

Promoting Translingualism & Multimodality in Academic Writing

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The University of Texas at San Antonio

UTSA Teaching English as a Second Language Programs

Agenda

Brief intro

- Navigating academia in an English speaking world
- Multimodal writing
- Translingualism in publication
- Multimodal publication

My background

TRANSNATIONAL MULTILINGUAL WRITER

1. Grew up and studied in Mexico all through my BA
2. Started writing academically till my MA years
3. Advocated use of L1 in all stages of L2 writing (and vice-versa)
4. Integrated multimodal, translingual writing in my academic work and publications
5. Publish using the languages I know in multimodal digital forms



1. Navigating Academia in English

PUBLISHING TIMELINE AND CHARACTERISTICS

100%

EARLY ARTICLES

The publication was entirely in English even though the topics came from multiple cultures, languages, and modes.

85%

MANY ARTICLES

I used Spanish in a title; provided raw data without alterations with translations, and offered an abstract in Spanish too.

60%

MOST ARTICLES NOW

Apart from what I did for Article 2, I also added photos, diagrams, tables, and other media to convey my points.

<60%

RECENT ARTICLES

The inception, the data collection, planning, data analysis, and some writing is in Spanish and comes from multimodal sources

100%

REALIZATION

Actually, I came to the realization that all of my work has always been translingual and multimodal, but with a mostly English output.

2. What is multimodality?

ACCORDING TO THE UCL:

It is “an inter-disciplinary approach that understands communication and representation to be more than about language... [and] addresses much-debated questions about changes in society, in relation to new media and technologies.”

[cf. Wikipedia, \(2023\)](#)

Linguistic

Includes oral, written, and sign language

Visual

Includes images, graphs, symbols, icons static or moving

Aural

Includes sounds, music

Gestural

Movement, expression, body language

Spatial

Position, physical arrangement, proximity

CHRONOTOPES

A TALE OF TWO ARTICLES

From linear and mostly English only writing to multimodal and
translingual writing

Article #1

CREATING A UNIQUE TRANSNATIONAL SPACE [click to access](#)

RQ:

How do individuals in a social network construct transnational social spaces through digital media?

DATA

Interviews

both
FACEBOOK

Creating a Unique Transnational Place: Deterritorialized Discourse and the Blending of Time and Space in Online Social Media

M. Sidury Christiansen¹

Abstract

This study describes how members of a transnational social network of Mexican bilinguals living in Chicago manipulate their language on online social

Written Communication

1-30

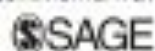
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Conversation 1. "Pesitos."

- 1 Daniela's wall post.
A picture of female members of the network dressed up and at a family member's *quinceañera* [fifteenth birthday] party. (Not included to keep confidentiality)
No caption.
Daniela took the picture and posted it on her wall.
Thursday, October 20 at 1:12pm · Like
- 2 **4 people** like this.
- 3 **Juana** wow what beautiful girls . Great photographer
Friday, October 21 at 12:45am · Like
- 4 **Tamara** <3 it!
Friday, October 21 at 7:50am · Like
- 5 **Pamela** Pues salen muy guapas todas,pero falte yop groseras y luego dicen q por q somos sentidos... jijijijiji...pesitos.....????
Friday, October 21 at 2:12pm · Like
- 6 **Chana** Uffff.... Ya reclamó PAMELA! Jajaja... Por k usted estava en el pipirin.... LOL
Friday, October 21 at 2:41pm · Like
- 7 **Pamela** Se uvuera esperado se pasan q no ve q esta camara hace milagros conmigo,tengo q aprovechar...jajaja... .y ya ve eso es mal de familia, jijiji
Saturday, October 22 at 2:56pm · Like
- 8 **Tamara** Ya veo. Sera para el próximo party!
Saturday, October 22 at 10:10pm · Like
- Wow, what beautiful girls!
Great photographer.
- [Love] it!
- Well, you are all looking beautiful, but I'm missing, you bad girls and then you say why do we get hurt... hahahaha... little p[k]isses.....????
- Argh! Pamela complained already! Ha haha... because you were in the pisser. LOL
- You should have waited. Don't you see that this camera does miracles with my image? I have to take advantage of it... hahaha.... you know it runs in the family, heeheehee
- I see. It will be in the next party!

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DOI: 10.1177/0741088317693996

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Conversation 2. “Échele.”

- 1 Tamara’s wall post.
There is a picture of Tamara’s dad with a microphone singing a karaoke song. [Cropped and blurred to protect confidentiality]



The caption reads:
“Ese es mi apa!!!”
October 21 at 7:21pm

“That’s my dad!”

- 2 **Queta, Coco, Isabel** and **12 others** like this.

- 3 **Tito** echele!!!!
October 22 at 7:23pm · Like · 1

Keep it going!
[message directed
to Tamara’s dad]

- 4 **Minerva** quien dijo que nomas mi Pa Miguel, si a mi Tio tambien le sale lo cantador. miren
October 23 at 2:57pm · Like · 1

Who said only my
dad [grandpa]
Miguel, if the
singer also
comes out of my
uncle... Look.

Post 1. “Celebrando.”

- 1 Pati’s wall post.
[Description: There is a picture of the *uchepos* cooking.]



The caption reads:
“celebrando el cumpleaños de mi mamá—with
Pamela, Tamara, Toña and 5 more people”
Friday, June 22 at 4:04pm

“celebrating my
mom’s birthday—
with Pamela,
Tamara, Toña and 5
more people”

- 2 **9 people** like this.

Main findings

- Participants can make imagined times and spaces via chronotopes
- Picture → memory → imagine they are experiencing the events in the picture at the same time they are interacting
- Shared (virtual) reality is chronotopic
- The language employed to create such a reality is digital and deterritorialized
- Motivation: In-group bonding, virtual enactment of social practices and identity maintenance

Results

- Agentive use of a transidiomatic practices (i.e., deterritorialized discourse) on Facebook allows participants to
 - **create** cultural chronotopes (Agha, 2007)
 - make **cultural transactions** between people separated by time and geography often due to economic reasons
 - **maintain** their transnationalism by fulfilling societal roles
 - Create a sense of **social and synchronic proximity** and keep the context of activities relevant to people in the other country
- Facebook is a unique transnational space where participants challenge the economic, political, time, and physical barriers through multimodal transidiomatic practices

Article #2

#XVdeRubi

[click to access](#)

RQ:

How can a
transnational social
space be created
online by
individuals of a
shared culture?

PRIMARY LABEL 4

Multimodal Posts

100%
TWITTER



DIC
26

Xv Años De Ruby En San Luis Potosi

🌐 Público · Organizado por Jose J Arenas

🕒 26 de diciembre – 27 de diciembre
Del 26 de diciembre a las 0:00 al 27 de diciembre a las 0:00

📍 La Joya, San Luis Potosi, Mexico



Public invitation was sent out via Facebook on Nov. 30. Event uninvited

4 dic

Private sponsors | political sponsors etc. Change of location to accommodate 16,000

16 dic

Location announced
Over 900,000 rsvp

9 dic

XV Años celebration
18,000 attendees

27 dic

Timeline 2016

Case Study

Protocol

- MC, court, guests
- Religious ceremony
- Compadrazgo
- Dress/Attire
- Last doll/first high heels
- Waltz
- Toast



Example

Of a chronotopic conversation



#TonayaPapi @cernlic · 18 Dec 2016

Top 5 que necesitas saber acerca de los **#XvdeRubi** bit.ly/2hK1pcw al parecer no hay dress code hasta el momento.

Translate from Spanish



Beatriz Nava @BNavadMX · 17 Dec 2016

Encuentro que la chiva de los **#XVdeRubi** se asemeja al buzkashi, deporte nacional de Afganistán. Tomado de The Kite Runner de Khaled Hosseini

Translate from Spanish

tournament that took place on the first day of spring, New Year's Day. Buzkashi was, and still is, Afghanistan's national passion. A *chapandaz*, a highly skilled horseman usually



magdiel lo @magdy7lo · 27 Dec 2016

Replying to @ElGordoyLaFlaca

listisimo para Los #XvdeRubi #rubixv #RubiFest

Case Study

Protocol

- MC, court, guests
- Religious ceremony
- Compadrazgo
- Dress/Attire
- Last doll/first high heels
- Waltz
- Toast



Case Study

Protocol

- MC, court, guests
- Religious ceremony
- Compadrazgo
 - Food, recuerdos
- Dress/Attire
- Last doll/first high heels
- Waltz
- Food
- Toast



Memes de los xv años de Rubi added a new photo.

December 5, 2016 · 🌐



👍 Like 💬 Comment

Erick Eduardo Martínez Mieles, Yaribeth Ortiz, Tiffany Campos and 294 others like this.

278 Shares



Mexican Judge @laloalcaraz · Jan 21

#RubiXV > #TrumpInauguration



Who attended?

Who planned for the party?

Who participated?

3. Translingualism in publication

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Research says



What people do



What I do



Where we are going

Research & What people are doing now

PROS AND CONS

- Writing is inherently multimodal.
- Technology makes it possible to add other modes of “writing” and communication.
- Hyperlinks have changed that reading is done.
- Lingua Franca
- Makes research/info accessible

“Natural”

See Canagarajah articles (2013, 2020, 2021)

Epistemic ethnocentrism

See Habibie articles (2020, 2021, 2022)

Social justice issue

See Cushman (2016), Shapiro (2022)

Access

See recent articles in the journals of ESP, JSLW, and World Englishes

What I do

NOT CONFORMING

From invention to publication, multimodality and translingualism is at core.

Titles

Including headings

Part of the title/headings can be in any language

Examples

From data itself

Present raw data and if possible do not translate all of it

Abstracts

Written in article and video

Add an abstract written in your language (not necessarily a translation of the English one)

SMS dissemination

Post in a different language

Summarize your research, tweet it, make stories all in your language

- 2019 Christiansen, M. S., "**Listisimo para los #XVdeRubi:**" Constructing a chronotope as an imagined experience in Twitter to enact Mexicanes outside of Mexico. *Lingua Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2019.05.002>
- 2018 Christiansen, M. S., '**Hable bien m'ijo o gringo o mx!**': Language ideologies in the digital communication practices of transnational Mexican bilinguals. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 4(21). [10.1080/13670050.2016.1181603](https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2016.1181603)
- 2015 Christiansen, M. S., '**A ondi queras**': Ranchero Identity Construction by US Born Mexicans on Facebook. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 19(5), 688-702. [10.1111/josl.12155](https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12155)
- 2021 Christiansen, M. S., (2021). **Ni de aquí, ni de allá**: Challenging the notions of transnationalism and belonging and the role technology plays. In Jain, R., B. Yazan, & S. Canagarajah (eds.) *Transnational Identities and Practices in English Language Teaching: Critical Inquiries from Diverse Practitioners*. Multilingual Matters.

Building authenticity: 'Como los meros meros'

An ideology of authenticity is the result of 'a process of interpretation in which a semiotic agent evaluates perceived indexes and determines that an entity is to be considered a genuine member or token of a given class or type' (Hansen 2021). Additionally, authenticity reflects an 'actually existing aspect of the world,' and authorities may determine such claims (4). In this case, the existing aspect is Spanish pronunciation and the authorities are peers or classmates, including the teacher. For the mariachi chronotope, Spanish language is very important, but unlike existing literature that shows the Mexican diaspora must speak 'fluent' Spanish (regardless of the form) to gain membership as an authentic Mexican, for an authentic mariachi singer, it is the accuracy and pronunciation of certain linguistic traits, not fluency, that grants membership. This accuracy is measured against what is considered to be the Spanish used in original mariachi from the 1950s in Mexico. Because this pronunciation is chronotopically framed, neither the lyrics of mariachi music nor their pronunciation can be simply modified from that Mexican accent if the goal is to inhabit an authentic identity (of mariachi which is rooted in the past). Excerpt 2. *Bautizo* shows the ways in which Mr. Aguilera frames pronunciation to reflect authenticity:

[Students begin playing and singing Las Mañanitas, a traditional birthday song]

Student [singing]:

'... el día en que tu **nacistes**, nacieron todas las flores ... y en la pila del **bautismo** ...' [the day you were born, all flowers were born ... and in the baptism fountain ...]

Christiansen (2023)
Building identity and
authenticity: exploring
the spatiotemporal
aspects of language
teaching in a mariachi
class, *International
Journal of Bilingual
Education and
Bilingualism*, DOI:
[10.1080/13670050.2022.2164176](https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2022.2164176)

'A ondi queras': *Ranchero* identity construction by U.S. born Mexicans on Facebook†

M. Sidury Christiansen [✉](#)

First published: 14 December 2015 | <https://doi-org.lib.utsa.edu/10.1111/josl.12155> | Citations: 4

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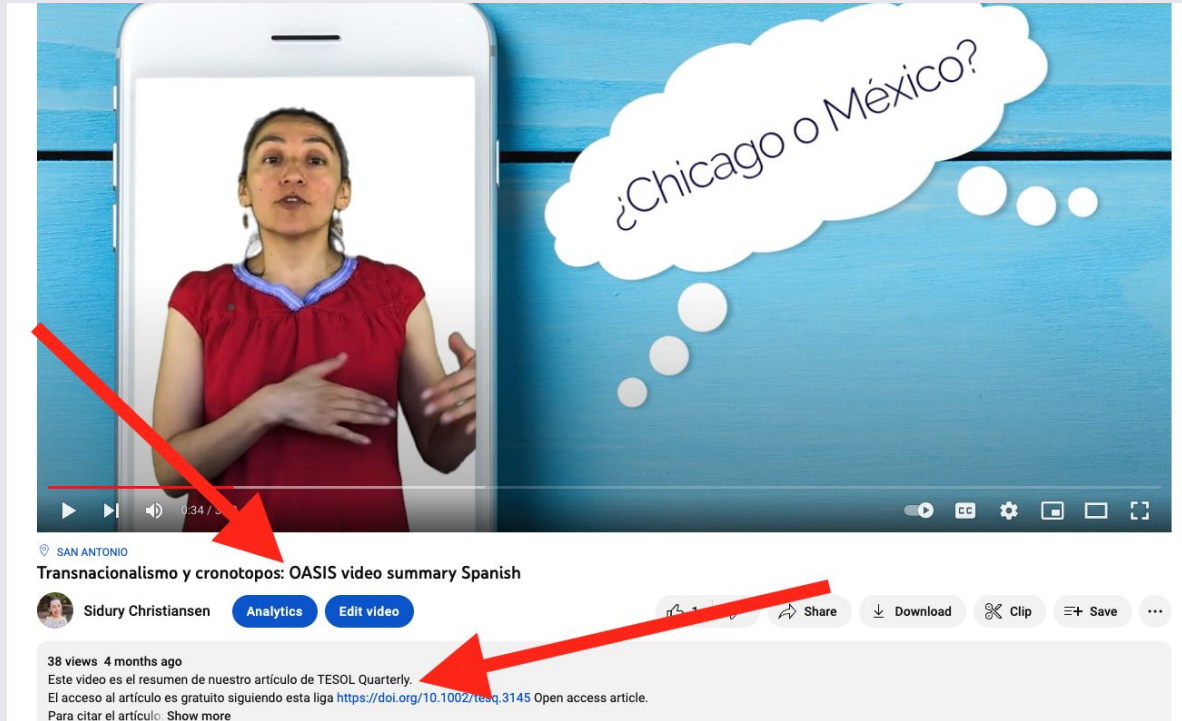
EN ES

Abstract

Este estudio describe la forma en la que mexicanos bilingües transnacionales de segunda generación utilizan una variedad del español mexicano estigmatizada para comunicarse vía Facebook y construir una identidad. Las características estereotípicas de esta variedad denotan una identidad de *rancheros*. Históricamente, *ranchero* es una identidad que es ambivalente para la sociedad mexicana en general. Por una parte, la cultura *ranchera* es una reminiscencia del México agrario pasado. Por otra parte, los *rancheros* se encuentran al fondo de la jerarquía en la sociedad mexicana, junto con los indígenas mexicanos. Mediante el análisis etnográfico cualitativo de conversaciones digitales en línea, los resultados de esta investigación demuestran cómo el utilizar este español vernáculo les permitió conservar reminiscencias del pasado colectivo agrario, manteniendo las identidades mexicanas atadas a sus ancestros, pero amoldadas a la cultura de origen mexicano en los Estados Unidos, distanciándose del estigma asociado a un antecedente *ranchero*.

1 Introduction

Rancheros are a subpopulation of Mexican peasants considered with some ambivalence by the larger Mexican society. On the one hand, *ranchero* culture is a positive reminder of Mexico's agrarian past (Barragán López [1997](#)). On the other hand, *rancheros* are considered



2022

Lam, W. S. E. & **Christiansen, M. S.** Transnational Mexican Youth Negotiating Languages, Identities, and Cultures Online: A Chronotopic Lens. *TESOL Quarterly*.
<http://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3145>

Video in Spanish

<https://youtu.be/jmslvFcFfHg>

Where are we going?

DIVERSITY IS HERE TO STAY

cf. Christiansen & Tian (forthcoming)

“It’s not simply about saying ‘I’m sad’.”

“It’s about sharing on a pool of cultural references to communicate.”

Many which are multimodal

Thank you!

ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

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- [Visit my Google Scholar Profile](#)
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