

Intersectionality in Interaction: Immigrant Youth Doing American from an Outsider-Within Position

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ABSTRACT

Current sociological studies on children of immigrants largely focus on how well children integrate into U.S. society. Working against this outcome-oriented framework, which undermines the importance of children's social location and situated doings, this study employs an interactional, intersectional approach to examine how bilingual youth navigate multiple inequalities when they translate for their immigrant parents. Based on 72 interviews with Mexican American and Korean American youth, my findings demonstrate that these "language brokers" confront racialized nativism and develop different interactional strategies to negotiate power imbalances pertaining to age, race, and class in different institutional contexts. Paying particular attention to structural barriers that limit the effectiveness of these strategies while highlighting their considerable agency, I argue that children of immigrants do not simply become American. Rather, they strategically use their "outsider-within" position and perform "American" behaviors in an attempt to gain social citizenship rights. This study, therefore, calls attention to how the margin, as a social location, can create moments of resistance and empowerment.

KEYWORDS: childhood; intersectionality; immigrant families; race and ethnicity; youth resistance; language brokers.

With nearly a quarter of the U.S. population identifying themselves as either immigrants or children of immigrants, much has been written about the experiences of youth from immigrant families (Foner 2009). To date, however, the majority of existing scholarship draws upon an outcome-oriented, deterministic assimilation theory to examine immigrant youths' lives. Because this line of research treats the category of "American" as a static category that children of immigrants either reject or aspire to become (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993; Waters and Jiménez 2005), it misses the strategies of resistance that young people employ while navigating social marginalization and attempting to change their economic realities.

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This study employs an interactional, intersectional approach to examine how children of immigrants use their simultaneously subordinated and elevated status as “outsiders-within” (Collins 1986) to negotiate power differences and structural inequalities. Drawing upon 72 interviews with working-class Mexican American and Korean American “language brokers” who grew up translating for their immigrant parents in adult-centric, English-speaking spaces, the findings demonstrate that many youth confront racialized nativism as well as age and class inequalities in their daily interactions. In hopes of gaining access to social citizenship—defined as “an entitlement of social provision, the guarantee of a decent standard of living” (Fraser and Gordon 1992:45)—these youth have developed various strategies to contest multiple forms of subordination during unequal translating encounters. By highlighting how working-class children of immigrants simultaneously reproduce and challenge the category of “American” in contextually specific interactions, this study calls attention to how the social location of the margin is both a site of resistance and repression (Collins 1986, 2000; Crenshaw 1991; DuBois 1903; Fanon 1963; hooks 1984; Kelly 1993; Rawick 1972). This interactional, intersectional approach to studying children of immigrants brings preexisting inequalities and resistance into immigration scholarship, thus providing a new way of thinking about immigrants’ agency.

STUDYING CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS: FROM ASSIMILATION TO INTERSECTIONALITY IN INTERACTION

Most sociological studies on children of immigrants examine whether children integrate into U.S. society and become “American.” Current work on children of immigrants broadly adopts two approaches to understand whether the assimilative paths of post-1965 immigrants resemble the paths of earlier waves of European immigrants who gradually became “Americans.” Segmented assimilation theorists, for example, argue that when immigrant parents lack the ability to shield their children from the deleterious effects of the poor inner city, children face downward assimilation and develop an adversarial stance toward the dominant society similar to that of American minorities (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993). As a result, second generation immigrants of color, especially Mexicans, have a harder time blending into the mainstream (Lopez and Stanton-Salazar 2001; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Waters and Jiménez 2005). Conversely, “neo-assimilation” theorists project more optimistic assimilative outcomes. In their view, because overt racial discriminations and other structural barriers to assimilation are now unlawful, non-white immigrants and their children can benefit from the declining significance of racial boundaries (Alba 2009; Alba and Nee 2003; Bean and Stevens 2003) and maintain a “second generational advantage” over native-born minorities (Kasinitz et al. 2008). This pattern of “progress” among these new immigrants leads neo-assimilation theorists to conclude that traditional assimilation remains pretty firm for many new immigrants (Alba and Nee 2003; Waters and Jiménez 2005).

However, there are three problems with taking an assimilation approach to study children of immigrants. First, assimilation theory relies on the implicit assumption that individuals either internalize or reject “American” norms and values and become either “good” or “bad” Americans. As such, this research overlooks the possibility that children of immigrants, as a less powerful group, have to enact or contest hegemonic beliefs pertaining to what it means to be American at the interactional level, regardless of whether they individually internalize such views. Second, since assimilation theorists often use measurements such as economic and educational outcomes to predict assimilative pathways (Waters and Jiménez 2005), they inevitably reinforce existing racial stereotypes about Asian “model minorities” and Mexican “underclass” while ignoring class differences within racial groups. Third, because many scholars regard children of immigrants as passive recipients of American adult values, they inevitably depoliticize purposeful and creative actions undertaken by children of immigrants in order to resist—rather than assimilate into—the unequal host society. That is, when researchers measure immigrants’ “progress” toward assimilation, or view resistance as a major obstacle to becoming “good” Americans, they implicitly and unintentionally advance the idea that the

successful or desirable destination of all immigrant trajectories is to be like white middle-class adults (Brubaker 2004; Jung 2009). As Lisa Park (2005:1) argued, we need to “extend our understanding of immigrants and immigration beyond the usual premise of the immigrant narrative, which at its core is a story of upward mobility and individual integration into U.S. society,” and question the pre-existing unequal society that these children are asked to integrate. How do we move beyond assimilation theory to expose inequalities of power, status, and resources while simultaneously viewing children of immigrants as active agents that construct cultural meanings?

In this article, I synthesize interactional and intersectional approaches to analyze the relationship between unequal social interactions and the countervailing process of resistance. Inequality is co-constructed at both macro and micro levels. Gender and race, for example, are not biological or static entities but rather social structures reproduced at interactional and institutional levels (Omi and Winant 1986; Ridgeway 2011; West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987). Because structural mechanisms, such as rules and dominant ideologies, are built into institutional arrangements, individuals cannot escape “accountability” or social regulation (Giddens 1984; Hays 1994; Hollander 2013; Kane 2012; West and Fenstermaker 2009). Consequently, people often develop interactional strategies to “pass as normal” to avoid stigma and “face-threatening situations” (Goffman 1955, 1959, 1963). Rather than merely “displaying” or suppressing their “differences,” however, individuals’ “competence as members of society is hostage” to the production of unequal relations (West and Zimmerman 1987:126). Individuals, therefore, do not merely internalize societal norms as assimilation theory suggests; instead, they actively accomplish and recreate categorical differences such as race, class, and gender at the interactional level.

Although hegemonic conceptions of Americanness provide scaffolding for social interactions, individuals living at the intersection of multiple systems of oppression can also use their social location to resist inequalities of power. Scholars studying race, class, and gender have long argued that the margin is a site of oppression and resistance, where the subordinated can cultivate reflexive perspectives (Collins 1986, 2000; Crenshaw 1991; DuBois 1903; Fanon 1963; hooks 1984; Kelly 1993; Rawick 1972). For example, taking into account the unequal power relationship between whites and blacks, W. E. B. DuBois (1903, 1920) argued that blacks experience “double consciousness,” which allows them to see the hypocrisy of racist practices that often remain invisible to whites. In her intersectional analysis of gender, class, and race, bell hooks (1984) also observed that the margin can enable the subordinated to look “both from the outside in and from the inside out,” thus helping them develop “a mode of seeing unknown to the oppressors” (p. vii). In short, being an “outsider-within” can enable individuals to make “creative use of their marginality” (Collins 1986:14), thereby potentially changing the social order.

However, an outsider-within status does not always allow people at the margin to openly resist all forms of institutional realities. Because certain aspects of structure are more apparent to people based on their social locations, some aspects of structural inequality may remain invisible in everyday interactions. For example, in the United States, class intersects with race and other axes of power to shape people’s access to resources and social networks (Bettie 2003; Bourdieu 1984; Horvat, Weininger, and Lareau 2003; Lareau 2003). In a highly racialized society like the United States, however, class often operates as an invisible social structure, and most people experience their class position through race (Bettie 2003; Hall 1978). Moreover, individuals at the margin have limited resources and opportunities to openly confront the powerful, even if they may be conscious of oppression. Therefore, they engage in “everyday resistance” (Scott 1985) or “covert resistance” (Hollander and Einwohner 2004), which goes unnoticed and thus unpunished by its target. Research on passing, for example, has demonstrated that many light-skinned blacks have resisted structural barriers by passing as whites to gain access that would have been otherwise forbidden (Daniel 2002; Khanna 2010; Williamson 1980). Gay and lesbians can also pass as straight to oppose social forces that may harm them (Kanuha 1999). Other times, knowing and anticipating multiple discriminations might mean that individuals have to, at times, emulate “the language and manner of oppressor” in an

attempt to protect themselves from the interlocking structure of race, class, and gender (Lorde 1984:114). While such subtle subversion, which hides the intent of the act, might not produce visible and immediate social changes, these oppositional behaviors are a form of resistance that can minimize repression or mitigate a dominant group's claims (Hollander and Einwonnner 2004; Kelly 1993; Scott 1985). As a result of limited support from mainstream political institutions, these infrapolitics (Scott 1985)—a set of deliberate and tactical choices based on subordinates' understanding of unequal power relations—are important political acts (Kelly 1993).

I use this new frame of “intersectionality in interaction” to theorize how the continuously evolving boundary between “American” and “foreigner” regulates social interactions of immigrant youth and ultimately affects the distribution of resources. At the same time, I highlight the ways in which youths' marginal status enables them to deploy strategies of resistance derived from their ability to see how multiple inequalities converge within their lives. I argue that children do not simply “become” American or passively integrate into the mainstream. Instead, these children of immigrants actively perform or “do” American from the position of “outsider-within” to contest unequal social hierarchies and exclusionary practices in hopes of gaining social citizenship. The following section describes how we can employ interactional and intersectional approaches to study children of immigrants, particularly children language brokers who translate for their parents in adult-centric and racialized spaces of America.

RACIALIZED NATIVISM AND SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP: MEXICAN AMERICAN AND KOREAN AMERICAN LANGUAGE BROKERS

This study examines the daily strategies of resistance that Mexican American and Korean American “language brokers” deploy during unequal translation encounters when representing their immigrant parents. To date, studies on children of immigrants, including work on language brokers, largely focus on one ethnic or racial group. Consequently, there is a limited understanding of how racialization works in related yet distinct ways to shape immigrants' experiences in the United States. Though Latino and Asian Americans currently endure seemingly different racialization processes that depict the former as “bad” foreigners and the latter as “successful” foreigners, both groups are seen as a potential threat to the economic stability and security of “true” Americans (Espiritu 2003; Saito 2001). Perceived as distrustful and disloyal un-Americans, they often become targets of what George Sanchez (1997) dubbed “racialized nativism,” antagonism and hostility aimed at racially identifiable immigrants on the basis of their perceived foreignness.

Historically, citizenship rights in the United States were reserved for white men who owned property (Fraser and Gordon 1992; Glenn 2002). This history continues to impact today's racial politics in which people living at the intersection of race, class, and gender are continuously denied full membership in American society (Kim 2013; Park 2005). Today, people in the United States widely embrace the notion of civil citizenship, such as individual rights for freedom (Fraser and Gordon 1992). Yet, the idea of social citizenship or the guarantee of social provision is not enforced by the state (Fraser and Gordon 1992). Accordingly, those who fail to achieve the “American dream” by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps are increasingly seen as “undeserving” citizens who get “something for nothing” and thus “violate standards of equal exchange” in a neoliberal society (Fraser and Gordon 1992:50).

Such hostility to the welfare state is often expressed through the popular discourses about “inassimilable” immigrants who retain their “backward” culture (Chavez 2008; Espiritu 2003; Ong 2003). Because the ideas of human capital, social citizenship, and consumer power are interconnected with whiteness (Fujiwara 2008; Glenn 2002; Ong 2003; Park 2005), non-white immigrants often struggle to prove their worth as “Americans.” Asian American professionals in Pawan Dhingra's (2007:189) study, for instance, “negotiated margins within the mainstream status” by engaging in so-called American activities such as attending Hollywood movies and sporting events in the public

space as a racial strategy to assert their social citizenship. [Dhingra \(2013\)](#) also argued that Indian American motel owners manage racial stigma by hiring white employees to work at the front desk. These studies suggest that immigrants do not passively enact dominant cultural ideals and assimilate into the mainstream. To the contrary, immigrants act with the keen awareness of being held accountable to the category of “foreignness,” which excludes them.

Although these findings illustrate that new immigrants and their children are denied full membership and thus use various racial strategies to make citizenship claims, few studies have examined how class and age intersect with race to affect unequal social interactions. In comparison to working-class parents, middle-class parents are better able to use their cultural and social capital in interactions with institutions in order to gain important resources for their children ([Calarco 2014](#); [Lareau 2003](#); [Lew 2006](#)). Moreover, as childhood scholars have long argued, children are not just proto-people or embodiments of the future who must be safeguarded from the danger of the adult world ([Pugh 2014](#)). Rather, as knowing and reflective actors, they strategize within their constraints to make profound differences in their surroundings ([Musto 2014](#); [Pugh 2014](#); [Thorne 1993](#)), including their family lives ([Park 2005](#); [Song 1999](#)).

This is especially true in immigrant childhoods, in which many bilingual children use their bicultural fluency to navigate social inequality in adult-centric public spaces ([Katz 2014](#); [Kwon 2014](#); [Orellana 2009](#); [Orellana, Dorner, and Pulido 2003](#); [Reynolds and Orellana 2009](#)). Today, the majority of children of immigrants—about 61 percent—have at least one parent who encounters language barriers ([Katz 2014](#)). This number has been gradually increasing since 1999, when only 49 percent of children of immigrants had at least one parent with limited English proficiency ([Katz 2014](#)). Due to limited language resources available to non-English speakers, and because children learn English faster than their parents, many bilingual children of immigrants blur the socially constructed boundaries of adulthood and childhood to navigate the constraints that affect their family lives ([Bauer 2013](#); [Katz 2014](#); [Kwon 2014](#); [Park 2005](#); [Reynolds and Orellana 2009](#)). Mostly focusing on Latino children, scholars have demonstrated that children’s work as language brokers facilitates permanent family settlement by connecting their immigrant families to a wide range of institutional resources and information ([Bauer 2013](#); [Katz 2014](#); [Orellana 2009](#); [Orellana et al. 2003](#); [Valenzuela 1999](#); [Valdés 2003](#); [Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, and Shannon 1994](#)). Rather than viewing their experience of translating negatively, most bilingual children see their work as typical family responsibility ([Orellana et al. 2003](#); [Valdés 2003](#)).

At the same time, bilingual youth might negotiate power imbalances pertaining to age, race, class, and immigration status when translating in various institutional contexts. [Marjorie Orellana \(2009\)](#), for example, notes that brokering work is shaped by power relations since children of immigrants often mediate “between people from different social classes, cultural backgrounds, and racialized identities” and translate “racist, xenophobic, or otherwise deficit-laden views of their families” in adult-centric public spaces (p. 66). Therefore, much like African Americans who engage in “style-shifting” ([Baugh 1992](#); [Hill 1998](#); [Lippi-Green 1997](#)) and non-white youth who act “white” in some institutional contexts ([Lew 2006](#); [Ogbu 1987](#)), bilingual language brokers may move between various behavioral codes and language to accomplish their normative understanding of American behaviors. In this article, I analyze how Mexican American and Korean American language brokers employ different strategies to mediate between different speakers and represent their immigrant parents. Because their parents, in the eyes of society, failed the human capital assessment of citizenship for being “poor” and “failing” to learn English, language brokers may consciously manage stigma—through “face work” of countering threatening situations impacting their families ([Goffman 1955, 1963](#))—at a greater risk of assessment than other children who do not shoulder such tasks. By demonstrating how language brokers draw on their knowledge of the rules and resources derived from their social position to replicate and subvert broader power dynamics, this study brings a much-needed focus on the effect of youths’ resistance to the study of immigration.

METHOD AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Data come from a larger interview study of Mexican American and Korean American language brokers from California, the state with the largest immigrant population in the United States. I conducted in-depth interviews with 33 Korean Americans (21 girls, 12 boys) and 39 Mexican Americans (25 girls and 14 boys). Their ages ranged from 14 to 23 years and averaged 17 years. The respondents included both second-generation children, born and raised in the United States, and 1.5-generation children who immigrated to the United States prior to the age of 12 (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Twelve children of immigrants were undocumented, and 13 children with U.S. citizenship had at least one undocumented parent. Eighty percent of children who had at least one undocumented parent were Mexican American. This mixed immigrant status is common among Mexican immigrant families, which in turn increases the likelihood that children with U.S. citizenship will represent and advocate for their parents in public spheres (Fortuny et al. 2009).

In order to sample those who served as language brokers for their parents on a regular basis, I distributed recruitment flyers outside of high schools located in low-income districts in Los Angeles. In addition, I visited various community-based organizations and academic programs catering to low-income students. The flyers stated that respondents would receive a \$20 gift card and restricted participation to those who used their bilingual skills to help their monolingual parents at least twice a week. From January 2009 to December 2012, I received more than 100 inquires from potential bilingual children of immigrants. Of those who expressed interest, potential participants were screened using a background survey, which included questions asking them about place of residence, age, the time at which they arrived to the United States, language proficiency of themselves and their immigrant parents, as well as their family's class background. Family class background was determined based on eligibility for reduced-cost or free lunch programs, the parents' level of education and occupation, and whether parents were home owners. By using this screening process, I sampled what Orellana (2009) calls "designated translators" from low-income immigrant families whose parents were Spanish or Korean monolinguals. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor to 10 being excellent, respondents' self-reports showed that youth viewed their parents' English language proficiency level as low, with an average score of 2.5. All interview respondents identified themselves as bilingual, rating their own English proficiency averaging 9 and their Spanish or Korean proficiency averaging 7.5. Finally, the age in which they started language brokering ranged from 6 to 12 years, with an average of 8 years.

Of Korean American youth, 27 percent came from single-parent households—mostly headed by mothers—compared to 38 percent of Mexican American youth. Education level was higher among Korean parents, reflecting the selective nature of the 1965 immigration law (Lew 2006). Thirty percent of Korean immigrant mothers and 35 percent of Korean immigrant fathers graduated from college, while only 8 percent of Mexican immigrant mothers and 9 percent of Mexican immigrant fathers graduated from college. The relatively higher level of education among Korean parents, however, was not reflected in their occupations. An overwhelming 90 percent of parents in both groups worked in low-skill, low-wage service occupations, and a vast majority of participants were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. None of the respondents' parents owned a home.

Interviews, which lasted about one to three hours, were transcribed and coded inductively based on emerging themes with an intention to identify different strategies that children employ during translation encounters (Glaser and Strauss 1967). For the purpose of this article, I draw from data pertaining to questions concerning daily translation activities—what participants liked and disliked about translating for their parents, the type of people that made their experience of translating difficult, and how they went about dealing with these people.

An interview, like any social interaction, is a scenario in which people enact cultural meanings. During interviews, people manage impressions (Goffman 1959) and endeavor to project a "moral identity" that is consistent with familial or social norms (Bauer 2013). In this process, interviewees also move between past and present, while drawing from and reconstructing their memories (Bauer 2013).

As a result, it is likely that the interviewees in this study downplayed the mundane experiences of language brokering and drew from their memories of high-stake situations in which they had to manage stigma in public spaces. Although interviewees may not fully recount what happened in specific brokering events, these high-stake situations can act as “magnified moments” (Hochschild 1994:4), and their interpretations of the events can provide a window into their understanding of social life. Consequently, in analyzing an interview I paid particular attention to what features of social structural inequalities were apparent in the shared reflections. I then analyzed why some language brokering strategies succeeded or failed from such perspectives. Furthermore, given the shared and different aspects of the racialization processes that Mexican Americans and Korean Americans endure on a daily basis, I compared and contrasted how both groups were similarly and differently racialized.

DOING AMERICAN FROM AN OUTSIDER-WITHIN POSITION

Below, I present different interactional strategies that bilingual youth employed during their translation encounters. As demonstrated in previous research, bilingual youth in this study played vital roles in navigating institutions and using their translation skills to speak for their parents (Bauer 2013; Katz 2014; Kwon 2014; Orellana 2009; Orellana et al. 2003; Park 2005; Valenzuela 1999). In the process of representing and advocating for their parents, however, they came across racial, class, and other structural inequalities (Kwon 2014; Orellana 2009; Reynolds and Orellana 2009). Because these structural mechanisms prevented their families from achieving full social citizenship, the entitlement and privileges enjoyed by dominant group members, young language brokers broadly adopted three different strategies: (1) passing, (2) shielding, and (3) posing. Rather than trying to assimilate into U.S. society or internalize “American” values, these strategies reflect how youth perform or “do” American from the outsider-within position in hopes of gaining equal rights and status as “insiders.”

Passing as “American” Adults

Although spoken language varies among all speakers, some languages are racialized, thus limiting minority speakers’ access to vital resources (Baugh 2007; Hill 1998). Cognizant of such assessments, many bilingual youth in this study attempted to pass as “American” adults by using the phone. Through their accumulated language brokering experiences, these language brokers learned that their social position as children, as well as racial meanings depicting their monolingual parents as “undeserving immigrants,” hindered their ability to gain social citizenship rights. Consequently, they intentionally used an avoidance strategy—a defensive measure designed to prevent anticipated face-threatening encounters (Goffman 1955). Furthermore, children repeatedly conflated “talking white” with “sounding like an American,” and said that speaking like a white person was equivalent to speaking without any accents. As Rosina Lippi-Green (1997) asserted, “every native speaker of English has some regional variety, with the particular phonology of that area, or a phonology which represents one or more areas for some people” (p. 45). Although “standard” English is nonexistent no matter how unmarked the person’s language may seem (Agha 1998, 2003; Hill 1998; Lippi-Green 1997), in the minds of bilingual children, like many other Americans, “standard” English was a colorless language spoken only by whites, and thus it was imperative that they spoke it in unequal translation interactions. By analyzing this avoidance strategy to sound like a “white” adult on the phone, I argue that preexisting social inequalities, including racialized nativism, are produced and reproduced at the micro-level. At the same time, however, such everyday acts that go unnoticed by English-speaking authorities helped these children to resist race and age inequalities while connecting their parents to crucial resources and benefits enjoyed by dominant groups.

Mina, a 17-year-old, was one of many “expert translators” who had acted as her parents’ translator since she moved to Los Angeles from Korea at age eight. Through her accumulated language brokering experiences, she learned that prevalent societal perceptions about children as naïve and incompetent (Pugh 2014; Thorne 1993) or innocent objects (Zelizer 1985) limited her ability to help her family access resources. She reported that many adult authority figures did not take her seriously

when she spoke and represented for her monolingual parents in face-to-face interactions. As a result, she preferred to talk over the phone so that she could sound like an adult:

It's really annoying when some people just think you are just a kid. I mean I understand that's how adults think about young people, but I am just trying to help my mom . . . I know all of my mom's intimate information by heart. When I pretend to be my mom on the phone, I feel more powerful because they take you more seriously 'cuz they think they are speaking with an adult.

It is likely that many children, regardless of their racial background, sometimes act or try to sound like a grown-up to gain respect from adults or even peers. Yet, having to shoulder what many Americans consider "adult" responsibilities, youth in this study perceived themselves as more mature than others of the same age group. This mismatch between their sense of relative age and widespread chronological understanding of age—which ascribed limited status to children and youth—compelled language brokers like Mina to use the phone in hopes of gaining resources for her family. Furthermore, for these racialized bilingual children of immigrants who have been historically signified as what whiteness is not (Espiritu 2003; Glenn 2002; Jacobson 1998; Lipsitz 1998), using the phone not only helped them pass as adults, but also as "American" adults. Flora, a 16-year-old Mexican youth, was one of the many respondents who learned from her language brokering experiences that "looking like a Mexican little girl made a difference" during social interactions. As a result, Flora sometimes deliberately used the phone to access services that her mother needed. I asked her to give me an example:

My mom wanted to buy a new car, so I went with her to Culver City to translate for her. But, we were just sitting there and nobody came to help us! So, I was like, let's call them and see what they say. I sound white, right? So, then they were like so nice on the phone. All of sudden, they had so many cars available for us to buy!

Vincent, a big, dark-skinned, 17-year-old Mexican youth with tattoos, was another language broker who used the phone to "erase" a racialized masculinity, which cast men of color as violent criminals. Growing up, Vincent became an easy target of racial profiling, especially when he accompanied his father to work in "rich" neighborhoods to fix houses. During the interview, he described one "unforgettable" incident in which his race and gender became a "problem" when he translated for his parents while his family was trying to move to a nicer apartment. An apartment manager, who sounded welcoming on the phone, suddenly refused to show the apartment upon arrival, telling his parents, through Vincent, that the space was now occupied. Vincent later learned that when his fair-skinned younger sister, who Vincent described as "nerdy looking," accompanied his parents to look at apartments, they did not encounter any problems in accessing apartments.

Like other language brokers, Vincent's outsider status enabled him to see the simultaneous and discriminatory operations of age and physical embodiment in a situated interaction. As such, Vincent became highly conscious of his choice between phone conversations and face-to-face interactions. Born in the United States, Vincent spoke English better than Spanish and his deep voice made it easier for him to pretend to be his father over the phone. In this process, Vincent—like African Americans who can switch between so-called Standard English and African American Vernacular English (Baugh 1992, 2007; Lippi-Green 1997)—was able to prevent his racialized masculinity from interfering with his "job":

I don't want my look and tattoo to get in the way when I try to do my job. It's a waste of time to deal with people who tell my family that they don't have the apartment available, when

I clearly see the sign (seeking tenants). Like I said, people think I am a *cholo*. But, I don't sound like one. I sound American on the phone.

As demonstrated by Vincent's story, in comparison to Korean families, Mexican families confronted more overt racial discrimination, especially when they were purchasing or renting goods such as cars, apartments, or other expensive products. This is possibly because Mexicans are racialized as working class (Bettie 2003; Jiménez 2008) whereas Koreans have been uniformly touted as exemplar middle-class model minorities (Kim 1999; Lew 2006; Park 2005). Accordingly, when translation work involved inquiring about advertised goods on the phone, Mexican language brokers like Flora and Vincent were more likely to benefit from using the phone. Still, because Korean Americans, like Mexican Americans, are viewed as foreigners (Kim 1999; Lew 2006; Park 2005), they also tried to sound "white." For example, Jennifer, who used the derogatory term FOB (fresh off the boat) to describe how Koreans were seen by other people, commented, "People think that all Koreans are FOBs, but if you speak without accents, and if they don't see you, then they think I am white."

In fact, many children reported that using the phone often reduced their anxiety. Not worrying as much about how their race and age would play a role in the social interaction, some children echoed what Jinju, a 15-year-old Korean American youth, said: "I don't know why, but I can talk better over the phone. I don't get intimidated because the other person doesn't see me." Studies have shown that when people become aware of negative racial stereotypes concerning their group, they are likely to become anxious and fail to perform at their maximum (Spencer, Steele, and Quinn 1999; Steele 1997). Accordingly, it is possible that children who were cognizant of the role of race and age in translation encounters actually communicated better over the phone knowing that others would not judge their ability to communicate based on their race and age. Although talking over the phone may reduce children's anxieties, this particular tactic of "doing American" adult over the phone does not always enable language brokers to avoid being racialized as Mexican or Korean. For instance, when language brokers call state and local agencies, they have to provide agency workers with "racial information" such as their parents' last names. But even in these cases it is quite possible that there is a short delay in triggering racial meanings when language brokers strategically speak what they viewed as "standard" English. Furthermore, "doing American" or sounding "white," as many children told me, had a clear benefit when they were simply inquiring about an apartment, car loan, or advertised goods.

Undoubtedly, race plays a significant role in interactions that do not involve language brokering. However, as I have demonstrated, translation situations compel children to respond to age and race inequalities (Orellana 2009) by avoiding direct translation encounters with fluent English speakers. Instead, they used the phone and their English fluency to sound like an "American." This strategy of passing as "American" adults demonstrates that children of immigrants, as a less powerful group, have to "do American" even if they do not entirely embrace or reject "American values." Because what is deemed appropriate "American" behavior is structured and regulated by institutions, youth had to craft interactional strategies to gain resources. Therefore, their actions, which highlight children's agency, reveal more about the adult-centric and race-conscious environment that children have to maneuver and less about their actual ability to pass as "American." Still, their outsider-within status allowed them to anticipate how others would judge their behaviors and consequently hold them accountable for their actions. Cognizant of such accountability in face-to-face interactions, they covertly resisted their imposed racial identity and the normative views of "naive" children that weakened their ability to help their families. These youths, therefore, made a reflective choice among limited alternatives in order to provide their parents with the better standard of living to which they were entitled.

Shielding Parents from Racialized Nativism: Censoring and Filtering

In the United States, members of the dominant group, who speak the national language, rarely need to learn the languages of "other" groups (Agha 2003; Hill 1998; Lippi-Green 1997). Due to historical

legacy, media representations, and the actions of government that reinforced the image of minority-language speakers as “unassimilable foreigners,” children of immigrants, as indicated earlier, often strive to master “standard” English in hopes of gaining the entitlement and privilege enjoyed by dominant groups. Yet, awareness of the interlocking systems of oppression can help people at the margin to oppose the social forces that harm them (Collins 1986, 2000; Crenshaw 1991; DuBois 1903; Fanon 1963; Hollander 2002; hooks 1984; Kelly 1993; Rawick 1972). In this section, I show how bilingual youth censor and filter the utterances of English-speaking monolinguals when translating for their parents. In this process, youth creatively use their bilingual skills in order to contest and shield their parents from racialized nativism. Censoring and filtering strategies, therefore, highlight these youths’ heightened consciousness of unequal power dynamics, which in turn, compels them to engage in covert resistance. Although censoring and filtering strategies do not always help these youths to gain social citizenship rights, young language brokers minimize the injury in the face of racialized nativism. Because the dominant groups enjoy the right to social safety for having the “right” race, marginalized youths’ actions must be understood as one strategy for claiming social citizenship.

At the beginning of interviews, youth often claimed that they tried their best to translate everything when acting as a liaison between their parents and English-speaking monolinguals. Upon probing their responses, however, there were a number of occasions where bilingual youth deliberately censored or filtered conversations. Maria was a 16-year-old Mexican American who used her bilingual ability to translate for her Spanish-speaking parents in all aspects of their lives in Los Angeles. In my interview with Maria, she recalled an incident in which she “got super angry” at an English-speaking, monolingual police officer who “gave her mom a hard time” when her mother was at a police station trying to report a hit-and-run accident:

My mom forgot to bring her new insurance card. So when I translated this to that police, he was like, “Tell your mother that in this country, it’s illegal to drive without the insurance.” He then went on and on about the consequence of driving without insurance and a driver’s license. I was thinking, “I never said my mom drives without the insurance!” But I kept my tongue. I just told him that she meant to, but forgot.

While electing not to challenge the officer, Maria also censored and omitted parts of the exchange to her mother. Rather than telling her mom that the officer assumed that she did not have insurance, she elected to say, “Let’s go get your insurance card. He said we need to bring the insurance card to file the report.” When they came back with the new card, Maria interpreted the questions on the police report for her mother. “We had to draw the cars on the form, too. I drew the other car so much bigger,” Maria recounted with a smile. When I asked Maria why she didn’t tell her mother about what the police officer had said, she told me, “I didn’t want my mom to get mad. Plus, he won’t take me and my mom seriously because we are Mexicans and I am a kid!”

Antonio, a 15-year-old Mexican youth, was another language broker who omitted words to “protect [his] mom from feeling hurt.” Growing up, Antonio accompanied both his father, who remodeled apartments, and his mother, who cleaned vacant units. Though Antonio generally enjoyed accompanying his parents and helping them, he often became aware of how language and race played an important role in determining the dynamics of his translation interactions. Antonio, like many other language brokers, repeatedly told me that his parents were treated like children because they did not understand the English language: “You know sometimes people think my parents are dumb because they can’t understand English. They treat them like little kids.” Being aware that his parents were constantly judged by their “un-American” behaviors of failing to speak English fluently, Antonio sometimes deliberately censored and omitted some words when he translated for his parents. Sharing that he “really hates the apartment manager because she thinks she owns [his] parents,” Antonio

described one memorable event when he decided not to translate everything that the apartment manager told his mother:

My mom was just cleaning the apartment and that crazy manager walks in and told her not to go up and down the stairs all crazy. But I didn't tell my mom that she called her crazy. I just told her that people downstairs can hear her walking so we should be quiet. My mom is doing this work to support me and my brother.

Similarly, Jungsun, a Korean American girl whose father painted houses for a living, clearly remembered censoring parts of clients' messages in order to prevent his hard-working father from feeling upset:

Jungsun: The client called me and said "Tell your dad that he needs to work faster. He is too lazy."

Interviewer: Really? So, did you tell your dad what she said?

Jungsun: Not everything. I didn't say that she said my dad is too lazy, because he's not. I didn't want him to get upset.

Interviewer: So, what did you tell him instead?

Jungsun: I said, "I think that customer is in rush to finish the job."

Censoring the content of messages was even more noticeable among children with undocumented parents, because their translation work involved gauging whether or not the other party possessed the power to deport their parents. My interviews with children with undocumented parents confirmed earlier studies that showed children's hyperawareness of their family's legal status (Dreby 2012; Menjivar 2011). Because interviews were conducted during the time when enforcement-driven police had produced a record high number of deportations (Dreby 2012), both undocumented children and U.S. citizens with undocumented families often worried about the possibility of deportation. Living in fear, these children tried to minimize their interactions with government authorities and tried to stay away from authority figures. For example, when I asked Jesus, a 14-year-old youth with Mexican undocumented parents, if there were people who made the translation experience difficult, he paused and told me about a drunken man who hit his father's car and ran. When his father chased him down, the man finally pulled his car over to the side and got out of the car. Jesus then stepped in as the translator telling the man that his father just wants the payment to fix the damages on his car. Jesus then heard xenophobic and racist remarks, which he decided not to translate:

Jesus: I understood what my dad didn't understand. He was talking trash about Mexicans, like "Oh, you illegal. You wetback and all that." And, he said he was gonna send my dad back to Mexico.

Interviewer: Wow, that's crazy. So, did you tell your dad what that drunken guy said?

Jesus: I actually didn't 'cause I know that it would anger my dad, and he'll start arguing with the person. I was thinking, what if this guy calls the police and my dad, he doesn't have proper documentation, he could easily be deported, and I heard that the immigration people of the United States are actually harder on people without documentation now. Yeah, I didn't tell my dad because he doesn't have to listen to him.

Jesus clenched his fists in anger during the interview and shared that this man allegedly committed a felony and almost killed him and his father. Though Jesus wished that his father, who he described as a good fighter, just "beat him up," he used his bilingual ability to prevent the possible consequence of "getting into trouble with the law."

If many children censored some words to protect their parents from racialized nativism, other children filtered messages and used their bilingual skills—or took advantage of other parties' inability to understand Spanish or Korean—to contest those who treated their parents with disrespect. In these cases, children felt powerful. Macarena, a 19-year-old youth, followed her mother to clean houses and often translated for her mother and her mother's clients. Though she often encountered friendly clients, she also met unreasonably “demanding” or “cheap” clients who tried to get her mother to perform extra services without fees. Telling me that her mom was “way too nice” with these rude clients, Macarena recounted a time when she used her bilingual skills to secretly charge more for undeserving clients:

There have been times where I have taken out some stuff out either because the people we've met didn't treat us nicely or I just felt it would be best not to mention it. For example, my mom says like, she'll clean the windows like inside and out for free, but sometimes I don't translate that, especially if clients are rude. So, even though my mom says it's free, I just say that I will give them discount.

Macarena's clever strategy of filtering highlights that language brokers are active agents who use their bilingual skills and outsider-within position to manipulate situations that could otherwise constrain their family's lives. Cognizant of her family's position in the social hierarchy, she avoided conflict. Yet, Macarena, like many other language brokers, subtly and skillfully countered “rude” English monolinguals whose power had the potential to negatively impact their family lives. Children like Macarena, therefore, are positioned to experience what DuBois (1903; 1920) once dubbed “double consciousness,” which allows marginalized or “veiled” individuals to observe insiders better than they can be monitored. While English-speaking adults did not have the burden associated with the veil—the understanding of the profound bigotry that racialized working-class children experience in the United States—they also lacked the linguistic skills that bilingual children employed to subvert multiple hierarchies.

Shielding strategies exemplify the everyday resistance that hides intent of action. Lacking power, these youth creatively used their marginality in an attempt to prevent face-threatening acts (Goffman 1963). With these protective measures, they reestablished the existing social order and maintained their parents' sense of dignity. Although these youth did not always achieve the rights and social provisions that they were entitled to, they contested racialized nativism and protected their parents from public abuse and exploitation of their labor. Narratives presented in this section underscore how children of immigrants are not just “being made.” Instead, many youth can see through the “veil” and make creative use of their marginality to change the harsh realities of their lives.

Posing Like Middle-Class Adults: Invisible Inequality

Although many language brokers recognized how race, age, and nativism operated in social interactions, they often did not fully comprehend how class intersects with other forms of inequalities to shape translation outcomes. Youth in this study often associated knowledge of middle-class cultural symbols (such as language) with whiteness or being “American.” For example, Mark was a Mexican youth who often accompanied his father, a real estate agent, to meetings in suburban neighborhoods. Conflating racial difference with class difference and constantly using “Americans” to mean “whites,” Mark proudly shared that dealing with “American” people required him to “act white, wear a dress shirt and tie, and study vocabularies.” However, as Lareau (2003) reminded us, “The ability to use language instrumentally, that is, to use vocabulary along with reasoning and negotiation skills to achieve specific ends, is an important *class-based advantage*” (p.11; emphasis added). While many children like Mark believed that dressing up or speaking in jargon could mediate racial (read: class) difference, the reality of what I call *posing*—an attempt to account for the class difference between their

working-class families and middle-class professionals—hardly allowed youths to achieve social citizenship. Lacking the middle-class advantage of effortlessly reasoning and negotiation with authorities, youth often felt inadequate after they tried to gain social citizenship by emulating middle-class behaviors. Focusing on two representative cases, I analyze central ways in which language brokers describe their parents' racialized and classed interactional styles—acting ghetto and acting obedient—and show how they try to overcome these styles by posing like middle-class adults. In line with previous research that illustrates how social class profoundly influences interactions and an actor's ability to access institutional resources (Bettie 2003; Bourdieu 1984; Calarco 2014; Horvat et al. 2003; Lareau 2003), I demonstrate that a posing strategy did not allow youths to contest unequal power relations.

A number of participants reported that their parents responded to racialized nativism by acting “uneducated” or “ghetto.” Carolina, an 18-year-old, accompanied her mother to her younger sister's school to translate after Lupe, her sister, “got busted smoking in the bathroom.” Carolina recounted her translation encounter:

[My mom] was screaming and asking [Lupe's] teacher if she saw Lupe smoking (in Spanish), because Lupe told us that she was just in the restroom when her friends were smoking. The teacher didn't see it. She told my mom that she heard this from other kids. And that was it. My mom totally lost it and started acting all ghetto.

Though Carolina understood why her mother got upset, she admitted that she became embarrassed. She feared that the teacher, who already “sighed and rolled her eyes” during this meeting, would judge her family even more harshly. As an upwardly mobile Mexican youth who gained admission to a magnet program in her high school, Carolina frequently interacted with peers who came from middle-class backgrounds and knew that there were differences between the ways her mother talked and the ways other parents interacted with school authorities (Lareau 2003). Consequently, Carolina tried to *pose* like a middle-class adult and tried to negotiate her *inherited* class identity from home with what she understood as the “American” (read: middle-class) identity. She told the teacher, “There is not enough evidence.” Despite her attempt at passing as middle class, Carolina felt that this strategy did not work out when Lupe ended up getting suspended from school. As with many children language brokers that I interviewed, Carolina blamed herself for not being firm enough: “I felt bad because I felt like I was not being professional enough. You know be firm with the teacher. I felt bad that I could not defend my sister.”

While some children language brokers believed that being ghetto was a stereotypical “racial” characteristic, others claimed that being obedient—another typical way of describing how their parents responded to racialized nativism—was the “immigrant” characteristic that they had to overcome during translation. As with being “ghetto,” acting “obedient” may have been a disposition that many working-class or poor families unconsciously employed during their interactions with authorities. Nevertheless, they did not characterize this behavior as a class disposition. Rather, believing that these obedient characteristics reflected their parents' immigrant background, children language brokers tried to “do American.”

Sungmin came to Los Angeles from Korea when he was eight years old. At the time of his interview, he had spent seven years attending schools in Los Angeles Koreatown with mostly black and Latino children. As an “introverted” Asian boy who was visible in school because of his race, he did not enjoy going to school and often got into fights. Sungmin shared one incident where he acted as his mother's translator when he was about to receive a week long suspension from school for “beating” a Guatemalan classmate: “I was just standing in line to get lunch. And, Jose spit on me and was like hey chino, ching-chang, ching-chang.” During his meeting with the principal, his Korean monolingual mother asked him to translate and say she was very sorry. Sungmin told me that he was angry that his mother acted like an “immigrant”: “I was mad because I wanted my mom to be like other

American parents. Defend me! Because my mom acts like an immigrant, [the principal] already had an upper hand on my mom.”

During the meeting, Sungmin convinced his mother that the decision was unfair. As soon as his mother agreed with Sungmin, he “yelled” at the principal by exhorting, “Even though I broke the rule, making fun of someone and spitting is also bad. It’s unfair. Jose has to get suspension, too. He made fun of me first!” However, Sungmin could not change the decision made by the principal. Although Sungmin, like other youth, lived in segregated neighborhoods and interacted with non-white immigrants on a regular basis, he still understood “American parents” as opposite of immigrants. While Sungmin believed that he could persuade the principal like “American parents” did, in reality, his interactional strategies did not resemble the strategies deployed by middle-class parents. Not only do middle-class parents effectively intervene in school matters by speaking with higher authorities or tapping into their networks (Horvat et al. 2003), they also employ professional and honorific registers within a language to deploy particular social statuses in interactions (Agha 2003). Without knowing how these “invisible” class rules operate in everyday interactions, Sungmin reported that he felt powerless and frustrated.

Clearly, posing as middle-class adults was purposive and intentional, similar to the other strategies discussed in this article. Youths were cognizant of racial stereotypes associated with the “angry person of color” or “submissive immigrants.” They also knew that racialized nativism operated in their lives to constrain their access to resources. Consequently, working-class children tried to “do American” at the risk of racial assessment and tried to present their parents as “rational” adults, often coded with the behaviors and mannerisms of “professional” white men. These children, therefore, exercised enormous agency and resisted what they perceived as unfair treatment by being “firm” and “assertive.” Yet, as the stories of Carolina and Sungmin demonstrate, these reflective actions were offset by their unreflective and unintentional deployment of their habitus, a set of socially learned, classed dispositions (Bettie 2003; Bourdieu 1984). While age and race were significant contributors to these inequalities, youths in this study also lacked middle-class knowledge since they did not grow up in households in which parents engaged in “concerted cultivation” (Lareau 2003) by teaching their children how to make institutions accommodate their needs. Because these “rules” of class—such as mobilizing social network or enacting middle-class status through language use—were relatively obscure and invisible, they felt inadequate and often blamed themselves or their parents for failing to change the decisions made by authorities. While their accumulated experiences may enable these youth to deploy “middle-class” behaviors in the future, it is important to note that “doing American” involves both recognized and rewarded displays of a dominant middle-class (and masculine) set of norms that frames both Asian and Latino families as foreign in the first place.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The vast majority of research on children of immigrants takes an assimilation approach, examining how well children integrate into U.S. society. Challenging this outcome-oriented paradigm, which overlooks the importance of situated doings and social location, this study employs an intersectional, interactional approach and explores how young language brokers—who live as “outsiders-within”—developed various strategies of resistance when they translated for their parents. I have proposed that we apply the framework of “intersectionality in interaction” to analyze everyday lives of a marginalized population, specifically the experienced reality of children of immigrants.

Examining the link between unequal social interactions and the countervailing process of resistance can address at least three shortcomings of assimilation theory. First, whereas assimilation theory implicitly assumes that individuals internalize or reject “American” values, this study shows that children of immigrants, as a less powerful group, have to enact a hegemonic belief of Americanness regardless of whether they internalize such views. For example, although children of immigrants were keenly aware of social forces that exclude their families from social citizenship, they did not openly contest all forms of institutional realities. Instead, knowing that the categories of Latinos and Asians

define what “whiteness” is not (Espiritu 2003; Glenn 2002; Jacobson 1998; Lipsitz 1998) and being aware of how children are seen as naive and incompetent (Pugh 2014; Thorne 1993; Zelizer 1985), language brokers tried to pass as “American adults” over the phone, to shield their parents from racial slurs and to pose as middle class. Because language brokers found it easier to pass over the phone than in person, my findings also illustrate how race, age, and class distinctly shape social interactions. Race and age are powerful and “visible” categorical differences that structure everyday interactions in the United States. As such, language brokers were more likely to pass over the phone with someone who only hears their so-called “standard” English. Meanwhile, trying to “pose” as middle-class adults in face-to-face institutional contexts was more difficult, not only due to the visibility of their age and race, but also their “invisible” class background. Not fully comprehending the linguistic forms of class styles, working-class youth sometimes felt inadequate and powerless in face-to-face interactions when they tried to achieve social citizenship rights in adult-centric and middle-class institutions. Hence, while social citizenship “is a privilege or an assumed right for some,” for those who do not have the “right” race or class it is “an elusive status that requires continuous effort to establish oneself as deserving of equal rights and opportunities” (Park 2005:6). In short, this study shows that institutional hierarchies that deny social citizenship rights to immigrants make it very difficult for children of immigrants to craft interactional strategies that do not involve some aspect of compliance, even if immigrants do not entirely embrace “American” values.

Second, because the assimilation paradigm uses measurements, such as economic and educational outcome, to predict new immigrants’ assimilative pathways (Waters and Jiménez 2005), it inevitably reinforces existing stereotypes and overlooks class differences within both Asian American and Latino communities. Based on these measurements, for example, scholars often find that new immigrants are not succeeding equally; Asians are making it, whereas Mexicans are not. In contrast, “intersectionality in interaction” can allow us to identify how different groups are racialized in related yet distinct ways while simultaneously helping us to analyze the importance of social class in structuring interactions. This study demonstrated that both Mexican American and Korean Americans were subjected to racialized nativism that targeted perceived “unassimilable foreigners.” At the same time, because the racial meaning of Mexican has been connected to working class (Bettie 2003; Jiménez 2008), findings also show that Mexican Americans, in comparison to Korean Americans, confronted more overt racial discrimination when purchasing high-priced goods or services. Although Korean Americans are cast as homogenous middle class in the United States (Kim 1999; Lew 2006), many working-class Korean Americans—just like working-class Mexican Americans in this study—had a hard time using language instrumentally to negotiate with authorities and access crucial institutional resources. Thus, my findings highlight the importance of exposing the shared lives of people at the margin, while identifying how different racial groups in the U.S. experience distinct types of racism.

Third, instead of regarding resistance as the major obstacle to becoming “good” immigrants, “intersectionality in interaction” can help us see the social location of margin as special place of strength and creativity. Although this study shows that language brokers’ situated doings often unintentionally reproduced existing structural inequalities (Hall 1986; West and Zimmerman 1987), doing American from an outsider-within position allowed them to shield their parents from racialized nativism, exploitation of their labor, public abuse, and their family’s exclusion from social services. Their strategies, therefore, must be understood as covert resistance (Hollander and Einwonhner 2004), especially when they do not have other means to resist unequal power relations as young children of immigrants. In other words, children of immigrants are not simply “being made” or strive to become “American.” Rather, they can use their social position of outsider-within to contest multiple inequalities during everyday interactions while changing their social and economic realities. The margin, therefore, can create moments of subversion, resistance, and potential for empowerment.

Beyond this, my findings can have broader implication about how the outsider-within status can transform society. Similar to the way women “undo” gender (Deutsch 2007) or “redo” gender (Walzer 2008) at the interactional level, marginalized youths’ worldviews, derived from their

particular social location, can potentially affect change beyond their families when they, for example, become teachers (Flores 2011), social workers (Watkins-Hayes 2009), or activists (Rios 2011; Terriquez and Kwon 2015). In fact, it was from her own outsider-within status that Patricia Hill Collins (1986) produced “black feminist thought that reflects a special standpoint on self, family, and society” (p. 14) and profoundly changed the study of sociology as a discipline. Furthermore, as the historical changes of the 1960s and 70s suggest, the boundaries of what seems possible can expand when the “right” historical circumstances provide people at the margin with greater opportunities to join larger movements. In short, the outsider-within ways of seeing the world can “reaffirm human subjectivity and intentionality” (Collins 1986:28) and produce cumulative effects on power relations, often informing organized movements (Kelly 1993).

In this sociohistorical moment in which color-blind racism, postfeminism, and the anti-immigrant movement work to prevent people from seeing how multiple inequalities unfold on the ground, scholars should treat power, social hierarchy, and hegemonic meanings as subjects of analysis. This means that the study of non-white immigrants must move beyond assimilation theory to avoid reinforcing racial stereotypes and advancing the idea that a desirable outcome for all immigrants is to become like the white middle class (Brubaker 2004; Espiritu 2003; Jung 2009; Park 2005). We need different theoretical tools that will allow us to ask innovative research questions and to examine how multiple forms of subordination converge in people’s everyday lives to constrain and enable human agency (Hays 1994). I believe that “intersectionality in interaction” represents a new theoretical framework that moves preexisting, unequal social structure to the center of analysis while bringing much needed attention to the link between unequal social interactions and the process of resistance.

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