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The Meanings of Interjections in Q'eqchi' Maya

From Emotive Reaction to Social and Discursive Action[1]

by Paul Kockelman

In Western philosophy and linguistic theory, interjections—that is, words like *oof*, *ouch*, and *bleah*—have traditionally been understood to indicate emotional states. This article offers an account of interjections in Q'eqchi' Maya that illuminates their social and discursive functions. In particular, it discusses the grammatical form of interjections, both in Q'eqchi' and across languages, and characterizes the indexical objects and pragmatic functions of interjections in Q'eqchi' in terms of a semiotic framework that may be generalized for other languages. With these grammatical forms, indexical objects, and pragmatic functions in hand, it details the various social and discursive ends that interjections serve in one Q'eqchi' community, thereby shedding light on local values, norms, ontological classes, and social relations. In short, this article argues against interpretations of interjections that focus on internal emotional states by providing an account of their meanings in terms of situational, discursive, and social context.

Paul Kockelman is McKennan Post-Doctoral Fellow in Linguistic Anthropology in the Department of Anthropology at Dartmouth College (Hanover, N.H. 03755, U.S.A. [paul.kockelman@dartmouth.edu]). Born in 1970, he was educated at the University of California, Santa Cruz (B.A., 1992) and the University of Chicago (M.S., 1994; Ph.D., 2002). His publications include "The Collection of Copal among the Q'eqchi'-Maya" (*Research in Economic Anthropology* 20:163–94), "Factive and Counterfactive Clitics in Q'eqchi'-Maya: Stance, Status, and Subjectivity," in *Papers from the Thirty-eighth Annual Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society* (Chicago: Linguistics Society, in press), and "The Interclausal Relations Hierarchy in Q'eqchi' Maya" (*International Journal of American Linguistics* 69:25–48). The present paper was submitted 1 vi 01 and accepted 27 xii 02.

1. A longer version of this article was presented at the workshop "Semiotics: Culture in Context" at the University of Chicago in January 2001. Chris Ball, Anya Bernstein, John Lucy, and Michael Silverstein all provided very helpful commentary. This article also greatly benefited from suggestions made by Benjamin S. Orlove and several anonymous referees.

Western philosophy and linguistic theory have traditionally considered interjections at the periphery of language and primordially related to emotion. For example, the Latin grammarian Priscian defined interjections as "a part of speech signifying an emotion by means of an unformed word" (Padley 1976:266). Müller (1862) thought that interjections were at the limit of what might be called language. Sapir (1921:6–7) said that they were "the nearest of all language sounds to instinctive utterance." Bloomfield (1984[1933]:177) said that they "occur under a violent stimulus," and Jakobson (1960: 354) considered them exemplars of the "purely emotive stratum of language." While interjections are no longer considered peripheral to linguistics and are now carefully defined with respect to their grammatical form, their meanings remain vague and elusive. In particular, although interjections are no longer characterized purely in terms of emotion, they are still characterized in terms of "mental states." For example, Wierzbicka (1992:164) characterizes interjections as "[referring] to the speaker's current mental state or mental act." Ameka (1992*a*:107) says that "from a pragmatic point of view, interjections may be defined as a subset of items that encode speaker attitudes and communicative intentions and are context-bound," and Montes (1999:1289) notes that many interjections "[focus] on the internal reaction of affectedness of the speaker with respect to the referent."

Philosophers have offered similar interpretations. For example, Herder thought that interjections were the human equivalent of animal sounds, being both a "language of feeling" and a "law of nature" (1966:88), and Rousseau, pursuing the origins of language, theorized that proto-language was "entirely interjectional" (1990:71). Indeed, such philosophers have posited a historical transition from interjections to language in which the latter allows us not only to index pain and express passion but also to denote values and exercise reason (D'Atri 1995).[2] Thus interjections have been understood as a semiotic artifact of our natural origins and the most transparent index of our emotions.

Such an understanding of interjections is deeply rooted in Western thought. Aristotle (1984), for example, posited a contrastive relationship between *voice*, proper only to humans as instantiated in language, and *sound*, shared by humans and animals as instantiated in cries. This contrastive relation was then compared with other analogous contrastive relations, in particular, value and pleasure/pain, polis and household, and *bios* (the good life, or political life proper to humans) and *zoe* (pure life, shared by all living things). Such a contrast is so pervasive that modern philosophers such as Agamben (1995) have devoted much of their scholarly work to the thinking out of this tradition and others built on it such as id versus ego in the Freudian paradigm. In short, the folk distinction made between interjections and language

2. D'Atri (1995:124) argues that, for Rousseau, "interjections . . . are sounds and not voices: they are passive registerings and as such do not presuppose the intervention of will, which is what characterizes human acts of speech."

proper maps onto a larger set of distinctions in Western thought: emotion and cognition, animality and humanity, nature and culture, female and male, passion and reason, bare life and the good life, pain and value, private and public, and so on (see, e.g., Lutz 1988, Strathern 1988).

In this article I avoid such abstracting and dichotomizing traps by going straight to the heart of interjections: their everyday usage in actual discourse when seen in the context of local culture and grounded in a semiotic framework. I begin by characterizing the linguistic and ethnographic context in which I carried out my research and go on to relate interjections to other linguistic forms, showing how they are both similar to and distinct from other classes of words in natural languages. Next I provide and exemplify a semiotic framework, generalizable across languages, in terms of which the indexical objects and pragmatic functions of interjections can best be characterized. Then I detail the local usage of the 12 most commonly used interjections in Q'eqchi' and show the way in which they are tied into all things cultural: values, norms, ontological classes, social relations, and so on. I conclude by discussing the relative frequency with which the various forms and functions of interjections are used. In short, I argue against interpretations of interjections that focus on emotional states by providing an account of their meanings in terms of situational, discursive, and social context.

Linguistic and Ethnographic Context

While I am attempting to provide as wide a theoretical account of interjections as I can, thereby providing a metalanguage for speaking about similar sign phenomena in other languages, I am also trying to capture the grammatical niceties of Q'eqchi' Maya and the discursive and social particularities of one Q'eqchi'-speaking village in particular. Before I begin my analysis, then, I want to sketch the linguistic and ethnographic context in which I worked.

Q'eqchi' is a language in the Kichean branch of the Mayan family, spoken by some 360,000 speakers in Guatemala (in the departments of Alta Verapaz, Izabel, and Petén) and Belize (Kaufman 1974, Stewart 1980).[3] Linguistically, Q'eqchi' is relatively well described: scholars such as Berinstein (1985), Sedat (1955), Stewart (1980), Stoll (1896), and Chen Cao et al. (1997) have discussed its syntax, morphology, phonology, and lexicon, and I have detailed various morphosyntactic forms (encoding grammatical categories such as mood, status, evidentiality, taxis, and inalienable possession) as they intersect with sociocultural values and contextual features and as they illuminate local modes of personhood (Kockelman 2002, 2003*a*, *b*). This article is therefore part of a larger project in which I examine how intentional and evaluative stances are encoded in natural languages and the relations that such stances bear to local modes of subjectivity.

Alta Verapaz, the original center of the Q'eqchi'-speaking people who still make up the majority of its population, has had a unusual history even by Guatemalan standards. In 1537, after the Spanish crown had failed to conquer the indigenous peoples living there, the Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas was permitted to pacify the area through religious methods. Having succeeded, he changed the name of the area from Tezulutlan (Land of War) to Verapaz (True Peace), and the Dominicans were granted full control over the area—the state banning secular immigration, removing all military colonies, and nullifying previous land grants. In this way, for almost 300 years the area remained an isolated enclave, relatively protected by the paternalism of the church in comparison with other parts of Guatemala (King 1974, Sapper 1985). This ended abruptly in the late 1800s, however, with the advent of coffee growing, liberal reforms, and the influx of Europeans (Cambranes 1985, Wagner 1996). Divested of their land and forced to work on coffee plantations, the Q'eqchi' began migrating north into the unpopulated lowland forests of the Petén and Belize (Adams 1965, Carter 1969, Howard 1975, Kockelman 1999, Pedroni 1991, Saa Vidal 1979, Schwartz 1990, Wilk 1991). In the past 40 years this migration has been fueled by a civil war that has ravaged the Guatemalan countryside, with the Q'eqchi' fleeing not just scarce resources and labor quotas but also their own nation's soldiers—often forcibly conscripted speakers of other Mayan languages (Carmack 1988, IWGIA 1978, Wilson 1995). As a consequence, the past century has seen the Q'eqchi' population spread from Alta Verapaz to the Petén and finally to Belize, Mexico, and even the United States. Indeed, although only the fourth largest of some 24 Mayan languages, Q'eqchi' is thought to have the largest percentage of monolinguals, and the ethnic group is Guatemala's fastest-growing and most geographically extensive (Kaufman 1974, Stewart 1980). The two key ethnographies of Q'eqchi'-speakers have been written by Wilk (1991) and Wilson (1995), the former treating household ecology in Belize and the latter upheavals in village life and identity at the height of the civil war in highland Guatemala during the 1980s. In addition to these monographs, there are also a number of dissertations and articles on the history (King 1974, Sapper 1985, Wagner 1996), ecology (Carter 1969, Secaira 1992, Wilson 1972), and migration (Adams 1965, Howard 1975, Pedroni 1991) of Q'eqchi'-speaking people.

The data for this article are based on almost two years of ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork among speakers of Q'eqchi', most of it in Ch'inahab, a village of some 80 families (around 650 people) in the municipality of San Juan Chamelco, in the department of Alta Verapaz. At an altitude of approximately 2,400 m, Ch'inahab is one of the highest villages in this area, with an annual precipitation of more than 2,000 mm. It is also one of

3. Typologically, Q'eqchi' is a morphologically ergative, head-marking language. In Q'eqchi', vowel length (signaled by doubling letters) is phonemic; /k/ and /q/ are velar and uvular plosives, respectively, and /x/ and /j/ are palato-alveolar and velar fricatives, respectively. All other phonemes have their standard IPA values.

the most remote, access to the closest road requiring a three-hour hike down a steep and muddy single-track trail. Its relatively high altitude and remote location provide the perfect setting for cloud forest, and such a cloud forest provides the perfect setting for the resplendent quetzal, being home to what is thought to be the highest density of such birds in the world. Because of the existence of the quetzal and the cloud forest in which it makes its home, Ch'inahab has been the site of a successful eco-tourism project the conditions and consequences of which are detailed in my dissertation (Kockelman 2002). While the majority of villagers in Ch'inahab are monolingual speakers of Q'eqchi', some men who have served time in the army or worked as itinerant traders speak some Spanish. All the villagers are Catholic. Ch'inahab is divided by a mountain peak with dwellings on both of its sides and in the surrounding valleys. It takes about 45 minutes to hike across the village. At one end there is a biological station kept by the eco-tourism project and used sporadically by European ecologists, and at the other there is a Catholic church and a cemetery. In the center there is a small store, a school for primary and secondary grades, and a soccer field. The surrounding landscape is cloud forest giving way to scattered house sites, agricultural parcels, pasture, and fields now fallow.

All villagers engage in corn-based, or milpa, agriculture, but very few have enough land to fulfill all of their subsistence needs.[4] For this reason, many women in the village are dedicated to chicken husbandry, most men in the village engage in seasonal labor on plantations (up to five months a year in some cases), and many families engage in itinerant trade (women weaving baskets and textiles for the men to sell) and eco-tourism (the women hosting tourists and the men guiding them). Dwelling sites often contain a scattering of houses in which reside an older couple and their married sons, all of whom share a water source and a pasture. The individual families themselves often have two houses, a relatively traditional thatched-roof house in which the family cooks and sleeps and a relatively new house with a tin roof in which they host festivals and in which older children and eco-tourists may sleep. Because of eco-tourism and the influx of money and strangers that it brings, there has been an increase in the construction of such tin-roofed houses, and, as will be seen, many of my examples of interjections come from such construction contexts.

My data on the use of interjections among villagers in Ch'inahab comes from 14 months of fieldwork carried out between 1998 and 2001. The data collection consisted in part of characterizing tokens of usage when I heard them and in part of tracking tokens of usage through recordings of naturally occurring conversations.[5] In particular, given the fact that many interjections occur in relatively nonconversational, task-engaged situations (house building, planting, playing, cooking, etc.), trying to record them in such contexts was futile. Luckily, as will be seen, they often occur in modes of disruption (when some goal-directed action goes awry), which makes them relatively easy to notice in real-time context and their contextual regularities relatively easy to stipulate. In addition, I tape-recorded naturally occurring conversations in the households of three families once a week over several months, usually at dinnertime.[6] After I describe the forms and meanings of the interjections I will discuss the relative frequency of the various tokens collected and thereby illuminate which forms and meanings are most often used by whom.

The Grammatical Form of Interjections

There are four criteria by which interjections may be differentiated from other linguistic forms within a particular language and generalized as a form class across languages (Ameka 1992, Bloomfield 1984[1933], Jespersen 1965, Wilkins 1992). First, all interjections are conventional lexical forms, or words, that can constitute utterances on their own (Wilkins 1992). They are conventional in that their sign carriers have relatively standardized and arbitrary phonological forms, and they can constitute utterances on their own because their only syntagmatic relation with other linguistic forms is parataxis—in which two forms are "united by the use of only one sentence pitch" (Bloomfield 1984[1933]:171). They can therefore stand alone as perfectly sensible stretches of talk before and after which there is silence.

Second, with few exceptions, no interjection is simultaneously a member of another word class (Ameka 1992*a*, Wilkins 1992). Almost all of them are what Ameka (1992*a*:105), following Bloomfield (1984[1933]), calls *primary interjections*: "little words or non-words which . . . can constitute an utterance by themselves and do not normally enter into constructions with other word classes." In Q'eqchi', the main exceptions are interjections built, through lexical extension, from the primary interjection *ay*. In the case of *ay dios*, the additional

4. Before 1968, what is now Ch'inahab was owned by the owner of a plantation. Q'eqchi'-speakers who lived in the village of Popobaj (located to the south of and lower than Ch'inahab) were permitted to make their milpa in this area in exchange for two weeks of labor per month on the finca (Secaira 1992:20). Only in 1968, when a group of villagers got together to form a land acquisition committee, were some 15 caballerías (678 ha) of land purchased from the owner for 4,200 quetzals (US$4,200). This land, while legally owned by the entire community, was divided among the original 33 villagers as a function of their original contributions.

5. I also include several examples of interjection usage that occurred in the context of ethnographic interviews about topics other than interjections, for these often indicated that an ethnographic question was poorly posed or inappropriate in the local context. I also carried out extensive interviews about the meanings of interjections with native speakers (see Kockelman 2002 for an extended discussion of the relationship between form, usage, and speakers' reflections).

6. Indeed, the best two accounts of interjection-like things—"response cries" in Goffman (1978) and "emblematic gestures" in Sherzer (1993)—explicitly take into account social interaction and ethnographic description. Good accounts of the discursive use of interjections are offered by De Bruyn (1998), Ehlich (1986), Gardner (1998), and Meng and Schrabback (1999).

element, *dios*, is a loan noun from Spanish, meaning "god." In the case of *ay dios atinyuwa'*, besides the Spanish loanword there is a Q'eqchi' expression, *at-in-yuwa'* (you [are] my father). Interjections of this latter kind, which are or involve forms that belong to other word classes, will be called *secondary interjections* (again following Ameka and Bloomfield). Similarly, the English secondary interjections *damn* and *heavens* may be used as both interjections and verbs or nouns.

Third, with few exceptions, an interjection consists of a single morpheme and undergoes neither inflectional nor derivational processes (Wilkins 1992). Interjections cannot be inflectionally marked for grammatical categories such as tense or number, and they cannot be further derived into another form class such as noun or verb. Such forms are often classified as a subclass of "particles" or discourse markers (see Ameka 1992*a*, Fraser 1999, Jespersen 1965, Schiffrin 1987, Wilkins 1992, and Zwicky 1985). In Q'eqchi' there are three exceptions to this characterization. First, *uyaluy* is what I will call a *reduplicative interjection*, being composed, through syllabic reduplication, from the interjection *uy*. Second, *ay dios* and *ay dios atinyuwa'* are what I will call *extended interjections*, being composed, through lexical extension, from the interjection *ay*. And lastly, the interjection *ay* may undergo further derivation into a delocutionary verb (becoming *ayaynak*, "to cry or yell continually," often said of dogs howling), which may then undergo normal verbal inflection for grammatical categories such as tense, aspect, person, and number.

Lastly, although it is not a criterial feature, many of these forms are phonologically or morphologically anomalous, having features which mark them as odd or unique relative to the standard lexical forms of a language. For example, unlike most Q'eqchi' words, in which stress falls on the last syllable (Stewart 1980), the interjection *uyaluy* has syllable-initial stress. Similarly, while reduplication is a common morphological process in Q'eqchi' (Stewart 1980), the reduplicative interjection *uyaluy* is derived through a nonstandard morphological form. While many Q'eqchi' words involve a glottalized alveolar stop, the interjection *t'* is also implosive.[7] Whereas the Spanish loanword *dios* is usually phonetically assimilated in Q'eqchi' as *tiox* when used as a noun, in the interjection *ay dios* there is no devoicing of the initial consonant of this noun (i.e., /d/ does not become /t/) or palatization of its final consonant (i.e., /s/ does not become /x/). And the interjection *sht* differs from ordinary Q'eqchi' words in using /sh/, rather than a vowel, as a syllabic (see Bloomfield 1984[1933]:121).

In short, it is clear from the number of qualifications that interjections, like most linguistic forms, are difficult to characterize with necessary and sufficient conditions (see Taylor 1995, Zwicky 1985). Nevertheless, they may simultaneously be differentiated from other form classes within a particular language and generalized as a form class across languages.

7. Often called a "dental click" (Wilkins 1992) or a "suction stop" (Jespersen 1965:90).

Readers who speak some Spanish may have noticed that many Q'eqchi' interjections look similar to Spanish interjections—*ay* (*dios*), *uy*, *ah*, *eh*, *sht*—and even to English interjections (*sh*[*t*] and *t'*). While I have no historical data that would attest to such a claim, given the history of sustained linguistic contact between speakers of Spanish and Q'eqchi' via the colonial encounter and between speakers of Spanish and English this should come as no surprise. The one good account of interjections in Spanish (Montes 1999) discusses only a small range of the discursive functions of interjections and focuses on the internal state of the speaker. As I will show, however, the meanings of some of these interjections in Q'eqchi' seem to bear a resemblance to their meanings in Spanish, as far as can be discerned from the comparative data. In this way, these "loan interjections" show that almost any linguistic form may be borrowed (see Brody 1995) with some maintenance of its meaning.

The Meanings of Q'eqchi' Interjections

Although interjections are relatively easy to characterize from the standpoint of grammatical form, there is no framework in terms of which one may order and compare their meanings—that is, the classes of objects and signs that they index (and thereby stand in a relationship of contiguity with) and the types of pragmatic functions they serve (and thereby may be used as a means to achieve). In what follows, I frame their use in terms of situational, discursive, and social context. I will begin with an extended example through which the framework will become clear.

The Q'eqchi' interjection *chix* indexes loathsome objects in the situational context. For example, when picking up his bowl of food from the ground, a man notices that he has set it in chicken feces. "*Chix*," he says, scraping the bowl on the dirt to wipe off the feces. His wife, herself responsible for the chicken, then takes his bowl for herself and gives him a new one. Similarly, when opening the door to her house early one morning, a woman notices that the dog has vomited right outside the doorway. "*Chix*," she says, and her five-year-old son comes over to look. She tells him to scrape it away with a machete. Like most interjections that have indexical objects in the situational context, this interjection serves to call another's attention to the object.[8] Relatedly, and as a function of responsibility assessment (husband > wife > child), it directs another's attention to what must be cleaned up, avoided, etc.

The interjection *chix* may also be transposed to index a sign denoting or characterizing a loathsome object (see Bühler 1990). In such cases of *sign-based transposition*, the interjection is in a relationship of contiguity with a

8. Montes (1999:1293) notes that most of the Spanish interjections she examined "seem to be associated with seeing. We find that a large number of the interjections [*ah, oh, uh, ay, oy, uy*] used in the conversations examined co-occur with directives to 'see' or 'look at' or as a response to these directives."

sign that denotes or characterizes the object or event in question (rather than being in contiguity with the actual object or event, as in the usage of *chix* just discussed). In other words, it is as if the speaker were inhabiting the frame of the narrated event (Bühler 1990). In this way, the interjection *chix* indexes not just loathsomeness but also signs that refer to or predicate qualities of loathsome objects. Insofar as the denotatum of such a sign has the same qualities and values as the object itself, the modality of contiguity (being able to taste, touch, see, or smell the object in question) is suspended while the ontological class of the object (loathsomeness) is maintained. For example, in telling a story to a group of men about a friend who was bitten by a poisonous spider while working on a plantation in the lowland area of Guatemala, the speaker describes the pus blisters that rose up on his friend's arm. "*Chix*," says one of the men listening. The other men laugh, and before continuing his story the speaker adds that the pus blisters took two weeks to heal. Like most interjections that undergo sign-based transposition, such usage often serves as a back-channel cue, indicating that the speaker is listening but cannot or does not want to contribute to the topic at hand (Brown and Yule 1983:90–94; Duncan 1973; compare the usage of *mmm* or *jeez* in English).

Lastly, the interjection *chix* may be transposed to index an addressee's relation of contiguity with a loathsome object. In such cases of *addressee-based transposition*, the situational indexical object is transposed to a person other than the speaker. The speaker's sign is audible (a relation of contiguity) to the addressee, who is in a relationship of contiguity with the object. In other words, it is as if the speaker were inhabiting the addressee's current corporal field (see Bühler 1990, Hanks 1990), and, again, the modality of contiguity is suspended while the ontological class is maintained. For example, a mother watching her three-year-old son approach a dog that is defecating wormy stool calls out to him "*Chix*." The child stops his advance and watches from a distance. In this most addressee-focused way, the sign is used by a parent to index that a child is within reach (typically tactile) of a disgusting object and serves as an imperative not to touch the object.

Interjections are primarily *indexical* (see Peirce 1955) in that they stand for their objects by a relationship of contiguity rather than by a relationship of convention (as in the case of symbols) or similarity (as in the case of icons).[9] Although the indexical modality of interjections is emphasized in this article, the symbolic modality is always present in at least two interrelated ways. First, and trivially, the interjection itself has a standardized but relatively arbitrary form that is conventionally used by members of a given linguistic community. Second, interjections conventionally stand in a relation of contiguity with particular classes of objects.

These conventional classes of indexical objects are present in two ways. First, across interjections, one may characterize what *semiotic class* of objects is being indexed. Second, in the case of any particular interjection, one may characterize what *ontological class* of objects is being indexed.

Besides indexing objects or signs in the immediate context, interjections have pragmatic functions: they serve as a means to achieve certain ends. For example, *chix* variously serves as an attentative (when nontransposed), a back-channel cue (when undergoing sign-based transposition), and an imperative (when undergoing addressee-based transposition). Both the objects indexed and the pragmatic functions served (see Silverstein 1987) are integral aspects of the meanings of interjections.

Finally, interjections may index more than one object at once. In particular, they may index objects, signs, internal states, and social relations. In what follows, I will refer to these distinct types of indexical objects as situational, discursive, expressive, and social, respectively. *Situational* indexical objects are the objects or events in the immediate context of the speech event. *Discursive* indexical objects are the signs that occur in the speech event.[10] Together, situational and discursive indexical objects are the most stable co-occurrence regularities that interjections possess and therefore the only ones that are easy to tabulate. *Expressive* indexical objects are the intentional stances of the speaker—the putative mental states, whether construed as "cognitive" or "emotive."[11] Lastly, *social* indexical objects are the various social roles inhabited by the speaker or addressee (gender, ethnicity, age, etc.) or the social relations that exist between the two (status, deference, politeness, etc.). For example, *chix* may index not only a loathsome object in the situational context but a social relation (parent-child, husband-wife, raconteur–appreciative listener) and, in many cases, an internal state ("disgust"). And the interjection *ay* not only indexes a painful object in the situational context or an unexpected answer in the dis-

9. If interjections were iconic, then they would be expected to resemble their objects. The problem with this, as exemplified by Kryk-Kastovsky's (1997) argument that interjections are the most iconic of all linguistic elements expressing surprise, is that one needs to know what "surprise" looks like when usually our only indication of surprise is the interjection or behavior itself. However, interjections as indexical of situational and discursive objects do in certain cases have iconic modalities of meaning (see, e.g., the discussion of *ay*, *ay dios*, and *ay dios atinyuwa'* below).

10. This is not quite the standard distinction between "text" and "context" (Montes 1999 and Wilkins 1992). For example, while it is tempting to put sign-based transposition into the discursive context for the purposes of schematizing the data, sign-based transpositions make sense only in terms of the qualities of the objects referred to by the sign indexed by the interjection. In contrast, an unsolicited response such as a dubitive is directed at the truth of another's assertion rather than at any particular quality of the state of affairs predicated by that assertion. For this reason, dubitives belong to the discursive context and sign-based transpositions to the situational context.

11. Whereas interjections *creatively* index expressive indexical objects in that the interjection is often the only sign of the internal state in question, they *presupposedly* index situational and discursive indexical objects in that both interjection and indexical object are simultaneously present in context (see Silverstein 1976 for this distinction). This difference in semiotic status (presupposing/creative) maps onto a putative difference in ontological status (world/mind).

cursive context but also an internal state (pain) in the expressive context and a role in the social context (in particular, female gender).

Many interjections index signs in the *discursive* context in that they co-occur with (or serve as) a *response* to an addressee's previous utterance or a *nonresponse*. In the case of a response, the use of an interjection occurs after and makes sense only relative to the addressee's previous utterance. For example, the interjection *ih* indexes an addressee's previous statement and serves as a registerative, indicating that the speaker has heard and understood the statement. In the case of a nonresponse, the interjection may either elicit an addressee's utterance (and thereby occur before it) or occur in the midst of the speaker's own utterances (and thereby bear little or no relation to an addressee's previous or subsequent utterance). For example, the interjection *ay dios* is often used to take the floor and/or initiate a new topic. As will be seen, the interjections discussed here usually co-occur with other signs, but in a few cases they may occur alone and thus constitute or serve as the entire response or nonresponse.

If the discursive indexical object is a response, one may distinguish whether the interjection co-occurs with (or serves as) another sign serving as a *solicited* or an *unsolicited response*. That is, some of the addressee's previously utterances may be the first part of a "pair-part" structure (e.g., questions, commands, or offers) and thereby solicit overt responses (e.g., answers, undertakings, or acceptances). For example, the interjection *ah* often prefaces an answer to a question, thereby co-occurring with (and hence indexing) a solicited response. In contrast, some of the addressee's previous utterances, such as simple assertions, may not solicit overt responses. For example, the interjection (stressed) *eh* is often used as a dubitive in relation to the addressee's previous assertion, thereby constituting an unsolicited response.

If the primary indexical object is a solicited response, one may distinguish whether the interjection co-occurs with (or serves as) another sign serving as a *preferred* or a *nonpreferred* solicited response. By "preferred" I mean the expected or unmarked form (see Levinson 1989, Sachs, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974). For example, questions are unmarkedly followed by answers, requests by acceptance, orders by undertakings, etc. Thus, the use of the interjection *ah* to index an answer to another's question is an example of an interjection indexing a preferred solicited response. A nonpreferred answer to a question may arise when the answer is unknown or the request is not accepted. For example, the interjection *ay dios* may precede either an unexpected answer to another's question or a refusal of another's offer. Nonpreferred responses often co-occur with a temporal delay or a prefacing comment.

And lastly, nonresponses come in two classes, those that are addressed and those that are unaddressed. *Addressed* nonresponses are not in a presupposing indexical relation with an addressee's signs but in a creative indexical relation (see Silverstein 1976)—that is, rather than occurring after another's sign (thereby presuming its existence), they occur before a solicited sign (thereby creating it). They typically have phatic or conative functions, serving to direct the addressee's attention to the presence of the speaker or acting as an imperative. For example, the interjection *sht* often serves to get an addressee's attention. *Unaddressed* nonresponses are in an indexical relation not with another's signs but with the speaker's own co-occurring signs. In this way, they are not addressee-focused. Typical nonresponses are *discourse markers* that have a function in relation to turn-taking (floor-holders, floor-returners, turn-enders), topic organization (introduction of new topic, return to old topics), and self-repair (Levinson 1983, Schiffrin 1987, and Zwicky 1985). For example, the interjection *eh* is often used as a floor-holder. Clearly, nonresponses are at the boundary of what one would like to call interjections in that they cannot stand alone as utterances. They are included here as a limit case because some of the interjections discussed may sometimes function as nonresponses.

In short, I have exemplified and ordered the situational indexical objects of interjections relative to a framework that turns on the following distinctions: object/event, sign-based transposition, and addressee-based transposition. I have exemplified and ordered the discursive indexical objects of interjections in terms of a framework that turns on the following distinctions: response versus nonresponse; within responses, solicited versus unsolicited; within solicited responses, preferred and nonpreferred; and within nonresponses, addressed and unaddressed. In the next section, I will discuss all the interjections in detail.

Extended Examples

The 12 most commonly used interjections in Ch'inahab are *sht*, *ih*, *ah*, *eh*, stressed *eh*, *ay*, *ay dios*, *ay dios atinyuwa'*, *uy*, *uyaluy*, *t'*, and *chix* (table 1).

Sht. The interjection *sht* is an attention-getting device or channel-opener and, when strongly accented, a disapproval signal or remonstrative. Its primary indexical object is in the discursive context: it co-occurs with or constitutes an addressed nonresponse—serving to get the attention of the addressee and, in so doing, allowing one to communicate subsequent information. Its primary usage is phatic (see Jakobson 1960): it opens up the possibility for further communication by establishing eye contact or recognition of the speaker's presence. It may be followed by a question, statement, or command. For example, while silently overtaking a friend on the trail to the village, a man says "*sht*." When the friend turns, the speaker smiles, catches up, and asks where he is going. A conversation ensues, and the men walk together. Or, a young man, seeing his friend one pew ahead in church, says "*sht, Pedro*," and Pedro turns. They shake hands and smile and then turn back to the mass. Or, as a fight between two boys over a toy escalates, the father says "*sht*" with more force and greater palatization

TABLE 1
Indexical Objects of Q'eqchi' Maya Interjections

	Interjection											
Context	*sht*	*ih*	*ah*	*eh*	*eh* stressed	*ay*	*ay dios*	*ay dios atin-yuwa'*	*uy*	*uyaluy*	*t'*	*chix*
Situational												
Object/event	–	–	–	–	Mistake	Quantity, pain, mistake	Quantity, mischief/misbehavior	Quantity	Transition	Danger	Glitch	Loathsomeness
Transposition												
Sign-based	–	–	–	–	–	Quantity, pain	Quantity, mischief/misbehavior	Quantity	Transition	Danger	–	Loathsomeness
Addressee-based	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	Danger	–	Loathsomeness
Discursive												
Solicited response												
Preferred	–	Registerative	Expected	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nonpreferred	–	–	Unexpected	Unexpected	Ignored, denied	Unexpected, refused	Unexpected, refused	–	–	–	–	–
Unsolicited response	–	–	–	–	Dubitive (of speaker)	Dubitive (of source)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nonresponse												
Addressed	Remonstrative, channel-opener	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Unaddressed	–	–	–	Floor-holder, self-repair	–	–	Floor-holder, topicalizer	–	–	–	–	–

than with the phatic function of *sht*. They turn, sheepish, to look at him and stop their fighting. This last usage is often followed by an imperative (e.g., to quiet down, stop fighting, go to sleep). As these examples demonstrate, *sht* indexes a relationship of familiarity; the speaker is friends with or an older relative of the addressee. It is considered impolite to use it otherwise, as is indicated by parents' disapproval of their children's usage of *sht* with strangers or elders.

Ih. The interjection *ih* is used to index the speaker's registering of the addressee's previous comment. It functions as a preferred solicited response to another's utterance in the discursive context. For example, as a man walks by a house on his way to his field he says "*hulaj chik*" (until tomorrow). The woman inside the house, probably recognizing the man by his voice or habits, replies "*ih*." Or, thanking a host for his dinner, a man says "*xik we laa'in*" (I'm off now), and his host replies "*ih*." Or, leaving his brother-in-law's house, a man addresses his stepfather as *inpapa'* (my father), and the stepfather says "*ih*." Such a usage serves, then, as a relatively noncommittal registerative. Walking past a house, announcing that one is leaving, or taking one's leave is an action that requires no subsequent action on the part of the addressee.

This particular function of *ih* may be best brought to light by contrasting it with the word *us*, an adjective meaning "good," which is also used as a registerative. In particular, *us* is often used as a relatively committal registerative—that is, in situations where the speaker's actions are directly implicated in the actions of the addressee. For example, after being thanked for food with the words *bantiox inwa'* (because of God my food), the host says "*us*." Or, while walking past a group of women coming from the market (as the typical unknown speakers of one's own language), a man or woman may say "*cheeril eerib*" (that you would watch yourselves), and the women will chime in unison "*uus*." Or, the anthropologist, leaving after breakfast, informs his host that he is off to get his coffee mug, and the host says "*us*." When

he returns with his mug, she is adding sugar to the coffeepot in anticipation. *Us* registers utterances that have some illocutionary force other than a statement and thereby implicates speaker and addressee in a more complicated social relation: thanking, blessing, or informing.

Ah. The interjection *ah* has two related indexical objects in the discursive context. First, it indexes preferred and nonpreferred solicited responses, in particular, answers to questions. In such cases, it occurs after a restatement of the topic of the question, before the answer to the question, or before an admission that the speaker does not know the answer. Such usage is particularly frequent among women, and men can cut in on their responses at precisely these junctures. It is also prevalent in directly reported speech, again prefacing answers to questions.[12] And young children, who are still mimicking others' questions, will say *ah* after the person has answered their question (for the second or third time). It often occurs with *us* or *bueno* (good), in its registerative function, after another's explanation of some fact. If I may be impressionistic, it seems to mark "information processing" (see Gardner 1998)—learning new information that one must use to make a decision or being asked to provide information that one must think about as an answer to a question.[13] In the following examples, 1 shows the use of *ah* as a preferred solicited response, 2 shows a man cutting in on his wife's response to the ethnographer's question, and 3 shows the use of *ah* as a nonpreferred solicited response, again in response to the ethnographer's question:

1) S1) *jarub libra wan chi sa' li saak*
How many pounds are in the sack?
S2) *ah, jun kintal*
Ah, a hundred pounds
2) S1) *ut ani li xbeen kristyan arin?*
And who were the first people here?
S2) *ah*
Ah (woman speaking)
S3) *saber wankeb tana*
Who knows who they were? (man speaking)
3) S1) *ut jo' nimal xtz'aq li jun siir li k'iche'*
And how much does a parcel of forest cost?
S2) *ah, ink'a' ninnaw, mare oxib mil*
Ah, I don't know, perhaps three thousand (quetzals)

Second, the interjection *ah* indexes the denial of a request, as a nonpreferred solicited response. For example, not knowing whether one can comply with a request to assist someone, one may preface one's refusal and subsequent explanation with *ah*. For example, a man asks his brother-in-law if he can join a labor pool to construct a house the next day. The brother-in-law replies "*ah, ink'a' ninnaw, wan naabal ink'anjel*" (*Ah*, I'm not sure, I have much work to do). Example 4 shows a speaker using *ah* first as a nonpreferred response to a question (nonpreferred because it asks another question rather than giving an answer) and second as a nonpreferred response to the original request (nonpreferred because instead of accepting the request it explains why the speaker cannot yet do so):

4) S1) *baanusilal, ok chi awk wik'in*
Please do me a favor and come to plant with me
S2) *ah, joq'e raj*
Ah, when would it be?
S1) *hulaj*
Tomorrow
S2) *ah, ink'a' ninnaw ma tinruuq tawi'*
Ah, I don't know whether I'll be free

Eh. The interjection *eh* has two discursive indexical objects. First, *eh* indexes a nonresponse, serving as a floor-holder and self-repair initiator. It occurs directly after the full-clause complementizers *naq* (that), *qayehaq* (let's say that), and *pues* (well/then) and after constituents in the preposed topic position. In addition, it occurs between inflectional prefixes and the verb stems they modify. Women use *eh* in this way much less frequently than men, perhaps because they are less likely to hold the floor. In this usage, it is comparable to *um* in English. In example 5 *eh* occurs before a repetition of the complementizer *naq*, and in example 6 *eh* occurs after *qayehaq* and after *pues*:

5) *qayehaq wan jun lix na'leb naq eh naq laa'in xinhulak chaq chi beek . . .*
Let's say there's a story that, um, that I arrived in order to walk . . .
6) *qayehaq eh, kama'eb lin kok'al pues eh tintaqla chi si'ik . . .*
Let's say that, um, like my children for example, um, I send them to cut wood . . .

Second, *eh* indexes a nonpreferred solicited response, in particular, a marked answer to a question. In such cases, it appears at the beginning of the utterance or after a restatement of the topic of the question. For example, if a question cannot be answered favorably or presupposes information that the addressee does not agree with or that does not make sense, the response may be prefaced with *eh*. Again, this function is used much less frequently by women than by men. In contrast to the interjection *ay (dios)*, which indexes an unanswerable question or an unfavorable answer, this use of *eh* indexes that the question is poorly posed. In example 7, the addressee takes issue with the presupposition of the speaker's question, and example 8, taken from an ethnographic interview, shows *eh* occurring after a restatement of the topic and in response to a poorly posed question:

7) S1) *ut joq'e xaak'ul laa maatan*
And when did you receive your gift?
S2) *eh, mare moko maatan ta*

12. This is true whatever the particular pair-part structure. My sense is that this is not because speakers accurately report everything that was said but because it is an index of a change in speaker.
13. There is a related form *aha'* that indexes new knowledge. It is used in relatively circumscribed contexts such as guessing games or getting unforthcoming addressees to reveal what they have done.

Um, perhaps it's not (really) a gift

8) S1) *chankiru lix na'leb li kaxlan*
What's a chicken's sense (or "reason") like?
S2) *li kaxlan, eh, maak'a' mas lix na'leb*
Chickens, um, they don't have much sense

Eh (*stressed*). The interjection stressed *eh*[14] has three indexical objects. In the situational context, with lowered pitch and descending intonation, *eh* indexes a mistake—a frustrated or poorly performed action that may be partially blamed on the actor. For example, in attempting to throw a fruit pit out the window of his younger brother's house, a man misaims and the pit whacks the edge of the window, falling back into the house. He says "*eh*" but makes no movement to retrieve it. (Houses in Ch'inahab have dirt floors that are swept each morning by their female owners.) Or, as two men are leveling the site for a house using a ploughlike instrument, the instrument skips over the dirt instead of digging in. The man whose house is being built and who is in charge of the activity says "*eh*" and the two men reposition the tool to try again. Lastly, while a man is standing on a rooftop about to hammer in tin roofing, the nails he has stored in his back pocket fall out onto the ground. "*Eh*," he says, as another man moves to sweep them up and hand them back. Mistakes indexed by *eh* seem to occur through lack of attention, and one may be held responsible for them.

Second, in the discursive context, stressed *eh* indexes a nonpreferred solicited response to another's request or command and is usually uttered by children. In particular, it indexes grudging compliance with commands and grudging acceptance of requests. For example, in the midst of playing with his friends, a five-year-old boy is called into the house by his mother, who says "*kim arin*" (Come here). "*Eh*," says the boy, continuing to play before reluctantly going to his mother. Or, having been asked to climb back up a hill to retrieve his father's jacket (after both had just returned home), a boy says "*eh*" before trudging back up the hill.[15]

Third, in the discursive context, stressed *eh* indexes an unsolicited response to another's utterance, serving as a dubitive. Such usage often co-occurs with eye and head movement, in particular, turning one's head slightly to the side while continuing to look one's interlocutor in the eye (a movement which is also enacted in the reported speech of such dubitives). My only tokens of such usage are from contexts in which young men were speaking with each other. Clearly, such usage may be construed as impolite. However, most usages occur in seemingly joking situations—speakers use stressed *eh* when their interlocutor is clearly exaggerating or pulling their leg.

Ay, ay dios, and ay dios atinyuwa'. The interjections *ay, ay dios*, and *ay dios atinyuwa'* are related in that they are all constructed out of the form *ay* through either reduplication or extension. As mentioned above, *ay* and *ay dios* are probably loan interjections from Spanish. In her examination of the use of interjections by a young speaker of Mexican Spanish, Montes (1999:1289) characterizes *ay* as "subjective" in that it "[focuses] on the internal reaction of affectedness of the speaker with respect to the referent." She notes that it is one of the most frequently used interjections in her corpus and is traditionally thought to mark pain. She finds that although it is sometimes used to mark pain, it is usually used "to express a negative reaction in general and in a number of cases to express pleasure or an explicitly approving attitude" (p. 1307). Indeed, she notes that "if 'pain' were taken as the basic meaning for *ay* there would be no way to associate this meaning with positive expressions like *ay, qúe lindo! 'ay*, how nice!' " She concludes that "if being affected (feeling) is taken as basic, then the various uses are explainable." As will be seen, the Q'eqchi' interjection *ay* bears a resemblance to the Spanish interjection, especially in its stereotypic (though infrequent) usage to indicate painful events and in its highly frequent usage to indicate marked quantities (whether positively or negatively valued). However, *ay* also exhibits a range of indexical objects and pragmatic functions not mentioned by Montes.

The interjection *ay* indexes objects in the situational context as well as signs in the discursive context. Relative to the situational context, this interjection has three classes of indexical objects. First, *ay* indexes painful or potentially painful objects and events. For example, a woman quickly retracts her hand after attempting to pick up a coffeepot that has been standing too close to the fire. "*Ay*," she says, and then reaches for a rag with which to hold it. Such usage may also be transposed to index a sign of a painful event. For example, while listening to a story about a boy who burnt his hand by straying too close to the hearth-fire, an elderly woman says "*ay*," clenching her fist.

Second, it may be used to index a marked amount of a recently revealed object (present before the speaker) or its sign-based transposition to a recently mentioned object (a noun phrase whose referent has similar qualities). This marked amount may be size, weight, length, width, duration, number, price, or even goodness. Functionally, its use ranges from a back-channel cue to an offer refusal. For example, a five-year-old boy asks for a tortilla to soak up the rest of his broth. His mother hands him a whole tortilla, and he says "*ay, mas nim*" (*Ay*, that's really big!). She retracts her hand, tears off half of the tortilla for herself, and gives him the remainder. While indexing the marked size of the tortilla, this usage also functions as an offer refusal. As another example, a woman, upon hearing the price of potatoes in the market that morning, says "*ay, mas terto*" (*Ay*, they're expensive!), and her interlocutor nods and continues speaking. Again, while indexing the marked price of the potatoes, this usage also functions as a back-channel cue. Such usages relate, then, to a whole metaphysics of quantity (what can be quantified and what is considered a marked amount of

14. Often with an uvular fricative at the end, as in *ej*.

15. In this case, the father phrased his request with a politeness marker, saying "*baanusilal, ayu chixok'bal*" (Please do me a favor and go up and get it). With children requests and commands shade into one another.

a quality—relative to body size, norms of distance, etc.). Indeed, *ay* may even be used in place of *chix* and *uyaluy* in the expressions *ay*, *mas chu* (*Ay*, that's very gross) and *ay, mas xiw* (*Ay*, that's very scary). An adjectival phrase is typically added to this interjection, thereby further specifying the quantity in question. The marked-quantity usage of *ay* is the most versatile and frequently used type of indexical object for all interjections.

Third, *ay* indexes a mistake or the frustration of an activity through the actions of one of the persons involved. For example, several boys are kicking a ball about, and one inadvertently kicks it into the underbrush. "*Ay*," he says, before making off to retrieve it. This usage contrasts with the usage of stressed *eh* in that the latter is usually used by men to index a more serious mistake.

In the discursive context, the interjection *ay* may be used to index a nonpreferred solicited response, in particular a refused offer. For example, while on his way to church a young man stops by his brother-in-law's house to inquire whether his family too is going. His brother-in-law's family is eating breakfast, and so his sister hands him the tortilla basket and a bowl of beans. "*Ay, ink'a' ninnaw*" (*Ay*, I don't know), he says, not taking them. He explains that he has just eaten and is very full. She continues holding them out, and he finally takes the tortillas, saying that he will eat them later.

Second, and again as a nonpreferred solicited response, *ay* may be used to index an unexpected answer to a question. For example, when a woman is asked by her neighbor whether she has any peppers left to sell, she says "*ay, maak'a'* " (*Ay*, there are none left). She then suggests to the neighbor that a woman living nearby may have some and he should check there. These last two uses of *ay* index the violation of an expected pair-part structure, in the first case offer-acceptance, in the second case question-answer.

Lastly, *ay* may index a nonsolicited response that is itself serving as a dubitive. This dubitive function is source-directed, and *ay* is usually followed by the expression "*ma yaal tawi'* " (Could it be true?). It casts doubt on the source of the information on which the dubious utterance is based and does this explicitly. For example, while listening to a friend report that he has heard that a bus flipped over, killing all the people inside, a man says "*ay, ma yaal tawi'* " (*Ay*, could it be true?!). This should be contrasted with the dubitive use of the interjection stressed *eh*, which casts doubt on the truthfulness of the speaker.

The interjection *ay dios* has four distinct indexical objects. First, it may be used to index a marked amount of a recently revealed object (present before the speaker) or its sign-based transposition to a recently mentioned object (a noun phrase whose referent has similar qualities). In this way, it is similar to *ay*. A relevant characteristic of this use of *ay dios* is that it exists as the midrange form of an intensity cline, such that one can say *ay*, *ay dios*, or even *ay dios atinyuwa'*. Here the length of the utterance is iconically related to the intensity of one's reaction. As will be discussed below, unfavorable answers and refused offers will be marked by *ay dios* or merely *ay* but not *ay dios atinyuwa'*, the intensity cline being truncated for this function.

Like the interjection *ay*, *ay dios* is also used to respond to another's question markedly or offer a nonpreferred solicited response. The third use of *ay dios* is to index a child's accident or misbehavior in context. For example, if a woman's three-year-old son stumbles as he walks by the fire or whacks his five-year-old brother as he passes by, the mother says "*ay dios*" and stands him upright or admonishes him. Similarly, if a five-year-old boy sees his three-year-old brother misbehave—say, kick his food over—he can say "*ay dios*" to call his mother's attention to the act. Very simply, then, when one stands in a relationship of concern or responsibility to someone—such as a mother or older brother to a child—the mistakes and misbehaviors of the cared-for elicit *ay dios* from the caretaker. Of course, these responses shade into each other: a child who falls is initially comforted but if unscathed is then rebuked for horsing around. Such usage can also undergo sign-based transposition, such that hearing about a child's mistake can elicit such a response. This is similar to but not the same as the use of the interjection *ay* to index one's own mistake.

The last use of *ay dios* is as a topicalizer and/or floor-taker, indexing the speaker's turn to talk (always out of turn) and/or the introduction of a new topic for discussion (often far afield from present concerns). For example, during a ceremonial meal, the host, leaning back from the table after he has finished eating, says "*ay dios*," and waits for the other men to come to attention before he begins to speak. Here, the interjection marks a break between two phases of a ritual, and the speaker takes the floor to initiate prayer. Again, a woman, cooking while her husband talks with his brother about the price of corn, says "*ay dios*" and then mentions what she has just remembered she forgot to do. A conversation that includes her about this topic ensues before the men return to their conversation about corn. This use often piggybacks with the marked-amount usage discussed above: one may jump into a conversation by indexing with an interjection a just-referred-to marked quantity and then explaining why it struck one.

As mentioned above, the interjection *ay dios atinyuwa'* is used to index highly marked amounts and exists at the far end of an intensity cline with *ay* and *ay dios*. For example, after discussing how heavy a man's sack must be, one of the discussants goes to pick it up. Visibly struggling with it, he says "*ay dios atinyuwa'* ," while the others laugh. He then estimates its weight for them: "*wan tana jun kintal*" (there's about a hundred pounds [inside]). Or, when two boys, having been asked to collect branches for firewood, drag a small tree into the house and over to the hearth, their mother says "*ay dios atinyuwa'* " (having expected, it seems, a much smaller amount) and moves to prepare a space for it.

Uy and uyaluy. The interjections *uy* and *uyaluy* are related in that the latter is a reduplicated version of the former. Again, *uy* is probably a loan interjection from Spanish, whereas the reduplicated form is particular to

Q'eqchi'. Montes (1999:1289) characterizes Mexican Spanish *uy* as "subjective" in that it "[focuses] on the internal reaction of affectedness of the speaker with respect to the referent." Although she found very few tokens of *uy* in her sample (p. 1309), she suggests that most of the cases were "used in the context of something unexpected, sudden or urgent, often negative." As will be seen below, this usage bears a faint resemblance to the usage of *uy* and *uyaluy*.

The interjection *uy* is used to index what one may term *transitions* or, somewhat metaphorically, "close calls." It indexes dangerous events that almost proved harmful, taxing activities that have just ended, and even distasteful practices that are not practiced "now" or "here." For example, having sawed through a particularly thick board, a man says "*uy*" and pauses to wipe the sweat out of his eyes. Or, as a man unloads himself of a heavy burden, he says "*uy*" as he exhales. This interjection is often transposed to index signs of such events and practices, serving as a back-channel cue. For example, when the anthropologist mentions that in another Q'eqchi' community he has eaten gophers, his interlocutor says "*uy*." Or, as a man recounts how he was almost bitten by a dog, his interlocutor says "*uy*." What is common to all of these usages is the distinction between two possible worlds (what happened versus what could have happened, what we do here versus what they do there) or a transition between activity phases (being in the midst of an activity versus being at its completion) one of the possible worlds or activity phases is more favorable than the other. In particular, the one we have just left is more dangerous, stressful, or unappealing than the one we are now in.[16]

The reduplicative interjection *uyaluy* indexes dangerous objects, events, or situations. For example, while building a house, a man traverses a relatively unstable two-by-four about ten feet off the ground: hammer in one hand, two-by-four bending, and nothing to hold onto. Halfway through this traverse he stops and says "*uyaluy*," eyes flicking up to his assistant. They laugh together, and then he continues his traverse, arriving safely at the other side.

This interjection may also be transposed to index a sign denoting or characterizing such a dangerous object, event, or situation. For example, having just returned from working on a plantation in the northern lowland area of Guatemala, a young man is describing what he saw in the way of flora and fauna to his family members. When he mentions that he saw a snake (*k'anti'*), his sister-in-law says "*uyaluy*." Again, when he describes this snake as very large (*mas nim*), she says "*uyaluy*." In both cases, her utterance of this interjection functions as a back-channel cue, and the man continues talking.

And lastly, this interjection may undergo addressee-based transposition to index an addressee's relation to a dangerous object, event, or situation. For example, after filtering ground-temperature spring water into a plastic bottle, the anthropologist takes a long drink. His host, who is watching from her home, says "*uyaluy*." He stops drinking to look at her, and she says "*mas ninxiwak xbaan naq mas ke li ha'* " (I get very frightened because the water is so cold). She then offers to boil it for him.

T'. The interjection *t'* indexes minor equipment malfunctions and unplanned outcomes—what one might call *glitches*—in the midst of a task. For example, a nail bends while a man is hammering it. He says "*t'*," stops hammering to inspect the nail, and then proceeds to tap the nail gently from the side in order to straighten it before pounding it in. Or, while sawing a piece of wood, a man notices that his cut is not going exactly straight and says "*t'*." He pulls out his saw, switches places so that he can saw in from the other side, and begins sawing to meet his old cut halfway—thereby using it while minimizing its effect. Such minor disturbances are eminently fixable with equipment on hand. One merely redirects one's efforts, and thus one does not need to begin again, throw out what has just been done, retrieve another tool, or call for help. In contrast to the mistakes indexed by stressed *eh*, these disturbances are not directly caused by the speaker's inattention and require less effort to repair.

The only tokens I have of this interjection were sounded by men engaged in house building. That it appears not to occur with agricultural activities may in part be because those activities, although performed collectively, require the repetition of a single machete-mediated action again and again by each individually working man and because their goal is relatively macroscopic—to clear, seed, weed the field—whereas house building involves many co-articulated activities. If in tossing a corn seed into a hole when planting one misses, one says "*eh* (stressed)," not "*t'* ". In house building, in contrast, tasks usually require two men—one as lead (pounding, sawing, measuring) and the other as assistant (holding, steadying, weighting). The man who is lead is the one who says "*t'*," and the assistant merely adjusts to the new, corrective action. In this way, *t'* indexes both the speaker's gender and the mode of production in which he is engaged.

Chix. Whereas nontransposed usages of *chix* may involve any modality of contiguity (smell, taste, touch, or sight), addressee-based transpositions usually occur when the addressee is within tactile proximity. Indeed, in such transposed usages parents often describe the object as disgusting (*mas chu a'an*) and order the child not to touch it (*maach'e' a'an*). Thus, although such addressee-based transpositions serve as a warning or imperative, one may add an explicit imperative without redundancy. Parents may also say "*moko us ta xch'e'bal*

16. One should compare Goffman's discussion (1978:801) of the *transition display*: "Entering or leaving what can be taken as a state of marked natural discomfort—wind, rain, heat, or cold—we seem to have the license (in our society) to externalize an expression of our inner state. *Brr!* is a standard term for wind and cold upon leaving such an atmosphere. . . . *Ahh!* and *Phew!* are heard when leaving a hot place for a cool one. Function is not clear. Perhaps the sounding gives us a moment to orient ourselves to the new climatic circumstances and to fall into cadence with the others in the room; these are not ordinarily taxing matters, and thus do not ordinarily require a pause for their accomplishment."

a'an" (It is not good to touch that), or "*ink'a' naru xch'e'bal a'an*" (One is not allowed to touch that). The set of relations in which a child is simultaneously implicated, then, is as follows: one is in proximity to an object, one hears an interjection, one learns of the object's salient qualities, one is ordered not to touch the object, and one is taught what one may and may not touch. Just as a child is about to close in on a wormy stool or some such loathsome object, a whole schema of quality, modality, authority, and sensibility unfolds which, as it were, links this immediate world to all possible worlds.

As a function of such an addressee-based transposition, *chix* may also be used as a adjective or noun, but only in a limited number of cases involving parents speaking with children (and is thus on the border between primary and secondary interjections). For example, a three-year-old holds up a slimy chicken foot to the anthropologist, who is still eating. The anthropologist turns his head away and grimaces while the child's mother watches. She says to her child, "*mas chix li ru chan*" ("That's really gross," he says). Through faux direct-reporting she thereby attributes to the anthropologist a description of the chicken bone as "gross," using the sign *chix* as the adjective in question. Such usage as an adjective is defective in the following senses: unlike most other adjectives, *chix* can be neither inflected for person (*chix-in** [I am gross] and *chix-at** [You are gross] are both ungrammatical) nor further derived into an achievement verb (*chix-o'k** [to become gross] is ungrammatical). This interjection can also be used as a noun, when talking to a child, to refer to snot. For example, after a child sneezes his mother looks at him and says "*maak'a' chix*" (There's no snot [so no need to wipe your face]), instead of the usual "*ayu chi aatink*" (Run off to wash [your face]). Again, such usage occurs only in the relatively circumscribed register of parents speaking to young children.

Of interest is that this usage implies that the focal and first-learned loathsome object is not produced by an other or discovered outside or dangerous to touch. Rather, the prototype of a loathsome thing (snot) is not *that* loathsome (one can swallow it without getting sick—compare wormy stool) and is produced by and publicly displayed on the self. Further, insofar as one first hears this interjection as a parent's warning and only subsequently uses it oneself as an interjection, it is probably the case that one's expressive or speaker-focused usage is a "de-transposition" or centering into oneself of a parent's conative or addressee-focused usage. Warning then becomes exclamation, and social imperative becomes individual emotion. In short, if loathsome indexical objects in the situational context co-occur with "disgust" as an indexical object in the expressive context, objects of "disgust" are originally self-created (snot), and disgust itself, as a private emotion, is an internalization of a parent's imperative as a public value.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the various ontological classes of situational and discursive indexical objects turn on all things cultural: epistemic values involving sources of evidence and speaker sincerity, social relations implicated in gifts accepted and answers proffered, deference hierarchies turning on politeness, gender, and age, cultural norms of quantity and quality, and local construals of what counts as loathsome, dangerous, painful, etc. Therefore any description of the indexical objects and pragmatic functions of interjections requires attention to ethnographic detail.

Before I conclude, I want to discuss the relative frequency of the various uses of interjections exemplified in the last section. Given that I engaged in two different modes of token collection in context, one via real-time observation and the other via recordings of conversations, and given that I was not vigilant in my observations and recordings of interjections throughout all of my fieldwork or across all contexts of social life, I will focus on their relative frequency during one month of my research in which I was particularly attentive to their use.

During this month, I recorded about ten hours of dinnertime conversation and wrote down every use of an interjection that I noticed during the course of each day. From these sources, I noted 2 uses of *chix* indexing loathsomeness (both addressee-based transposed), 2 uses of *uyaluy* indexing danger (1 nontransposed and 1 sign-based transposed), 3 uses of *uy* indexing transitions (1 addressee-based transposed), 6 and 7 uses, respectively, of stressed *eh* and *t'* indexing mistakes and glitches, 6 uses of stressed *eh* serving as a dubitive, and 10 uses of stressed *eh* indexing nonpreferred solicited responses. Of the 35 tokens I noted of *ay*, only 2 (both of them sign-base transpositions) indexed a painful event; 15 (10 of them sign-based transpositions and functioning as back-channel cues) indexed marked quantities; 1 indexed a nonsolicited response, serving as a dubitive, 9 indexed nonpreferred solicited responses (offer refusals and unexpected answers), and 7 indexed mistakes. I also noted 10 uses of *ay dios* to index a child's misbehavior or mistake, 10 indexing marked quantities (9 of them involving sign-based transposition), and 5 involving unaddressed nonresponses (functioning as floor-takers and/or topicalizers). And I heard 3 uses of *ay dios atinyuwa'* indexing marked quantities, 2 of which were sign-based transpositions. During this same time, I noted uses of *ih* and *sht* as least once a day. I could not count the number of times I heard unstressed *eh* indexing an unaddressed nonresponse (functioning as a floor-holder or self-repair) or *ah* indexing a preferred solicited response (with answers to questions) because they occur in nearly every utterance of every conversation.

As may be seen from these numbers, interjections varied greatly in the frequency with which they were used. In particular, interjections that indexed situational objects such as transitions (*uy*), danger (*uyaluy*), loathsomeness

(*chix*), and painful events (*ay*) and would usually be characterized as indexing internal states such as "relief," "fear," "disgust," and "pain"—that is, those that seemed the most traditionally interjectional—were the least frequently used. Slightly more frequent were interjections indexing mistakes (*ay* and stressed *eh*) and glitches (*t'*) or functioning as source- or speaker-directed dubitives (*ay* and stressed *eh*). Interjections indexing marked quantities (*ay*, *ay dios*, and *ay dios atinyuwa'*) were relatively frequent, especially in cases of sign-based transposition, as were interjections indexing nonpreferred solicited responses (*ah*, *eh*, stressed *eh*, *ay*, and *ay dios*). More frequent still were interjections indexing preferred solicited responses, functioning as registeratives (*ih*), and interjections indexing addressed nonresponses, functioning as remonstratives or channel-openers (*sht*). By far the most frequently used interjections indexed preferred solicited responses (*ay*) and unaddressed nonresponses (*eh*).

By and large, then, interjections with indexical objects in the discursive context and sign-based transpositions of interjections with indexical objects in the situational context were far more frequent than interjections with indexical objects in the situational context. And interjections with many different kinds of indexical objects and/or discursive functions were far more frequent than interjections with fewer kinds of indexical objects and/or discursive functions.

Lastly, interjections were intimately related to gender roles and relations. The interjection *eh* as an unaddressed nonresponse (floor-holder) or nonpreferred solicited response was used mainly by men, whereas *ah*, as a preferred solicited response, was used mainly by women. Stressed *eh* was used mainly by men to index mistakes or doubt. In particular, during this month, all uses of stressed *eh* were by men, but I have observed women using them at other times. *Ay* (and *ay dios* and *ay dios atinyuwa'*) were used mainly by women in all of their functions. In particular, during this month, both uses of *ay* indexing painful events were by women. Ten of the 15 uses of *ay* indexing marked quantities were by women (and 4 of the remaining 5 were by boys). The single dubitive use was by a woman. Five of the 9 uses of *ay* to index nonpreferred solicited responses were by women, and 3 of the 7 uses of *ay* to index mistakes were by women (the rest were by boys or girls). I have no tokens of the use of *uy* or *t'* by women from any part of my fieldwork.

Clearly, for these numbers to have statistical significance, I would need to average over the percentage of time I spent in various modes of production (weaving, house building, cooking, planting, etc.) and discuss the kinds of people engaged in those modes of production; I would need to average over the types of people engaged in the conversations I heard, their roles, and the topics they discussed, and so on. Nevertheless, I include these numbers because they provide a relative sense of the gendered distribution of tokens.

Of interest regarding women's frequent use of the interjections *ay*, *ay dios*, and *ay dios atinyuwa'* to index marked quantities is that speakers' accounts of this usage often turn on the explanation that women are smaller and more likely to be impressed by the size or the painfulness of something than men. This accords with widespread ideas about women's inability to measure up to men, their tendency to be more easily affected by the world, and their inability to substitute for men in labor pools (see Kockelman 2000, 2002). Missing, of course, in such rationalizations is the fact that women are more likely to concede the floor in conversations—precisely by using this interjection with its back-channel function. In other words, while women do indeed use *ay (dios atinyuwa')* more than men, I think that is because of its discursive function rather than because of its stereotypical situational indexical objects (painful events or marked quantities). In short, women's relatively frequent use of *ay* (*dios*) is probably based in a socio-discursive inequality (i.e., who can control the floor in a conversation and/or introduce new topics) masquerading as a bio-physical inequality (i.e., who is smaller and/or weaker).

In conclusion, interjections have an extremely rich and well-structured indexical relationship to social, situational, and discursive context. Indeed, having made only minimal reference to internal states such as emotion, I have managed to characterize the indexical objects and pragmatic functions of interjections relative to a relatively generalizable framework. Interjections exist as a cross-linguistic form-functional domain whose particular indexical objects and pragmatic functions, although variable, are always comparable. When we focus on internal states (or, rather, expressive indexical objects), the situational, discursive, and social regularities of interjections are all too easily elided. What we gain in succinctness by ascribing them to a mental state we lose in understanding by eliding context.[17]

Comments

JILL BRODY
Department of Geography and Anthropology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La. 70803, U.S.A. (gajill@lsu.edu). 4 V 03

Kockelman accomplishes a great deal toward redeeming the heavily used but analytically neglected category of interjections. Data that come from actual use in closely

17. Speakers of Q'eqchi', however, do tend to interpret interjections in terms of internal states. For example, of all the uses of the interjection *ay* discussed here, only the "pain" function—that is, only the indexical object that is figurable in terms of an internal state—is easily characterized by speakers, and if the other uses are pointed out to speakers they (metaphorically) extend the pain function to account for them. In other words, expressive indexical objects are thematized by speakers at the expense of situational, discursive, and social ones. Thus this article has left out two crucial aspects of the meaning of interjections of Q'eqchi': an account of speakers' interpretations of their own usage and an account of the semiotic and social conditions for and consequences of the fact that these interpretations usually turn on internal states (but see Kockelman 2002).

observed ethnographic context allow him to take his analysis into appropriate realms of interaction with the natural and social worlds. Although his work focuses on one Q'eqchi' speech community, the model he proposes has great potential for cross-linguistic applicability.

The meaning of interjections is clearly in their use in context. The separation of interjections in table 1 into situational and discursive contexts advances Kockelman's analysis of the indexical objects of interjections, but his decision to exclude back channels eliminates the consideration of ongoing talk as the indexical object of interjections. In his discussion of a conversational example of the Q'eqchi' interjection *chix*, he says that for "most interjections that undergo sign-based transposition, such usage often serves as a back-channel cue, indicating that the speaker is listening but cannot or does not want to contribute to the topic at hand." This definition of "back channel" does permit the inclusion of prior and ongoing talk as precisely the indexical object of the interjection. I think that back channels should be considered as having the speaker's attentiveness to and participation in prior and ongoing talk as their discursive indexical objects. Kockelman provides corroboration for this interpretation when he describes how four (*chix*, *ay dios atinyuwa'*, *uy*, and *uyaluy*) of the five interjections labeled as distinctive to the situational context also serve as back-channel responses in conversation. From the back-channel usage example he provides in the description of *chix*, it seems clear that it not only operates in discursive context, indexing the specific prior talk as object, but also actually contributes to the topic as "RESPONSE+DISGUST."

I suggest that modifying the distinction in table 1 to indicate that all Q'eqchi' interjections have indexical objects in (social and) discursive context, with some also having a strong situational-context component to their use, would permit the inclusion of back channels, thereby strengthening the coherence of Kockelman's overall argument about indexical objects and further contributing to our understanding of this category of conversational contribution.

Kockelman's discussion of the grammatical form of interjections establishes their status as words that can also stand alone as utterances. From the few Q'eqchi' examples he gives it appears that they also exhibit a characteristic syntactic and discourse pattern; where he provides language examples, the interjection is utterance-initial, although a preposed topicalized element may precede it. Part of the discursive context of interjections is their location in the flow of talk. The Q'eqchi' pattern could be determined through an extended text analysis of the transcripts of the dinnertime conversation recordings he made, something along the lines of Brody (2000), where I present a translation of a conversational sequence of nearly 300 exchanges between two women speaking Tojolab'al Maya. Despite publication limitations restricting the translation to English (but see Texas archives) and despite having different goals for the analysis of the text, I transcribed and inventoried the "expressive exclamations" that occurred in that stretch of talk, arriving at a list that is comparable in many ways to Kockelman's Q'eqchi' interjections: "*aj*, *ej*, 'oh' (also included in reported speech); *ji'i*, 'yikes'; *eso*, 'right' (from Spanish *eso*); *eu*, 'ooh'; *ijole*, 'son of a . . .' (from Spanish *hijole*); *ix*, 'horrors'; *iy*, *ay*, 'wow'; *ja*, 'ah'; *jawi*, 'right'; *ja'*, 'yes'; *ju*, *u'ju*, 'huh-uh' " (p. 92). Looking at interjections in conversational context focuses on their social and discursive functions and also provides the opportunity to monitor the frequency with which speakers use various interjections, their position in discourse (standalone, utterance-initial), and their meanings in use. The extremely high frequency of occurrence of various kinds of interjections as back channels (at least in Tojolab'al) further argues, within Kockelman's analysis of the meanings of interjections as being primarily indexical, for understanding back channels as indexing previous talk; otherwise, many interjection tokens in conversation that are not necessarily tied to situational context would lack indexical objects in discursive context.

JOHN B. HAVILAND
Linguistics, Reed College, 3203 S.E. Woodstock, Portland, Ore. 97202, U.S.A. (johnh@reed.edu). 4 v 03

In this remarkable paper Kockelman rounds out a theory of language that pushes the notion of linguistic action to its outermost logical boundaries, locating certain linguistic entities—in this case, interjections—so firmly in social action that he thereby further picks away at an apparent contrast between situational and discursive context or a dichotomy between inner states and public social circumstances. I am impressed by the implications for the notion of linguistic expertise, the focus of my own recent work, because Kockelman's approach suggests more generally that linguistic knowledge can be construed as coextensive with sociocultural knowledge and that perhaps the model of "knowledge"—the dominant theme in standard linguistics—is less appropriate to language than a more general notion of skill and sociocultural know-how, "competence" in the ordinary sense of the term. Kockelman's already demonstrated neologic virtuosity continues in labels that capture whole situational complexes in which "registeratives" or "remonstratives" are deployed. He also demonstrates again the essential role of ethnography in the lexicographic enterprise, a point to which I will return.

Kockelman defines interjections via four formal criteria, principally their ability to stand alone as utterances and their resistance to further syntagmatic combination or to morphological analysis. Nonetheless, some Q'eqchi' exemplars raise doubts (*ay* combines with adjectives, *chix* displays exceptional inflection, and some interjections are morphologically complex, for example), calling into question Kockelman's conclusion that interjections can be "generalized as a form class across languages." Moreover, insisting that interjections can stand alone as utterances may obscure the formal and expressive links such elements can have with less au-

tonomous particles and clitics (evidentials, for example, in other Mayan languages).

As Kockelman notes, interjections may participate in derivational processes, which in turn illustrate characteristic metapragmatic reincorporation back into the lexicon of the speech situation the interjections conjure. Laughlin (1975) gives the following parallel example from Tzotzil, based on two affective verbs which mean respectively "say (or 'go') '*i*' " and "say '*a*' ," interjections here located in the mouth of a drunk: "x'i' on x'a' on. lit., He is saying 'yes, yes,' i.e., He is mumbling to himself (drunk)."

A central contribution of Kockelman's work is to link situational and discursive indexicality. It is worth underscoring his arguments about what we might call the *inherent transposability* of indexicals, which seem to beg for projected perspectives (a speaker transposes him- or herself into the addressee's shoes or those of an observed or narrated protagonist). Kockelman further argues that *chix* undergoes the reverse "detransposition" when children learn how to use the interjection on the basis of caretakers' use directed at them.

Kockelman also imports insights from conversational analysis to show how interjections project indexical surrounds onto turn structure ("seconds" or, in Tzotzil at least, "thirds"), onto various aspects of "preference structure," and, one might add, onto culturally differentiated types of "back channel" (what Goodwin and Goodwin [1992] call "assessments," for example) which systematically merge modal, ethical, epistemic, and emotional stances, as Kockelman argues for Q'eqchi' interjections.

Of course, the multiplicity of meanings Kockelman discerns is itself problematic on theoretical grounds. If we rely on formal criteria to identify form, disjunctive definitions always require careful justification. For example, if *ah* indexes both "preferred and nonpreferred solicited responses" then it does not distinguish them, and the disjunction is motivated only by the supporting conversational theory rather than by the Q'eqchi' form itself. Or if, as we are told, unstressed *eh* has both floor-holding and unpreferred solicited response usages, are these two "meanings" related (perhaps in some sort of metaphorical chain—as, for example, in Kockelman's later claim that in certain gender-specific interjections "socio-discursive inequality . . . masquerad[es] as biophysical inequality"), or is this simply an unmotivated disjunction?

Kockelman's central beef is with the notion that interjections index "internal emotional states." For example, in his analysis of unstressed *eh* and *ay* he contrasts his indexicality-based account with one focusing on "subjective emotional states." But there is no contrast if "emotion" is intersubjectively and interactively constructed. Here Kockelman's own reference (n. 16) to Goffman (1978) is an appropriate corrective.

Kockelman's method depends on exhaustive contextual observation, an ethnographic technique familiar from Hanks's (1990) seminal work on Yucatec deictics. However, for me the moral is not simply that one must be a good ethnographer to work out what people mean when they say things but that indexical elements in language are a central ethnographic probe: they take one to the heart of cultural meaning in action. The apparently miniature "things" people "do" with "words" are prototypical, multiply nuanced exhibits of their sociocultural positioning, activities, and competences writ large. As always, the facts of language acquisition here are crucial, both because children must learn to be adults and because relaxing grammatical patterns in children's and child-directed speech itself indexes (and thus puts into perceptible relief) the child's incomplete linguistic competence under construction.

Huzzahs for Kockelman!

YAEL MASCHLER
Departments of Communication and Hebrew, University of Haifa, Mt. Carmel, Haifa 31905, Israel (maschler@research.haifa.ac.il). 6 V 03

Kockelman's work is an important step in the right direction. As students of talk-in-interaction, we have no access to speakers' internal emotional states; all we can do is investigate the functions of utterances in discourse by closely examining them in naturally occurring conversation. His study could be sharpened by a close analysis of actual conversational excerpts taken from recordings of more of the task-engaged situations in which the situational interjections are more often employed. A greater reliance on recordings would strengthen the quantitative part of the analysis as well.

In my own study of Hebrew talk-in-interaction, I have found that one's initial findings based on tokens heard are always refined upon in-depth analysis of actual conversational excerpts. For instance, the Hebrew interjection *nu* seemed at first to have the sequential function of "urging the speaker to continue" (Maschler 1998). Upon closer analysis, it turned out that *nu* could also have a keying function, providing the discourse with a joking or provoking tone (Maschler 2003). Such findings lead to interesting questions concerning connections between the various functions of a particular interjection and to the study of the grammaticization (Hopper 1987) of such particles. The study of Q'eqchi' Maya discourse could thus contribute to the cross-linguistic study of this type of grammaticization (e.g., Fleischman and Yaguello 1999, Traugott and Dasher 2002).

Kockelman writes that interjections are often classified as a subclass of discourse markers and that "there is no framework in terms of which one may order and compare their meanings . . . and the types of pragmatic functions they serve." He suggests an original semiotic framework based on Peirce's work for examining interjections as a system, also employing certain conversation-analytic categories. While, to the best of my knowledge, no general framework in fact exists for interjections per se, this is not the case for discourse markers.

The relationship between interjections and discourse markers can be examined in terms of a Bate-

sonian framework (Bateson 1972 [1956]). In order to be considered a discourse marker, an utterance must fulfill two conditions, one semantic and the other structural (Maschler 1998): (1) Semantically, it must have a *metalinguistic interpretation* in the context in which it occurs. In other words, rather than referring to the extralinguistic world, it must refer metalinguistically to the realm of the text, to the interpersonal dimension of the interaction among its participants or to their cognitive processes. (2) Structurally, it must occur in intonation-unit initial position, either at a point of speaker change or, in same-speaker talk, immediately following any intonation contour other than continuing intonation. It may occur after continuing intonation or in non-intonation-unit-initial position only if it follows another marker in a cluster.[1]

It is difficult to relate the structural component of this definition to Kockelman's study because of the lack of detailed transcriptions and segmentation into intonation units. However, his examples suggest that, apart from *eh*, Q'eqchi' Maya interjections generally occur at beginnings of turns and are therefore intonation-unit initial.

As for the semantic component of the definition, interjections satisfy it in that they do not refer to the extralinguistic world. This is self-evident when, for example, a Q'eqchi' Maya-speaker utters *sht* as an attention-getting device or a channel-opener. They also satisfy the semantic requirement where the situational context is concerned. For example, when a Q'eqchi' Maya-speaker utters *chix* upon encountering some loathsome object, this interjection does not *refer* to some entity in the extralinguistic world in the same way that the word *chair*, say, refers to an object in the situational context. Rather, it functions *metalinguistically* in the interpersonal realm (Becker 1988), referring to the interpersonal relationship of speaker to (loathsome) object or to the relationship among discourse participants (as when *chix* is used by parent to child as an imperative not to touch the object).

The fact that some of the interjections in Q'eqchi' Maya are borrowed from Spanish lends further support to the claim that they are metalinguistic. Studies of language alternation at discourse markers show that discourse markers are one of the most frequently borrowed grammatical categories in bilingual conversation (Brody 1987; Salmons 1990; Maschler 1994, 2000). This is because of the iconic bilingual discourse strategy of separating the linguistic from the metalinguistic in such a way that one language is reserved for languaging (Becker 1995) about the world while the other serves to language about the process of using language, that is, for metalanguaging (Maschler 1994).

Interjections, then, constitute a subclass of the grammatical category of discourse markers because they function metalinguistically in conversation. Among the discourse markers found for Hebrew discourse (Maschler 2002:21–23), interjections function in the interpersonal and cognitive realms, and this seems to be the case also in Kockelman's data. The interpersonal functions are often the first that come to mind, but many interjections function in the cognitive realm, referring to cognitive processes taking place during verbalization which are often revealed in spoken discourse (cf. Heritage's [1984] study of English *oh* as a change-of-state token). However, by signalling transition, interjections always carry a textual function as well. It would be interesting to examine Kockelman's imaginative framework in light of this approach to discourse markers.

1. The two criteria in this definition coincide for 94% of the discourse markers found throughout the database. The remaining 6% satisfy the semantic but not the structural requirement. (see Maschler 2002 for a study of this latter category).

LAWRENCE SCHOURUP
Osaka Women's University, 2-1 Daisen-cho, Sakai-shi, Osaka-fu 590-0035, Japan (schour@bc4.so-net.ne.jp).
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While I applaud Kockelman for attempting to set the study of interjections on a more empirical footing, I am less than sanguine about the prospect of providing a full account of their meaning within a framework of this kind.

Kockelman sees interjections as part of language: he regards them as "linguistic forms," as composed of morphemes, and as constituting a word class. He comments that "interjections are no longer considered peripheral to linguistics." In fact, however, recent literature reveals a persistent ambivalence about the linguistic status of interjections turning on such issues as their syntax-independence, lack of productivity, enlistment of extrasystemic phonological elements and combinations, and intimate association with paralinguistic phenomena. Kockelman mentions Ameka, Wierzbicka, and Wilkins, who do take a linguistic position, but Ameka acknowledges the affinity between interjections and paralinguistic phenomena, Wierzbicka compromises her position by referring to interjections as "vocal gestures," and Wilkins, allowing that "it has been common to treat interjections as though they were outside the concerns of linguistics altogether" (1992:119), cites work by Goffman, who argues for a nonlinguistic view. The uncertain linguistic status of interjections is discussed at length in a recent study by Wharton (2001), who cites, together with much other evidence, work by Goodglass (1993) demonstrating that some grave aphasics retain the use of interjections like "ouch" when language itself has been lost. Wharton notes (2001:213): "If one can have interjections, but not language, it is hard to see how the former can be viewed as part of the latter."

Having first assumed that interjections are fully linguistic, Kockelman goes on to treat their meanings within a semiotic framework, working from extensive field observation of their use. But, while relying on empirical observation can help to redress the impressionistic vagueness that has often plagued studies in this area and while Kockelman's semiotic approach does, as he

intends, clarify how interjections are tied in with "local values, norms, ontological classes, and social relations," it is not clear that this approach can shed equal light on the way in which interjections actually do their communicative work and, therefore, in the broadest sense, on their meanings. For this purpose, an inferentially based approach strikes me as better positioned to succeed.

Consistent with his semiotic perspective, Kockelman does not directly address the role of inference in the interpretation of interjections, though inference would be required to give cognitive substance to this claim that a single interjection is capable of indexing a variety of different kinds of objects and pragmatic functions. Inference is necessarily involved as well in the routine use of interjections to constrain the communicated content of an accompanying utterance (thus "Wow! You won!" can convey "The speaker is delighted that I won"). In this regard, readers of Kockelman's paper may again wish to compare his views with those of Wharton (2001), who treats such issues within a cognitively grounded theory of communication (Sperber and Wilson 1995 [1986]) that has clarified a broad range of phenomena involving both linguistic and paralinguistic communication. Wharton argues that interjections, like some entirely paralinguistic phenomena, incorporate both coded and natural elements ("natural" in providing direct evidence for information to be conveyed) and that individual interjections fall at various points along a continuum between fully linguistic "saying" and natural "showing." This view meshes with the common observation that interjections of related function are often similar in form (though rarely identical) across languages. Thus, for example, as noted by Darwin, interjections related to pain commonly begin with [a] (as do both English "ouch" and Q'eqchi' Maya *ay*), a fact not accounted for in Kockelman's framework. Wharton suggests that irrespective of whether they are used in conjunction with fully linguistic utterances, the coded element in interjections is "procedural": it constrains inference by activating attitudinal concepts or concept types, thus assisting comprehension by "reducing the search space inferential processes are working in" (p. 194).

Wharton's approach and Kockelman's are incompatible in broad theoretical respects, but there are significant points of contact. Wharton is willing to grant that at least some interjections are "directed toward a percept or object" (2001:191), and both writers dispute the claim that interjections exclusively indicate emotions (though Wharton grants them all a role in communicating attitudinal information). Moreover, observations like Kockelman's, which explore limits on the range of objects indexed by particular interjections, can be seen as complementary with cognitive-inferential treatments to the extent that the latter must finally characterize the *specific* inferential constraints effected by individual interjections. For this task, detailed observations like Kockelman's would seem to offer a rich point of departure.

IGOR SHARONOV
Institute of Linguistics, Faculty of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, Russian State University of Humanities, Moscow, Russia (igor_sharonov@mail.ru). 19 V 03

Kockelman's article is most interesting and new from various points of view. It makes it more or less evident that the idea that interjections serve to indicate internal emotional (or mental) states according to situational context cannot yield significant results unless the indexical objects of the interjection are identified. Kockelman's generalizable framework for classifying interjections illuminates very effectively the real life of this class of language units—their situational, discursive, and social regularities and their sign-based and addressee-based transpositions. I would like to say a few words about methodological problems to be solved in the future.

As we can see in table 1, some interjections (*eh* [stressed] and *t'*) indicate a mistake or glitch. These are a characteristic of a person's activity rather than of the object as such. If we only hear someone using *eh* or *t'* without seeing anything we learn something about the general situation but very little about the object and its characteristics.

Some interjections (*ay dios atinyuwa'*) indicate a large quantity of the object. Thus we learn, at the very least, that the objects or events in question have weight, length, width, size, and so on, to be measured and, possibly, that it is surprising if some quantities are greater than expected. Even if we see nothing, we can say that the speaker using *ay dios atinyuwa'* is dealing with "measurable" objects.

Some interjections (*chix*, *uyaluy*) indicate dangerous, painful, and loathsome objects. This is a more or less well-defined class of objects in every culture. Even if we see nothing we can say that the speaker using *chix* or *uyaluy* is dealing with or very close to dealing with "aggressive" or "bad" objects.

This notion helps us to comprehend the outline of the situation even without situational context and to react adequately.

The interjection *ay* can indicate every class: a person's activity process, "measurable" objects, and "aggressive" or "bad" objects. This could mean that it is not limited to the indication of objects at all. Possibly this is one of the reasons it is used more frequently than certain more specific interjections.

ANNA WIERZBICKA
Linguistics, School of Language Studies, Faculty of Arts, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 0200, Australia (anna.wierzbicka@anu.edu.au). 4 V 03

I agree with Kockelman that interjections play a very important role in social life and shed light on local values, norms, and "cultural scripts"—as discussed in the pioneering special issue of the *Journal of Pragmatics* edited by Felix Ameka in 1992. Careful studies of the use

of interjections in context based on fieldwork in remote communities are particularly valuable. But to investigate the meanings of interjections one needs a suitable methodological framework, and Kockelman's paper suffers from the lack of such a framework. The contrast set up in the paper between social and discursive functions of interjections and their inherent meanings is, in my view, false: it is precisely by virtue of their meanings that interjections can have important social and discursive functions.

I agree with Kockelman that interjections do not always express "emotional states." Interjections fall into three types: emotive (e.g., *yuk!*), volitive (e.g., *shush!*), and cognitive (e.g., *aha!*), with the emotive being by far the most common (Wierzbicka 2003 [1991]). These three types can be linked with three invariant semantic components. "I feel something," "I want something," and "I think something." As I have shown (and see also the articles by Ameka, Evans, Hill, Wierzbicka, and Wilkins in Ameka 1992*b*), the meanings of interjections can be portrayed with great precision and in a way testable by native speakers' intuitions in terms of empirically discovered simple and universal human concepts such as *I*, *feel*, *want*, *think*, and 60 or so others (cf. Wierzbicka 1996, Goddard 1998, Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002). The natural semantic metalanguage based on these concepts allows us to capture the insider's perspective (see Shore 1996) while at the same time making the speakers' meanings intelligible to the outsider.

By contrast, the "semiotic framework" used in Kockelman's article and credited to Michael Silverstein relies on a complex technical metalanguage whose key expressions include "ontological classes," "modality of contiguity," "symbolic modality," "discursive indexical objects," "sign-based transposition," "primary indexical objects," "relationship of contiguity," and so on. For example, discussing the interjection *chix*, comparable to the English *yuk*, Kockelman says that it "indexes loathsome objects" and that "the modality of contiguity . . . is suspended while the ontological class of the object (loathsomeness) is maintained," and he argues that such an analysis is superior to one along the lines of "I feel disgusted."

A portrayal of the meaning of *yuk* in terms of "I feel disgusted (now)" is not fully satisfactory because it relies on the language-specific English word *disgusted*, but, inadequate as it is, in my view it is more illuminating than the kind of description Kockelman proposes. A more accurate explication of *yuk* (and, I imagine, *chix*) could be formulated in simple and universal human concepts as follows (adapted from Wierzbicka 2003 [1991]):

yuk
I feel something bad now
sometimes a person thinks like this about something:
"this is very bad
I don't want any part of my body to touch this"
when this person thinks like this, this person feels something bad
I feel something like this now because I think like this now

Kockelman's strategy of describing what is (relatively) simple and clear in terms that are complex and obscure and of subordinating the perspective of the cultural insider to that of an Anglophone theoretician/semiotician can be illustrated with the following example. A five-year-old boy asks his mother for a piece of tortilla, is given a whole tortilla, and responds by saying *ay*, *mas nim*, "Ay, that's really big," using the interjection *ay*, borrowed by Q'eqchi from Spanish. Discussing this episode, Kockelman tells us that this use of *ay* involves "a whole metaphysics of quantity," thus clearly attributing to the emotive interjection *ay* the meaning belonging to the context (the big tortilla) rather than to the interjection itself and at the same time using complex academic language which could not possibly correspond to what the little boy wanted to say. Similarly, discussing the interjection *uy* (another loan from Spanish), used, for example, by a man unloading a heavy burden, Kockelman says that "what is common to all these usages is the distinction between two possible worlds."

In conclusion, interjections are indeed crucial to the understanding of social interaction and cross-cultural differences, but they need to be studied from an insider's point of view, and their putative meanings need to be expressed in experience-near concepts available to the insiders rather than in semiotic jargon unrelated to their experiential and social world.

JIM WILCE
Department of Anthropology, Northern Arizona University, P.O. Box 15200, Flagstaff, Ariz. 86011-5200, U.S.A. (jim.wilce@nau.edu). 4 v 03

Kockelman's essay counters the frequent assertion that interjections index emotion, but does it escape the tired binaries in relation to which Western scholars have tended to write (emotion versus rationality, prosody and interjections versus grammar, the spontaneous or natural versus the cultural)? Evolutionary accounts (Turner 2000) categorize emotion, prosody, and interjections as less liable to conscious control, more natural and primitive; "pitch, inflection, intonations, rhythms, pauses, and the like" are represented as the semiotic modalities that convey affect (p. 40). Relegating affect to those dimensions of language that are the least "linguistic" requires overlooking how deeply grammaticalized subjectivity is (Lee 1997, Ochs and Schieffelin 1989).

Kockelman challenges primitivist discourses on interjections, arguing that interjections are culture, not nature—social acts structured by local semiotic and linguistic conventions. His essay's uniqueness lies in part in its synthesis of linguistic formalism, semiotics, and conversation analysis. From conversation analysis and pragmatics he derives a concern for interactional sequentiality and particularly adjacency pairs ("pair-

part structures"). The semiotic layer of Kockelman's analysis is the richest, not only for what it is but for the ways it could be extended. I have in mind here his conclusion and devote the rest of my discussion to extending and critiquing it.

All interjections have their indexical objects (situational and discursive—and, significantly, Kockelman finds that Q'eqchi' interjections more often have discursive than situational objects) and their pragmatic functions. Thus, *chix* might index the situational object of wormy dog droppings or a discursive object, a description of pus blisters. Interjections also index an utterance's place in a conversational sequence and in relation to response preferences. Then, too, interjection use probabilistically indexes gender roles. Although such indexes can be presupposing (such that no one notices a man using a typically male set of interjections), others are creative, as, for example, when a woman wants to speak "like a man." Yet such indexicality cannot be represented apart from ideologies of language and gender. The particular representation of gender-indexicality that Kockelman finds to be widespread transforms "discursive inequality" into "bio-physical inequality." Metapragmatic utterances that rationalize gendered practices this way index the social positions of their speakers. Implicitly, however, the article supports the claim of a kind of false consciousness not only on the part of Q'eqchi' Maya-speakers but on that of scholars from Sapir to Jakobson. Their transformation of sociosemiotic acts into direct manifestations of inner states, unconscious and primitive, indexed their investment in modernist ideologies that privilege psychological explanation. Conversation analysis, drawing from Wittgenstein (1958), has rejected psychologizing metadiscourses.

Yet the post-Wittgenstein loss of faith in the ability of language to represent inner states accurately is in itself an index of another face of modernism. Though intended to affirm the public nature of the categories of language and of its referents, Wittgenstein's "acute awareness of the abstract or categorical nature of language" implies "the consequent impossibility of describing the individual objects or immanent moments of our experience," spreading the notion that experience—including emotional experience—is ineffable (Sass 1992:186). I welcome Kockelman's reinsertion of interjections into sociosemiotic space, but his downplaying of interjections' ability to index emotion is indicative of this second face of modernism. Modernism's increasingly "hyperreflexive" (Sass 1992) stance, the same stance that leads to a loss of faith in linguistic convention as a means of expressing emotion or other forms of subjectivity, can result in a form of alienation that helps explain our anxious attempts to reestablish the "context" to which Kockelman points in his closing sentence. A reflexive account of linguistic anthropology and its mostly unquestioned dependence on 20th-century modernist thought, which alienates the speaking subject from the only codes in which subjectivity can enter the realm of intersubjectivity, has yet to be written. In this context, Kockelman's satisfaction over having written an account of interjections that makes "only minimal reference to internal states" must be seen as both a necessary step and a reflection—rather than a denial—of recent Western thought which, still in the grip of binaries such as emotion versus convention, may lose sight of the subject in grammaticalized subjectivity. The subject may not be "present" in a pre-Derridean sense, but we should see its decentering as constituted by the neo-Cartesianism of the past century rather than as a startling or unambiguously liberatory achievement.

Reply

PAUL KOCKELMAN
Hanover, N.H., U.S.A. 4 VI 03

Brody's main point—that uses of interjections that I characterized as sign-based transposition in the situational context (and functioning as back-channel cues) should instead be characterized as having "the speaker's attentiveness to and participation in prior and ongoing talk as their discursive indexical object"—is a fair one to raise and one that I wrestled with in writing this article. Thus, in n. 10, I note that "it is tempting to put sign-based transposition into the discursive context for the purposes of schematizing the data." I then argue against doing so, saying that "sign-based transpositions make sense only in terms of the qualities of the objects referred to by the sign indexed by the interjection." Their primary indexical object turns not on a quality of the sign they are in contiguity with (e.g., nonsolicited response versus solicited response) but on a quality of the referent of this sign (e.g., loathsomeness versus dangerousness). To gloss over this fact is to hide the systematic relations—and developmental implications—that link nontransposed and transposed usages of interjections (as seen in the case of *chix*).

Does this mean that interjections undergoing sign-based transposition don't index "the speaker's attentiveness to and participation in prior and ongoing talk"? Of course not. Almost every sign said within an interaction trivially indexes the speaker's attentiveness and participation as its (expressive) indexical object, and therefore this cannot be a criterion for delimiting the different kinds of primary indexical objects with any precision. And does this mean that interjections whose primary indexical objects are in the situational context have no social, expressive, and discursive functions? Of course not. Just as sign-based transpositions serve as a back-channel cues (and hence are maximally involved in discourse patterns), addressee-based transpositions may serve to start a conversation, nontransposed usage may index a change in the speaker's focus of attention, and so on. Thus, while I agree with Brody that back-channeling is an important function of interjections, I don't

agree that it provides the minimal characterization of the maximal usage.

Haviland calls into question the claim that interjections can be generalized as a form class across languages, pointing out that I note that some of my interjections violate each definitional criterion I provide. However, linguistic form classes (noun, verb, interjection, clitic), like many categories more generally (lion, toaster, doctor, monotreme), should probably have their conceptual content specified through some kind of prototype rather than through necessary and sufficient, equally weighted, abstractly defined conditions (cf. Taylor 1995). Thus, while not all interjections satisfy each of my criteria, this is probably true of any form class more generally. Taking his criticism as a justified warning, let me rephrase my claim as follows: interjections are just as generalizable as a form class across languages as any other linguistic form class.

Haviland also raises the crucial question whether it is legitimate to predicate a disjunctive definition (for example, that *ah* indexes both preferred and nonpreferred solicited responses) without any formal criterion to justify it. I retain both definitions for two reasons. First, another analyst might find a formal criterion that justifies the distinction. For example, perhaps when *ah* is used as a preferred solicited response it receives some distinctive prosodic treatment. Second and more important, there is a functional criterion for the distinction: women tend to use *ah* as a preferred solicited response. Hence, what looks like an unjustified distinction in one dimension (i.e., the realm of discursive indexical objects) is justified in two dimensions (i.e., the realm of discursive and social indexical objects—in this case, the gender of the speaker). Haviland's criticism, then, is helpful in motivating a search for the contrastive dimension.

Maschler is right in pointing out that there is formal and functional overlap between interjections and discourse markers, and therefore whether interjections "constitute a subclass of the grammatical category of discourse markers" is a fair question (though not my concern here). Nonetheless, the analytic framework set out by Maschler is not robust enough to answer this question, conflating as it does a number of key semiotic dimensions that I have been at pains to distinguish. In characterizing the "semantic conditions" for something to be a discourse marker, she says that "rather than referring to the extralinguistic world, it must refer metalinguistically to the realm of the text, to the interpersonal dimension of the interaction among its participants, or to their cognitive processes." She contrasts such metalinguistic reference with "extralinguistic reference," by which she means "the . . . way that the word *chair* . . . refers to an object in the situational context."

To my mind, this is a one-dimensional schema that is being used to characterize a (minimally) four-dimensional phenomenon. Following Jakobson, Peirce, Silverstein, and Tarski (inter alia), I would keep separate four basic axes: object type (situational, social, discursive, expressive), ground (iconic, indexical, symbolic), function (referential, nonreferential), and level (object-language, metalanguage). Maschler's schema lumps together relatively situational objects, symbolic grounds, referential functions, and object-language levels (as extralinguistic reference) and relatively expressive-social-discursive objects, indexical grounds, nonreferential functions, and metalanguage levels (as metalinguistic reference). While it may be the case that, for certain events, these features correlate in this way, there is no reason to presuppose it in our analytic framework. Indeed, most utterances are rich enough in meaning to require attention to all of these dimensions simultaneously. What I have said about form classes' being prototypic rather than Aristotelian categories applies here as well. To say that interjections are a subclass of discourse markers provides an answer where there should be a question: they are relatively alike along some dimensions and relatively different along others. Part of our job as linguists is to delimit these degrees of similarity (and hence difference). In sum, such a one-dimensional schema ignores the multidimensionality—and by-degree definability—of the phenomenon at issue.

Schourup relies on Wharton for evidence and argumentation, and therefore, in the following, I am responding to his summaries of Wharton. First, I have no wish to argue over whether interjections are linguistic—for which we would need to define what it means for something to be linguistic. I certainly don't think that their meaning is tractable within a formal, syntactic, symbolic, generative understanding of language, but how much of language is? Such definitions would only serve to limit, not delimit language—a total social fact if ever there was one. Second, a distinction between "coded and natural" and its counterpart distinction "between fully linguistic 'saying' and natural 'showing' " is beset by all the problems of unidimensionality that I have taken up with Maschler. (Indeed, there is an unsettling resemblance between Schourup's show-and-say and her meta-extralinguistic.) Third, with regard to the iconic dimension of interjections, I am wary of speculation about why "interjections related to pain commonly begin with [a]." Iconic relations are crucial, to be sure; however, if they are to be more than trivial, they must involve diachronic data (to understand their origins), cross-linguistic evidence (to assess whether they are indeed "common" or just commonly remarked upon), and/or system-internal relationality (focusing on relations between forms *in relation to* relations between functions). (Darwin's work on facial expressions of "emotion" [1965 (1862)], as carried on by Ekman [1982] and others, is a nontrivial—indeed, breathtaking—examination of iconicity with regard to each of these three criteria.) Minimally, any attempt to understand the iconicity of interjections must first decide which type of indexical object they might be iconic to (expressive, social, discursive, situational). In addition, I would predict that many of the most interesting iconicities will be not between interjections and indexical objects but between different kinds of objects indexed by the same interjection. For example, I showed explicitly how speakers of Q'eqchi' understand the gendered use of *ay (dios)* by way of an iconicity between social, situational, and expressive indexical object

(gender, quantity, pain). Iconicity, then, is rooted in "culture" as much as in "nature," as much in second-order observations by speakers as in first-order practices of speaking, and as much in deontic norms as in ontological categories—"saying" how certain kinds of people should be as much as "showing" how certain kinds of people are.

With regard to the question of implicature, I would follow the trajectory of Levinson (2001), not the work of Sperber and Wilson (1995 [1986]) that Schourup cites. In addition to the usual distinction between sentence meaning (as explicated by grammatical analysis in the strict sense) and speaker meaning (or "utterance-token meaning," with its attempt to reconstruct the intentional states of the speaker and hearer), Levinson brings in a crucial third element—what he calls "utterance-type meaning." He describes this as "a level of systematic pragmatic inference based *not* on direct computations about speaker-intentions but rather on general expectations about how language is normally used. . . . It is at this level (if at all) that we can sensibly talk about speech acts, presuppositions, conventional implications, felicity conditions, conventional presequences, preference organization, and . . . generalized implicature" (pp. 22–23). Following Sperber and Wilson, Schourup's example (the way in which "'Wow! You won!' can convey 'The speaker is delighted that I won'") is aimed at the second level.

In contrast, I follow Levinson in thinking that the most interesting inferences involving interjections will not lie in reconstructions of the participants' intentional states. Nor can they be explained in terms of an automatic max–min relationship between information quantity and processing effort, given that the latter is unmeasurable (cf. Levinson 2001:57). Rather, they should be understood as behavioral norms of interpretation motivated by "inferential heuristics" (p. 35), heuristics which ultimately rest in Gricean-derived notions of quantity, informativeness, and manner. *Pace* Grice, who tended to see such norms as embodying universal rational principles, I would underscore that, as behavioral norms, such inferential patterns form an integral part of what is often called "culture." Therefore they will be as richly variable across speech genres, interaction types, and social groups within a society as they are methodologically comparable across societies.

The insight of Wierzbicka's natural semantic metalanguage—one long known to philosophers, parents, and language learners—is that complicated words can be defined in terms of simpler words. Aside from a collection of such simple words, an ad hoc grammar of how we may combine them, and a mind-numbing number of stabs at lexicography, this paradigm has yielded no further insights of the kind we associate with other semantic paradigms that systematically treat relationships among forms and the relation between form and function. After 30 years of work, natural semantic metalanguage has unearthed nothing on an intellectual par with the implicational universals we associate with Berlin and Kay, Bull, Greenberg, and Silverstein, with the *Aktionsart* classes of Dowty and Vendler, with the relation between semantic typology and spatial conceptualization of the Planck group, with the lexicalization patterns of Talmy, or with the categorization hierarchies and domains of Keil, Rosche, and others.

As a theory of semantics, natural semantic metalanguage offers at best trivial truths and restatements of observations developed by other paradigms. As a theory of pragmatics—accounting for the work speakers do with language and the meaning it derives through context—it offers nothing at all. Hence, it is not surprising that Wierzbicka makes no attempt to use it to account for any of the phenomena I describe in my article. Rather, she simply asserts that interjections have only three kinds of meaning—the "emotive," the "volitive," and the "cognitive"—and that any social or discursive functions they have are derivative of these. Thus, ignoring 99% of usage patterns, her argument comes down to providing a natural-semantic-metalanguage-based gloss that would account for the least frequently used function in my corpus: the nontransposed use of *chix* (by way of the English proxy *yuk*).

Besides ignoring almost all patterns of actual usage, and besides offering a gloss that is much less illuminating than mine, Wierzbicka's rendering of *yuk* reveals natural semantic metalanguage's two most persistent conflations: (1) reflections on usage are analyzed at the expense of actual usage patterns and (2), confounding this, analysts' introspective imaginings about speakers' reflections on usage are analyzed at the expense of speakers' actual reflections. Wierzbicka assumes that speakers have perfect, unmediated knowledge of the patterns of their own linguistic usage. Anyone who has ever asked an informant to gloss the meaning of some linguistic element knows all too well the degree to which speakers misrepresent their own usage. Such reflections are, of course, key data in their own right, but only when systematically related to the way speakers actually use language—in real time, not interview time (and certainly not armchair time). In other words, if we want to analyze second-order reflections, we should ask the little boy to gloss his usage in his own language rather than have Wierzbicka do it for us—especially because the "experience-near" concepts that she calls for are best rendered in indigenous genres of metalanguage: poetry, ritual, proverbs, reported speech, caregiver registers, ethnolexicography, and so on. Lastly, we would have to relate speakers' understanding of their usage to their actual usage by way of a theory that takes into account the systematic relationships between language structure and linguistic ideology (Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998, Silverstein 1981). In short, not only does natural semantic metalanguage not provide a theory of semantics, it does not even offer a theory of ethnosemantics.

Assertions like Wilce's regarding what is and isn't "modern" are familiar by now: claims of false consciousness, reflexive stances, privileging psychological explanation, loss of faith in being able to represent "inner states," and so on. However, "modernity," as cannot be pointed out often enough, is a shifter—and a wily one

at that. For every scholar who wants to characterize some feature of "modernity" there is another scholar (usually with a deeper archive or a more generous reading of a source) waiting to contradict that characterization (see, for example, Callinicos [1990] for a critique of (post)modernist claims, Hacking [2002] on when language actually went public, Kelly and Kaplan [2001] on the shifter-like nature of "modernity," and Taylor [1989] on the deep genealogy and wide panoply of "modern" identities). In short, whether or not my arguments partake of the presuppositions of "modernity" (plus or minus any available prefix: pre-, post-, or a-) is not my concern.

Wilce suggests that, insofar as it depends on "20th-century modernist thought," linguistic anthropology "alienates the speaking subject from the only codes in which subjectivity can enter the realm of intersubjectivity." This is an astounding claim, and it is false. The purely linguistic literature on grammar and subjectivity is enormous. Rogue scholars such as Bakhtin, Benveniste, Goffman, Jakobson, Peirce, Sapir, Vygotsky, and Whorf (not to mention Freud and Heidegger) deftly swam in these waters. Trained in these traditions, linguistic anthropologists (a prototype category) such as Niko Besnier, Lisa Capps, Vincent Crapanzano, Thomas Csordas, Alessandro Duranti, William Hanks, Judith Irvine, John Lucy, Elinor Ochs, and many others have analyzed the relation between language and various modes of subjectivity: affect, deixis, selfhood, psychodynamics, cognition, embodiment, agency, personhood, and mental illness. A truly "reflexive account of linguistic anthropology" that takes into account the scope, depth, and above all diversity of this scholarship will write a much more complex genealogy of this discipline than the one based in "alienation" that Wilce suggests.

Lastly, Wilce implies that by shifting the focus from expressive indexical objects (or "internal states") to situational, social, and discursive indexical objects I have banished reference to emotions (and "subjectivity" more generally). Let me clarify what a minimal account of "emotion" must include. Most sophisticated accounts of emotions (cf. Averill 1980, Ekman and Davidson 1994, Griffiths 1997, Kovecses 1990) see them not as "internal states" but as the relatively systematic bundling of some combination of the following components: eliciting situation (e.g., threat or loss), physiological change (e.g., adrenaline or metabolism), reflexive signal (e.g., facial expression, recoil, interjection), subjective feeling (a.k.a. internal state), relatively controlled response (e.g., fight or flight), and second-order interpretations of this ensemble of components as relatively uncontrollable, subjective, and natural. No single one of these components is an "emotion"; rather, any "emotion" involves all of them. Moreover, despite Wilce's assumption that emotion is a subjective state (or putative psychological kind), the ethnographic record shows that second-order interpretations of this bundling are just as often rendered in moral, spiritual, and physical idioms as in psychological ones (cf. Levy 1973, Shweder 1994).

Understood in this expanded sense, my ethnography of the situational, discursive, social, and expressive indexical objects of interjections—along with local understandings of them—is a detailed account of one culture's way of experiencing "emotion." The next crucial step, as flagged in my final footnote, is to show the semiotic and social conditions under which speakers represent their own practices in terms of internal states. If there is one property that captures the uniqueness of being human, it is that our agency is both enabled and constrained by the fact that our first-order practices are never commensurate with our second-order understandings of them. To see the speaking subject at the intersection of these orders is the minimal account one needs to show that it is *intersubjects* (semiotic and social beings all the way down) who inhabit "subjectivity" through their *in*alienable possession of language—with all its tools, tricks, and charms.

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