CONSTRUCTING LATINX IDENTITY THROUGH LANGUAGE: CELEBRITY CODE-SWITCHING AND COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

**Bruno, Paulina
Ledesma, Carolina
Peralta, Nicolás Andrés
Group AII**

INDEX

IDENTITY

01

Identity is something people 'do' rather than something they have, and it consists of performances of self in different contexts, that is why we talk about the construction of an identity. We make choices about how we speak based on how we want to present ourselves.

02

People use language as a way to construct their identity depending on where they are, who they are with, what they are doing, etc. And, since we are part of various communities and groups, we enact our identities by participating in practices associated with these groups, such as eating the food, using the language, speaking with a particular accent, dressing in specific ways, etc.

Anya Taylor-Joy

She is an actress who constructs her identity as an Argentine woman living in an English-speaking country. In several interviews, she speaks about her time living in Argentina and her strong connection with the Argentine culture, even though she was born in the US.
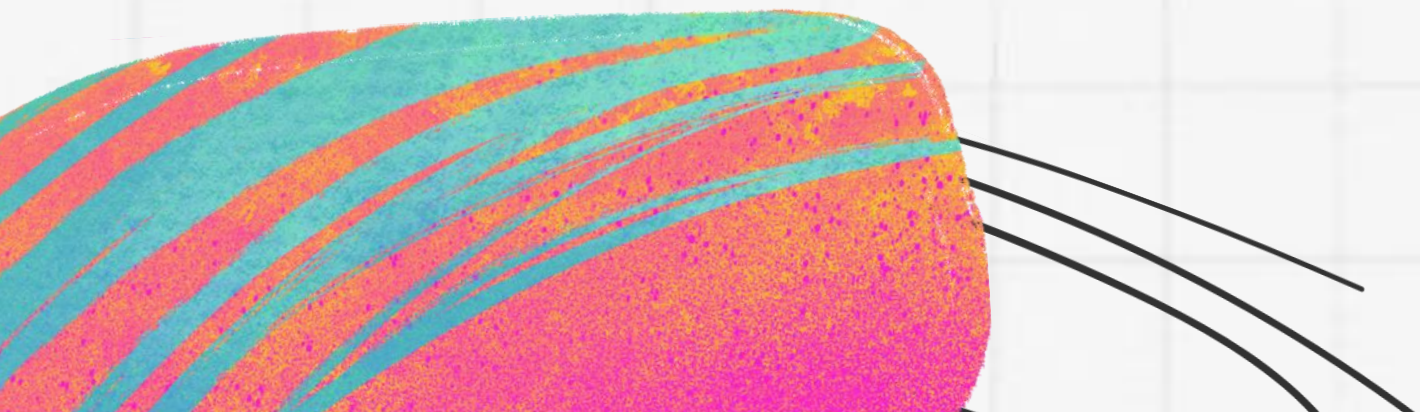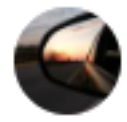
CODESWITCHING

Alternation or combination of different languages or varieties within a conversation or utterance.

The combining of resources drawn from across languages is another resource for constructing and performing identities.

A ustedes no les importa ¿No?

HOW ANYA'S IDENTITY PERFORMANCE IS PERCEIVED BY THE LATINX COMMUNITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Hugo TACCONI 😎
Podría haber intentado traducir el sabor pero no lo hizo porque así se llama. Excelente decisión.
2022-7-… Reply

Andrés J666
Amo como cambia de estadounidense a argentina en un segundo 😂
2022-4… Reply

COWBOY MATT (taylor's version)
"en mi lengua", ELLA MISMA LO DIJO 💋 REINA LATINAAA 💁
5-7 Responder
Ver 2 respuestas ⌄

Benicio Ahumada
cambio la nacionalidad en una sola palabra jajaja
2022-6-1 Reply
View 4 replies ⌄

_A_
Ella es la única que le acepto que sea Latina, porque ella si es latina de verdad porque vivió en Argentina. Not you Rachel Zagler
Hace 5 … Responder

nachito
paso de tomar té verde con 2 cucharadas y medias de azúcar con la reina Isabel a tomar unas birras con Eduardo el del maxikiosko
2021-12… Reply
View 2 replies ⌄

Ali1980
cuando se convierte en Argentina no tiene desperdicio. Es realmente argenta.
5-10 Responder

JENNIFER LOPEZ

She is a famous singer and actress born in the Bronx, a neighborhood in NYC with a large Latinx population. She identifies as a Puerto Rican because her parents were born there.

However, when she tries to speak in Spanish, she generally cannot express herself fully, and starts speaking in English.

HOW JENNIFER'S IDENTITY PERFORMANCE IS PERCEIVED BY THE LATINX COMMUNITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MistycMay
Si sos del Bronx sos de USA. Fin de la discusión
5-30   Responder

Nach
latina si apenas habla español.
5-30   Responder

Kris08B
latina versus una payasa q es latina cuando le conviene
2023-11...   Reply

gus
@monocromo_o
apropiación cultural: la que hace Jennifer López cuando dice que es latina y no ha pasado un mes entero viviendo en algún país de latam.

Elizabeth
oigan pero ella no es latina. porque nació en EEUU y sus papás son de Puerto Rico. osea que tiene de latina
5-30   Responder
Ver 1 respuesta ⌄

sfulaniyo
y jlo ¿que tiene de latina?
7-1   Responder

josefina¡¡
@jomoguri
amo hacer enojar a mi mamá fan n1 de jennifer lopez diciendole que jennifer lopez es una fake latina que se apropió del concepto latino para vender porque es una gringa más que con cuea sabe hablar español y probablemente no ha puesto ni un pie en america del sur
6:19 p. m. · 19 may. 2024 · **143** Reproducciones

Roberto Ramirez
@ColorRober
Jlo no es latina, toda su idiosincrasia es gringa, ni siquiera tiene el español como segunda lengua.
8:38 p. m. · 22 sept. 2024 · **93** Reproducciones

JENNA ORTEGA

She is an actress born in the US who claims Latinx heritage due to her Mexican and Puerto Rican grandparents.

However, although she tries, she is not fluent in the Spanish language.

HOW JENNA'S IDENTITY PERFORMANCE IS PERCEIVED BY THE LATINX COMMUNITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Malona 🐍
@malonakido

No me deja de aparecer el vídeo que la boluda esa le dice a Jenna Ortega "you are latina enough" y la otra tipo omgg😭 es tan ridículo, es como que cualquiera de los de acá que tienen apellido italiano se quieran hacer llamar italianos! NO HABLA EN ESPAÑOL como va a ser latinaaaa

7:05 p. m. · 18 sept. 2024 · **205** Reproducciones

JB¹⁶ 🌸 🇵🇷
@sabsleclerc

Jenna Ortega born and raised in "Palm Desert, California" but is apparently a latina

---

Chittaᴬᴿ

yo soy italiana pq tengo sangre italiana, pero no hablo italiano y tampoco sé nada sobre el país

2-28   Responder

> **Nico**
>
> entonces sos argentina y tenes origen italiano, igual que yo
>
> 3-1   Responder

ElKevinTrip

Dejen de decirle latina por favor 🙏🏼

8-25   Responder

Tonia

Qué feo que sus papás no le hayan enseñado español...

2023-9-... Responder

Ver 2 respuestas ⌄

---

julia ✨🍄 **cursed soul**
@wutheringcrime

Jenna Ortega es tremenda actriz, pero espero que no empiece a vender con eso de que es latina, porque no lo es. Estoy harta de que las gringas se inventen opresiones y lo vendan, porque siempre es para ser un producto más exótico e interesante.

9:06 p. m. · 5 dic. 2022

---

dani 🇻🇪
@whitewolvezs

los argentinos son más latinos que jenna ortega, gringa, el hecho de que sean blancos no les quita lo argentino así como el hecho de que jenna se apellide ortega y "parezca latina" no la hace latina, venga un besito

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

Language Ideologies are ideas about language structure and use, they can be about language in general, specific languages, specific language varieties or specific ways of using language. (...) Language Ideologies are not just individual opinions or impressions held by individual people, instead they are tied to societal values and norms.

In this case, there is a common belief, both within and outside the Latinx community, that people are not "Latinx enough" if they do not speak the Spanish language. This expectation to speak 'flawless' Spanish is often viewed as a way to demonstrate one's cultural authenticity.

'LATINO BOOM'

Jennifer Lopez and Jenna Ortega are criticized for indexing an identity that, according to Latinxs on social media, does not actually fit them.

It is often said that famous people perform these identities only because there has been a recent 'Latinx Boom' in music and culture and, in certain contexts, being Latinx is being celebrated and is something to be proud of.

For example, Jennifer Lopez released bilingual songs and she caters a wider set of consumers, not limiting her market to English-speaking people.

THE CASE OF ORDINARY NON-FAMOUS PEOPLE

The same happens with non-famous people, that is to say, it is also essential to speak Spanish fluently to acknowledge a Latinx identity whether the person is famous or not.
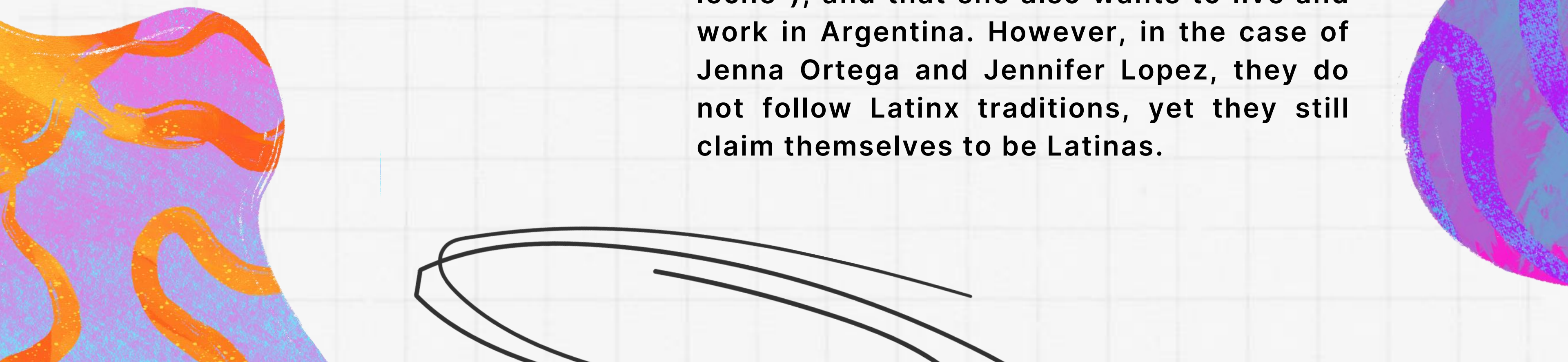
For example, in a study carried out by Shenk (2007), three friends discuss which one is more Mexican considering three different aspects. One of them states that being a Mexican involves being proficient in Spanish, another one states that ancestry is what makes a person Mexican, and the last one prioritizes birthplace and citizenship.

IS THEIR LATINX IDENTITY INFLUENCED BY THE DEGREE OF INTEGRATION INTO THE LATINX COMMUNITY?

No. These celebrities' own perception as Latinxs is not influenced by the degree of integration into the Latinx community because no matter what people say, they state that they feel Latinx.

Anya Taylor-Joy has declared in many instances that she likes to eat Argentine food (such as "empanadas" or "dulce de leche"), and that she also wants to live and work in Argentina. However, in the case of Jenna Ortega and Jennifer Lopez, they do not follow Latinx traditions, yet they still claim themselves to be Latinas.

THE IMPACT OF EARLY LANGUAGE EXPOSURE ON IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S PROFICIENCY

If immigrants' children who were born in an English speaking country are not exposed, in this case, to the Spanish language, they are less likely to develop proficiency in their biological parents' mother tongue.

Such is the case of Jenna Ortega, whose parents are Spanish speakers but she was raised speaking English and with a low exposure to Latinx cultural activities. Taking into account factors such as exposure to the language and the amount of interaction with native speakers, the culture, the age, an immigrant child can acquire a native-like accent in their early years of life.

CRITICAL PERIOD

If an immigrant arrives in the host country as an adult, it can be more challenging to pick up a native-like accent, but it is not impossible.

This is similar to what some Argentine young adults who have emigrated to other countries such as Italy without command of the Italian language are experiencing, since they have not acquired the language when they were children.

According to Lenneberg (1967), there is a critical period in which we can acquire languages easily and natively. After this period, acquisition seems to get harder.

TO CONCLUDE...

While Anya Taylor-Joy is embraced and celebrated by the Latinx community for her ability to connect with cultural and linguistic aspects, Jennifer Lopez and Jenna Ortega face criticism due to the societal expectation that fluency in Spanish is essential for authentic Latinx identity.

However, we can argue that although language is an important aspect of identity, it's just one of many factors, including ethnicity, cultural practices, personal experiences, ancestry, and individual self-perception.

REFERENCES

- **Fuller, Janet M. and Jennifer Leeman (2020). Chapter 4. Language Ideologies. Speaking Spanish in the US: The Sociopolitics of Language**

- **Fuller, Janet M. and Jennifer Leeman (2020). Chapter 6. Language and Identity. Speaking Spanish in the US: The Sociopolitics of Language**

- **Meyerhoff M. (2006). Chapter 7. Real time and apparent time. Introducing Sociolinguistics**