

GITANO CHILDREN JOKING IN INSTITUTIONAL AND INFORMAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

In this paper we analyze jokes told by *Gitano* (Spanish Gypsy) children in two different interactional settings: research interviews in schools and informal peer conversations. We examine these jokes drawing on tools from performance-oriented narrative analysis and examine how jokes as discursive sequences can be either textualized or oriented to performance in their production. In informal conversations jokes are usually understood as oral performances and educational institutions promote a textual orientation to discourse. By examining how *Gitano* children produce jokes that both fit these expectations and break them we examine how *Gitano* children deal with requirements of the institutional order and construe their relationships with adult researchers.

Keywords: Jokes - *Gitano* - Peer interactions - School Discourse

Introduction

In this paper we compare similar jokes told by Spanish *Gitano* (Gypsy) children during informal conversations in a peer group and during research interviews in a school setting. The center of the analysis is to examine some of the formal and functional transformations that jokes experience when told within an institutional adult-child interactional context. This is done with two research goals in mind. First, illustrate one form of entextualization and hybridization that jokes, an established primary genre in children's discourse, experience when moved into institutional settings. Second, discuss how this entextualization reveals aspects of *Gitano* children's experience with the discursive order of school. This examination rests on three theoretical and empirical strands of work that are briefly presented in this introduction: (a) the framework developed by Bauman and Briggs to examine intertextuality, (b) common characterizations of jokes in informal conversations in contrast to schools as discursive spaces, (c) *Gitano* children's experience in the Spanish educational system as a disenfranchised ethnic minority.

Genre and intertextuality in performance-oriented narrative analysis

Bauman and Briggs (Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Briggs and Bauman, 1992; Bauman, 2004) have developed an elaborate framework to examine the production and transformation of discourse stretches in relation to its identifiable generic conventions. In this framework genre is understood as "one order of speech style, a constellation of systematically related, co-occurrent formal features and structures that serves as a conventionalized orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse" (Bauman, 2004, p. 3). Each time a discourse fragment is produced, the speaker can calibrate how her/his utterances relate to its identifiable generic conventions. This calibration creates an intertextual gap between the generic framework and the particular generic instance that can be restricted or amplified through several mechanisms and with different effects.

Minimization of the intertextual gap occurs in what can be seen as 'conservative' discursive activity, where the particular realization of a text attempts to reproduce most expected formal and functional features of the genre it is associated with. Under these conditions, participants can interpret the resulting discourse and event making use of the conventional elements of the generic framework, reproducing the established ideologies and cultural expectations that

constitute the generic framework. Maximization of the intertextual gap takes place in situations where generic conventions are transformed and disrupted. This can happen through multiple procedures including the blending of different genres or the insertion of discourse formats with identifiable formal features in unexpected (or inappropriate) interactional settings. Maximization apparently leans towards the more 'creative' and explicitly strategic uses of language and, precisely by creating generic disruptions, tends to make more visible particular ideological and cultural expectations in relation to discourse. Nevertheless, both forms of intertextuality and their reproductive or transformative orientation involve strategic work on the part of speaker. What a performance-oriented form of analysis attempts to do is relate speaker's discursive work paying equal attention to more formal and internal linguistic elements of genre, the local conditions of the interactional event and the broader ideological, institutional and socio-political conditionings of discourse.

In relation to our data, this framework requires introducing several elements as background context. On one hand, what has been said about jokes as conversational genres and school as a discursive environment. On the other, a review of the socio-historical conditions under which our participants (Gitano children) operate in schools.

Informal conversations and institutional settings as joke-telling contexts

Bloome, Katz and Champion (2003) state that educational institutions work with dualist language ideology in which two conceptions of discourse stand in opposition. A first view of discourse (or narrative) *as text* favors internally coherent and decontextualizable forms of discourse, while a second view of discourse (or narrative) *as performance* favors grounding in the interactional event and the relationships among participants. This opposition reflects different theoretical traditions of narrative analysis (e.g. structural analysis such as 'high point analysis' or 'story grammar analysis' vs. work stemming from the ethnography of communication) and different ideological orientations to discourse that may be taken up by actors and institutions.

Within this opposition Bloome and colleagues as well as others (Collins, 1996) argue that schools favor and promote a textualist orientation to discourse. Students are expected and actively socialized to produce decontextualized forms of discourse which are ultimately tied to particular conceptions of literacy and literate language. Institutional routines and systems

of assessment promote this ideology and are often visibly successful in producing subjects capable of reproducing schooled forms of discourse.

Drawing on a different strand of work, the power of this institutional ideology can be seen in the way it permeates a wide variety of speech events and interactional situations that are not a routine part of schooling. Diadic adult-child interview situations, common in professional clinical assessment situations and research interviews within developmental psychology and psycholinguistics (all of which probably are construed as similar type of events by children) may be seen as an example of this. Aronsson and Hundeide (2002) argue that within research interviews, contrary to what is assumed by developmental research, children work with a “relational rationality” in which their responses and productions are designed to meet what they construct as adult’s expectations and intentions for the situation. That is, their responses may reveal more about their interpretation of the communicative event and their attunement to adult interviewers than their supposedly stable internal forms of reasoning or knowledge. If adults come into these interactional encounters with particular textualist language ideologies only certain types of responses on the part of children will be assessed positively and smoothly inserted into the interactional flow of research interviews. If these interviews take place within an educational setting and are not actively defined as distinctive events separate from institutional routines (which, in any case, may something very difficult to accomplish); then it is reasonable to believe that children may draw into these speech events their understanding and interpretation of institutionally mediated adult-child interactions and its definition of what constitutes an appropriate response.

While this conception of discourse is part of school institutions, Norrick (2004) and Sherzer (2002) suggest that jokes in informal conversations, their ‘natural habitat’, should be seen as *oral performances* and, therefore, in their production put into action quite a different set of discursive ideologies and expectations. Several converging features have been pointed out for jokes as conversational activity (Sacks, 1989, 1992; Norrick, 1993; Sherzer, 2002). First, jokes appear in rounds. When a person tells a joke, the rest of interlocutors in the conversation become candidate speakers to tell another joke. Second, when a joke appears in a conversation, the following turn is a test for joke comprehension. Thus, listener's identities, in terms of their world knowledge or cognitive abilities to understand the joke, can be at risk. Third, when a joke is produced, the audience evaluates (tests) the teller for its production. Thus, the speaker's identity can also be at risk, in terms of his or her capacity to produce

correctly in content and form a joke. The preferred response to a joke is laughter, which is usually taken as an indication of a positive assessment for all parties involved - for listeners, who by laughing appear understand the joke, and for tellers, who produced successfully a 'funny' instance of discourse. Consequently, absence of laughter will be marked as 'significant' by participants in different ways. Fourth, these traits highlight participant's sensitivity to superficial aspects of the joke telling (e.g. timing, punch-line delivery, laughter, etc.) as an oral production. Finally, socially jokes can have a cohesive function in peer group relations in a number of ways. They can enhance the joke-teller's status in the peer group if he or she is successful in producing jokes and they can strengthen in-group ties and shared knowledge when jokes are used as verbal aggressions (ritual or not) towards third out-group parties.

In short, we have two very different discursive domains (e.g. schools and informal conversations) in which initially different orientations towards discourse prevail, as expressed in their standards for particular discourse genres (e.g. narratives as text vs. jokes as performances). Arguably these domains have a number of 'resources' to promote and even enforce these orientations. However, under a number of circumstances speakers may not always comply with the expected discursive ideology. On one hand, as has been argued often in different ways (Hymes, 1996; Blommaert, 2005), being able to respond efficiently to the demands of a textualist or a performance oriented ideology requires a discursive repertory and experience that not all speakers may have to the same degree. On the other hand, complying with but more visibly going against the linguistic expectations of the setting and genre reflects speaker's capacity to strategically act within or even resist the expectations of particular discursive domains.

In other words, participants may *textualize* their productions when the setting and discourse genre would favor an orientation towards performance or, vice versa, may turn into *performances* their productions when the setting and genre favor textualism. Analytically, we can take these counter-associations as an achievement of interlocutors and scrutinize empirically the meaning and implications they have in each research situation. Within this framework, producing jokes as responses during institutional research interviews, which apparently is an inappropriate act of putting into contact antagonistic generic conventions, could be seen as particularly informative of speaker's resources. This question may be

especially relevant in the case of Gitano children, since their educational experience is very different than the one experienced by the majority of Spanish children.

Gitano children in Spanish schools

Gitano children in Spain are part of a marginalized ethnic minority that has a historically conflictive relationship with educational institutions (Enguita, 1999). Policy aims at enrolling all Gitano children in schools and allowing formal education to play the same socio-economic role it has for the majority population. However, in practice, a large majority of Gitano students are quickly placed in a variety of "special" educational programs and arrangements (compensatory education, vocational training, etc.). Also, some Gitanos attend 'Gitano majority' schools, usually in degraded urban areas - close to 2% of Gitano children may be enrolled in this type of schools (Alfageme and Martínez, 2004). Regardless of the intentions behind these policy and pedagogical arrangements it is clear that for Gitano students schools hardly meet any of the social-educational goals that are placed on them by the majority of Spanish society.

The causes and effects of Gitano student's experiences with formal education are complex problems that are well beyond the scope of this article. Here what we want to stress is that by placing Gitano children in various alternative and special programs or having them attend majority Gitano schools what occurs is that, in fact, these students end up not being exposed to 'regular' institutional routines and arrangements. Among other things, typical routines in schools allow for exposure to and participation in discourse formats (such as extended teacher recitation, Initiation-Response-Evaluation turn sequences, etc.) that the literature on classroom discourse suggests are pervasive in Western schools. Also, it is through routines and school's 'normal' work that their discursive ideologies are promoted. For example, one of the compensatory education teachers in the school where data were gathered (see below) described Gitano children's life in the school in these terms (Poveda and Martin, 2004, p. 417, field notes translated into English):

The teacher in the compensatory education class complains about the lack of interest that the rest of the teachers show, since in their classrooms they do not do anything about them or the Gypsy students are put simply to draw and

paint (...) She told me how teachers forget about their Gypsy students and let them go out to the halls and dance. She thinks the children do this as a result of their boredom with sitting down in class doing nothing.

If indeed Gitano students placement in alternative educational programs or simple neglect of their educational rights excludes them from participating in these regular routines, it may be possible to predict that Gitano children, more so than other type of students, will bring into the interactional order of school a discursive repertory developed elsewhere (in their community, family and peer interactions).

Given these conditions the research project this paper stems from was initially based on some revised ideas of the "home-school mismatch" research tradition and assumed as a starting point that Gitano children's language practices are unknown and not valued in school contexts. As a first step in documenting and working with these language practices we asked children to produce narratives of personal experience or stories they might have heard at home, using a variation of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic procedures - described below. Some children under these conditions produced what seemed to be well known jokes and in a first discussion of these results (Martín and Poveda, 20002) we argued that jokes appeared as hybrid productions drawing on different genres also produced by the children. For example, children began and closed a joke with typical Spanish story openings and closings, such as *Erase una vez* 'Once upon a time' or *Colorín, colorado, este cuento se ha acabado* 'Little color red, this story is finished' (a traditional Spanish story ending). In these instances it seemed that children's experience of discontinuity was not so much a question of not being able to participate in a particular interactional structure, but rather took place when the children produced texts that are usually not valued in school contexts and which only partially met the adult's initial demands - which were to produce a narrative, preferably of personal experience.

In later phases of the project we documented similar jokes told during informal peer group interactions, which allowed us to compare more systematically these two contexts of production. As we have advanced, our claim is that this second analysis may be especially useful to understand more about Gitano children's experience with school institutional encounters, since it is here where well documented properties of joke-telling in informal conversations are strategically transformed.

Method

The data of this paper are part of a larger research project focusing on Gitano children's language practices in various community settings. Here we present jokes produced in two situations. The first setting are research interviews gathered during the spring-summer of the year 2000 that initially attempted to replicate the narrative interview procedure developed by Peterson and McCabe (1983) for young children. In this format, in one-to-one interviews an adult attempts to elicit (through several questions, presenting a model narrative, etc.) personal narratives from children by requesting stories about accidents, frightful moments, etc. Our initial experiences showed that strictly adhering to this procedure did not produce good results so 'narrative interviews' were opened up to include varied situations such as interviews with couples or groups of children and broadening the request to other kinds of narratives (fiction stories, daily routine narratives, etc.), although we never explicitly requested jokes. The research interviews where jokes appeared were gathered at an urban school from a large city in Spain that we will call Urbana. The school was located in a working class district and the Gitano children attending this school lived in a shanty town located in the outskirts of the district. All the Gitano children that participated in this part of the study attended 'compensatory education' classes which were largely organized as pull-out groups from 'regular classes'. The children in this group ranged between 6 and 9 years of age.

The second setting are peer interactions in a mostly Gitano group of children which were gathered primarily during the summer of the year 2001. Language practices were documented primarily through linguistic ethnographic procedures which included extensive participant observation and audio and video recordings. The children in this network lived in a socio-economically and ethnically heterogeneous relatively new neighborhood in a small city in Spain that we will call Mid-City. The jokes gathered in this context took place during the informal conversations of the peer group in the plazas and parks where they spent several hours a day during the summer vacation period. The children in the larger network of the peer group ranged between 4 and 13 years of age.

Performing jokes in informal peer group conversations

In Mid-City children formed a broad age-heterogeneous peer network where relationships were based on kinship and residential proximity. During the summer, these children made

ample use of the public spaces surrounding their homes with very indirect adult supervision. This way of structuring social relations and using public space seemed more typical of Gitano children in the community (see Poveda and Marcos, 2005 for a broader discussion of friendship patterns in this community) but their choice of jokes or their performance in conversations did not show particularly ‘Gitano’ ethnolinguistic traits and some of the non-Gitano children of the peer group also participated in these linguistic practices. Rather, in this context joke-telling shared many of the cross-culturally documented traits discussed in the introduction. They appear in rounds, participants are oriented to laughter as a preferred response and joke telling is a highly evaluative activity.

Extracts 1-3 illustrate these traits. These instances took place in a round of jokes that the group of children began one night they had built a hut with wood, bricks and pieces of metal that they had collected from a nearby construction site. A group of about 6-9 children (since several come in and out of the ‘house’) was sitting inside or close to the cabin and at one point one of the older participants proposed telling jokes and the peer group begins a round of jokes that lasts over ten minutes.

When a child ends his/her joke presentation, everybody laughs and a following turn is opened for another child to tell a joke. In Extract 1, we see how one child begins to tell a joke after a turn of collective laughter which closed the preceding joke. There are several procedures to select the following teller in the round. In our example, Quique (11 years old) and Sehila (9 years old) compete for the telling of the following joke and they both self-select themselves as next speakers (lines 2-3), although it is finally, Quique who tells the next joke (lines 4 and 7):

Extract 1: Turn selection in a ‘round’ of jokes

Spanish original

- (...)
- 1 NIN: ((risas unánimes))
- 2 QUI: eh. mira eh uno
- 3 SEY: y yo me[se uno
- 4 QUI: [eh . eh eh y y y y va su padre y le manda a Jaimito a a comprar. [y dice
- 5 EZE: [ah ese yo me le se=
- 6 SEY: =y yo
- 7 QUI: y digo y . y va con dinero y le dice:: l'ice compra salchichas (...)

English translation

- (...)
- 1 NIN: ((group laughter))
- 2 QUI: eh. look eh one
- 3 SEY: I know [one
- 4 QUI: [eh. eh eh and and and and his father goes and sends Jaimito to the store. [and says
- 5 EZE: [ah I know that one=
- 6 SEY: =and me
- 7 QUI; and I say and. and he goes with the money and he sa::ys h'says buy sausages (...)

The joke is closed by the children bursting into laughter together when the joke is concluded. Laughter is the preferred reaction despite the fact that the children already know the joke, as made explicit at the very beginning of the joke telling (Extract 1, lines 5-6), and one child moved ahead of the joke by providing the punch-line before the official joke-teller presented it (line 13), as shown in Extract 2:

Extract 2: Laughter as joke closure

Spanish original

- (...)
- 11 QUI: y l::uego dice Jaimito . y luego dice Jaimito ALA QUE VOy a hacer. me ha dicho salchichas h luego coge unas tijeras y y se corta la picha . la lia y coge y dice TOMA PAPÁ y va su padre a comer y com uu dice UY QUE RICA [a ver cuando compras más (.) [eeh Jaimito
- 12 NIN: [jajaja ((bajo))
- 13 NIN: [cuando me crezca ((bajo))
- 14 QUI: y coge:: el Jaimito HASTA QUE NO ME CREZCA::
- 15 NIN: ((risas a carcajadas unánimes))
- (...)

English translation

- (...)
- 11 QUI: and l::ater Jaimito says. and later Jaimito says HEY WHAT AM I GOing to do. he said sausages h. later he takes a pair of scissors and he cuts his penis. he ties it takes it and says HERE DADDY and his daddy starts to eat and eat- uu says HOW DELICIOUS [let's see when you buy more (.) [uh Jaimito
- 12 NIN: [jajaja ((low))

- 13 NIN: [when it grows
back ((low))
 14 QUI: and Jaimito goe::s UNTIL IT DOESN'T GROW BA::CK
 15 NIN: ((all burst into laughter))
 (...)

A third trait of oral joke telling in informal settings is that participants (the children in the role of audience) evaluate, comment and correct the speaker's joke-telling. In Extract 3 below Sehila attempts to present a joke but then Quique and other children claim to also know the joke (lines 11-12). Then, Quique begins to interrupt Sehila with negative assessments (lines 14, 16 and 18) while she continues with her narration until he finally succeeds in taking the floor (line 20) and becomes the main teller of this joke. Once Quique becomes the main teller he produces a joke that does not alter the content or logic of the joke but rather changes the grounding of the characters: from three brothers to three of the participants in the setting. Quique is able to complete the joke but several participants continue to comment on his version and even provide different alternatives answers (line 30) that have other stylistic effects while they do not change the content or punch-line of the joke – note here that "David" is the researcher and the only adult (excluding the adolescents) in the group, so the reference to 'women' as David's request to the genie could be a form of verbal teasing on the part of Ezequiel.

Extract 3: Evaluation of joke telling skills

Spanish original

- (...)
- 10 SEY: -no el de el del (tres herm- hh) es que eran tres hermanos y se encuentran una lámpara mágica (.) lo
 frotan los tres y como la vís frotao los tres son tres de↑seos hh u::n deseo cada uno y ses . ice:: SUBIOS
 A UN TRAMPOLÍN Y POR EL AI↑RE. pedid un de↓seo . bueno de↑se↓o l °la picina llena (oro)
- 11 QUI: A YA [ya me lo se
 12 ELS: [a:: ya me lo se
 13 SEY: y el otro que se escurre [y va
 14 QUI: [no no es es así
 15 ELS: [y el otro se tropieza=
 16 QUI: no . es ↑a↓sí
 17 ELS: =y dicen (↑MIER↓DA)
 18 QUI: no es a↑sí

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19 NIN: ((varios solapándose, no se entiende))

20 QUI: es así, mira . es mm ↑van a la ↓pis↑ci↓na y se van a tirar ¿no? y y por ejemplo son e-el David, el Eliazar y el Ezequiel y y se van a tirar y sale y sale el mago y como de de cuando sos vayas a tirar a la::
[

23 ELS: [(a la grande

24 EZE: [por el aire por el aire=

25 QUI: =por el aire de dicís el deseo que queráis y:: y si va (halí). en la piscina. Y Y y va Eliazar) y se tira y dice °dice° ↑O↓RO . y sale oro . mm va el David y dice dice ↑PLA↓TA . y sale el plata

28 EZE: NOO[OOO

29 QUI: [Y VA EL EZEQUIEL

30 EZE: MU↑JE↓RES

31 QUI: no . y eh [dice plata iba el [Ezequiel y y y y=

32 SEY: [si

33 ELS: [a mí me lo han contado así como dice mi hermano

34 QUI: =se tira y co y coje y dice MIERDA . y toda la piscina llena de mierda

35 NIN: ((risas colectivas))

(...)

English translation

(...)

10 SEY: -no the one of the of the (three broth-hh) that there were three brothers and they find a magic lamp (.)
the three of them rub it and since the three of you have rubbed the lamp there are three wishes hh o::ne
for each and he 'sa::ys GET ON A DIVING BOARD AND IN THE A↑IR ask for a wi↓sh. ok I w↑ish↓
°t-the pool full of (gold)

11 QUI: OH YES [I know it

12 ELS: [o::h I know it

13 SEY: and the other one slips [and goes

14 QUI: [no no it's it's like this

15 ELS: [and the other one trips=

16 QUI: no it's like ↑this↓

17 ELS: =and they say (↑SHIT↓)

18 QUI: no its like ↑this

19 NIN: ((several children overlapping, non-transcribable))

20 QUI: it's like this, look it's mm ↑they go to the ↓pool↑ and they are going to jump right? and for example
they are the-e David the Eliazar and the Ezequiel and and they are going to jump and the genie comes
out comes out and like when it's it's you're' going to jump to the::[

23 ELS: [(to the big one)

24 EZE: [in the air in the air=

25 QUI: =in the air and you say' the joke that you want a::nd and he goes (there) in the pool AND AND and

Eliazar and he jumps and says °says° ↑GOLD↓and gold comes out mm the David goes and says
 ↑SILVER↓ and the silver comes out
 28 EZE: NOO[OOO
 29 QUI: [AND THE EZEQUIEL GOES
 30 EZE: WO↑MEN↓
 31 QUI: no . and he [says silver the [Ezequiel went and and and and=
 32 SEY: [yes
 33 ELS: [I've heard it like that how my brother says
 34 QUI: =he jumps and go-a and goes and says SHIT and all the pool full of shit
 35 NIN: ((collective laughter))
 (...)

In summary, these instances of jokes in a round show some of the apparently ‘unmarked’ traits of joke-telling in informal peer conversations. In these circumstances participants are oriented to jokes as a performed oral discourse genre. They are sensitive to the sequential organization of a joke and the moment at which each element should be produced (punch-line, laughter, etc.) even if these elements are not novel to the children. Also, as Extract 3 shows jokes are heavily grounded in the conversational event, tying the content of the joke telling to the identities and roles of participants in the conversation. Finally, joke tellers produce ‘oral performances’ of their jokes in the sense discussed in the ethnography of communication (Bauman, 1986; Hymes, 1981). They aesthetically manipulate the voicing, framing and timing of their joke telling and listeners are sensitive to this display of verbal skills. For example, among other reasons, Quique is more successful than Sehila in bidding and maintaining the conversational floor because he is perceived by members of the peer group (including Sehila) as a better joke teller.

More generally, in Mid-City children told jokes in a way that showed their alignment with a broader *child culture*. The class of jokes the children told: well known stock jokes, many of them with Jaimito (a recurrent protagonist of a whole saga of jokes well known in Spanish speaking countries) as the main character, indexed their participation in a cultural system that stretches beyond their local and ethnic community. This alignment is also a form of knowledge that children have and explicitly define as shared - as seen in the above fragments, where several children state they know the jokes and, yet, speakers are not deterred from telling it. This knowledge can be tested, a test that is especially relevant when directed at external participants, such as an adult ethnographer. When this happens, jokes are entextualized in different terms and experience what we have described as a textualization in

which the sequential structuring and generic framing of the joke is very different. Extract 4 shows an instance in which the 'sausage joke' already presented above is treated as declarative knowledge and textualized.

Extract 4: Textualization of a joke in the peer group

Spanish original

(...)
9 NAT: Sehila ¿contamos tu y yo un chiste (.) contamos (tu y yo) el de las salchichas?
(.) ¿David te sabes el de las salchichas?
10 DAV: claroo↓
11 NAT: ¿a ver como es?
12 DAV: pues que va la-el-la-el-le-el padre de Jaimito y dice Jaimito vete tu a la tienda a comprar (.) salchichas
[entonces Jaimito se gasta todo el dinero↑
13 NAT: [si-se las come-se las come y se las come por el camino y se cortó la picha
14 DAV: sí
(...)
((detrás continúan hablando de los tenderos y Sehila riendo))

English translation

(...)
9 NAT: Sehila you and me should we tell a joke? (.) (you and me) should we tell the one of the sausages? (.)
David do you know the one of the sausages?
10 DAV: of coourse↓
11 NAT: let's see how is it?
12 DAV: well that the-that-the-the-that Jaimito's father goes and says Jaimito you go to the store to buy (.)
sausages [and then Jaimito spends all the money↑
13 NAT: [yes-he eats them- he eats them and he eats them on the way and he cut
his penis
14 DAV: yes
(...)
((in the background they continue talking about the neighbors and shop owners and laughing))

In this extract the group of children is sitting on the stairs of a park making up stories about neighbors in the community and laughing constantly. In this humorous context, Natalia (7 years old) proposes telling jokes and tells a first Jaimito joke in collaboration with another girl. This first joke is not received with laughter by the group and, in fact, seems to quiet

down the chortling that was taking place in response to her stories about neighbors (all this not transcribed). After this first joke, Natalia moves up to David (the researcher), who is standing a few steps away holding a video-camera, and asks him if he knows the "sausage joke" (line 9) to which the adult responds affirmatively with confidence (line 10). This prompts a sequence in which the adult's knowledge of the joke is tested through what in fact could be seen as a variation of the well know Initiation-Response-Evaluation sequence in schools (Cazden, 1987). Natalia initiates the sequence requesting the joke (line 11), David begins to produce the joke (line 12) and Natalia overlaps with the production evaluating positively this knowledge and completing the sub-episode (line 13) with the adult ratifying that they both know the "sausage joke" (line 14). In this version of the joke, the punch-line is not produced, none of the participants (Natalia, David or the rest of the children who are close by engaged in a parallel conversation) react with laughter to the production of the joke and there is no follow-up with further jokes. There is agreement that both interlocutors are knowledgeable of the same joke even if they provide different versions of one of the episodes of the story (in line 12 the adult states Jaimito spent the money while in line 13 the child presents the version in which Jaimito ate the sausages).

What treating a joke in these terms seems to accomplish interactionally is related to the role of the adult in the peer group. The researcher confirms that he is knowledgeable of this part of children's oral cultures (i.e. the 'sausage joke' within the Jaimito saga) and, arguably, this contributes to establish a more symmetrical relationship between adult and children that is convenient in ethnographic fieldwork - within the limits that are unsurpassable in adult-child relationships during research (e.g. Mayall, 2000).

When jokes appear in the institutional context they also seem to experience a process of textualization. Yet, although they may have a similar interactional design to this last example, the social relationships that are established and the interactional consequences they have are very different. These contrasts are related to the institutional ordering of the interactive event.

Producing jokes in formal research interviews

In formal contexts, jokes appear as answers to researcher's requests for fiction or personal narratives. Under these circumstances jokes are produced within hybrid texts in which elements of different genres are blended (cf. Bauman, 2004):

Extract 5: Textualization of a joke in an institutional setting

Spanish original

- (...)
- 1 BEA: muy bien. a ver . ¿me cuentas algo?
- 2 NIN: el qué
- 3 BEA: pues cuéntame alguna ↑vez. que hayas pasado mucho mie↓do
- 4 (1.5)
- 5 NIN: XXXXXXXXXXXX una vez ↑no. que que que Jamito fue al . al . donde su madre
- 6 >y dice< mama mama. mama tengo hambre. veg ande tu. an veg ande tu padre.
- 7 padre padre. tengo hambre. veg an veg ande tu aguela.
- 8 aguela aguela. tengo hambre. veg ande veg ande tu aguelo.
- 9 aguelo aguelo. tengo hambre. veg ande tu hermano.
- 10 hermano hermano tengo hambre. veg ande tu hermano herma↓no
- 11 herma↑no tengo ↓hambre.
- 12 cogió. pa la tienda. y yy no había nada . donde la tienda.
- 13 pssese se metió al servi↑cio. se hse ((riendo)) cortó la ↑picha. la metió en un pa↑pel.
- 14 y así aluego la:: la be↑só. a ver cogió con papel y todo
- 15 y y y (ya ey). y dijo “cómo sabe esto”
- 16 y> colorín colorado este cuento se ha acabado<.
- 17 BEA: ah muy bien. pero ahora cuéntame ↑algo que te haya pasado a ti
- (...)

English translation

- (...)
- 1 BEA: very good. let's see. why don't you tell me something?
- 2 ELE: what?
- 3 BEA: well tell me about a time↑. when you have been very sca↓red
- 4 (1.5)
- 5 ELE: XXXXXXXXXXXX one time↑ right. that that that Jaimito went to. to. where his mother
- 6 >and says< mommy mommy. mommy I am hungry. go' where your. wh' go' where your father.
- 7 father father. I am hungry. go' wh' go' where your grandmother
- 8 grandma grandma. I am hungry. go' wh' go' where your grandfather
- 9 gradnfather grandfather. I am hungry. go' where your brother
- 10 brother brother I am hungry. go' where your brother bro↓ther
- 11 bro↑ther I am ↓hungry.
- 12 he went. to the store. and aand there was nothing. where the store.
- 13 hehe went into the bath↑room. he he ((laughing)) cut his ↑pennis. he put it in a pap↑er.
- 14 and like this and 'later he:: kiss↑ed it. let's see he took it with paper and everything

- 15 and aaand (then ey). and said “what a taste”
 16 and >little color red this story is finished<.
 17 BEA; ah very good. but now tell me something↑ that has happened to you
 (...)

Here, Elena (an eight year old girl), builds a narrative based on a variation of the ‘sausage joke’. The connection to this particular joke is possible thanks to the presence of its minimally necessary components: Jaimito as the protagonist and an eventual self-castration. Otherwise, the version departs significantly from any known variation of the joke and is structured generically more like a story. The narrative is opened and closed with traditional children’s story openings and closings: ‘Una vez’ (line 5) is a variation of *Érase una vez* a canonical literary opening in children’s stories and ‘colorín colorado este cuento se ha acabado’ (line 16) is a standard story closing that exploits rhyme before stating that the story is finished. The narrative is presented as a succession of episodes in which Jaimito seeks to be fed by members of his family and is repeatedly sent to other members of the family. This succession is produced in a very compact pattern of parallelisms in form and content summarized below:

Summary of the rhetorical design of the narrative in Extract 5

line	element	ordering: request and answer	repetitions
6	<i>mama mama. mama</i>	I (female)	3
	<i>veg ande tu. an veg ande tu</i>	1st	2
7	<i>padre padre.</i>	II (male)	2
	<i>veg an veg ande tu</i>	2nd	2
8	<i>agueta agueta.</i>	III (female)	2
	<i>veg ande veg ande tu</i>	3rd	2
9	<i>agueto agueto</i>	IV (male)	2
	<i>veg ande tu</i>	4th	1

10	<i>hermano hermano</i>	V (male)	2
	<i>veg ande tu</i>	5th	1
11	<i>herma ño</i>	VI (male)	1

Jaimito most often names twice his addressee and, in turn, is answered with a duplication of the command. Yet this pattern develops throughout the story with repetitions decreasing as they are unsuccessfully produced ('addressee in request' 3 → 1 and 'command in answer' 2 → 1). Content wise, Jaimito first approaches his mother and from this point he is apparently sent to all members of what in a traditional Gitano community would be labelled his 'roof', those members of the family that live or organize their daily life in the same domestic space 'under the same roof' (San Román, 1997). The circulation among family members is kinship and gender patterned: he first goes to his parents, then his grandparents and, finally, his siblings (which rhetorically are also coupled although this is not a structural necessity); in the first two cases first to the female provider and then male provider.

In summary, Elena produces an elaborate and compact narrative in which her discursive skills are put into action. However, the key question is to understand how this text is produced within a research interview and is related to the adult's request and is evaluated afterwards. As in Extract 4, the narrative is inserted in an IRE sequence in which adult and child uptake the more conventional turn distribution of this interactive structure: the adult initiates and evaluates and the child responds. Beatriz (lines 1-3) formulates a request for an emotionally charged narrative of personal experience and after a significant pause (line 4) Elena produces this Jaimito story (lines 5-16). Initially, Elena's story does not meet the interviewer's specific request but it does meet the researcher's broader objective of obtaining 'rich narrative data' for later analysis. In general, this larger goal and the rationale behind research interviews favors conditions in which adult's reactions and evaluations of children's productions will generally be positive and benign. In consequence, Beatriz's assessment is explicitly positive (line 17, *muy bien* 'very good'), although it is followed by a second request for a narrative of personal experience.

As explained above, joke-telling is supposedly a highly evaluative activity. In Extract 5, Elena produces a Jaimito story that in content and design departs significantly from known jokes in the saga and, in fact, eliminates the key humorous element in ‘Jaimito jokes’, which is based on Jaimito’s mischief and his ‘creative solutions’ to avoid adult’s reprimands - in this case, if anything, Jaimito is portrayed as a victim who has to castrate himself to satiate his hunger after each member of his family fails to nourish him. Given that the text is such a highly narrativized hybrid, in this sequence laughter probably would not signal the same interactional functions as in informal conversations (even though Elena produces laughter herself when introducing the narrative’s high point, line 13) and Beatriz’s positive assessment underscores the narrative aspect of the story rather than its efficiency as a joke.

However, since this research interview situation is not a natural context for joke telling, the adult’s reactions will continue to be overall positive even if the texts that are produced seem to be more ‘faulty’ rather than ‘creative’ versions of the joke:

Extract 6: Spanish original

- (...)
- 1 BEA: y ↓ese cuen↑to ↓quien te lo ha con↑tado
- 2 MAN: en música:
- 3 BEA: ¿en música? ay y te sabes al↑guno que te hayan contado en tu ca↑sa
- 4 MAN: n↑o↓ a s↑i↓i
- 5 BEA: ah pues cu↑entame↓lo
- 6 MAN: el de::: (1.5) °no me acuerdo de este ↑nom↓bre° (1) ↑m↓m (2) Jai↑mi↓to
- 7 BEA: ah ¿de Jaimito?
- 8 MAN: sss
- 9 BEA: cu↑éntame el de Jai↓mito
- 10 MA: hh [e
- 11 BEA: [¿quién te lo ha contado?
- 12 MAN: em: mi tío
- 13 BEA: a ver
- 14 MAN: este es Jaimito y le dice su ma↓ma (.)
- 15 hhh >Jaimito Jaimito ve a comprar< salchichas (.)
- 16 no hay (.) otra vez >Jaimito Jaimito< ve a comprar salchichas hhh
- 17 y aluego va ar zervicio (.) se corta la pichi:
- 18 y di aluego dice h ↑toma ma↑má ↓y aluego dice h la madre lag cose y dice (.)
- 19 digo la cocina y dice hh Jai↑mito es↑tá mu ↑ri↓co (.) ve ↑a com↓prar ↑más h ↓a
- 20 y dice Jamito (.) hasta que ↑no me creza ma↑má

21 BEA: an↑da::: (.) oye (.) ¿y algo que te haya pasado a ti? (.) quiet que:: lo hayas pasado muy bi↑én
 22 MAN: e:: pos (.) en gina↑sia ↓en ↑música ↓con Can↑dela y:::m (.) en el recleo y todo
 (...)

English translation

(...)
 1 BEA: and ↓that sto↑ry ↓who to↑ld you that story?
 2 MAN: in music ((class)):
 3 BEA: in music? ay and do you know a↑ny that they have told you at ho↑me?
 4 MAN: n↑o↓ a y↑e↓s
 5 BEA: ah well tell↑ it to me↓
 6 MAN: the one o:::f (1.5) °I can't remember this ↑na↓me° (1) ↑m↓m (2) Jai↑mi↓to
 7 BEA: ah a Jaimito one?
 8 MAN: sss
 9 BEA: tell↑ me the Jai↓mito one
 10 MAN: hh [e
 11 BEA: [who told it to you?
 12 MAN: em: my uncle
 13 BEA: let's see
 14 MAN: this is Jaimito and his mo↓mmy says (.)
 15 hhh >Jaimito Jaimito go buy< sausages
 16 (.) there aren't any (.) again >Jaimito Jaimito < go buy sausages hhh.
 17 and 'later he goes to the 'bathroom (.) he cuts his penis:
 18 and he sa-'later he says hh ↑here mo↑mmy ↓and 'later the-the mother tak'es them and says (.)
 19 I mean (she) cooks it and says hh Jai↑mito it'↑s very ↑deli↓cious (.) go ↑buy↑more
 20 and Jaimito says (.) until it ↑doesn't grow mo↑mmy
 21 BEA: w↑e:ll (.) listen (.) and something that has happened to you? (.) that-y that you:: had lot's of fun↑
 22 MAN: e:: well' (.) in g↑ym in↑music ↓with Can↑dela a::nd (.) at recess and everything
 (...)

Manuela is a nine year old Gitano girl who has just finished telling a story and Beatriz is trying to know where she learned it (lines 1-2). Given Manuela's answer, Beatriz asks for a story learned at home (line 3) and after some hesitation Manuela proposes a 'Jaimito story' (line 6). The adult accepts this choice (line 9) and listens to the full presentation of another version of the 'sausage joke'. In the standard versions of this joke (of which we have seen parts in Extracts 1, 2 and 4), Jaimito is sent by one of his parents to buy sausages to the store and is given some money to do so, but during the time on the errand he either spends the

money and is not able to buy the sausage or eats the sausage himself. To solve this problem he cuts his penis and presents it to his parents as the sausage. His parents cook and eat the sausage, find it delicious and ask Jaimito “when can he buy more”. This produces Jaimito's answer, which is the closing punch line of the joke: he replies that they will have to wait until “it grows back”.

In Extract 6, Manuel produces an unusual variation of this joke in which the mother repeatedly asks Jaimito to buy sausages even though Jaimito has replied that they are not any at the store (lines 14-16). Finally, to meet the mother's request Jaimito goes to the bathroom and cuts his penis and the joke continues in the expected way (lines 17-20). In contrast to Extract 5, this version does not seem to be an elaborate alternative narrative and lacks formal elements that would contextualized it as such. Rather, it is simply a version of the joke in which one of the elements that contributes to the punch-line, Jaimito's initial mischief (by spending the money or eating the sausage) is missing, and therefore the final punch-line lacks part of its force. As we saw above, in informal joke sequences, laughter would signal positive uptake and performance of the joke whereas problematic omissions in the production would be reacted to immediately with interruptions and negative assessments. In this interview context we see neither, Beatriz's reaction can be considered a neutral, but accepting, feedback turn followed by another request for a story (line 21). The researcher follows the same procedure as in the previous example, with the main variation being in the intensity of the assessment. In other words, the joke is textualized and inserted in a typical institutional and school-like IRE sequence in which Manuela's joke-telling is uptaken as an 'adequate' realization of the narrative/story text format that the adult is requesting during this interview.

These two examples show researcher's reactions to the ‘jokes’ that could seem more benign than those predictably produced by peers in informal situations if they were confronted with similar versions. Yet, in fact, this sequential arrangement reinforces the institutional nature of the exchange and the asymmetrical relationship between child and researcher. What the adult evaluates in these cases is not if each child has produced a 'good' or 'bad' instance of a joke (a test to which the adult could also be put in later turns of the same event) but if the instances produced by Manuel and Elena meet a set of task requirements that have been defined solely by the adult. Admittedly, the ‘task requirements’ are much more loosely defined than regular school curricular activities. In terms of format, eventually, any stretch of discourse is valid empirical data and, content wise, the researcher allows sexual and scatological themes to be

presented. Nevertheless, it is the child who has to disentangle the adult's intentions and ambiguous requests and provide candidate answers in light of his/her interpretations (i.e. it is the child who puts to work his/her relational rationality as defined in the introduction). Textualization as an orientation to discourse and production format allows for this, it permits focusing on discourse as an object and assess it in its own terms without having to incorporate immediately the particular identities and interactional relationships of the participants. The above examples show the children complying with this discursive ideology which allows unmarked and recurrent forms of institutional discourse to unfold.

However, this cooperation can be broken down. In fact, such a breakdown may even emerge unexpectedly when a joke is inserted in such a way that some of its informal traits as oral performances are recuperated. If this happens in an institutional setting, several of the elements that we have seen so far as indexing children's acquiescence with institutional constraints may be problematized. Extract 7 shows a complex case of a joke performance during the research interviews:

Extract 7: Performing a joke during a research interview

Spanish original

- (...)
- 1 AND: eee ((chasquéa la lengua)) esto son tre::s hombres que van por el desi↑er↓to (.)
- 2 era hh uno gitano uno quinquillero y uno °payo°
- 3 BEA: y ↑U::N
- 4 AND: >payo< hh y dice::l >gitano< (.) ↑pon↓pon unabitaciónparatrespersonasestaocupa::↓da
- 5 hh el viñiquin-qui-lloero hh ↑pon↓pon unabitaciónparatrespersonasestaocupa::↓da hh
- 6 y aluego °el payo° ↑pon↓pon unabitaciónparatrespersonasestaocupa::↓da hh
- 7 y aluego otra >vez el gitano< ↑pon↓pon unabitaciónparatrespersonas hh mi::ra: (.) mira mi (diente)
- 8 ↑JA pues mi↓ra el mí↑o hihhi ((risas))
- 9 BEA: no lo entien↑do
- 10 AND: mia
- 11BEA: ¿me lo explicas?
- 12AND: ¿otra vez?
- 13BEA: si, no pero me lo::tienes me tienes que decir ↑que quieres de↓cir porque ↑yo no lo en↑tiendo
- 14AND: y otra vez es el gitano ↑pon↓pon unabitaciónparatrespersonas (.) esta ocupá hh eh
- 15 y dice::: el (.) y dice (.) mira:: mira mi (cien)>dibujao< pues ↑mira ↓el ↑mío
- 16BEA: ¿y eso por qué?

- 17AND: por que zı porque es un chis↓te y aluego hh (????) ↑pon ↓pon
 18 unabitaciónparatrespersonas °está° (.) hhh mira (.)
 19 y le dice (.) ((agrava la voz)) mira:: mira mi pelo >jau< pos mira el mío ↑m↓m ((especie de risa))
 20BEA: a eso-y ↑eso qui↓en el gi↑tano
 21AND: en [en
 22BEA: [el ↑payo
 23AND: °si° hh y el quinquillero es el de °(¿?)° hh y dice ↑pon↓pon unabitaciónparatrespersonas estaocu hh
 24 y le dice ((agrava la voz)) mira:: (.) mira:: (.) espera a ver si ma cuerdo
 25 (1) mira:: mi↑ra mi ca-mi oreja mira mi ↓ca (.) mira mio cara (.) ↑JA pues ↑mira la ↓mía ↑m
 26BEA: h↑hhh ((risa))
 (...)

English translation

- (...)
 1 AND: eee ((clicks his tongue)) these are thre:: men who are going through the de↑sert↓ (.)
 2 one was hh. *Gitano* one was *quinquillero* and one was a °payo°
 3 BEA: and ↑O::NE
 4 AND: >payo< hh he sa::ys I'll go: >gitano< (.) ↑knock↓knock oneroomforthreepersonsit'soccupi::ed↓
 5 hh the goi-quin-qui-lloero hh ↑knock↓knock oneroomforthreepersonsit'soccupi::ed↓ hh
 6 and later °the payo° ↑knock↓knock oneroomforthreepersonsit'soccupi::ed↓ hh
 7 and later again >the gitano< ↑knock↓knock oneroomforthreepersons hh lo::k (.) look at my (tooth)
 8 ↑JA well lo↓ok at mi↑ne hihhi ((laughs))
 9 BEA:I don't understand ↑it l
 10 AND: look'
 11 BEA:can you explain it to me?
 12AND:again?
 13BEA: yes, no but you have to:: tell me ↑what you mean↓ because ↑I don't un↑derstand it
 14AND: and again it's the gitano ↑knock↓knock oneroomforthreepersons (.) it's occupied' eh
 15 and he sa::ys (.) and he says (.) lo::k at my (one hundred)>painted< well ↑look ↓at ↑mine
 16 BEA:and why is that?
 17AND: because yes because it's a jo↓ke and later (????) ↑knock ↓knock
 18 oneroomforthreepersons °it's° (.) hhh look (.)
 19 and he says (.) ((deep voice)) loo:k at my hair >jau< well' look at mine ↑m↓m ((a small laugh))
 20BEA: 'and that- and ↑that who↓ the gi↑tano
 21AND: in [in
 22BEA: [the ↑payo
 23AND: °yes° hh and the quinquillero is the one °(¿?)° hh and he says ↑knock↓knock oneroomforthreepersons
it's occup hh

- 24 and he says ((deep voice la voz)) loo:::k (.) loo:::k (.) wait let's see if I' remember
 25 (1) loo:::k look↑ my fa-my ear look at my↓ fa (.) look at mine face (.) ↑ JA well ↑look at ↓mine ↑m
 26BEA: h↑hhh ((laugh))
 (...)

Here Andres, an nine year old boy, tells a joke that falls within the interethnic joke genre (Sherzer, 2002). Although we have not been able to disentangle the details of its content (which eventually is Andres' interactional goal, so he is successful in this respect), it involves comparisons between a Gitano, a *quinquillero* and a *payo*. 'Quinquillero' is a derogatory label used by Gitanos to designate people who, while not being "racially" Gitano, live in similar conditions as some Gitanos; more specifically people who live in shanty towns and share similar marginal occupations. 'Payo' is label, ranging from neutral to derogatory, used by Gitanos to designate non-Gitano Spaniards. The purpose of the joke is to show the Gitano character's better wit or skills to solve the problem of the joke, which in this case seems to be related to securing a hotel room in the middle of the desert. The joke is clearly told from the perspective of a Gitano teller (e.g. the lexical labels used to designate each protagonist are Gitano-based) and would have the social cohesive functions that these jokes can play if told in a context where all interlocutors were from similar ethnic origin. However, this is not the case. Andres is a Gitano child and Beatriz is a payo adult and this interaction is taking place in an institutional context where participants have an asymmetrical relationship. Under these circumstances, in the absence of other framing conditions, the joke could be considered insulting or at the very least inappropriate.

As soon as Andres begins to tell the joke there are indications that he becomes aware of some of the risks associated with his choice for a joke. In line 2 he enumerates the characters stating the first two characters clearly (Gitano and quinquillero) but visible lowers his speech when he mentions the third one (payo). In reaction to this change the adult requests a clarification (line 3), and Andres quickly repeats the last token (line 4) and continues with the joke. The joke is structured around three parallel sequences involving onomatopoeia (knocking on the hotel door: 'knock knock' *pon pon*) and dialogue in which each of the protagonists requests a room for the three of them and are answered that there are not any available (lines 4-6). Finally, the Gitano character makes a fourth request, his second in the story, accompanied with 'something else' (which we are not able to determine) that supposedly makes him

succeed (lines 7-8). The punch-line and closing of the joke is the Gitano protagonist's retort and that they obtain the room remains implied (line 8 in the first version).

As said, Andres has realized early on that the joke is potentially inappropriate but he does not choose to repair the situation by aborting the telling and moving on to some other topic or narrative. Rather, his 'solution' is to obscure the content of the joke by manipulating elements of the performance of the joke. He produces the dialogue at a very fast pace, mumbles the final exchange involving the Gitano character and leaves the resolution out of the telling. In this way, although the narrative involves different ethnic characters it is not clear how they are finally positioned in relation to each other and the problematic Gitano-payo relationship is not articulated. However, there is a shortcoming in this strategy: as he completes this first version he closes the joke with laughter (line 8). This closing creates the conditions for a reaction on the part of Beatriz, which in this case is uptaken (cf. Extract 5), but instead of aligning with the laughter Beatriz explicitly states that she does not understand the joke, moving the interaction in another direction which may be equally problematic.

As we said in the introduction, for a joke the expected response on the part of Beatriz would be laughter, which would indicate she appeared to understand the joke and was not offended by its ethnic content (therefore, disconfirming the child's initial 'fear'). Alternatively a positive assessment similar to the previous two examples would textualize the instance in similar terms and with the same interactional consequences. Another possible reaction would be some form of disapproving move on the part of Beatriz, which would indicate she understood the joke but does not align with its content or stance (e.g. in multiethnic educational settings interethnic humor can be considered especially inappropriate). In contrast, the adult's reaction is to state that she did not understand the joke (line 9) and make an explicit request for clarification (line 11). Supposedly, this is the most face threatening response for the recipient of joke (since she admits her incapacity to understand it) and in peer interactions may invite playful banter from the joke-teller and other members of the audience (e.g. Sacks, 1989). The setting and relationship (Beatriz and Andres are not peers) does not allow for this banter. In fact, the institutional ordering of the relationship is visible in how responsibilities are eventually distributed: even though it is the adult who has not understood the joke she can request (line 11) or even command (line 13) a reformulation, defining the problem as located in the production not the reception of the joke.

Under these conditions, practically the only viable alternative for Andres is to reformulate or explain the joke. This is especially inconvenient for Andres, since potentially it will be more difficult to continue obscuring the content of the joke in successive clarifications and reformulations. In comparison to previous examples from this setting where we saw children complying with the adult's request, we can also scrutinize if Andres cooperates with the interviewer's demands given these different circumstances.

Andres' actions during each of the successive clarifications of the joke suggest that, within his range of options, he resists this development. When Beatriz recycles and upgrades her first request, Andres questions this need ('again?' line 12) and when he finally repeats the final part of the joke he again mumbles and speaks quickly (lines 14-15). In turn, Beatriz explicitly asks for an explanation (line 16) but Andres does not comply stating the self-evident ('because it's a joke', line 17) and produces another version of the final exchange and punch-line (lines 17-19) which on this occasion he closes with much more subtle laughter. It is reasonable to expect that Andres would laugh less in each successive telling of his joke but this decrease in laughter on the part of the joke-teller also makes less relevant an equivalent reaction on the part of Beatriz - which was what caused the original 'trouble'. Beatriz continues introducing more indirect confirmation moves (lines 20 and 22) and Andres provides a third version of the final exchange of the joke, hesitating and correcting his telling and without laughter in the closing (lines 23-25). At this point of the narrative, Andres has provided three different endings and, as a result, it is not even clear which of the three protagonists said the key lines; yet it is at this moment where Beatriz reacts with laughter to the joke (line 26). As a preferred next-turn to a joke, laughter closes the sequence. However, in this case it does not imply that the adult has finally understood the joke or found it funny. Rather, it simply closes a sequence, by providing the canonical closing move of a performed oral joke telling sequence, which was not meeting any of the communicative expectations of the conversational setting. Andres is obviously not looking to 'have some laughs' with Beatriz and the discourse stretch he is producing does not meet the textual requirements the adult is looking for in the interview (broadly defined as comprehensible and coherent narratives).

In summary, in this example Andres neither fully performs competently a joke nor does he produce a coherent text. This undefined outcome is the result of Andres' turn by turn attempts to manage the interpersonal consequences that he perceives the telling of this joke, of interethnic content, can have in this setting. In this respect he is strategically successful but

the elements he can manipulate to achieve this are in the domain of performance and by doing this some of the traits and expectations of 'jokes as oral performances' are brought into interaction (such as the role of laughter, the relationship that is established between teller and recipient, etc.). This leads to a different emergent definition of the conversational episode and the relationship between adult and child that the one established in other institutional sequences.

To summarize, the full range of examples provides a portrait of how Gitano children use jokes as conversational genres in different contexts and especially of how they are transformed in institutional contexts. In the conclusions we discuss some of the broader implications that this analysis might have.

Conclusions

We have presented the production of jokes by Gitano children in two very different interactional settings. On several occasions the children produced 'joke-tokens' of the same 'joke-type' (different versions of Jaimito's 'sausage joke'). This has had several analytical advantages. First, it permits examining these variations drawing on a well articulated framework, proposed in the work of Bauman and Briggs, to study genre, performance and intertextuality. Second, it allowed us to examine the sequential and social conditions that configure these variations in what can be considered natural linguistic ethnographic experiments in which similar discourse sequences are observed under different social conditions. Our general claim is that informal peer conversations are the primary setting for joke telling and here they follow well established and accessible procedures in children's and youth peer cultures that are radically transformed when these jokes are inserted in formal research interview sequences. That this transformation occurs is not surprising. However, our argument is that the particular ways in which these transformations take place is informative about Gitano children's larger experiences with educational institutions. In other words, contrary to what certain forms of ethnographic reasoning might expect, joking in institutional settings has proved more revealing about Gitano children's ethnolinguistic resources and the way their socio-cultural background reveals itself through discourse than what was observed in peer interactions.

Formally, jokes in the institutional setting are not the expected response to adult's initiations and when they appear many of the traits that characterize them as an oral informal genre are lost (what we are calling textualization). In fact, the transposition of performance-oriented elements (Extract 7) in a formal context creates interactional problems. Thus, the question is what do these insertions reveal about the participating children's sociolinguistic competence? A simplistic answer would be to say that they are incompetent, they fail to provide the expected type of answer (i.e. narratives of personal experience) and the text they produce, given the institutionally mediated transformations that they experience, are not even directly informative about their 'vernacular' practices. More broadly, children's answers of this type would be highly problematic in language assessment procedures based on narrative discourse (cf. McCabe and Rollins, 1994) and in general, they have little value in educational settings. Such an interpretation, which unfortunately is reached too often, would underscore Gitano children's deficits and limited skills in producing more elaborate forms of language and discourse and, in fact, serves as a justification of the remedial and compensatory approach that is often taken with Gitano students.

A radically different answer would be to claim that these children are very competent and, having understood and identified the intentions of these institutional speech events, they subvert them by providing answers that do not fit with the researcher's expectations and intentions and 'sabotage' the researcher's work. Further, inserting jokes allows the children to knowingly introduce sexual and scatological themes that are normally censored in schools in an encounter they clearly understand as 'low-stakes' in the institutional order. In other words, these instances could be interpreted as moments of resistance where children reflexively manipulate the constraints of the institutional order in which they are inserted by breaking down certain expectations of the interactional order (cf. Heller and Martin-Jones, 2001).

Mid-way is the interpretation we think is most plausible. In Blommaert's (2003) terms they are *orthopractic*. Jokes are inserted in sequential structures that are generically school-like and put these sequences in practice but do so by inserting text types that do not fit the usual expectations of these sequences. In this way, jokes are Gitano children's 'best available choice' to comply with the adult researcher's demands and put reflect children's relational rationality in this setting. Yet, paraphrasing Blommaert (2003) "the orthopraxy observed [in the institutional research interviews] is not necessarily an expression of resistance, but one of inequality: [children] behave *as if* they have control over [school] resources, but not because

they reject these elite resources. They do so because they have no access to [school] resources” (p. 45). In the introduction we attempted to summarize some of the organizational and educational conditions that create institutional barriers for Gitano children to access these resources. This potentially has an effect on the sociolinguistic repertory these children acquire and ultimately bears on their educational and social opportunities. These conditions are relatively well documented in several studies of Gitano children’s life in schools. Here we have shown how they are also made visible during interviews done by committed researchers who, precisely, attempted to liberate momentarily children from these constraints and allow them to produce more ‘vernacular-like’ language practices. Obviously, in retrospect, this was a rather naive approach and what the children produced indexed directly their institutionally mediated reading of the episode. Yet, this particular ‘reading’ can only be interpreted fully if we can also document what children bring into the interactional episodes and this was possible by moving out of schools and tracing some of the intertextual connections between jokes and joke telling in different settings.

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