

Discourse Forms and Social Categorization in Cha'palaa

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 A conversation with Yambu..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Social categories in oral history..... | 9 |
| 1.3 Using racial language..... | 14 |
| 1.4 Linguistic resources for racial discourse..... | 20 |
| Summary | 26 |
| 1.5 Race and ethnicity in northwest Ecuador..... | 28 |
| 1.6 Racial and ethnic language in academic accounts..... | 33 |
| 1.7 Linguistic analogies and linguistic analysis | 46 |
| 1.8 Points of articulation | 51 |
| Presentation | 57 |
| Chapter 2: Grammatical and social collectivity | 61 |
| 2.1 Social relations into the afterlife..... | 61 |
| 2.2 Collectivity and the animacy hierarchy | 64 |
| Summary | 81 |
| 2.3 Collectivity in predicates..... | 81 |
| Summary | 94 |
| Chapter 3: Ethnonyms and group reference | 95 |
| 3.1 Ethnonyms in history: Chachilla and uyala..... | 95 |
| 3.2 The autonym and indigeneity | 107 |
| 3.3 Ethnonyms, oral history and whiteness..... | 114 |
| 3.4 Blackness and history encoded on ethnonyms | 120 |
| 3.5 Other exonyms and inter-indigenous differentiation | 134 |
| Summary | 149 |
| Chapter 4: Collective Pronouns, social categories and discourse structure | 151 |
| 4.1 Ethnonyms and pronouns in us/them alignment | 151 |
| 4.2 Racial language and the interview context..... | 163 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 4.3 From person to place..... | 171 |
| 4.4 The Cha’palaa pronominal system | 175 |
| 4.5 Social knowledge and participation structure | 181 |
| Summary | 189 |
| Chapter 5: Social categorization across modalities..... | 191 |
| 5.1 Gestural resources for social categorization..... | 191 |
| 5.2 Gesture and the historico-racial schema | 195 |
| 5.3 Reflexive gestures and social categorizing discourse..... | 203 |
| Summary | 219 |
| Chapter 6: Dialogic dimensions of race relations | 220 |
| 6.1 Cha’palaa and Spanish in multilingual social space | 220 |
| 6.2 Economies of exchange | 234 |
| 6.3 Interracial marriage and “collisions of blood” | 246 |
| 6.4 Racializing the supernatural | 282 |
| Summary | 294 |
| Chapter 7: Race and racial conflict in interaction..... | 296 |
| 7.1 Complications of demarcating boundaries..... | 296 |
| 7.2 Racial formation in the interactional economy | 310 |
| 7.3 Old categories and new collectivities | 335 |
| Summary | 354 |
| Chapter 8: Conclusion | 356 |
| 8.1 On Milton’s porch..... | 356 |
| 8.2 Race and the depth of social imprint | 358 |
| Appendices..... | 364 |
| Appendix A: Key to abbreviations | 364 |
| Appendix B: Standard format for ethnographic interviews | 366 |
| Appendix C: Orthography and pronunciation guide | 367 |
| References..... | 369 |
| Vita | 388 |

Chapter 7: Race and racial conflict in interaction

7.1 Complications of demarcating boundaries

One evening during the summer of 2007 while I was doing pilot research on the Upi river, my friend Alberto asked me if I wanted to participate with the community in an event with a *miruku* (literally a “man who knows”) with the purpose of resolving a land dispute over the boundaries of Chachi territory and Blacks’ territory to the west. When we got to the top of the hill where the school house that doubles as a community meeting hall sits, most of the town was already there. At one end of the room a hammock was hung for the *miruku* alongside an altar that was arranged with different stones, small statues, candles, tobacco, cane alcohol, and pots full of corn chicha covered with banana leaves. Over the hammock hung a small pointed roof woven with leaves to protect the *miruku* from any dangerous shadows. We arranged our sleeping mats on the ground and some of the women blocked the doors by stacking school desks, to keep anything dangerous from sneaking in.

The community had contracted the *miruku* and brought him from where he lived downriver; they spent some time talking about the details of the land dispute with him before he settled in for the night and began to sing. The bright lights were extinguished, leaving only a few candles and the *miruku* began a long night of singing and whistling while shaking leafy branches and spitting alcohol and smoke into the air. Little by little the community members fell asleep in little piles of children and parents snuggled together. Sometime not long before dawn the *miruku* finally finished his singing, and with the first rays of light everyone descended the hill to start their day. The same procedure was repeated again that night, and the night afterwards.



Figure 4. The *miruku* sings to influence the land dispute. Candles and other ritual items are arrayed on the floor beside his hammock.

Many Chachi people are wary about the offensive power of shamans, and often when a person is inexplicably sick it is often suspected to be the doing of enemies who have contracted a *miruku* to take revenge. This particular event was not meant to harm the members of the Black community but instead to influence their willingness to accept a solution based on a historical land title that favored the position of the Chachi community. They hoped that the Blacks would respect the land title that had established the limits of the Chachi Center two generations before. Chachi “Centers” are a kind of comunal landholding in which legally all members of the community own the land collectively and an internal organization determines who can live and farm on which parts of the land. Each Chachi Center may include several towns as well as agricultural and forest land; the Chachi Center where I did field research has extensive forest resources in an ecologically sensitive area that borders the vast Cotacachi-Cayapas nature reserve to the east. To the west the Chachi Center borders the Comuna Santiago Cayapas, a large administrative unit that includes many small and large Black communities. The closest Black population to the Chachi village where I was living lies about ten kilometers away cross country through the forest. The Black town used to be a remote area, but a logging company had recently opened a road in order to have access to the valuable old-growth tropical hardwoods. They had made a deal with the Black community to pay for the wood and to employ the locals, but the trees were rapidly being

depleted in the area, leading them to push further into the forest to the point that they were encroaching on Chachi land. When the Chachis discovered that hundreds of trees had already been cut on what they considered to be their side of the border, new tensions arose between them and their Black neighbors. They hoped that through a combination of tactics using both legal channels and the powers of the *miruku* that they could make an agreement to clearly delineate the border and to respect it in the future.

A year after the event with the *miruku*, however, when I returned to the area to begin full-time field research, the problem had still not been settled. On several occasions a delegation of men had walked through the forest to attend community meetings with the Blacks in order to negotiate an agreement. At times after the meetings it had seemed like the Blacks had agreed to the boundary, but then a short time later the Chachis would find the stumps of cut trees and the scars of logging machinery, each time further inside their territory. During my first few months living in the Chachi community the land dispute was a constant topic of conversation when people gathered in the evening to sit around and talk; even with my beginning Cha'palaa I could figure out what they were talking about by catching isolated words and phrases like *peechulla* (Blacks) and *lala' tu* (our land). By my third month in the village people were getting anxious and decided to schedule another meeting with their Black neighbors. The evening before the day of the meeting some of the men asked me if I wanted to come along.

We set off early the next morning in order to arrive on time to the meeting, which was planned for ten o'clock. There were about ten of us as we crossed the Upi River by canoe and headed through the plaintain groves near the river into the forest beyond. Two other Chachi communities were also sending delegations that would take different routes and meet us at our destination. Forging a small stream and climbing up to the crest of a ridge, we came out of the forest into a clearing. It was the logging road, a great muddy gash torn by heavy machinery through the forest. Following the road, we eventually emerged into cow pastures on a hill and saw the outskirts of the town below. To get to the town we had to ford a river at a point where the logging road cut through the riverbed;

compared to the crystalline waters in the Chachi territory this river was brown with the silty runoff from logging activity, contaminating the main source of water for drinking and washing.



Figure 5. The muddy ruts of the logging road cut; Chachi men on their way to the Black community for a meeting about the land dispute.

As we walked into town the Chachi men greeted a few of the Black community members that were around town. As usual for Ecuador, the officials had not yet arrived so the meeting would have to be delayed until the afternoon. While we waited in the shade under a house on stilts, I watched as a pickup truck and several motorcycles rode into town to sell clothes and other goods. A few years ago the town had only been accessible by canoe and on foot, but now due to the logging road it was connected to the Ecuadorian highway system. While it had increased access to consumer goods, the road did not appear to have brought prosperity to the town, which looked even more impoverished than the Chachi towns we had arrived from. Some Chachi men pointed out to me how some of the local men carried pistols and acted as enforcers for the logging company. In addition to their machetes, a few of the Chachi men had brought pistols as well. It was getting late in the afternoon now and the meeting still had not started. We would have to stay the night.

Finally a pickup arrived and the officials from the Comuna Santiago Cayapas arrived, Black men from the larger towns who, unlike most of the locals, move in national political circles. They were supposed to mediate the discussion between the Chachis and the local Blacks. The officials called everyone to the schoolhouse and began to set up at the front of the classroom, but the locals reluctantly hung about the door. The town president was missing and there was some debate if the meeting could even take place. Members of the Chachi delegation later claimed these were tactics to make sure that any resolution reached at the meeting would not be binding due to lack of quorum.

When at last there was agreement that the meeting could start, the representative from the Comuna Santiago Cayapas government took the floor and gave a long, high volume speech scolding the community members for their failure to cooperate with the natural resource management plans pushed by the Comuna and, ultimately, by the national government under the newly-elected leftist president Rafael Correa, who the Comuna representative praised in his speech. In line with international trends, the government was encouraging participation in carbon trading as their major environmental strategy for protecting the imperiled Chocóan rainforest. Already the areas accessible by road had been logged and largely replaced by African palm plantations marketed as an ecological alternative for producing biofuels, but with a host of problems due to complications with monoculture and the displacement of smallholder farming. The consequences had been the destruction of many Black and indigenous communities in the province, who were intimidated through threats of violence to sell their land (Hazlewood 2004, 2010). Webs of corruption were rumored to connect the local political class, the contraband economy centering on the Colombian border,³⁰ and the logging companies, which pushed relentlessly on towards the last areas of virgin forest. Their strategy was to incorporate rural communities further into the capitalistic economy by offering wages and credit, seeking to create relationships of debt servitude to use as leverage for manipulating locals.

The Comuna representative scolded the community members at length for an episode in which locals had smashed the camera of a representative of a European Union carbon capture program as a rejection of the idea that they would stop logging the forest.³¹ “How much can you get from the logging companies?” asked the Comuna representative. “Twenty dollars? You can’t live off that when the forest is gone.” In his discourse, the Comuna representative used the Spanish equivalent of the kinds of **pronoun system alignment with ethnonyms** seen in Cha’palaa in Chapter 4. Spanish has the possibility of marking person on the verb, so independent pronouns are not necessary to establish relationships of co-reference with ethnonyms. In this excerpt from the speech the ethnonymic phrase *los negros* (“the Blacks”) is syntactically the subject of the verb *ver* (“to see”), however the verb is not inflected for a third person subject but rather for the first person, establishing the relationships of co-reference between the ethnonym, the person marking, the speaker, and the social group that he belongs to:

| | |
|--|---|
| | [CO-REF] ↔ ↔ ↔ [1PL] |
| (7.1) Por eso es que dicen algunos que | [los negros] no ve[-mos] hácia allá! |
| | [the Blacks] NEG see-[1PL] |
| That is why some say that | we Blacks don’t see far off. |

¡No vemos hasta aquí, hasta allí! ¡Entonces no pues hermanos!
 We see up until here, up until here! So (we say) no then brothers!
 [GESTURE: POINTS HANDS AND HEAD IN FRONT OF BODY]

³⁰ Ballvé 2009 describes links between narco-traffickers and carbon capture programs.

³¹ At this moment I became uncomfortably aware of my own presence as a white foreigner wielding a video camera during the meeting. However, I had sought previous approval from the town authorities to film on the condition that I send a copy of the DVD to them – which I later did. In addition, the Chachis with whom I had arrived have a long-term documented agreement with me to participate in the collection of video data. The camera did not seem to be causing any immediate problems for any of the meeting participants so I continued to film.

After a number of speeches by the local and regional officials, in which all parties generally supported the idea that the land title of the Chachis would be upheld and both communities would participate in the demarcation of the territory, the floor was opened to the attendees, and a number of Chachis and Blacks stood up to voice their opinions. In these discourses as well pronominal forms came into such consistent alignment that the first and second person pronouns could be said to be operating with racialized semantics throughout the interaction. In the example below, one of the Chachis named Roberto, a member of our party on the walk through the forest, stood and spoke for several minutes in Spanish; readers may notice his non-standard Spanish which is best described as a variety of coastal Spanish similar to that of Blacks but with a number of distinct features connected to the influence of Cha'palaa. I point this out to highlight complex issues of multi-lingual semantics, and to suggest that the boundary is permeable between the meanings generated in the monolingual Cha'palaa discourse discussed in previous chapters and those that circulate in Spanish discourse. As in racializing Cha'palaa discourses, the particular resources of the language can be exploited in ways that link the people meeting in the school house to larger communities and, at a higher level of scale, ultimately to their macro-racial categories.



Figure 7. Roberto speaks at the meeting between Chachis and Blacks – he is standing at the right side of the image.

(7.2) Estamos tratando sobre la situación de límite Chachi Tsejpi

We are dealing with the situation about the limits of Chachi (Center) Tsejpi

y los compañeros conocidos de Juan Montalvo,

and the comrades known as Juan Montalvo,

compañeros, según me contaban que

comrades, according to what they tell me,

cómo hacer un contacto- un diálogo, **a favor de dos razas**

to have a dialogue, **in favor of two races.**

Cuando iniciaban el lindero pero ese momento **nosotros** estamos pequeños.
When they first began that border, but in that moment **we** are small,

nosotros no podemos responder sus preguntas, que se queda bien claro
we cannot respond to your questions, that it remains very clear,

esas son los antiguos gentes que ha hecho esa manga
they, the old people have made that cut (in the forest)

nosotros no tenemos- ese asunto no tenemos ni un (?) preguntas.
we don't have- that issue we don't have (?) questions.

Siempre **nosotros** seguimos manteniendo que ha puesto la línea
We have always kept up the maintenance where they have put the line.

Eso no más estamos manteniendo **nosotros**.
Just that is what **we** are maintaining.

Roberto explains how the legal boundaries of the land were set when the people of his generation were small children – using the Spanish pronoun *nosotros* to make this link between himself and other adult community members. As Roberto describes how since that time they have simply respected the boundaries they inherited, he uses the pronoun so frequently that it strikes me as over-frequent for many forms of Spanish discourse, Spanish being a language that has the option of expressing person on the verb alone (in contrast to Cha'palaa, which does not mark person on verbs). As his speech continued Roberto began to use the second person pronoun *ustedes* in opposition to *nosotros*, as a way to consolidate his addressees as a single social group:

(7.3) **Nosotros** siempre hemos expuesto- hemos gastado
We have always explai- we have spent

y sacrificamos nuestro esfuerzo.
and we sacrificed our efforts.

Entonces **ustedes** tendrán que poner un financiamiento
So **you all** will have to provide some financing

para poner ese equipo.
to supply that equipment.

In the example above, Roberto references one of the most common points of contention surrounding meetings and other official activities, both between Chachis and Blacks and among different Chachi communities when they coordinate jointly: where do the logistical funds come from? Demarcating territorial boundaries far in the forest requires food, tools and GPS equipment, and somebody has to pay for them.

When members of the Black community took their turns to speak, they also described the situation through the same systems of pronoun alignment, but now inverted to a perspective centered on their position within their own racialized social categories. In the comments of one Black woman this was observable in how the first person is used:

(7.5a) **Nosotros** no tenemos tierra.
We don't have land.

The first person, aligned with the members of the Black community, then comes into opposition to the Chachis in the third person through us/them alignment:

(7.5b) **Ellos** se llevan todas las tierras de **nosotros**.

They are taking the land of **ours**.

The pronominal alignment further maps onto the participants in the interaction when the second person pronoun is used in reference to the visiting Chachis, contesting the legality of the land boundaries as they were set by previous generations:

(7.5c) Mi padre no se dió cuenta cuando **ustedes** hicieron esa manga.

My father did not realize when **you all** made that cut.

Part of the reason for the switch between third person in (7.5b) and second person in (7.5c) to refer to the Chachis is that the first part of the meeting was primarily oriented around the visit of the Comuna officials, while the second example is from the second part, which was oriented towards the Chachis. When the officials left, the meeting was supposed to continue in order for the two communities to come to an agreement, but the participants slowly began trickling out the door of the school house while nobody made an effort to proceed with the meeting. Finally a group of Black women took charge and attempted to call both the Chachis and Blacks back into the school house. The following interaction took place at the school house door, and consists of overlapping turns during a bit of confused mulling around. Here I will introduce a set of transcriptions designed for describing natural speech and interaction that I will refer back to throughout the chapter. I use a simplified version of the system developed by Gail Jefferson (Jefferson 2004) with the following conventions: [brackets] for overlapping speech, a period in parenthesis (.) for a pause of undifferentiated duration, the equals sign = for continuous speech between lines of transcript, CAPITALS for emphatic prosody and repeated letters for extended vowels. Here CH1 and CH2 are Chachi men, and S1 is a Black woman. CH2 was moving as if to leave:

(7.6)

S1: Falta la reunión de Juan Montalvo con **ustedes**.

(We) still need to have the meeting of Juan Montalvo with **you all**.

CH1: [Si ese.

[Yes that's it.

[

CH2: [Aaaah. Todavía?

S1: [Si ese.

[Yes that's it.

[

CH1: [Si si.

[Yes yes.

CH2: Aaah, ya ya.

Aaah, ok ok.

In the interaction above both CH1 and S1 both speak, in part simultaneously, to CH2 to convince him to stay and continue participating in the meeting. S1 uses the second person pronoun in contrast to the name of the Black town, setting up a racialized pronoun alignment that the local organization of activity is responding to. Not only were the Chachis walking away, some of the Blacks were leaving as well. The women from the example above (S1) together with another Black woman (S2) called out to a third woman who was walking back to the center of town.

(7.7)

S1: Nena veeeeenga, ven acá a conversar con **los chachis** neeena.

Girl coooooome, come here to talk to with **the Chachis** giiiiiiirl.

S2: Donde es que se va ieeendo?
Where is it that you are goooooing?

S1: Vengan que **los chachis** van a venir.
Come back, **the Chachis** are going to come.

The use of the ethnonym *chachi* in the example above as a referential term for not *all* Chachis but the Chachis who were physically present in the speech situation is another way that linkages between social categories are established with participants in actual instances of interaction. Eventually the meeting regrouped and a general agreement was made to set a date for mutual demarcation of the territory. After that agreement, the conversation turned to the discussion of the logging road that was being pushed through the forest towards the Chachi community. The Chachis were eager for the road to be completed so that they could avoid the difficult and expensive canoe trip that was their only way of traveling to urban centers to access different services and outside institutions. The Blacks offered permission for the Chachis to use the road to take their lumber to market, with the condition that they pay a toll to the Black community. They said that they needed an income now that they had spent virtually all of the money from their lumber on paying back the logging company for building the road. They did not have many trees left, which was why they had been pressing further into the forest near the territorial boundary. “The road cost us dearly,” said one town official (*nos costó caro*).



Figure 8. Some of the last giant old growth hardwoods in the area on their way to market.

The late meeting had disrupted our plans to hike back to the Chachi community the same day, so we were offered the use of the pre-school building where we could sleep on the floor. A group of women volunteered to feed us and after some discussion at the store about sharing the cost of the food, we sat around talking and eating plates of rice and pork. Some of the Chachi men followed the sound of recorded music to join some of the local Black men to drink hard liquor, while the rest of us crowded onto the floor and slept as the rain hammered outside. In the morning the town was sleepy, partly due to the drinking of the night before. We waited while the women prepared breakfast for us and then set off on the long walk back through the forest. The Chachi men had agreed to meet the Blacks at the territorial boundary the following week. However the meeting never took place, I believe due to problems communicating with the Black town without phone or radio; at the time of writing the land dispute remains unresolved.

7.2 Racial formation in the interactional economy

Most of the discourse examples presented in the previous chapters of this dissertation have been taken from ethnographic interviews and monologic accounts of oral history or traditional stories. While the difference between language usage in these settings and in the natural speech data included in this chapter is gradient and should not be dichotomized, it is fair to wonder about whether the patterns described in previous chapters hold for the language of everyday conversational interaction, which constitutes the bulk of language usage as a whole. The examples of natural speech in the previous section from a recording of a meeting between representatives of opposing sides in a land dispute between Chachis and Blacks showed that very similar alignment patterns could be observed both in an interview context and elsewhere, in that particular case expressed with the resources of Spanish grammar. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate how the discourse forms described in the previous chapters are articulated locally day to day in Chachi communities, both in Cha'palaa and in Spanish in a broader bilingual context including both Chachis and Blacks.

One of the central propositions of the Conversation Analysis school of interaction studies is that the analyst should not impose abstract social categories onto interaction data but should rather look for evidence of the social order as realized in interaction (Schegloff 2007). While hesitance to bring more abstract social knowledge to bear on interaction data seems based on a misconception about the the degree of empirical precision the method really allows relative to ethnography or other methods, there is something to be said for seeking empirical manifestations of social phenomena in reviewable, micro-analyzable data. Anthropological studies of race and social inequality sometimes jump directly to the macro-scale of social movements and political negotiations, and while this does not necessarily stop them from acheiving good ethnographic analysis, the resulting generalizations can gloss over a lot of detail about the

social mechanisms of race and racialization.³² A good example of how to approach racialization through interaction is recent work by Paglaia (2009) that explores ways for connecting Omi and Winant's (Omi and Winant 1994, Winant 2000) concept of racial formation to specific interactional structures in racializing discourse in Italian. In interaction studies, the minimal unit of analysis is not a single construction like a phrase or a sentence, as in descriptive linguistics, but is instead a pair of utterances in conversational sequence, or an **adjacency pair**. This perspective puts a spotlight onto the **sociality of language**, framing linguistic form not just as grammatically consistent in a descriptive framework but as an intersubjective, interactionally consistent system. In terms of the kinds of discourse structures described in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, an interactive approach demonstrates how those frameworks for social categorizing discourse are upheld across turns and between speakers, the true evidence of their social construction. The discourse forms associated with social categorization are distributed across speakers, across turns in interaction, across instances of discourse, and across languages in situations of complex multilingual relationships.

In everyday discourse in Chachi households social categories are drawn on as one of the basic ordering principles of human activity. In interaction studies ethnonyms and other words for referring to social collectivities have been referred to as **membership categorization devices** (Sacks 1992, Schegloff 2007), which become resources for person reference in interaction by associating referents with social categories (Sacks and Schegloff 1979; Stivers, Enfield and Levinson 2007). The example below shows how racial categories can be enlisted for the most mundane instances of person reference in conversation, where social knowledge provides common ground for making inferences about the identity of referents (Enfield 2006). The transcript shows the initiation of a conversation between Manuel and Humberto. I was filming Manuel as he worked on the finishing touches of a new canoe when Humberto had arrived and sat down in the hammock. Manuel began the conversation by making initial reference to an individual

³² A few studies have approached these issues through discourse data, such as Urciuoli's work on prejudice and bilingual speech among New York Puerto Ricans (1996) and Hill's work on mock Spanish and racism

through the use of the ethnonym *peechulla*, assuming that Humberto will be able to infer which “Black man” he is referring to and not think he is talking about Blacks in general. It turned out to be an older Black man that sometimes lent money to Chachis; Manuel had seen Humberto talking to him and assumed they were arguing over interest. Humberto responded briefly in recognition and Manuel continued with a series of long turns including a series of third person pronouns all co-referent with the initial referent *peechulla* that established the frame. The maintenance of this frame across conversational turns shows how racial meaning is socially established and sustained in real instances of interaction.



Figure 9. Informal conversation.

(7.8)

M: **Peechulla** naatin **ya'** fantieeyaa ura ikaa
What did **the Black** have to say on **his** part?

Umaa naake'bain iee mijantsui ti' ma jaisu.
Now (he) should know what he comes to do.

H: Aee.

M: Je je je. Tsenñaa tsantintsu **ya'**ne ura tsantintun.
Ha ha ha. Well, **he** was speaking nicely like that.

Keenu chachilla rukula maty (.) **yabain** (.)
Known (by) the Chachis, the old men so (.) **he** also (.)

peletu kes ne' kalen netyu
does not go around causing trouble

chachi amigu puree.
and has many Chachi friends.

Tsaayaa (.) peletu dejaa ti' (.)
So then (.) a problem comes (and he) says (.)

chachi tsaayaa maali tsantis neintsusaaka.
like a Chachi alone going around saying that.

H: Aaa.

M: Tsenñaa kepenene maa rukutaa **lala'**.
So then he is a very early (known) man for **us**.

In aa abuelunuba kerai ti (.)
He says he knows my great grandfather.

rukui ti tsa'mitya chachillaba naadetinka
saying he is old, for that reason Chachis say

mantsa (.)**ya**ibain (.) setenta y cincuuuyu ti challa
some (.) **he** also (.) (he's) seventy five he says now.

A: Aaa.

M: Tsaaren weela manen ya'ne fijan mishuu=
And others go around with white hair

=manen ka ne palu'kayaa deneeti=
and hunchbacked, they say,

=yachi kayiibain (.) naa (.)
(people) younger than him (.) how (.)

Telembisha tsaaba dechaa ti.
They live in Telembí they say.

H: Yaa.

M: Tse'mitya (.) **ya** rukui ti tsaanuren (.)
Because (.) **he** is old, he says, it is like that

tsaa ibain matyu tsatsakai titaa=
like "I also did this and that" he says,

=tsantintsumi chachitsaayaa (.)Tapingu naatin (.)

saying that, like a Chachi (.) like Tapigo (.)

kera (.) kera rukulanu

(he) knows (.) (he) knows the old men

laaba kayinu uranu

when we were children, good,

entsa maty den ne' maty nemushaaka,

he came around here a lot.

H: Mmm.

M: Nara kera

He knows (the area) very well.

H: Maty yabain inee ura in kajuunaa=

Well **he** also was nice to me to my face

=ne firu' palaayaa pandyaa

he did not speak rudely.

In the excerpt above Manuel takes a series of long turns at talk, with Humberto upholding his part of the conversation through minimal **backchannel** turns that reveal how even long conversational turns like Manuel's turns above are socially and interactionally co-constructed (Schegloff 1982, White 1989, Young and Lee 2004). Structurally in this interaction it appears that even though Manuel began with a question he did so not to request an immediate response but rather to initiate his own series of turns, which Humberto supported through his backchanneling. When Humberto finally did take a longer turn, his use of the third person pronoun *ya* is a way of taking up the

same referent that has been tracked and maintained throughout all of Manuel's turns since its initial introduction through the ethnonym *peechulla*. In this way Humberto confirms his uptake of the pronominal frame and by extension the social validity of offering an ethnonym to stand for a reference to a single individual by way of his social category. At a very high level of granularity, it confirms the status of the category as a social phenomenon. The conversation between Manuel and Humberto continued for several more minutes, all concerning the same referent but never using any other recognitional terms for him, only third person pronouns and, more often, predicates unmarked for person marking of any kind. In Cha'palaa discourse more generally reference is highly underspecified at the clause or sentence level and relies heavily on discourse structure for disambiguation, notably more so than languages with obligatory person marking. Once a referential framework has been established between speakers, that framework is present to be exploited by speakers for disambiguating their underspecified utterances (until they are modified by the introduction of new referents or by the switch reference system of the grammar). Understanding Manuel and Humberto's conversation in those terms helps to show how Manuel successfully drew on the intersubjective social reality of race to achieve person reference in interaction. Picking up at a later part of the conversation we can observe that the same framework has been maintained throughout the duration of the conversation, in which all clauses reference the same Black man under discussion. Throughout much of the conversation not even third person pronouns (*ya*) are required for tracking co-reference, and person is grammatically unmarked in all but one clause below:

(7.9)

H: Tsenñu naatimuumiñu weelanu dran pa'bain=
Well as you say to others he speaks loudly=

=matyu ajaati'bain matyu (.)

=um speaking agrily um (.)

inee in kajuunaa (.)
to me in my face (.)

firu' palaayaa [pandyaa kaspele tsantiña
rude words [(he) did not speak before as they say.
[
M: [Jee firu' pa- firu' pandyaa
 [Yes rude spea- speaking rudely

panchibain ma ratu jatubain (.)
also to speak for a moment coming (.)

tsaawe matyu [tsaañu'mitya cusas matyu.
like that um [because things are like that um.
[
H: [Jee yabain- yabain chachi (.)
 [Yes **he** also- **he** also Chachi (.)

Chachitalaa (.) maty chachi juntsaayu
among Chachis (.) um like a Chachi

pensa- pensa ke'mitya (.) ñu'pa'ba tishu (.)
think- thinking because (.) as you'd say (.)

yumaa rukula amigudee ti.
now he is friends with the old men (he) says.

In one sense, from the moment of initial reference, across turns and between speakers, the social category of *peechulla* (Black) is confirmed and co-constructed, and acknowledged as one of the major relevant aspects of the referent. The continued salience

of social categorization beyond the initial reference is also highlighted by the way the referent is compared and contrasted with Chachi people throughout the conversation. The speakers evaluated the extent to which this particular Black man was like or unlike Chachis, hinging on his long-term experience with Chachis and his acquaintance with the earlier generations. These aspects of the referent help to establish him as someone who is affinal to Chachis and who is favored because he does not “speak rudely” in credit negotiations, but at the same time he is established as a member of a distinct racial category from the Chachis. This relatively positive discourse about interracial relationships is only one sample of how social categories can be constituted in interaction. Keeping in mind the relatively simple alignment patterns seen in the dyadic conversation presented above, now I will track similar structures through a complex stretch of multi-participant conversation that directly concerns issues of interracial conflict.

Returning to my account of the land dispute between the Chachi town and the neighboring Black town, over the next few months after the meeting the two parties had not successfully been able to complete the boundary demarcation. During that time I was living in the house right at the center of town with an older couple, Mecho and María Pastora, along with their grandson Alberto and his family. Alberto was the town president at the time and was generally known in the community as someone who speaks good Spanish and is adept at navigating official circles outside the Chachi area. In the evenings the men of the town would gather on the balcony of the house and discuss news, gossip and current events, including frequent conversations about what steps would be taken regarding the land dispute. Women were not usually included in these conversations, although sometimes they sat by listening and speaking up from time to time.³³ The following set of examples consists of excerpts from one such evening conversation in

³³ I am aware that a bias towards men’s speech is a problem throughout my dissertation. In general during fieldwork it was more difficult for me to record informal conversation among women. I attempted to partially compensate for this problem by including interview data from women speakers. The gender bias in my data also reflects the gender bias of male Chachis who tend to dominate official discussions in the community; interestingly, in my brief experience at official meetings in Black communities the women appeared to have a more prominent role in the proceedings.

which the local men discussed their options for dealing with the land dispute. By this time there had been several attempts to meet with the Blacks partway through the forest, but when they had finally met there had been an argument and some tense moments of near violence. In this excerpt, the Chachi men discuss the meeting point where a pile of soft drink bottles had been discarded, and Ebaristo (EB) received laughter for reminding everyone how the Blacks had apparently almost harmed José, an Awá man who lives in the Chachi community and is married to Lucrecia, a local Chachi woman. Like the example above, a social category term is used for the interactive function of making reference to a single person; Ebaristo relies on his intersubjective awareness that there is only one relevant Awá. They almost “finished” him, Ebaristo said:

(7.10)

V: Tsaaren inaa junu tiee inaa jityusai timiya
But for me, there, I say, for me, not to go there,

laatalan ketu junu (.) cola tsamantsa (.)
doing it amongst ourselves (.) a bunch of soft-drink (.)

cola lemeta bui'purenashujunu miinu keñuren (.)
soft-drink bottles are piled up, going to do it there (.)

yaila [meedityu' enku ajkesha jainu dekeshujuntsaa-
if they [don't listen and come futher towards here-

[

ALL: [MANY TALKING AT ONCE]

PE: Lejos (.) lejos.
Far (.) far.

EB: Peechullachi.
The Blacks’.

RI: Jee?
Yes?

EB: Peechullachi.
The Blacks’.

V: Junka yala’ junka-
Place, their place.

EB: Junaa **awaa** juntsa kalaa kera keraishaaka.
There **the Awá** came out and they saw each other,

ALL: Je je je je [LAUGHTER]

EB: Akawa iitsumin.
(He) almost got finished.

V: Juntsankedaa . . .
Let’s do that . . .

This short example is a good illustration of the complexity of multi-party conversation; there are numerous things going on. In terms of the discussion of social categorization, two ethnonyms (*awaa*, *peechulla*) were used for reference. Interactionally, Vicente (V) attempted to take a longer turn and explain his position about meeting the Blacks but was interrupted by other participants who added comments to establish that the place in question was far away, that the soda bottles belonged to the

Blacks, and that it was the spot where José had been threatened. In his final turn Vicente re-took the floor to continue expressing his opinion.



Figure 10. Night time conversation among men on the porch. The topic is the land dispute with the Blacks. Town president Alberto (AL) is in red on the right, with Vicente (V) in black in the center and Braulio (BR) in white on the left.

The man identified as SD in the transcript is a Chachi from the local area who has lived for many years in the city of Santo Domingo de los Colorados, where many Chachis travel for work or education. A number of these Chachis, including SD, work in plantations owned by the Tsachila people, in a fairly new kind of reciprocal relationship that has developed between the two indigenous groups. The following transcript shows SD attempting to convince the others that the best solution for dealing with the Blacks would be to call the military, and in the previous conversation he mentioned names of officers that he knew in Santo Domingo that might help them. Through the course of the transcript Alberto (AL) and Vicente (V) offer more peaceful solutions centered on continued efforts for meetings, negotiations and territory demarcation. All of the discourse features identified in previous chapters are present, including pronouns in co-

referential alignment with collectivized ethnonyms that is co-constructed across turns in interaction. I include a very long transcript (divided into sections) here to give a sense of the tone and structure of this conversation about interracial conflict to give a sense of how meaning is negotiated around such conflicts on a mundane communal level for Cha'palaa speakers.

(7.11a)

SD: Ahora sí naawanu negeela (.)

Now how it is with the *negros* (.)

lala' linderunuren tsaMANSTA problema detanañu'mitya (.)

on **our** borders because we're having treMENDOUS problems (.)

naawanuba **chachilla lala'** centruno (.)

and how the **Chachis** at **our** Center (.)

tiba kendetyaa tiñu'mitya umaa (.)

do not intend to do anything about it now (.)

naadejuyu dos tres ciento persona tishujunsaa (.)

what will you do? Saying two or three hundred people (.)

yaichiya naakenu tinu jutyu=

for them (the military) it is no problem.=

=Naaju presidentee,

=Hey president (of the community),

presidentenu yumaa (.) junpiee (.) pundetsuña (.)

to the president now (.) up to here (.) putting it

tseñmala (.) este este ya, [HANDS SWIPE TOGETHER] tapao
so then here and here ok [HANDS SWIPE TOGETHER] cut off

tapao (.) junuya.
cut off (.) it will be.

BR: Je je je je. [LAUGHTER]
ha ha ha ha.

EB: Tapao, je je. [LAUGHTER]
Cut off ha ha.

SD: Iya juntsAA pensa keekeñu llashpe in pensaya
ThAT is what I think gentlemen, my thoughts

ibain-
I also-

RI: (unclear name?) tsumi.
(unclear) is there.

SD: Jee.
Yes.

AL: Saaduma **yala**n acepta ke'ba [dekenmala
On Saturday if **they** accept [when (they) do
[

V: [Jee.
[Yes.

AL: Umaa taaswasha aranca kenu pantsumeeka.
There will be an agreement to begin the work.

V: Naa pu ke maintsumi(?).
How are (they) coming (?)

BR: Juntsaidaa juntsaidaa, (.)
Let's do that, let's do that (.)

tsenbalaa tienpu gana inu juba tsaityushujuntsaa (.)
then time can be gained by doing like that (.)

lala tiempo gana injutyaa.
we can gain time.

V: Ayu juntsa ayu **ñulla** (?)
Tomorrow there tomorrow **you** (?)

naatieeka [tsankenmalaa.
as (I) was saying, [doing like that.
[

SD: [Ura inchi kebuchunaa.
 [For me that is not enough.

ALL: [MANY TALK AT ONCE]

V: Tsankenmala-
 Doing like that-

BR: [UNCLEAR]

V: Tsanmkenmala (.) demeetyunmala
Doing like that (.) if (they) don't listen

enku kejtsasha detaanu kenmala
and (they) bring it here to the middle

suspende ke' majaintsumee.
(we'll) come back suspending (talks).

AL: Mm hm.

V: Junaa serio' mawikeenu juba
Then (we'll) have to get into it seriously.

At this point in the conversation Alberto took an extended turn where he created a hypothetical reported speech frame (shown with “quotes”) in which the first-to-second person frame imagines what the Chachis could say to the Blacks, embedded into a first-to-third person us/them alignment, also co-referential with the Chachis and the Blacks.

(7.11b)

AL: **Lala** junu reunionchiren (.)
By **us** having a meeting

ma kaa dibuju kemin linea [DIRECTIONAL GESTURES]
and doing a small drawing of the line

“Entsan **laachi** enu

“Here is **ours**,

lala mijikenu ke (.) keee- [DIRECTIONAL GESTURES]

we measure it to here (.) maaa

patu reunion keturen

speaking at a meeting

tsaaren **ñulla** junuren acepta deputyushujuntsaa umaa (.)

but if **you** don't don't except it there then (.) now

laachi escritura na'baasa iinu juñu'mitya umaa.” (.)

(we have) **our** title and (you) can't cause any problems now.” (.)

Lala entsadekiwashujuntsaya enaa [GESTURES 2 HANDS FORWARD]

If **we** do like that right here

(ñulla) maderanun aapensa judeeñu'mitya

(you) are mostly worrying about the wood

madera kalaamiren escritura (.) linea naajuñuba

we cut out the wood the title (.) how the line is

juntsanu mantencion **lala**

we have to maintain that

juntsa idea inu ju **yalanu**

we have to go to **them** with that idea.

After Alberto's turn, SD attempted to take another turn but was interrupted by Braulio, who recommended attempting to frighten the Blacks with legal documents. When SD finally took another turn, he insisted that the military solution was the best in his view:

(7.11c)

SD: Juntsaa, juntsaren [juu.
Right, right that [is.
[
BR: [Tsaaren tsaañu'mitya
[So for that reason

peechullala juntsanti depa' (.)
(we) have to talk to **the Blacks** saying that (.)

depanmala (.) kasperlee firu' pensa keeketun (.)
when (we) speak (.) in the past they had bad intentions (.)

jee pensaba dekewa challa juntsanti depa'
that will make them scared if (we) say that, speaking

deshiikaamalaa tsaañu'mitya umaa (.)
ordering (?) like that, for that reason now (.)

jayaa meedejaa pensa keekemi iyaa,
they will listen a little but, **I** think

RI: Jee (?).
Yes (?).

- BR: Meedidejaa pensa keekemi
That will make (them) listen.
- V: Recto mankanu.
To cut it straight (the boundary).
- BR: Jee iyaa recto mankalaañubain
I also think (we should) cut it straight.
- SD: Tsenmala juntsanti panmalaa
So then when (you) speak to them saying that
- ñulla** de aseeta dekityunmala
and **you** don't convince (them)
- militarlanutene tyatyukeshujuntsaa (.)
(you have to) just talk to the military (.)
- juntsanaa wapantensumi laabain.
that is also how we also can scare (them).

Similar conversations took place on many different nights during this period, the men debating how best to “scare” the Blacks and what outside officials might be enlisted to help. As in these examples, social categorization was salient in these discussions more generally, and the discourse patterns and alignments sketched in previous chapters were identifiable throughout them. When the occasion arose to collectively make sense of the land dispute and to debate plans of action for confronting it, speakers brought to bear the resources offered by their grammar and their store of experiences of previous moments of discourse through these and similar instances of interaction. The way that these specific articulations of social categories and interracial conflict generate and reproduce socially-

circulating meanings goes to the heart of the general argument about language and social meaning that I am advancing in this dissertation. The way that such current social conflicts play out is shaped and constrained by the kinds of meanings they take on through social history at different scales. One relevant level of scale here is the local history of previous generations through which the first attempts to establish a land boundary were made, and the way successive generations have interpreted these earlier events. But another relevant level of scale is that of hemispheric patterns of racial formation that developed through the colonial encounter and that continue to shape current social conditions through their iteration as global capitalism, in which the racial categories inherited from colonialism remain significant in new and changing ways. It is in this context that social categories come to be articulated as an ordering principle for conflicts that develop along racial lines. Mollet makes a similar point in describing how in a somewhat comparable land dispute in Honduras between the Afro-indigenous Garífuna and the indigenous Miskitu in which “subalterns draw upon dominant racial ideologies to justify and legitimate natural resource claims” (2006, 78).³⁴ But what does the articulation of dominant ideologies mean in this setting in which two differently racialized but similarly dominated social groups come into conflict and the dominant sectors of society do not appear to be present or even fully conscious of what is happening in this remote area of the country?

From the earliest European colonial expeditions into the tropical lowlands of South America to more recent episodes of contact with previously isolated groups in the Amazon, the major method for incorporating indigenous peoples into colonial and capitalist societies has been through the strategic generation of dependency on commodities. Whether the circulating goods consist of fish hooks, knives and beads, as they did two hundred years ago, or outboard canoe motors, chainsaws and television sets,

³⁴ Mollett arrives at these conclusions through a political ecology approach that I feel complements the more semiotic approach that I am undertaking here, and insightfully situates some discourse data in the other details of analysis to demonstrate how “Natural resource struggles are simultaneously racial struggles and thus, the manner in which indigenous and Afro-indigenous identities are racialized in Honduras shapes their access to natural resources” (2006, 78).

as they do today, the social relationships that develop out of such economies stretch beyond subsistence and localized trade relations and ultimately connect to global racial formations more broadly. As with many Ecuadorian indigenous groups, the Chachi relationship with European colonialism began in the 16th century and has accrued a deep level of historical meaning over the centuries, meaning which is expressed through the discursive particularities I have considered in this dissertation. Afro-descendant peoples in Latin American after emancipation have been incorporated into the commodities economy in much the same way as indigenous people, transitioning from enslaved labor to wage labor under exploitative conditions in order to gain the capital required for any kind of activity in the money-based economy. Both the Chachis and the Blacks of Esmeraldas have been faced with the dilemma of being incorporated into social conditions that impose the logic of capital and demand to be paid in its currency, and at the same time facing a racialized social hierarchy that denies them equitable access to capital. The once-inaccessible hinterland that was the refuge of both indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in search of land and self-determination far from the gaze of White elites in the urban power centers have now come to the center of that gaze, as projects of capitalist resource extraction reach their limits in other areas and begin to set their sights on newly-attractive unexploited areas. Through the accidents of both groups' history, today rural Black and Chachi communities of the Cayapas River basin are the residents and caretakers of the last relatively intact areas of virgin forest in Esmeraldas. The demand for tropical hardwoods has come to provide the main source of cash for both Blacks and Chachis and is the economic base on which all other local industries rest. That is why in the land dispute issues of boundaries and tenure over land are entirely secondary to the issue of lumber extraction; as Alberto stated explicitly in the interaction transcribed (7.11b) above, "*maderanun aapensa*" ("the major concern is the wood"). The reason the land dispute had taken on a new urgency after several relatively uneventful generations is because, due to the new road, lumber extraction in the area had become feasible for the first time. In fact, extraction had already begun on what the Chachis considered to be Chachi land, the initial discovery of which catalyzed this new conflict.

Approaching disputes between Afro-descendant and indigenous peoples can be bewildering for social analysis because both groups occupy distinct but partially comparable positions in contrast to the White elites, who appear invisible on the ground in the forests of Esmeraldas. However it is through these conflicts that we can see the presence of the dominant class. In her ethnography of Guyana, Williams³⁵ describes how multi-racial, multi-ethnic social relations continue to be shaped by the “ghost of hegemonic dominance,” (1991, 201-225) long after the official departure of the colonial power structure, where none of the local social groups are strictly egalitarian or hierarchichal with respect to the others. A similar observation can be made of relations between Black and indigenous people in Esmeraldas, except with a longer time depth allowing for social categories to align along the hemispheric macro-racial categories of Black, White and indigenous and to become deeply embedded in local social life. These categories become the terms both for social belonging and for social conflict. Race relations in this historical formation are based on white supremacy, but where are the Whites in these disputes between Blacks and indigenous people? Whites are sometimes physically present in rural Esmeraldas, whether as doctors, NGO workers, tourists, officials, missionaries, natural resource extractivists or anthropologists like me. But another way that we are present, if only in a ghostly manner, as consumers of wood and other natural resources. Wood from Esmeraldas is commercialized in both domestic and international markets (Sierra 2001); consumers, however, are unaware of the conditions of social conflict and environmental degradation that the demand for wood generates at its localized source.

³⁵ Williams expands on the postcolonial dynamic of social groups in contact but with not clear hierarchical dimensions to their relationships:

“The very formation of the ethnic categories “African” and “East Indian” represents a transformation of previous identities and classificatory distinctions based on factors such as religion, language, place of birth, and other social characteristics that existed among the enslaved and indentured immigrants as they entered Guiana. Further, as the Hindu-Muslim, North-South Indian distinctions suggest, these factors have not lost their ideological force. Yet, for Cockalorums, their current meanings also have been assimilated to the different precepts of the ideological field in which they now operate and they must, therefore, be understood in those terms.

Contemporary interpretations, whether viewed as ideological resistance or as “colonial mentality,” continue to be part of a debate fashioned in an ideological field where neither hierarchical nor egalitarian precepts legitimately dominante conceptions of sociocultural and political order.” (1991, 225)

When Chachis and Blacks deploy racializing language and racist stereotypes against each other the relationship of these expressive forms to inequality and dominance is not as clear as when similar discourses are used by Whites, who benefit personally from the reproduction of hegemony. But one thing the study of socially circulating discourse can show is that racism reproduces hegemony no matter who articulates it. When Chachis and Blacks articulate versions of dominant ideologies in their dispute over land and resources, the resulting competitive animosity has the systematic result of giving loggers access to cheap wood, with either side eager to sell as quickly as possible to avoid letting the other side exploit the trees first. Since I never came into direct contact with the loggers except through evidence of their presence in the trip to the Black village, for my ethnographic project they also seemed like a kind of unseen-but-felt, ghostly presence. On several occasions I heard Chachis talking about how they were already indebted to the logging bosses who had given them cash advances on the basis of promises of cut wood in the future. Through these relationships of debt servitude, the Chachis were following the same path that had led to the depressing conditions of the deforested Black town with its polluted water and its armed enforcers keeping watch.

There is a sense of resignation among the Chachis of the Upi River in the face of the coming ravages of environmental degradation and its social consequences. In these remote places, the presence of the State is feeble and its grasp is overextended; at one point President Correa declared a national emergency and installed an army-backed freeze of logging nation-wide. But it was only a matter of days before the logging ban disintegrated, a testament not only to the strength of logging companies relative to the State in Esmeraldas, but also to the massive public rejection of the logging freeze because it cut off the main cash source for most families. Forest preservation efforts have been intermittent and unsuccessful, and do not provide the same level of earnings as logging. With a desperate pragmatism, the community officials are quick to promise the carbon trading NGOs that have recently targeted the area, promising that they will preserve their forest in exchange for monthly payments, and then proceed without hesitation to cede

logging rights to some of the same areas for advance credit. The immediate acquisition of capital becomes the single goal of their economic activities, fueled by Chachi peoples' incorporation into economic structures where they are pressed to spend capital on education, medical care, transportation and manufactured goods.

Chachis are well aware that their resources are being depleted, and often talk about how they need to go constantly farther to find game or wood, but when asked about how the next generations will be able to hunt, fish or build canoes without forest land, most answer with nervous laughter or a shrug that seems to say that the total depletion of local natural resources is inevitable. In this last example from the recording of the evening conversation on Alberto's porch, the men considered the conditions of the Black town that had made a deal with the loggers as a way to think about what might happen to the Chachi village. Alberto pointed out that even though they have depleted all of their trees they don't have much to show for it. Braulio, on the other hand, made reference to the *compadrazgo* relationship that bosses enter into for local leverage, giving specific locals favors and keeping their "stomach full." Vicente then countered that the Blacks receive Frontera, a local cane alcohol, not food, in reference to the loggers' use of alcohol as a motivation to control their extractive operations:

(7.12)

AL: Naa dekalareke'bain millonario tityainu juulañu.

Even though they extracted (all of their trees) they are not millionaires.

V: Junkaya (.) desayunu naaju comidaa (.)

There breakfast, what food (.)

naaju comidaa kenudee tejain

what food do you think they have,

[desayunuya kaana yaichiya?

[for their breakfast?

[

BR: [Kaspeleya tenbiyadeewe

[Before they were poor

Sapayitu' chullala tenbiya deju

the inhabitants of Zapallito were poor

tsaaren challaya (.) naa uranuba ñu jitu (.)

but now (.) you just go (.)

ma rukuba compradre ti'ba (.) uupeedi'lushujuntsaa=

and ask a man to be (.) your compadre=

=ñunu pandachee ñunu ajkaa chapujtuu tanandeju.

=and you can have your stomach full of food.

V: Tsenmiren naajuaa desanu juaa tejan

So then what do (you) think they have for breakfast?

Desanu Frontera (.) ishkala yaichi desayuno

Frontera for breakfast (.) alcohol is their breakfast.

The coercive force of capitalism is not entirely invisible to Chachi people as it exerts pressure on them, and Chachis are able to see clear parallels between their position and that of the Blacks, who they see have been exploited by the loggers. But this does not stop the Chachis and Blacks from competing with each other along racial lines instead of forming a coalition for their mutual defense based on their similar subordinate positions, as political idealists might hope for. The local articulations of macro-racial

categories have all the weight of history behind them and continue to be major ordering principles of social life. As a conclusion to this chapter, however, I will offer a tentative exploration of the possibilities and obstacles for interracial political solidarity that could alternatively emphasize social conjunctures rather than disjunctures between the two groups.

7.3 Old categories and new collectivities

In this section I will center a discussion of interracial coalition politics using data from a recording made at a town meeting where a candidate for the local governing body, the Parish Council, made his case in order to earn the support of Upi River residents in the upcoming election. The way that Parish Council elections work is that each party nominates a list of candidates for the five seats on the Council, with one candidate as the “head” of the list. Then voters have the option of voting for a straight party ticket or of choosing individual candidates for each seat. Tomás, the visiting candidate, was the head of the Movimiento Popular Democrático (MPD) list, a left wing party with a historical power base in Esmeraldas and strong ties to the workers unions. The main opposition for control of the Parrish Council was the Alianza País list, the national party of President Correa; the two leftist parties had enjoyed a national coalition until recently when it had dissolved due to a conflict between the national government and the national teachers’ union, which is tied to the MPD. Tomás and his companions had arrived at the communities of the Upi River to distribute some computers donated by the Provincial Prefect, also a member of MPD; the computers were desktop CPUs that need more power than was available from the local solar panel system, compared to my laptop computer which ran perfectly on the local electric system. Within a few weeks the computers were abandoned and full of insects.

Without romanticizing political negotiations in the region, which like everywhere in Ecuador is clientelistic and sometimes corrupt, Tomás’ list did offer a real possibility

of interracial coalition; two of the candidates were Black, and the remaining three were Chachi. People of both races were providing logistical support for the campaign as well, including two Black men that were accompanying Tomás on his visits to the upriver communities, helping with the canoe and the computer donations. Tomás downplayed the racial composition of the list during his initial speech, which emphasized general themes of progress and social services for the area. When the meeting was opened up to comments from the audience, however, the issue of race was raised by one of the attendees, the school teacher Raimundo, who complained that in previous administrations only Blacks had been elected to the Parish Council. At the end of the excerpt below Raimundo uses the ethnonyms *chachilla* and *peechulla* to describe local politics along racial lines:



Figure 11. Parrish Council candidate speaking in white at center, with donated computer to the right.

After asking for questions and comments from the audience, Tomás (T) acknowledged Raimundo (R) and gave him the floor:

(7.13)

T: Compañero, por que tema, que pueda, maa kuinda kinu?
Comrade, on what theme, what could, be discussed?

R: Maa enu, padre familiara jayu meenañu uraa pensa keeña,
So here, the parents of families should listen and think well,

kuinda keñu ura tsaaren entsa kuinda kekinuuya
discussing is good, to have this discussion

puita depaa pensakitu, tantiya ki'tu, ñu' pa'ba tishu
when they speak too much, as you say,

kayiiimala ajaatenmuña tsaaren lala de awen indu
when we were children it made us angry but now we have grown up,

uranun tsaju, bueno ñuillanu challa **lala' chachilla** deputyuña
that is good, well now to you **our Chachis/people** are not there,

maliiba tsaaren **peechullatene, peechullatene** wiidetsuña.
alone, **just Blacks, just Blacks** enter (the Parish Council).

Tsaaren **chachillabain** umaa kapuka jayu dechainke'mitya
But now **the Chachis** have also opened their eyes a little,

juntsasha winu kendetsuña.
and want to enter.

From what I was able to ascertain, the Parish Council had indeed been dominated by Black candidates during previous election cycles, some of whom according to both Chachi and Black interviewees had obstructed and attempted to remove the few Chachis that had been elected in the past. Using metaphoric language, in the excerpt above Raimundo explains that as the Chachis “grow up” and “open their eyes” they will be able to secure more positions on the Council. Raimundo continued speaking for several minutes; when he finished his turn Tomás responded, and the two continued through several more exchanges of long turns, discussing the racial composition of the candidates. I include a transcript of much of the exchange below, because in many ways this conversation brings together the different themes that I have been concerned with connecting in this dissertation. I will break the example into sections and offer periodic commentary as a guide to the data.



Figure 12. Raimundo makes his point at the political speech.

In the excerpt below Raimundo continues his turn, explaining why he is not sure if Chachis should help Blacks by voting for them. I mark the pronouns (1COL = *lala/laa*, 3COL = *yala*) and the collectivized ethnonyms (Chachis = *chachilla*, Blacks = *peechulla*) in **bold** to show how they are aligned in the same kind of us/them framework described in detail in Chapter 4.

(7.14a)

R: Juntsa katawawaiña (.)
(We) have seen that (.)

tsaanu'mityaa iyaa **lala' chachi**=
so for that reason I- **our Chachis/people**

=wideishujuntsaa ayuda kinu=
=going in to help=

=**peechullalanu** ayuda kinu (.)
=to help **the Blacks** (.)

chachillanuren kedekee tinmala (.)
the Chachis are doing it (they'll be) saying (.)

chachillanu peechullala laanu naatimu deenka (.)
the Chachis for **us the Blacks** they will end up saying (.)

chachillallanu (.) mijtudekee (.) tindetsu=
the Chachis (.) don't know anything (.) (they're) saying=

=**yalanu** dekytaati'mitya (.) pareeren junu juña (.)
because **they** gave it to then (.) they have to be equal (.)

ya iya tsaanu'mitya (.) tujlekei tiiteeña (.)
so that is why I say (.) they are confused (.)

ya (.) aanu pure' **chachilla** mishpukasha pudenaa (.)
so (.) over there there are many **Chachis** in the "head" (.)

tsemmala (.) main **peechulla** luña (.)
so then (.) one **Black** will get in (.)

peechullanu mankala'kepuntitu (.)

to get **the Blacks** out (.)

When Raimundo finished his turn Tomás responded with a long turn explaining the composition of his party's ticket. He named the candidates of both races and located them according to additional descriptive phrases for locating them socially, through kinship ("Eliseo's daughter") and known histories and associations ("buys wood from Jobani") for the two Blacks, and through place of residence ("lives in Corriente Grande") for the Chachis, including local candidate Alberto ("lives here"). He uses the positional phrase *bulu pudena* ("be bunched up together") in a metaphoric sense referring not to being physically bunched up but to be bound together politically.

(7.14b)

T: Bueno (.) jayu keenaa aanu ñu pensa manpirentyuren (.)

Well (.) wait a minute here before you get lost (.)

lalanu (.) lala paashaaka iee unu kejtala=

we (.) we have spoken here in the middle=

=enu iya punmalan (.) enu (.) main (.) **negueeshimbu**=

=here I am (.) here (.) one (.) one (.) **negro** woman=

=lala pa'pa detyeeshu=

=we were saying=

=**negee chachillaba** bulu pudena lala (.)

=with **negros** and **Chachis** we are all "bunched up" together (.)

main tisee Mejía' shinbu (.) Eliseo na'ma (.)

one is the wife of Mejía (.) Eliseo's daughter (.)

enu está (.) tisee (.) Jofre tisee **negee** ruku=
here is (.) um (.) Jofre um, a **negro** man=

=Sanminguel chumu ta'pa ati atikeshujuntsa Jobani detiñu
=who lives in San Miguel who buys wood Jobani they say

kaspele mantejan ñuillanuba (.) enu tisee (.)
back in the old times with you all (.) here um (.)

Leida main Corriente Grandenu chumu (.) tsenmala enu (.)
Leida an inhabitant of Corriente Grande (.) then here (.)

Albertu enu chumu (.) laachi- tse'mityaa laachi plancha=
Alberto lives here (.) our- because our ticket=

=entsa jumi **lala chachilla** pema (.) **negeelaa** palluaa (.)
=is like this **we** are three **Chachis** (.) and two **negros** (.)

lo que queremos es que (.) **laachi** entsa (.)
what we want is that (.) **ours** here (.)

entsanke paki pakikelaa (.)
doing like this flat flat (straight party) (.)

para entrar (.) osea la mayoría (.)
to get in (.) um the majority (.)

ahora tisee (.) muba deputyu enu **laaba**=
now um (.) with nobody else here with **us**=

=**negee** ruku putyu (.) inchin juu.

=there are no other *negro* men (.) there is my (spot).

In this excerpt the pronoun alignment accomplishes something quite different from the kinds of us/them alignments described in Chapter 4. Tomás uses the first person collective pronoun to talk about *laachi plancha* (“our list”), and in the next line when the pronoun’s referent is further specified it turns out to include both Chachis and Blacks (*chachilla* and *negeela*). The kind of collectivity that Tomás proposed did not break down along racial lines, as many of the different discourses of social collectives have in examples throughout this dissertation.

(7.14c) Tse'-mityaa **laa**-chi plancha entsa ju-mi,

SEM-RES-FOC **1**COL-POSS ballot DEM.PRX be-PTCP

For that reason **our** party ticket is like that,

lala chachi-lla pema **negee-la**-a pallua-a.

1COL **Chachi**-COL three **negro**-COL-FOC two-FOC.

we are three **Chachis** and two *negros*.

In the context of the pervasive circulation of racializing discourses in rural Esmeraldas among Chachis and Blacks that essentialize the differences between the two groups and orient collective activity around racial categories and allegiances, the idea of political cooperation can be met with considerable resistance and incredulity. As their conversation continued, Raimundo asked Tomás why they shouldn’t choose only Chachis, voting for the Chachis on Tomás’ list and then individually choosing Chachis from other lists to total five candidates none of which were Black.

(7.14d)

R: Peechulla maliba putyushujuntsaa (.)
Alone without any Blacks there (.)

lala plancha ma kedekeñubain (.)
on our ballot doing that (.)

chachillanu (.) manda lunbera (.)
for the Chachis (.) five get in (.)

llena kenbera ñuchi aanu (.) pema (.) pallu (.)
filling it up for you there (.) three (.) two (.)

millanke kutyu'bain kejtalaa kunu juba.
not giving everything but (we) have to give half.

Tomás' answer to Raimundo's comment is revealing, because it does not question the underlying logic of why voting along racial lines would be desirable. Instead he offers the explanation that because the majority of Chachis are unfamiliar with official documents, if they attempt to vote individually instead of straight party they will make mistakes and invalidate their ballots.

(7.14e)

T: Tsaami profe (.) el problema es que (.) **chachillalaa** (.)
That's right teacher (.) the problem is (.) **the Chachis** (.)

kepunu mijdetuña ñu aantsanti papatimiya=
don't know how to vote while you say that=

=es porque ñu keponu mi'mitya (.)
becasue you know how to vote (.)

tsaaren **lala'** pensaya (.) **chachilla** (.)
but **our** thought is (.) **the Chachis** (.)

casi el sesenta por cienta ma comunidaanu keponu mijdetu (.)
almost sixty percent of the community does not know how to vote (.)

seleeciona kenu pude deju mantsala (.)
a few know how to select (candidates) (.)

enku kalare junka kalare (.)
here picking and there picking (.)

(.) cinco voto (.) ñu cinco **chachi** kalaanu pude main (.)
(.) five votes (.) you can pick five **Chachis** (.)

tsaaren tsanti' depanmala (.)
but when you say that (.)

chachilla tsaan enku kalare' entsanke chi'pajte (.)
the Chachis here pick like this scribbling (.)

chi'pajte dekinmla voto nulu tene lundejuba mushatene.
when they scribble just a null vote comes out damaged.

Tomás could have made a more compelling case for an interracial coalition ticket that simply resorting to scare tactics based on stereotypes of backwards rural people who cannot understand the voting process. His central position remaining unchallenged,

Raimundo remained persistent in reiterating his intention to vote selectlively only for Chachis.

R: Iya entsanke pensa kintsaaña (.)
I am thinking like this (.)

ñunu Tomás mishpuka pukentsaaña (.)
to put you Tomás as the head (.)

tsenmala junu main chachi pele pumunubain=
and then to put a Chachi below=

=kentsaaña tsenmala=
doing like that then=

=Albertunubain kentsaaña ementsakeesha (.)
=and also Alberto doing like that (.)

ementsa pudenashujuntsanubain (.)
is (we) could put it like that (.)

chachillanun mantsaaña manda lunbera junu (.)
for some Chachis then five will get in (.)

tsenmala juntsa balenun jun tijtieña.
so (I) wanted to ask if that would work.

The exchange between Tomás and Raimundo was in one sense a conversation between just two people, but it was also a performance oriented towards all the attendees at the meeting. Raimundo as the village school teacher and Tomás as the politician are

both positioned as people who can inform and educate community members about official matters like voting, and their exchange was staged partly as a display for the audience members, who both speakers cast as confused and unable to correctly fill out a ballot. Taken as a whole, the meeting is at once an articulation of racial categories illustrating their extreme rigidity and a piece of evidence that racial collectivities are unstable and that other kinds of collectivities that cross-cut racial categories might be possible. It is through these kinds of tensions in specific interactions that racial categories are reproduced, changed or challenged in small, incremental ways. Before ending this chapter I will add a third voice to this discussion which adds another important dimension to the different positions of Tomás and Raimundo as for or against an interracial coalition. Towards the end of the meeting Tomás gave to floor to one of his Black companions who addressed the assembled Chachis in a plea for support for the coalition. Tomás introduced him in mixed Spanish and Cha'palaa:

(7.15a)

T: Compañero que queríamos conversar, ahora el siguiente
Comrades what we want to talk about, now the next

punto que vamos entrar, este,
point that we are going to address, um

Elíanu enu punto kundetsaña
Elía will give this point,

entsa historia paate, dos minuto.
this part of the story, two minutes.

C: Pues, ven ustedes, buenas tardes, yo soy Mauricio.
Well, look you all, good afternoon, I am Mauricio.

No soy candidato de esta plancha, no me vean como un candidato,
I am not a candidate on this ticket, don't look at me as a candidate,

sólo estoy manejando la parte de la comunicación de este grupo
I am just managing communication for this group

para que ustedes, lleguen candidatos . . .
so that for you, the candidates can arrive . . .

Su pequeño historia- de los dos, este,
Their short story- of the two, um,

son los honorables candidatos que tienen ustedes,
there are two honorable candidates that you all have,

y si tambien, de este equipo yo si quisiera criticar por qué
and yes, also, from this group I would like to offer a critique because

me ven ustedes que hablo con el compañero Tomás,
you all see that I speak with comrade Tomás,

por acá andaba otro compañero **negro**,
around here another **Black** comrade was going around,

pero **nosotros los negros estamos cansados**
but **we the Blacks are tired**

de que sólo los negros lleguen a la parroquia Telembí.
of just Blacks getting into Telembí Parish (council).

Following Raimundo's advocacy for Chachi-only politics, the Black speaker had the complicated task of explaining why he and other Blacks would support a coalition ticket. In the last two lines of the excerpt above we can observe the ethnonym *los negros* (the Blacks) aligning first with the first person plural and then with the third person plural ("We the Blacks are-1PL tired that just Blacks get-3PL into the Parrish Council"). Mauricio's strategy is to distinguish between the traditional Black political class and the Black/Chachi coalition he supports as leader of the association of Black cacao producers in Zapallo. In the excerpt below he uses the terminology of ethnicity to frame the town of Zapallo as having a multi-ethnic identity. As one of the few places where Chachis and Blacks live in integrated neighborhoods, Zapallo is a good setting for experiments in coalition building.

(7.15b)

Eso significa ustedes pueblo chachi analisen,
This means that you the Chachi community analyze

pero aquí está el compañero Nelson
but here is the comrade Nelson

que fue presidente de la OUNE de una . . .
who was president of the OUNE of a . . .

Entonce por ese lío
So because of that problem

aunque haya chachi en esta plancha pero no todo pueblo,
even though there are Chachis on the ticket, the whole community,

aquí está el compañero plancha de la 12 partido,
here is the comrade on the party ticket 12.

Que le ha hecho el señor que anda allí
what he has done, the man over there,

el otro negro que anda junto con nosotros,
the other Black that is with us,

motorista, es hijo de Gabe el compañero Lara,
the canoe motorist, is the son of Gabe, comrade Lara,

pero que porqué se vira el lado del papá apoyar al otro equipo porque
but he has turned away from his father's side to support the other team because

él ve que el papá no ha hecho nada.
he can see that his father has not done anything.

En Zapallo nosotros somos zapaleños, **en Zapallo vivimos dos etnias,**
In Zapallo we are *zapaleños*, in Zapallo **we live (as) two ethnic groups**

los negros y los chachis, este gran equipo
the Blacks and the Chachis, this great team

se une porque tenemos dos elecciones allí, el centro chachi,
unites because we have two elections there, in the Chachi Center

y una asociación de productores de cacao que es negra
and an association of cocoa producers that is Black,

la asociación, de esa asociación yo soy el vicepresidente,
that association, of that association, I am the vice-president,

este asociacion se une apoyar al compañero Tomás.
this association is united in support for comrade Tomás.

As a bystander witnessing this interaction, I was impacted by the way that Mauricio made his case for supporting Tomás' candidacy by saying that Blacks were tired of Black elected officials and wanted to try voting for Chachis in order to bring about a change.

(7.15c)

Por eso **los negros estamos** cansado y **hemos** decidido
That is why **we blacks are** tired and **we have** decided

que vaya **un chachi** en la junta parroquial
that a **Chachi** should go to the Parish Council.

At the end of his speech Mauricio directly addressed the previous conversation of Tomás and Raimundo by mentioning that even though he does not speak Cha'pala he understood enough to know that they had been discussing voting for individual Chachis instead of for the interracial party ticket. He makes a case that if the Chachis vote along racial lines it is still likely that some Blacks will be elected to the Council, but crucially it will not be those Blacks who were running in coalition with the Chachis. If Tomás' ticket wins, on the other hand, two Blacks would sit on the council but they would be "managed" and kept "humble" by Tomás and the other Chachis:

(7.15d)

Les digo- decir, señores
I say to you- to say, sirs

que al pedir voto en plancha, porque,
that to ask for the straight party vote, because,

yo no hablo cha'palaachi pero decir palabras que hablo
I don't speak Cha'palaachi but to say the words that I speak,

ustedes hablaban de que automaticamente
you all were speaking automatically

quieren apoyar al pueblo chachi
that you want to support (only) the Chachi people,

por eso le persigue este momento que
for this reason I follow this moment that-

la junta parroquial , y pueden automáticamente los tres chachis
the Parish Council, and the three Chachis can automatically

presionar al negro para que-
pressure the Black so that-

pero esos chachis tampoco se han amarrado los pantalones
but the Chachis have not tied up their pants well either,

que pasaría ustedes votan por los chachis solamente
what would happen if you all vote only for Chachis,

pero van a llegar negros a la junta parroquial
but some Blacks will get into the Parish Council (anyway)

y un negro que llegue allí, si es que llega, un ejemplo,
and a Black that gets in there, if he get's in, for example,

Ayoví va hacer tambaliar esa junta
Ayoví would really shake up the Council,

entonces, por eso que nosotros pedimos ese votitos en plancha
so for this reason we ask for your votes in straight ticket

para que los negros que entren sean humildes
so that the Blacks that get in are humble

y sean manejado por este compañero chachi.
and can be managed by this Chachi comrade.

I wondered how this same campaign might position itself when asking for support from a Black community, and I doubted it would be in the same terms as Tomás and Mauricio used in the examples above. Combining the concept of **recipient design** in specific interactions with the more general observation that **intersubjective awareness of social categories** that in this area of rural Esmeraldas circulate across racial and linguistic divisions, we can better understand the ways that the speakers at the political meeting framed their positions through their discourse. The history of racial formation does not determine absolutely new social developments, but it constrains them in such a way that transformations can only be imagined on the basis of the terms and categories of the entrenched social order. When the candidates attempt to cross-cut social categories in an appeal for coalition politics, they still tailor their appeals to some extent in terms of the social category membership of the audience. While Blacks and Chachis sometimes observe that they share similar class positions, their interactions are always marked by their different histories of racialization, and racial thinking becomes an obstacle for coalition building, as illustrated by Raimundo's resistance to voting for an interracial

ticket. This same tension between historical social category distinctions and the project of the political campaigners can be observed at the level of linguistic form in the examples above where they used ethnonyms in novel alignments with pronouns as a way to describe the kinds of collectivities they were imagining. It can be observed at the level of interaction in Raimundo's interjections and Tomás and Mauricio's responses to them. And it can be observed at higher levels of social organization, such as the coalition between the Chachi and Black political associations in Zapallo and their coordinated campaign. It appears, however, that Tomás' campaign was able to make a convincing case in the face of historical momentum of racial divisiveness; a few days after I recorded the political meeting the election was held and when the results were counted Tomás' interracial coalition had won control of the Parish Council.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explore the ideas and observations about racializing language presented in earlier chapters in an interactive framework. Most of the data presented in Chapters 2 to 6 was taken from ethnographic interviews, but the interaction data presented in this chapter illustrated how many of the same discourse structures described in previous chapters are observable in natural speech data as well, from mundane informal conversations to formal public events. In addition, an interactional approach is able to show how those discourse structures exist not only in more monologic speech but take shape across speakers and turns to reveal their status as socially-circulating constructions, recognized and co-constructed by discourse participants. My ethnographic account of the land dispute between the Chachis and their Black neighbors was designed to put those discourse structures into a social context to help show how they function to create meaning in real moments of contention and racial conflict. My account began with a description of the shamanic performance held to influence the land dispute as a way to think about how culturally-transmitted linguistic and discursive resources provide ways for approaching current situations of social

conflict. The next section described my trip to the Black community to be present at a meeting held in order to discuss possible solutions to the conflict; examples of interactions from the meeting showed how the particular resources of Spanish grammar can create similar alignments between ethnonyms and pronouns as those seen in social categorizing discourse in Cha'palaa. The next section dealt with Cha'palaa household conversation in which racial categories are part of the way social relationships are reflected from the most mundane instances of reference to the most contentious discussions of interracial conflict. The final section dealt with the complications for the possibility of interracial coalition politics through examples from a political meeting in which participants debated the merits of voting along racial lines. The general point that brings these examples together is that expression is highly constrained by the significance of social categories and their role in maintaining historical relations of racial difference and inequality. The basis for the racist power structures established in colonial times and re-invented today through the cultural logic of transnational capitalism is the principle of White supremacy, which has been a precept for how both indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples have been racialized. When indigenous and Afro-descendant people come into conflict, however, their articulation of socially-circulating discourses of racial difference towards each other hegemonically reproduces racial inequalities but does not justify racial privilege for those who articulate them in the same way that White hegemonic discourses do. To the contrary, as the case of the land dispute shows, racial conflict and competition for resources between Blacks and Chachis does not generate privileges for either group, but rather creates a situation that can be exploited by the loggers as agents of the capitalist market structure. A coalition politics that might be able counter these kinds of exploitation such as that proposed by the political candidates in the final examples above faces the difficult obstacle of having to transform and reconceptualize rigid socio-historical tendencies of divisiveness, but if their successful campaign was any indication, such possibilities for transformation may exist.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 On Milton's porch

At times during my research I felt as if I spent the vast majority of my time hanging out on porches, talking to people. In the Chachi village it was my host Mecho's porch, where locals gravitated in the evening and where outsiders like White NGO workers or Black gold miners met with members of the community. In Zapallo, it was Milton's porch, where Chachi and Black visitors and neighbors came in and out all day. My research took me to different sites, walking cross-country through the forest to the meeting about the land dispute, canoeing up and down the rivers, or strolling across town to meet with students for English classes. But it was a focus on the most informal contexts, hanging out and conversing with people on the porch, that generated the most new understanding for me over the months and years of research in the Rio Cayapas area. This dissertation takes a discourse-centered approach to social categorization, and from that perspective spaces of social gathering and informal conversation are among the richest sites for looking for ways to observe aspects of the social order in language usage and interaction. One way of thinking about ethnographic research is as systematic participation in thousands of "conversations on the porch" that over time yield better and better understanding of local language, culture and society, a kind of simulation of the socialization process. Some of my interactions on the porch are documented here in transcribed recordings or ethnographic accounts, but many others are implicitly recalled by the generalizations that I make and the way that I process my experiences.



Figure 13: Chachis hanging out with Milton on his porch.

In the Cayapas River region, informal spaces like porches are also good places to learn about interracial relationships since they are where much of the interaction between Blacks and Chachis takes place. I strategically positioned myself in these contexts in order to participate in and observe the relationship between the two groups on a day-by-day, mundane level. The moments of friendly conversation that I shared with both Chachis and Blacks as we passed the time on Milton's porch illustrate how both groups as neighbors share many similar concerns and cultural frames of reference. However, the high degree of affinity and unity between Chachis and Blacks co-exists alongside the more conflictive and divisive aspects of their relationship, as seen in the racial stereotypes, negative attitudes, and disputes over resources and political power documented throughout this dissertation. The representation of these areas of contention

troubled me while collecting the data for this dissertation and processing it into its present form, and I worried that my project might turn into a voyeuristic spectacle of racial conflict. I wondered how I could do justice to those interactions on the porch and the other positive aspects of the relationship between Blacks and Chachis while still being honest about conflict and racist attitudes and how these aspects tie into the larger social histories that I was tracking ethnographically at the local level. Ultimately I came to understand racial conflict between Blacks and Chachis as a reflection of a history of racial formation that stretches back to colonial times and which continues to unavoidably saturate interactions with social meaning today, heavily constraining the way in which individuals inhabit social categories. While these meanings are reproduced through informal conversation, they are also challenged and transformed by it, and in that sense every conversation between Chachis and Blacks hanging out on Milton's porch offered a new opportunity for redefining race relations and affirming social ties in the face of social tensions.

8.2 Race and the depth of social imprint

I began this dissertation by proposing to take a language-based approach to social categorization that relied on linguistic analysis, not just linguistic analogy. The main task of that linguistic analysis was to describe a pattern of co-referential alignment established to link collectivized ethnonyms, pronouns and the bodies of participants in interactions, both in terms of how their features are “read” and classified and how multimodal resources add meaning to spoken language. The co-occurrence and alignment of these properties of social categorizing and racializing discourse in Cha'palaa form a “certain frame of consistency” (in Whorf's terms) that might today be referred to as an **interface** among different grammatical and socio-pragmatic sub-systems. The way that the properties of Cha'palaa align in social categorizing discourse is part of more generalized processes of reference and referent tracking. Presumably all languages have some way of tracking referents and categorizing human referents as members of social groups –

indeed, at many points in this dissertation I used the resources of English to link ethnonyms to pronouns to social categories in the world in my own writing. Yet while social categorization may be universal, the grammars of particular languages constrain and shape how it is accomplished. Producing alignments between referents and social categories online in discourse in different grammars requires speakers to cognitively attend to the obligatory values of each particular grammar, implying different habitual patterns of thought linked to the production of well-formed speech, if only at a basic ambient level (or the level of “thinking for speaking”; Slobin 1996). Comparing the three languages present in this dissertation, Cha’palaa, Afro-Ecuadorian Spanish, and English in my own writing, is a good way to think about how different grammars organize and track reference in discourse.

| | Cha’palaa | Spanish | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| NUMBER MARKING nouns/verbs | Nouns: collective Verbs: collective/plural not obligatory | Nouns: plural Verbs: plural obligatory | Nouns: plural Verbs: limited agreement pattern obligatory |
| PERSON MARKING noun phrase/ verb phrase | NP: independent pronouns not obligatory VP: unmarked | NP: independent pronouns not obligatory (pro-drop) VP: person agreement obligatory | NP: independent pronouns obligatory VP: limited agreement pattern obligatory |
| MAIN REFERENT TRACKING STRATEGY | STRATEGY: switch reference system; verb/noun animacy cross- referencing | STRATEGY: person/number agreement; gender agreement | STRATEGY: person/number agreement; some gender in pronouns |
| RELIANCE ON DISCOURSE STRUCTURE FOR DISAMBIGUATION OF REFERENCE | HIGH Ambiguous at clause level. | LOW Some ambiguity in cases without explicit noun phrases (pro-drop). | LOW Obligatory explicit noun phrase with verb agreement. |

When speakers of Spanish track referents across discourse, this is accomplished through obligatory person and number marking on the verb with a rich set of verbal

morphemes, optionally with explicit nominal referents marked for number and gender. In English explicit nominal referents are obligatory, marked for number, and must agree with verbs. Both of these languages feature different kinds of obligatory person marking. Cha'palaa, in contrast, does not track person reference on verbs and only optionally marks number or includes explicit nominal referents. Instead, it tracks reference mainly through switch-reference marking and pragmatic inferences derived from discourse context. Pragmatic factors have a higher functional load for referent tracking in Cha'palaa than in English or Spanish in the sense that any given predicate in English or Spanish will obligatorily include some information about person, while in Cha'palaa it is as likely as not that there will be no explicit person reference at all. For the kinds of collective reference involved in social categorization, culturally transmitted socio-historical knowledge can come to play a large role in disambiguation, as speakers use their acquired knowledge of local social groups to help to identify ambiguous collective references. Since English and Spanish conflate collectivity and plurality and do not relate them to the animacy hierarchy in the same way that Cha'palaa does, speakers of Cha'palaa grammatically attend to associativity and animacy in ways that Spanish and English speakers do not. At a basic level these different ways of referent tracking imply to some degree language-specific forms of cognition – not that Spanish speakers cannot imagine collectivity or that Cha'palaa speakers cannot imagine gender, but that their respective grammars do not obligate them to mark it.

While this relativistic approach holds for an articulation-level analysis, it begins to erode at the level of broader circulation. As examples in the previous chapters showed, both speakers of Cha'palaa and of Afro-Ecuadorian Spanish can use the distinct resources of their respective languages to similar ends, connecting macro-social categories to participants in interactions and other human referents. The data presented in this dissertation illustrated how the same racial categories of Black, White and indigenous are relevant both in Spanish and in Cha'palaa, approached through different linguistic and cultural frames of reference in each language. So while whiteness in Cha'palaa is referenced through language-specific collectivized ethnonyms and has culture-specific

connotations linking White people to the *uyala*, the traditional cannibalistic enemies of the Chachis, at the same time Cha'palaa speakers participate in larger discourses of whiteness and other broad racial categories that are socially significant and frequently referenced. In fact, in some cases the practice of frequent collective reference to social categories has over time changed the linguistic forms associated with them, resulting in the fusion of the collective marker to several ethnonymic roots such as *uyala* (White) and *peechulla* (Black) and in the development of phonologically-reduced forms like *uya* and *peechui*. In such cases it is not the grammar of Cha'palaa that constrains how social categories are referenced, but rather the need to speak about and make sense of social categories that has shaped the grammar.

The idea of global-scale racial formation or concepts such as the historico-racial schema comes into tension with more relativistic approaches that focus on local specificities. The latter emphasizes the internal perspective of a social group while the former emphasizes external relations among social groups. These two perspectives are not contradictory, however, but are rather complementary; in this dissertation I have been concerned with describing the role of language in social categorization as both shaping and being shaped by social conditions. Social conditions are heteroglossic, including many different voices and social positionalities – in Chapter 6 I described how the resources of Spanish and Cha'palaa together help to dialogically constitute the relationship between the two groups. Sometimes Spanish and Cha'palaa discourse reflect very different perspectives, such as with respect to interracial marriage, but this disjunct itself constitutes part of the relationship between Chachis and Blacks. Throughout this dissertation I illustrated how Chachis not only apply their linguistic resources to making sense of social conditions, but how they also apply their knowledge of oral history, traditional stories, shamanic practices, and accounts of the supernatural and the afterlife to how they interpret the meaning of race and racial categories. The wider significance of social categories, in the end, always *relies on* localized articulations and cultural frames of reference rather than contradicting them.

Both cultural knowledge and the grammatical forms used to express it provide terms for articulating social categories, and in this dissertation I have used both as ways for ethnographically tracking race through heterogeneous discourse forms, indentifying topics and patterns of alignment that frequently recur and following them through the data. Finding similar categories and discourse structures not just in monologic discourse but also constructed and maintained among speakers across turns in interactions (as discussed in Chapter 7) provides good evidence for those categories' social constitution and co-construction. Adding a dimension of social interaction to the study of social categorization, it becomes possible to see linguistic and cultural resources not just as means for articulating social categories but also for instantiating, reproducing and transmitting them. I hope that my methodology of not treating language as a social analogy but rather of following the trail of a social question through linguistic and discourse data has been able to increase the depth and transparency of my ethnography of social categorization in Cha'palaa and of my account of interracial relations between Chachis and Blacks. Treating language and culture as integrated phenomena is an effective methodology because it rests on how these two dimensions are jointly circulated and socially co-transmitted.

During the early stages of my research I remember sitting around on Mecho's porch listening to the rapid flow of discourse and wondering in frustration when my Cha'palaa would improve. But as time went on I noticed that my language abilities were indeed improving rapidly, and that this was not entirely due to my conscious efforts and descriptive linguistic investigations. Instead, I was semi-consciously acquiring language skills mainly through cultural exposure, participating in the process of social imprint. The lexicon, grammatical forms and discourse structures developed collectively by the Chachis' ancestors over history take on a social momentum that the properly-positioned social actor can acquire through stepping into the stream of their circulation. I was learning cultural frames of reference along with the language; cultural transmission works in much the same way as linguistic transmission, and both together provide people with the socially-conditioned meanings that allow them to make sense of society. These

meanings are determined by historical conditions and, except in moments of meta-reflection, are generally semi-conscious in those who share them. This perspective helps to illustrate why any social group that has been touched by the history of European colonial expansion is constrained to operate with localized versions of the terms and categories of hemispheric and global racial formations, just by virtue of their exposure to them. In a similar way that a speaker of a language cannot simply invent new words and expect them to be recognized socially, confronting race means coming to terms with the deep imprint of the history of racialization, whose terms cannot simply be reinvented at this stage in history. Racial categories are always present in the underlying “grammar” of social relations, to use a linguistic analogy that, by this point, I hope should not be too much of a stretch. From my view on the porch talking to the people of the Cayapas River region, social categorization sets the terms both for their relations of interracial affinity and of animosity, at the intersection of social history and discourse.

Appendices

Appendix A: Key to abbreviations

1, 2, 3 = personal pronouns

ACC = accusative

AG.NMLZ = agentive nominalizer

AUG = augmentative

CL = classifier

COL = collective

COM = comitative

COMPL = completive

COND = conditional

CNJ = mirative conjunct

DAT = dative

DEC.REF = deceased referent

DM.PX = proximal demonstrative

DM.MED = medial demonstrative

DM.DST = distal demonstrative

DIM = diminutive

DR = different reference

DSJ = mirative disjunct

DUB = dubitative

FOC = focus

HAB = habitual

INF = infinitive

INSTR = instrumental

IRR = irrealis

INTER= interrogative
LOC1 = directional locative
LOC2 = specific locative
LOC3 = general locative
LOC4 = endpoint locative
NEG = negation
NMLZ = nominalizer
PFTV = perfective
PTCP = participle
PL = plural
PN = proper noun
POS =positional
POSS = possessive
PROG = progressive
RECIP = reciprocal
REFL = reflexive
RES = resultative
SEM = semblative
SP= Spanish loanword
SR = same reference
TPN = toponym
(?) = unclear in recording

Appendix B: Standard format for ethnographic interviews

Interviews in Cha'palaa with Chachis and in Spanish with Afro-Ecuadorians followed roughly the same format. In order to approximate informal conversation, I followed the flow of discourse, varying the order of the questions and expanding on some fruitful topics while skipping others when interviewees had little to say. Sometimes third parties became involved in the interview, adding to their informal and conversational tone.

1. How would you describe the relationship between Chachis and Blacks?
2. What do people say about the history of how Chachis and Blacks came to live in this area?
3. What do you think are some differences between Chachis and Blacks?
4. What do people say about when Chachis and Blacks intermarry? What about children from those marriages?
5. How do Chachis and Blacks participate together in local (Parish/County) politics?
6. What kinds of commerce are there between Chachis and Blacks? Are they beneficial to both groups?
7. Aside from Chachis and Blacks, what other kinds of people are there in the region? In Ecuador? What are they like?
8. How are the beings talked about in traditional history (like "old stories") and cosmology (like "ghost stories") considered to be members of social groups? Are they Black? Chachi? Neither?
9. What kinds of things do Blacks and Chachis say about each other? Are these statements considered rude or polite?
10. Can you tell me a personal story about your relationship to Blacks/Chachis?

Appendix C: Orthography and pronunciation guide

CONSONANTS:

| | bilabial | dental / alveolar / postalveolar | palatal | Velar | glottal |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| stop | p b | t t ^y d d ^y | | k g | ʔ |
| affricate | | ts tʃ | | | |
| nasal | m | n | ɲ | ŋ | |
| tap | | r | | | |
| fricative | β | s ʃ | | χ | |
| approximant | | | j | | |
| lateral approximant | | l | ʎ | | |

SEMI-VOWEL:w

VOWELS: a, e, i, u [and nasal series: an, en, in, un]

PRACTICAL ORTHOGRAPHY:

| Letter | IPA | NOTES |
|--------|----------------|---|
| a | a | - nasal form <an> |
| b | b | - the voiced bilabial is a phoneme and an allophone of /p/ |
| ch | tʃ | - grapheme based on Spanish |
| d | d | - the voiced dental is a phoneme and an allophone of /t/ |
| dy | d ^y | - the voiced palatal dental is a phoneme and an allophone of /ty/ |

| | | |
|----|----|---|
| e | e | - nasal form <en> |
| f | β | |
| i | i | - nasal form <in> |
| j | X | - grapheme based on Spanish |
| k | k | - voiceless velar is voiced after nasals |
| l | l | |
| ll | ʎ | - grapheme based on Spanish |
| m | m | - the bilabial nasal is a phoneme and an allophone of /n/ |
| n | n | |
| ñ | ɲ | grapheme based on Spanish |
| p | p | - voiceless bilabial is voiced after nasals |
| r | r | - grapheme based on Spanish |
| s | s | |
| sh | ʃ | - grapheme based on Spanish |
| t | t | -voiceless dental is voiced after nasals |
| ts | ts | |
| ty | tʲ | |
| u | u | - nasal form <un> |
| w | w | - has allophone [v] before front vowels |
| y | j | - grapheme based on Spanish |
| ‘ | ʔ | glottal stop |

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Vita

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