and, indirectly, his willingness to embrace the multilingual identity of the family.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of the transcripts confirms something that is well established in the literature on Italian Americans, i.e., that by the third generation usually language shift into English has already occurred. But this study also shows that members of multigeneration families who deal with a varied repertoire and differential language competencies maintain some level of engagement with the heritage language that points to a still vital attachment to their Italian origins. In this family one member of the third generation has re-learned Italian in college and makes all efforts to maintain communication with her Sicilian grandmother. She also has an active role in encouraging her peers to maintain the family's multilingual identity. We have also seen that the use and understanding of Italian/Sicilian is an issue on which identity negotiations take place with explicit or implicit positioning by members of different generations indicating sometimes conflicting attitudes towards such multilingual identity. More in general, family interactions reveal that all members participate in various capacities in activities that show their engagement. I have identified such activities as:

- speech accommodation
- brokering (spontaneous or elicited)
- metalinguistic reflections
- probing
- performing

Such observations are consistent with answers to interview questions about identity. Indeed, most respondents said that they felt both American and Italian, with varying degrees of allegiance to one or the other nationality. They also pointed to the family as one of the central cultural constructs distinguishing them from other groups, but also to family activities as strongly connected to their identity as people of Italian origins. One implication of this study for future research is the need to extend and expand the study of multigenerational families and their interactions as significant sites for the study of language and identity processes among members of communities of immigrant descent.

At the same time the analysis has wider implications for sociolinguistics as it points to the importance of distinguishing language loss from identity loss. Indeed, I have shown that even minimal language use in family interaction indexes engagement with and interest in the ethnic background. Thus, this study demonstrates that multilingualism/multiculturalism as practiced in everyday communication cannot be fully captured within a traditional sociolinguistic frame that regards language contact from the perspective of maintenance or shift from the L1. Indeed, from that perspective attempts to speak the language of origin by less proficient members or mixing of language varieties are often seen exclusively as symptoms of loss. Research examining linguistic phenomena like the ones discussed here from an interactional perspective shows instead that even limited use of linguistic resources can index an acceptance of and engagement with individual and collective multicultural identities.

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Appendix

Transcription conventions

((smiling))	non linguistic actions
(…)	inaudible
(.)	noticeable pause
.	falling intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of declarative sentence)
?	rising intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of interrogative sentence)
,	continuing intonation: may be a slight rise or fall in contour (less than . or - or ?); may be not followed by a pause (shorter than . or ?)
word->	listing intonation
-	self interruption
=	latched utterances by the same speaker or by different speakers
_____	emphatic stress
CAPS	very emphatic stress
::	vowel or consonant lengthening
//	overlap between utterances
-> (line)	highlights key phenomena.
@	laughter
Underlining	utterance in Italian
Italics	utterance in Sicilian
Bold	utterance in English within an utterance in Sicilian or Italian

Notes

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2. All specifications of relative status refer to the researcher: Marina.
3. Underlined utterances are in Italian, while utterances in Sicilian are in italics. Bold face indicates that a word in an utterance in Italian or Sicilian was originally spoken in English.
4. According to Modern Language Association data (see Furman, Goldberg & Lusin 2007) enrolments in Italian at U.S. colleges and universities rose 22.6 percent between 2002 and 2006.
4. The symbol (∅) is used to indicate that the verb has a zero subject here.

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