

"I am also a Colorado Native": A Perspective of Identity-Work in Conversation

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Abstract

Identity is socially constructed and emerges through discourse, where identity is claimed, negotiated and challenged through linguistic practices. Both on-record and off-record linguistic resources are utilized as mechanisms of identity construction and negotiation. This project involves analyzing a conversation among a focus group of four individuals, who are negotiating the identity, “Colorado native”. The research draws upon conventions of conversation analysis to reveal identity-work that is being done in a minute-long segment of conversation; more specifically, this research builds upon current linguistic research done by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and Kitzinger (2005), as well as focuses on off-record elements of conversation like gaze organization, gesturing, and facial expressions that occur in cohesion with identity construction. Off-record behaviors such as gaze organization, gesturing and facial expressions have seldom been analyzed with identity and from a conversation analysis perspective. This study provides insight into the micro-linguistic practices of identity formation and negotiation in discourse through looking at identity-work being done in a conversation between Colorado natives and non-natives.

Keywords: identity, identity-work, conversation analysis, gaze organization, on-record, off-record, linguistics, Colorado native, native vs non-native

Introduction

In recent years, Colorado has experienced immense population growth. According to the United States Census Bureau, Colorado has experienced a 11.5% change in population from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2017 (United States Census Bureau). Many implications arise from such a dramatic change in population—for instance, there are issues pertaining to use of water resources, structural concerns involving living space and capacity, and environmental concerns over trail overuse and ecological damage. Perhaps a less-commonly discussed issue emerging from population growth is the covert resistance of increased population growth displayed by individual’s claiming to be “more Colorado” than those who have been moving into Colorado, coining the term “Colorado native”. In Colorado, this materializes through bumper stickers, T-shirts, and door signs all bearing the words “Colorado Native”. This “native” identity is not only displayed materialistically; but, most importantly, the identity of being a Colorado native is constructed in interactions among friends, co-workers, and family members. The Colorado native identity is constantly constituted and negotiated through everyday discourse. This is done through the overt practice of utilizing the self-descriptor “Colorado native”, but also through subtle linguistic practices that allow participants to claim, negotiate, or challenge an identity; linguistic resources can be drawn upon to accomplish this work in both an ‘on record’ way, where conversational partners can be held directly accountable for their conversational choices, and in an ‘off record’ way, where conversationalists disagree, or offer dispreferred responses, through utilizing non-attributable behaviors (like gaze).

To exemplify the employment of identity in conversation, take, for example, the following segment:

- 1 JOE: [Bei]ng a native[(.) I love nature (.) boy scout:[camping
2 ALE: [Yeah.

3 REN: [Why do
4 you keep looking at me? Heheh hh.
5 ALE: (heheh)
6 JOE: I dunno-
7 SAR: Well I t[hink peop]le[e are=
8 REN: [heheheheh]
9 JOE: [riding horses
10 REN: (hand on chest) [I am also a Colorado nati[ve.(heheheh.) Who
11 goes to boy scout camp and rides horses. Heheh (hand quickly off
12 chest)

Here, it is clear that Joe overtly claims the identity, “Colorado native”. By using the specific descriptor, “Colorado native,” and not his name, or any other identity markers, he brings to bear the relevant identity of being from Colorado—this is exemplified in line 1. In the context of the conversation, his identity becomes important, and therefore he utilizes the outward practice of claiming an identity he wishes to make known, in an on-record way, which reinforces associations to and behaviors of being a Colorado native. Further along the segment, in lines 3 and 4, Renee interprets Joe’s gaze as accusatory, and makes her own claimed identity, as a Colorado native, relevant in line 10. This is just a small taste of the identity work that is accomplished in this conversation; it is the goal of this paper to further explore the detailed mechanisms of identity construction around the issue of being a Colorado native (or non-native).

Purpose and Argument

The research presented in this report explores identity emergence in conversation and the methods conversationalists utilize in mundane conversation in order to employ, display, and make relevant their own identities. In doing so, it contributes to current linguistic research by building upon findings of identity emergence in conversation, and further applies identity emergence theories to topics not normally appearing in academic discourse (i.e. looking at

Colorado native identity versus gender and sexuality). Furthermore, this research contributes to linguistic knowledge by examining both on and off the record behaviors, as well as the affective physical practices, like gaze organization, gesturing, and facial expressions that occur in cohesion with identity construction.

Identity

Personal portrayal, or expression of identity, reveals many personal attributes a person desires to have, and desires to display, to other people. However, while identity is experienced by every person, identities, most importantly, surface and manifest through interaction with others. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) note that

“identity formation [and] indexicality relies heavily on ideological structures, for associations between language and identity are rooted in cultural beliefs and values—that is, ideologies—about the sorts of speakers who (can or should) produce particular sorts of language” (p. 594).

One can develop greater insight into larger-held social beliefs when looking at identity-in-interaction. In the case of Colorado natives, what constitutes a “native” becomes relevant through the emerging and negotiated identities in conversation; deeper beliefs about that identity become apparent in interaction, based on the language interlocutors produce when presenting a “native” identity. Consequently, a “in-group” and “out-group” forms around being a native, which is constituted by talk that reveals what participants believe makes a Colorado native. These taken-for-granted conversational practices fit into larger sociological structures surrounding identity.

During conversation, people utilize linguistic tools and structures to create a self-identity. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) find that “performance is... emergent in the course of its unfolding in

specific encounters” (p. 587) and that there are specific processes that are complement to identity emergence:

“Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one’s own or others’ identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personas and groups” (p. 585).

This study analyzes one minute of a fifteen-minute conversation that displays emergence of the identity, “Colorado native”. The data highlights the indexical processes outlined by Bucholtz and Hall (2005), which helps contribute to and expand current knowledge of identity presentation in conversation. This research affirms Bucholtz and Hall’s and Kitzinger’s (2005) findings through applying them to a different context. Simultaneously, this research gives greater perspective into gaze, gesture, and facial organization and other linguistic practices utilized in identity construction, which is currently a gap in linguistic research. The association between identity and linguistic practices such as gaze, gesture, and expression have seldom been looked at together, especially when a gaze is treated as accusatory. Therefore, this study attempts to bring academic knowledge closer to understanding the relationship between dynamic facial expressions and social factors like identity, which influences the use of facial expressions. The study does not cover a broad range of facial expressions in regard to identity, but emphasizes the identity-work that occurs with gaze, self-referential gestures and blowing a raspberry.

Methods

To obtain data, I prepared five questions for a focus group to discuss for fifteen minutes (see Appendix 1: Focus group questions). The video-recorded focus group consisted of four participants who were also friends: Joe, Alex, Renee, and Sara (all pseudonyms), and they discussed the questions openly for fifteen minutes. Kitzinger (2004) utilized a similar methodology with participant interviews, and found that “the topic – as they are in research interviews – are a response upon which the social participants draw to achieve their interactional goals” (p. 8). In some respects, participants are primed to discuss particular topics, but conversation is free flowing. The researcher was not present while the focus group conversed. The excerpts utilized for data derive from a one-minute segment in which the participants negotiate the identity of being a Colorado native.

Participants

There is no dictionary definition around what constitutes a “Colorado native”. Semantically, “Colorado native” is a subjective, self-identifier. “Colorado native” can relate to how long a person has lived in Colorado, if a person was born in Colorado, whether a person is a Native American Indian from Colorado, or if a person has personal, emotional sentiments about Colorado. For the purpose of this study, Colorado native will be used as a subjective identity marker—rather than being based on the factors outlined above. Participants choose to claim the identity of Colorado native, based on their subjective beliefs. This becomes relevant in the data, when participants negotiate this identity.

Participant’s ages range from 22-23. Participants were chosen based on their self-identification of being a Colorado native, or not. Participants are all friends, having known each other for four years. Their profiles are:

Sara, aged 23, was born in Colorado and has lived in Colorado her entire life, and identifies as a Colorado native.

Joe is aged 23, and similar to Sara, he was born in Colorado and has lived in Colorado his entire life. He currently works for Colorado state park services, so he is directly aware of the impact of the increased population growth on trails, and self-identifies as a Colorado native. Joe is in a relationship with Sara and was in a horse-back riding program with Sara for 10 years.

Renee is aged 22. She was born in California but moved to Colorado when she was about 11 years old for three years, and then her family moved back to California. Renee chose to attend college in Colorado and is currently living in Colorado. She identifies as a Colorado native, she has expressed this to me personally, and she has a bumper sticker on her car claiming the identity “Colorado Native”.

Alex is aged 22. He was born in Texas and moved to Colorado when he was 18 to attend college. Alex does not identify as a Colorado native, but rather has stated that he is a “proud Texan”.

Data

The data is a one-minute excerpt of a fifteen-minute conversation that demonstrates participants’ engagement with the Colorado native identity. The data is transcribed utilizing transcription conventions from Rebecca Clift’s (2016) *Conversation Analysis*.

Findings

The data exemplifies different identity-displaying moments with regard to the identity of being a Colorado native or not. Below is the transcript of the segment being analyzed.

Screenshots of the participants’ gaze are included under the segment of the turn taking place. *It

is important to note that arrow color (either black or white) has no meaning—the color of the arrow is chosen solely on visibility with the background of the image.

1 ALE: {reading} Do you think living (.) or being from Colorado has an
2 effect on
3 conceptualization or appreciation of nature-
4 REN: (heheheheheh.)
5 JOE: -ye[s.
6 SAR: F[uck ye[a:h.]
7 REN: [Yea:p.]
8 ALE: How s::[°o°]
9 JOE: [Bei]ng a native[(.) I love nature (.) boy scout:[camping
10 ALE: [Yeah.
11 REN: [Why do
12 you keep looking at me? Heheh hh.
13 ALE: (heheh)
14 JOE: I dunno-
15 SAR: Well I t[hink peop]le[e are=
16 REN: [heheheheh]
17 JOE: [riding horses
18 REN: (hand on chest) [I am also a Colorado nati[ve. (heheheh.) Who
19 goes to boy scout camp and rides horses. Hehe[h (hand quickly off
20 chest)
21 SAR: [=I think we're
22 grown up like, we grow up being taught to like respect it and
23 also just like gaining respect for nature because [we're
24 REN: [because you're
25 in it.
26 SAR: Yeah. And l[ike-
27 REN: [and people who live here go outside= (be outside.)
28 SAR: =I think people that move here a lot of them do have respect but
29 (.) some don't.

31 REN: Yeah.
32 (.5)
33 REN: I think being familiar with it makes it so much easier for you to
34 have respect for it.
35 SAR: And like if you don't grow up like hiking or being outside like
36 you can't know (.) how to treat trails

Throughout the findings section, both on record and off record identity work is analyzed throughout the course of the interaction.

In the first segment, Alex is reading the provided question.

1 ALE: {reading} Do you think living (.) or being from Colorado has an
2 effect on
3 conceptualization or appreciation of nature-
4 REN: (heheheheheh.)



When Alex reads the given question, all of the participants are gazing down. The gaze in the conversation begins as normally expected in a conversation. In normal turn-taking conventions, turns at talk consist of various sequences—these sequences minimally consist of a first pair part and a second pair part. Within the data, Alex asking the question elicits a subsequent action of an answer. Therefore, speakers become mobilized to begin the sequence.

- 5 JOE: -ye[s.]
- 6 SAR: [Fu]ck ye[a:h.]
- 7 REN: [Yea:]p.



Joe is providing the answer to Alex’s question, completing the adjacency pair. Sara and Renee also answer the question after Joe.

After Alex is done reading, his gaze begins shifting towards Sara and Joe, and Joe has quickly provided the strong, affirmative answer, “Yes.” Sara, soon thereafter, offers the response “*Fuck yeah*”. While responding, both Joe and Sara change their gaze to look upward. Two beats later, Renee responds, “*Yea:p*”, but her gaze remains looking down. Alex orients to Joe and Sara’s response by beginning the question, “*How so*”. Stivers and Rosanno (2010) confirm that “speaker gaze to the recipient is another turn design feature that mobilizes response” (p. 8). Alex’s gaze moves towards Sara and Joe, and he is thus utilizing the turn-taking function of gaze.

Joe’s receives the conversational floor when he responds “Yes”. Joe’s response is type-conforming—it follows the structure of the preceding question (Clift, 2016, p. 152), which is a yes or no interrogative. According to Raymond (2003), “typically, preferred responses are

produced immediately and without qualification” (p. 943). Joe answers in a structurally-preferred way, because his answer is immediate and, at that moment, Joe did not offer any further explanation for his answer. Additionally, Joe could have chosen to say “yeah”, however, his “yes” is a stronger response than “yeah”. Joe’s immediacy and strong “yes” could be an on-record display of Joe’s belief that he has a higher epistemic knowledge on the topic in comparison to his conversational partners. Epistemic status is how speakers “recognize one another to be more or less knowledgeable concerning some domain of knowledge” (Heritage, 2012, p. 32), whereas epistemic stance is “how speakers position themselves in terms of epistemic status in and through the design of turns at talk” (Heritage, 2012, p.33). Both epistemic status and epistemic stance become relevant in the data, because the actions of the speaker reinforce their epistemic position within the conversation. Through the “precise timing of a response such as *yes*, the recipient may display that [he] has some independent information” (Sorjonen, 2001, p. 27). Thus, by quickly responding “yes” Joe is displaying that he will likely express his high epistemic status through additional turns at talk in the interaction.

There is an upgrading of answers that occurs due to a resistance to the question being asked. Sara treats the question as having an obvious answer, this is shown through her “fuck” prefaced response. This interactional segment presents the beginning of identity emergence in the interaction.

Sara responds in a strongly preferred manner, building off of Joe’s response. Sara upgrades on Joe’s response in the micromoment after hearing the beginning of Joe’s “yes”, which is when she starts the response “*Fuck yeah*”. While Sara does not utilize an “oh-prefaced” response (Heritage, 1998, p. 292), parallels between an “oh-prefaced” and a “fuck-prefaced” response can be made. Heritage (1998) noted that “an oh-prefaced response to an inquiry can

indicate that the question to which it responds is inapposite in some way, and it can do so inexplicitly and self-attentively" (p. 296). Sara's fuck-prefaced response is a stronger form of the "oh" that would one might find in this circumstance, and demonstrates a resistance to the question Alex presents in lines 1-3. By utilizing the "oh-prefaced" structure, Sara treats the answer the question as "already known. . . from antecedent contexts of joint understandings that are invokable, and in most cases invoked, as taken for granted" (p. 297).

I suggest that there is a possibility that Sara displays her identity of a Colorado native through her strong response. Sara might be orienting the interlocutors to her strong epistemic status that could be grounded to her Colorado native identity. The use of "*fuck yeah*" as an upgrade to Joe's "yes" is suggestive that Sara wants her second position answer to be heard by her interlocutors as her own, independent answer, rather than just an agreement with Joe. In conversation, the response to a first pair part (i.e. a question) is a second pair part (i.e. an answer). A position, according to Clift (2016) is "the placement of a turn in a sequence" (p. 16), in this particular sequence, Joe answers in the first position, Sara answers in the second position, and Renee answers in the third position. Sara seems to be trying make her response independent through the use of *fuck*. In contrast, Renee comes third in the interaction and replies "*yea:p*", which is not as strong, and therefore supporting that Renee is not working to make her answer independent; Renee could be simply agreeing with Joe and Sara.

8 ALE: How s::[°o°]

9 JOE: [Bei]ng a native[(.) I love nature (.) boy scout:[camping

10 ALE: [Yeah.



After the first question-answer sequence comes to completion, Alex initiates a second sequence, with a question, at line 8. Even though Alex’s gaze is towards Sara, which normally would select Sara to speak, Joe responds to Alex’s question at line 9. Using the descriptor “Colorado native”, Joe creates a relevant identity with which interactants can identify. The referent becomes a marked, central piece of conversation because of participant understanding of the associations of that identity.

Bucholtz and Hall (2005) claimed that “the most obvious and direct way that identities can be constituted through talk is the overt introduction of referential identity categories into the discourse” (p. 594). Joe uses the term “native”, and uses invokes a perception of what he believes constitutes a Colorado native, through qualifiers, which self-validates Joe’s idea of why he can claim the identity of native. “Where there are equally ‘accurate’ alternatives drawn from non-relational category sets” (Kitzinger, 2004, p. 19), Joe overtly chooses the particular category of Colorado native, thus making “Colorado native” a relevant identifier.

Kitzinger’s (2005) study investigating heteronormativity in interaction uncovers that heterosexuals do not preface their talk with ‘speaking as a heterosexual’. Rather, the

heterosexual identity is the hegemonic norm in comparison to the homosexual identity—therefore, heterosexual speakers do not highlight this identity as they make other identities relevant. By comparing Kitzyner’s findings to the Colorado native data, we can ask: Why would Joe choose to highlight his identity as a native, when this Colorado native identity is the norm, and everyone in the interaction knows he is a native?

The construction of Joe’s turn, *“Being a Colorado native...”* parallels Kitzyner’s (2005) findings comparing heterosexual and homosexual speech in conversation. Similar to how homosexuals utilize talk that conveys information about their sexual orientation (Kitzyner, 2005, p. 254), Joe’s phrasing of “being a native” immediately orients the participants to this particular facet of his many identities. Kitzyner, citing Schegloff (1997), argues “the fact that someone can be categorized with reference to a particular identity category does not make that identity automatically relevant in any particular interaction” (p. 225-226). All of the participants in the interaction are aware that Joe was born and raised in Colorado. Therefore, there was no question of Joe’s belonging to the identity category of “Colorado native”, yet he chooses to identify himself on-record in this way. Like Kitzyner’s findings that heterosexual speech is commonplace and automatically “gives off” their heterosexuality (p. 255), Joe’s identity as a Colorado native is commonplace knowledge among the interactants—his “Coloradoness” is given off based on his already known identity. Therefore, Joe does not have to overtly state “I am a Colorado native” to make his native identity. Similar to just “doing being heterosexual” (Kitzyner, 2005, p. 255), Joe could just “do being a Colorado native”. Also notable is that the original question asks if *living* or *being from* Colorado has an effect on conceptualization or appreciation of nature. Joe matches his response to the stronger identity-tying term being. By

choosing this, Joe places greater value and legitimacy on how *being from* Colorado allows a greater epistemic status in comparison to just living in Colorado.

So why then, does Joe choose to make this identity relevant? Joe brings the relevant identity to the conversation in order to contrast himself among group members. Particularly, he contrasts himself with Renee, who he is looking at while claiming the identity of a native. Joe making his Colorado native identity relevant gives him a higher epistemic status and more credibility in answering the question Alex presented. However, this presentation of a higher epistemic status would not be apparent without Joe’s turn construction, which displays his epistemic stance. Epistemic stance “captures the moment-by-moment positioning of participants with respect to each other in and through the talk” (Clift, 2016, p. 203) Joe’s turn is constructed in a way that places his epistemic status (being a Colorado native) in a higher position in comparison to his interlocuters.

After Joe states his identity, he offers qualifiers for the identity of Colorado native. Clift (2016) discusses that “attached to particular categories are what [Sacks] calls ‘category bound activities’ shaping the particular inferences we draw” (p. 190). Joe claims the activities boy scouts, camping, and riding horses. These qualifiers can be seen in lines 9 and 17. Joe offers these category-bound activities as his inferences into what makes a Colorado native. Schiffrin (1996) discusses that “we verbally place our past experiences in, and make them relevant to, a particular “here” and “now”, a particular audience, and a particular set of interactional concerns and interpersonal issues” (Schiffrin, 1996, p. 168). The verbalization of Joe’s experiences is made relevant in association to the referent “Colorado native”; giving him association to other member categories that qualifies one as a “Colorado native”. Similar to what Hirshey (2017) found, “in conversation... members construct a macro-identity category...by making qualities

and actions relevant (or not) to both the conversation and their understandings of self” (p. 7), Joe exhibits his idea of the “macro-category” requirements for a Colorado native; thus, the qualifiers become the category-bound activities that exhibits Joe’s understanding of how he exemplifies being a Colorado native.

Joe gazes at Renee immediately after saying “*Being a native*”, rather than at Alex, who does not identify as a Colorado native, even though Alex asked the question “*How so*”. Traditionally, the turn-taking function of gaze would be used with a response, and Joe would return Alex’s gaze. Joe’s resistance to traditional turn-taking structures furthers the idea that he is, off the record, challenging and problematizing Renee’s claimed Colorado native identity. He is enacting a particular status entitlement that he does not see Renee as having. It could be argued that Joe’s gaze, phrasing, and descriptor are all constructing the action of positioning himself in contrast to Renee, which would indirectly take issues with her claims (outside of this interaction) of being a Colorado native. Renee is looking downward, even though Joe is looking in her direction. Joe does not break this gaze, even when Renee returns the look.



When Joe says the word “native”, Renee looks up and her gaze becomes locked with Joe’s. Renee’s changed gaze when Joe brought the relevant identity of “native” into discussion, demonstrates that she is also orienting to the identity that Joe claimed for himself.

11 REN: [Why do
12 you keep looking at me? Heheh hh.



Throughout his turn, Joe continues looking at Renee. His gaze does not break until Renee challenges him with the account-solicitation, “*Why do you keep looking at me?*”. Renee brings Joe’s off-record gaze behavior into relevance within the conversation, and this is one of Renee’s first mechanisms of identity defense. Renee treats Joe’s gaze as accusatory—this is evident through her overt challenge of Joe’s behavior. Joe has made his identity of Colorado native clear, through his statement “*Being a native*”—therefore, this statement and Joe’s gaze produces a contrast with Renee. Renee makes the gaze relevant by bringing Joe’s behavior to bear when she asks, “*Why do you keep looking at me*”. The pronoun “you” explicitly calls Joe out on the prolonged gaze, and by using the word “keep” Renee implies that the length of Joe’s gaze is problematic. Kuhnke (2015) finds that “people in control of the interaction demonstrate their dominance by choosing when and how long to look at someone” (Chapter 5). Both Joe and

Renee then problematize the identity positions that have been presented in conversation. Renee, who was targeted by Joe’s gaze, self-selects, which also is dispreferred because she self-selects during Joe’s turn at talk. Therefore, one can deduce that Joe’s problematization of Renee’s identity through gaze was accusatory enough for Renee to solicit an account for Joe’s prolonged stare. Overall, Joe problematizes Renee’s identity in an off-record way—and Renee brings the problematization to relevance by challenging Joe’s off record behavior.

- 14 JOE: I dunno-
- 15 SAR: Well I t[hink peop]le[e are=
- 16 REN: [heheheheh]
- 17 JOE: [riding horses



When Renee makes this challenge clear, Joe breaks his gaze and instead looks at the camera and says, “*I dunno*”. Joe breaks gaze because his behavior becomes too on-record. Joe’s response is confounding to us as analysts because it could semantically function as a direct response to Renee’s question, or act as a continuation of his turn in line 9. Both are potential possibilities.

Also occurring during this moment is Sara beginning to offer her answer to Alex's initial question. Once Sara speaks, Renee's gaze briefly shifts from Joe to Sara. Sara begins with a well-prefaced response, suggesting "that the response will not be straightforward" (Heritage, 2015, p. 92) and Sara's turn should "be treated as an initial component of an expanded turn that will take additional units to complete" (Heritage, 2015, p. 92). Additionally, Karkkainen (2003) finds that the phrase "*I think*" occurs in certain sequential position, namely in second-part parts of adjacency pairs, where the current speaker perceives some minor interactional trouble in the preceding turn" (p. 130). Arguably, Sara has picked up on the interactional trouble that is occurring between Joe and Renee, and her "*Well I think*" demonstrates that she will "shift back to an earlier or to a completely new point" (Karkkainen, 2013, p. 128). She also expresses "*I think*" at a higher volume and pitch, prosodically indicating her epistemic stance is valuable and relevant to the context of the interaction. Sara's turn is likely going to be an extended turn (highlighted by the well-preface) as a second pair part in response to Alex.

18 REN: (hand on chest) [I am also a Colorado nati[ve. (heheheh.) Who
19 goes to boy scout camp and rides horses. Heheh (hand quickly off
20 chest)



:23 Renee shifts gaze to Joe, who is looking at Renee when she says, "I am..." Joe is beginning the phrase "rides horses." Sara is looking at Renee as she continues her turn. Alex's gaze is toward Sara.



After challenging Joe by saying “*Why do you keep looking at me?*”, Renee gazes briefly at Sara when Sara says “*Well*” in the beginning of her turn, but then re-shifts her gaze back to Joe to say, “*I am also a Colorado native*”. Joe glances at Sara, also orienting to the beginning of Sara’s turn, and looks back at Renee to offer the qualifier “*riding horses*”. Both Joe’s and Renee’s gaze toward Sara illustrate that they recognize that Sara is beginning a turn, yet both Joe and Renee utilize interjacent overlap— “beginning [their turns at talk] at a point where the prior turn is nowhere near possible completion and transition ready” (Clift, 2016, p.127)—in conjunction with Sara’s turn to negotiate their identities even further.

Renee states “*I am also a Colorado native*”, and directs this statement towards Joe. This turn displays the importance of the Colorado native identity to Renee—if the identity was not important to her, it is unlikely that she would have engaged in interjacent overlap and make the overt claim that she is a Colorado native. Subsequently, Renee challenges Joe’s gaze, treating it as challenging her own identity as a native, Renee resists Joe’s challenge by returning a prolonged gaze and using the self-identifying phrase “*I am also a Colorado native*”.

Renee utilizes the category “Colorado native” in line 18. Renee orients to Joe’s identity by using the same category, therefore placing Joe and herself as equally deserving of claiming

the identity. She continues to relate to Joe’s identity, stating in lines 18 and 19: “[I am also a Colorado native. (heheheh.) Who goes to boy scout camp and rides horses.” Renee continues to level her identity with Joe’s identity by utilizing the same qualifiers Joe does to describe his Colorado native identity, Renee format-ties (Goodwin, 1990) her statement with Joe’s statement. Format-tying is when “participants make creative pragmatic use of the local environment of talk... for the formulation of their next utterances” (p. 284). Those who format-tie “display their common alignment toward a target” (p.285). Renee’s repetition of the same category and qualifiers Joe used earlier in the segment illustrates her alignment to the Colorado native identity.

Renee enacts a particular gesture when she defends her identity. Shown below is an image of Renee with her hand on her chest.



This occurs when Renee says, “I am also a Colorado native, who goes to boy scout camp and rides horses”. Renee utilizes this self-referential gesture for a long duration, and does not take her hand off her chest until after she completes her turn. Turk (2007) describes that “the chest hold, when the hand is held against the chest, [is] used when one has been accused of something”. Renee’s chest-hold further supports the notion that she understood Joe’s gaze as accusatory, or challenging. Turk (2007) also found that “self-referential gestures are produced in

proximity to a prosodically-stressed first person term” and that these gestures can be used to “emphasize individuated experience” (p. 559, 564). Renee’s self-referential gesture is used to emphasize her individuated identity, as partially represented through the use of the gesture in proximity to her referential pronoun, *I*, and the semantic meaning of the sentence.

The entire interaction between Joe and Renee is a side-sequence (Jefferson 1972). The overall ongoing action within this segment is the sequence where Alex asks, “*How so*”. Sara is attempting to offer her perspective, but it is interrupted by a side sequence. Jefferson (1972) claims that participants may initiate a side sequence when “there are occurrences one might feel are not ‘part’ of the activity but which appear in some sense relevant” (p. 294). Renee makes it clear that she thinks Joe’s gaze is accusatory, therefore she makes the gaze relevant, and, subsequently, re-proclaims her identity as a Colorado native. Furthermore, Renee enacts a “break in the activity”, and assumes that “the ongoing activity will resume” (p. 294). Renee legitimizes her own Colorado native identity in order to establish that her contributions to the conversation are legitimately grounded in her experience. A common feature within side sequences are “repeats” (p. 296). Repeats are conversational items that replicate what is said before, and they can “have intonation that is regularly characterized as ‘disbelief’ [or] ‘surprise’” these repeats reference “a specific prior object as its product-item” (p. 299, 296). In Renee’s case, the repeat occurs with the label “Colorado native”, and the Colorado native identity, therefore, becomes the product item that is being negotiated within this side sequence. However, Jefferson also notes that these types of repeats “characteristically signal that there is a problem in [the] product item, and [the repeat’s] work is to generate further talk directed to remedying the problem” (p. 299). Renee’s Colorado native identity has become problematized during the side sequence, and Renee

is attempting to remedy the attack on her identity through initiating more talk around the problematized subject.

The next action I examine is the raspberry Joe blows after Renate states "*I am also a Colorado native*". After Renee completes the phrase "Colorado native", Joe returns his gaze towards Renee and blows a raspberry. Meanwhile, Alex is gazing at Sara who is continuing her turn, and Sara is gazing at Renee.



Ruusuvuori & Perakyla (2009) find that "facial expression is a flexible interactional resource that is easily adaptable to the contingencies of a situation" (p. 392). Although there has

been extensive research on facial expressions and their connection to emotions, there have not been many studies that link social factors and facial expressions (Namba et al., 2016, p. 594). Some studies connect the use of blowing a raspberry to cognitive understanding of social positions and cues (Bates, 1979; Corballis, 2011); however, there are not many extensive studies examine the meaning behind using a raspberry, especially in regards to identity. In the case of Joe’s raspberry towards Renee, I argue that Joe utilizes the raspberry as a means of sarcastic conclusion to their sequence.

Connor (2014) notes that “the action known as ‘blowing a raspberry’... is an imitative dismissal” (p. 135), and that “the purpose of such comical eruption is, of course, to provoke laughter” (p. 137). Therefore, it can be argued that Joe utilizes a raspberry in order to conclude the sequence between him and Renee, but also to dismiss the identity claim that occurred in Renee’s prior turn. When Joe blows the raspberry at Renee, he is orienting to “negative representations [that] derive from considerations of recipient design and local interactional concerns” (Kitzinger, 2005, p. 231). He displays that he does not like Renee’s identity negotiation with him, or her recognition and ‘calling out’ his off-record actions.¹

¹ Furthermore, the raspberry is a dynamic facial expression that combines a variety of different facial expressions. A raspberry generally consists of pursing one’s lips, squinting one’s eyes, and scrunching one’s nose. According to Matsumoto & Hwang (2013), lips tightening often exhibit anger, and a wrinkled nose can display disgust (p. 17). Matsumoto & Hwang continue, finding that “disgust is an interesting emotion because people are not only disgusted at objects... but they are also disgusted at other people... the function of disgust is to eliminate the contaminated objects or idea” (p. 17). Arguably, the combination of facial expressions used in a raspberry display both a serious and playful reaction from Joe regarding Renee’s identity. The raspberry could be a “toned down” version of the disbelief, anger, and disgust that is associated with pursed lips, a wrinkled nose and squinted eyes; and the comical nature of a raspberry tones down the severity of the facial actions occurring during a raspberry. The duality of the purpose of a raspberry also coincides with the finding that facial expressions “display the speaker’s vacillating stance, corresponding to the vocal action where the twofold stance was also observable” (Ruusuvaori & Perakyla, 2009, p. 391). In the data, Joe displays multiple stances to Renee’s identity by blowing a raspberry. The raspberry becomes the source of an interesting



When Renee makes her identity position clear, she re-oriens her gaze towards Sara, who is still continuing her turn. Renee extends her turn when she says, “*who goes to boy scout camp and rides horses.*” It is also important to note that Renee chooses the present tense of “go”, and as if the action is ongoing, and continuing. This parallels the idea of Renee’s identity of being a Colorado native as being in the present, and not in the past.



dialectic: the physical aspects of a raspberry allude to Joe’s disregard of Renee’s identity of a Colorado native, whereas the playful nature of a raspberry orients to Joe’s desire to maintain friendship with Renee.

21 SAR: [=I think we're
 22 grown up like, we grow up being taught to like respect it and
 23 also just like gaining respect for nature because [we're
 24 REN: [because you're
 25 in it.



:28 Renee has returned her arm to the "home" position, Renee and Alex are gazing towards Sara. Joe is looking in the distance, not gazing toward anyone. Sara gazes toward Renee and is in the middle of saying "respect it" in line 22.

After Renee fully completes her side sequence, she returns her arm back to home position and shifts her gaze back to Sara, who is still attempting to continue her turn. Once again, Sara begins her sequence with "*I think*". Sara is fully aware of the identity tension and negotiation between Renee and Joe. Karkkainen (2003) claims that "by placing *I think* at the beginning of the intonation unit the speaker wants to display a certain stance towards its content, and by extension to the conversational activity and to the coparticipants" (p. 120). Sara's turn does not explicitly claim an epistemic authority over other members (she is doing being a Colorado native), but her turn does display an epistemic stance regarding why Colorado natives appreciate nature. Moreover, *I think* "simultaneously points backward and forward in discourse: backward, as its use is engendered by the trouble perceived in the previous turn, and forward, as it deals with that trouble by marking that the current speaker's perspective will follow" (Karkkainen,

2003, p. 130). There is still identity negotiation and resistance occurring in Sara's turn. Her use—and repetition of—"I think" demonstrates that Sara recognized the trouble that was occurring in Renee and Joe's side sequence. Trouble also occurred due to the overlap of Renee and Sara's side sequence. Schegloff (1974) finds that "identical repeats of turn beginnings, and identical repeats of rather long turn beginnings occur regularly when there has been an overlap of the turn beginning with the prior turn" (p. 74). Sara clearly repeats the phrase "I think" and "we grow up" indicating that she is enacting turn-beginning recycling (Schegloff, 1974) to manage the overlap that has taken place during her turn. At the same time, *I think* also projects that Sara will offer her perspectives about the semantic content of the original on-going activity of Alex asking the question "how so".

Other significant work is done by Sara in this turn at talk. Sara uses the pronoun "we" in conjunction with "grow up in it". The "we" highlights a particular member category that Sara is enforcing within her turn. It is ambiguous who the referent is, however, it could be that Sara is distinguishing all Colorado natives at this point in her turn, and using the terms "grow(n) up" to categorize Colorado natives as people who grow up in Colorado. There is still tension between Sara and Renee, albeit discreet. For instance, Sara uses the pronoun "we", and then her turn is pre-emptively completed by Renee, who says "because you're in it". According to Lerner (2004), "[pre-emptive] completion... can be responsive to the action the ongoing turn is implementing, but in most circumstances, that responding action is not called for until the possible completion of the full TCU" (p. 230). In other words, Renee responded with the completion as a response to the content of Sara's turn in line 23. However, because Sara was not at a place of possible completion with her TCU, Renee's pre-emptive completion was not necessary. It is possible to speculate that Renee utilizes pre-emptive completion in order to

validate her epistemic knowledge about growing up in Colorado in conjunction with Sara's epistemic knowledge.

Additional negotiation continues when Renee uses "you're" as a universal "you" in order to broaden the scope of the identity, Colorado native, to anyone living in Colorado. Further, the tense changes from the past—referring to "growing up" in nature—to the present—still "being in" nature. This brief "push-and-pull" is an instance of less obvious identity negotiation occurring in the segment.

Identity is relevant here because Sara and Renee are negotiating who fits within the category of "Colorado native". Sara claims epistemic authority over the identity, as demonstrated by her use of "we". The *we* implies a level of ownership that allows Sara to make the claims about how influential growing up in Colorado is on someone's appreciation for nature. Sara's wording distances her from Renee, and there is still separation in the idea of what makes an individual "more or less" Coloradan.

26 SAR: Yeah. And I like-

27 REN: [and people who live here go outside= (be outside.)

28 ALE: [huh.]

28 SAR: =I think people that move here a lot of them do have respect but
29 (.) some don't.

31 REN: Yeah. (looks down)



In this segment, there is still slight identity defense from Renee, and identity resistance from Sara. However, the overall amount of identity negotiation is lessening. Renee partakes in another interjacent overlap—although it could be argued that Renee interpreted Sara’s agreement as a place of possible completion to create a turn end overlap. Renee then shifts from the second person referent “you’re” to the third person referent “people”. There is a continued shift into the present tense in this segment, implying that the “people who live here” currently are living in Colorado and go outside, which is why they develop an appreciation of nature. However, there is little proof within the data that demonstrates that Renee is utilizing her statement in line 27 to qualify why people who go outside are Colorado natives. At that point, Sara then resists Renee’s claims by utilizing a contrastive category when she says, “*people who move here*”—this is a direct contrast to Renee’s comments about “*people who live here*”. Sara’s *I think* prefacing also is used this time to disassociate her opinions from Renee’s, and Karkkainen (2003) reiterates that the presence of *I think* in second pair parts can show “a less than hundred percent alignment with the preceding turn” (p. 137). Sara is still resisting Renee’s claims, Sara constructs her turn, and displays her epistemic stance, which reflects her higher epistemic status about Coloradan’s behaviors.

32 (.5)

33 REN: I think being familiar with it makes it so much easier for you to
34 have respect for it.

35 SAR: And like if you don't grow up like hiking or being outside like
36 you can't know (.) how to treat trails



The end of the segment brings a heightened sense that the Colorado native identity has been negotiated. There is still resistance in these turns—for example, Renee in lines 33 says “*I think being familiar with it*”, whereas in line 35 Sara notes that “*if you don't grow up like hiking...*”. There is still a discreet disagreement as to what constitutes a person's respect for nature, and this emerges through the contrasting claims of “being familiar” with nature versus “growing up” in nature. Sara holds more regard for those who grow up in nature, whereas Renee makes it clear that just being familiar with nature is what constitutes respect for nature. Therefore, the personal identity-work has shifted away from identity defending and has become a negotiation about who does or does not have respect for nature. Sara is still claiming a higher epistemic stance through her use of “growing up”; she is implying that a longer time spent within Colorado, or nature, constitutes a respect for nature. Contrarily, Renee makes the claim that being familiar with nature is enough to respect it.

Conclusion

With a consistently growing population, the identity of “Colorado native” in Colorado has become increasingly relevant. This identity is continually produced and reproduced through materialistic means, such as bumper stickers and t-shirts, but it is also a topic that arises through conversation. The identity does not only emerge from conversation, but it is continually constructed and negotiated through interactions. The Colorado native identity is constitutive, and created through the utilization of linguistic resources.

Fascinating identity work is being done throughout the interaction between Alex, Renee, Joe and Sara. Building off of the identity research that has been done by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and Kitzinger (2005), this study explored both on-record and off-record behaviors. On-record behaviors such as turn construction, the use of identity categories, and questioning of off-record behaviors, as well as off-record behaviors like gaze, self-referential gestures, and blowing a raspberry worked to create and challenge participant’s identity positions throughout the interaction. Through the exploration of this data we have achieved a heightened understanding of the mechanisms of identity construction among those who identify as a “Colorado native”, and, whilst doing so, we have perhaps gained greater general insight into identity construction as a whole.

Appendix 1: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Interview Questions

Brittney Johnston, Fall 2017

- 1) The population in Colorado has grown 9.7% from 2010 to 2016. In recent years, there has also been a number of popular hiking trails including Hanging Lake, Boulder’s Sanitas trail, Conundrum Hot Springs, and Mt. Bierstadt that have experienced various issues and need to close. Do you think the population growth and trail harm are related? Please explain either way.
- 2) What issues related to human impact do you think these trails face?
- 3) Do you think this is a recent issue or is it ongoing?
- 4) Do you think living in/being from Colorado has an effect on conceptualization or appreciation of nature? In what ways does this have an effect?
- 5) What can be done to better communicate about these issues?

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