Castro's Shifters: Locating Variation in Political Discourse

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1 Introduction

Seminal work and more recent work in linguistic anthropology has focused on personal pronouns as among the clearest examples of the pragmatic-indexical function of language, in Peirce's (1955/1897:102) sense of the index as "a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object," or a sign whose referential value derives from the context of the speech situation. Silverstein (1976:29), following Jakobson, calls pronouns "shifters": that is to say, their value is not purely referential, because their scope of reference is not fixed; rather, pronouns are "referential indexes" whose values are "constituted by the speech event itself." Silverstein also writes that "the meaning of … shifters involves a presupposition of the 'existence' of, or cognitive focus on, some specific value in the domain of variables of the speech situation" (25). Indexical meanings depend on spatio-temporal contiguity of sign vehicle (the pronoun) and object denoted (the person or people), in discourse if not in actuality. To put the issue in simpler terms, as Benveniste (1971:218) frames it, "What then is the reality to which *I* or *you* refers? It is solely a 'reality of discourse,' and this is a very strange thing." In other words, "I," "you," and "we" are shifters because their meaning or referential value cannot be determined independently of context, and is constantly shifting with the circumstances of the speech situation.

Because pronouns are shifters by nature, it has been argued that they are especially susceptible to manipulation by individual speakers (Wilson 1990). The first person plural pronoun "we" has a special status in the linguistic anthropological literature, since it seems both to "encode a subjective sense of belonging, of membership in a larger entity" (Urban 1996:44) and to "impl[y] a not-'we,' an exclusion of some as against others" (55). There is a sense, then, in which "we" can be both inclusive and exclusive, a distinction some languages have grammaticalized in different first person plural pronouns (Nichols 1992). Urban (1996:45) observes that "manipulations can result in changes to the patterns or regularities in 'we' usage" over time. In this study, we have attempted to track changes in patterns of first person plural reference in one speaker's public discourse over five decades. To investigate this issue systematically, we coded each first person plural active verb form in our sample according to referent for "we", and performed simple quantitative analyses on the resulting data.[1] In doing so, however, we realized the limitations of a quantitative approach to the study of pronominal use: the shifters we kept trying to fix for the purposes of our research refused to stay still, remained stubbornly ambiguous, and showed evidence of the "manipulations" about which the literature had warned us. Our results are intriguing, if inconclusive, and raise difficult questions about whether quantitative approaches alone are adequate for locating and describing variation in discourse.

Political speech is fertile ground for researching the inclusive and exclusive aspects of "we" usage and its potential for manipulation by speakers. The official government transcripts of Fidel Castro's major speeches[2] provide a rich set of data that spans five decades from 1959 to the present. Initial readings of the transcripts revealed Castro's prominent use of first person plural (Sp. *nosotros*) verb forms, and suggested that first person plural reference varied to a considerable degree. The purpose of this study was to find out whether this variation might be systematic, namely whether Castro's possible manipulations of "we" usage might show change over time, and what this might tell us about Castro's self-positioning during different eras of the Cuban revolution.

After coding tokens of both (unmarked) first person plural verb forms and (marked) first person plural subject pronouns (since Spanish is a PRO-drop language) by referent, we did not find a consistent pattern across all five decades, but we did see striking differences from decade to dec-

[1]Although excerpts from our data may include first person plural possessive (*nuestro/a*) and object clitic (*nos*) forms, we counted only unmarked first person plural verbs (e.g., *hablamos* 'we speak') and first person plural verbs with marked subject pronouns (e.g., *nosotros hablamos* 'we speak') in our analysis.

[2]http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/discursos

ade. Different patterns of first person plural reference are related to the historical moments at which Castro delivered the speeches. We cannot make claims about discrete "eras" of Cuban history based on the speeches in our sample, but are simply looking at changing patterns of pronominal reference across time. However, in shifting referents for "we," Castro does respond to changes in the political and economic climate that impinge upon the health, and potentially even the survival, of revolutionary Cuba. This finding led us to incorporate insights from the literature of semiotic anthropology in our discussion, extending Greg Urban's (1989, 1996, 2001) work on first person pronominal reference to show how shifting first person reference interacts with a specific discourse feature, the litany of complaint, to allow Castro to "voice" revolutionary Cuba successfully in each decade, in the face of diverse threats to his authority and legitimacy.

It is important to point out that the focus of our study was not a sociolinguistic variable. Rather, this was a form-based study, in which we identified a number of referents for a single grammatical form (the unmarked and marked first person plural.) Our approach is therefore somewhat unorthodox by the standards of both sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Nevertheless, we think our findings have implications for the study of variation in discourse, as well as for our understanding of the discourse-level processes that facilitate self-positioning in political speech. Our analysis complements the classic literature on the nature of pronouns.

2 Methodology

Broadly speaking, Castro's first person plural referents fall into three categories. First, he uses the first person plural in what we term an "ordinary" sense to refer to a specific group of individuals, present either at the speech event or in the discursive context:

(1) *Me recuerdan que **tenemos** aquí algunas delegaciones extranjeras* (11/22/91). 'They're reminding me that we [who are present] have here some foreign delegations.'

This form occurs only rarely in Castro's speeches, and though we noted it during our coding process, we eliminated tokens of ordinary *nosotros* and unmarked ordinary "we" verbs (as in the above example) from our analyses, as our primary interest was comparing patterns of reference in the remaining categories. Second, Castro uses the first person plural to refer to the Cuban government, people, or nation as a whole. We call this "collective 'we'":

(2) *No **estamos** en el capitalismo, **estamos** en el socialismo* (4/29/92). 'We [the Cuban people] are not [engaged] in capitalism, we're [engaged] in socialism.'

Finally, Castro uses *nosotros* and unmarked "we" verbs to refer to himself alone. We call this "personal 'we'":

(3) ***Sabemos*** *cuantas horas llevan Uds. ya de pie en esta plaza. Les **pedimos** sólo un esfuerzo más* (5/1/80). 'We [I] know how many hours you've already been standing in this plaza. We [I] only ask you for a bit more effort.'

As our sample has only one speaker, speaker variation is controlled. We decided not to take a random sample from the transcripts of Castro's speeches because the speech situation varies considerably by occasion. On a given day, Castro might have inaugurated the opening of a new hospital, celebrated the accomplishments of a group of fishermen in a provincial town, or addressed a large crowd (and, by extension, the entire nation) in Havana on a national holiday. To control for factors having to do with the speech situation, we decided to examine the speeches Castro gave on the annual commemoration of the pre-revolutionary attack on the Moncada garrison (on July 26, 1953). We selected Moncada speeches at ten-year intervals from 1960 to 2000 and coded each instance of unmarked or marked first person plural in verbal subject position (see note 2). However, since the 1960 and 2000 Moncada were considerably shorter, we also analyzed May Day speeches for both years and an additional Moncada speech Castro gave in 2000. The May Day speeches were given to commemorate International Workers' Day, and are generally comparable in length and tone to the Moncada speeches. All three researchers coded each first person plural

token for referent: personal, collective, or ordinary "we." Results were compared, and where all coders were not in agreement, two-thirds agreement was used to assign referents. A negligible number of first person plural tokens (n<10) were discarded because all three coders disagreed. Based on these data, we calculated percentages and did chi-square tests to investigate a possible relationship between speeches from different years and the rate of occurrence of specific referents for the first person plural.

3 Findings

Our corpus of 68,452 words yielded a total of 983 tokens of personal and collective "we" (Table 1). Personal "we" *nosotros* indicates Castro only. Collective "we" *nosotros* indicates the Cuban people, nation, or government. Ordinary "we" *nosotros* indicates Castro plus specific individuals. Castro frequently uses the first person plural to refer to himself alone, so we also counted unmarked and marked first person singular subjects (i.e., *yo* 'I') to compare Castro's forms of self-reference across the five decades (Table 2). The data in both tables suggest that there is a relationship between year of speech and Castro's tendency to use the collective "we" and personal "we" referents for the first person plural. The pattern of distribution of referents for the tokens compiled in Table 1 is relatively consistent across the decades, with the exception of 1970, where Castro used *nosotros* or unmarked first person plural verbs to refer to himself (i.e., personal "we") with greater frequency. Collective "we" was the most frequently identified first person plural referent in all eras.

Year	Word count	1st person plural tokens	Personal "we" tokens	Collective "we" tokens	Ordinary "we" tokens
1960	17,465	273	41 (15.0%)	215 (78.8%)	17 (6.2%)
1970	18,539	357	169 (47.3%)	176 (49.3%)	12 (3.4%)
1980	9,783	181	35 (19.3%)	139 (76.8%)	7 (3.9%)
1990	12,948	177	42 (23.7%)	130 (73.4%)	5 (2.8%)
2000	9,717	38	9 (23.7%)	27 (71.1%)	2 (5.3%)
Total	68,452	1,026	296 (28.8%)	687 (67.0%)	43 (4.2%)

Table 1: Referents for unmarked and marked first person plural verbs by era of speech(es)

The data in Table 2 show an interesting split between the earlier and later decades: in 1960 and 1970, Castro was more likely to refer to himself as "we," while in 1980 and 1990, he was more likely to use the first person singular "I".

Year	Total	Total *yo* tokens	Total *nosotros* (personal "we" tokens)
1960	47	6 (12.8%)	41 (87.2%)
1970	211	42 (19.9%)	169 (80.1%)
1980	107	72 (67.3%)	35 (32.7%)
1990	116	74 (63.8%)	42 (36.2%)
2000	16	7 (43.8%)	9 (56.2%)
Total	497	201 (40.4%)	296 (59.6%)

Table 2: First person singular reference (unmarked and marked) vs. *nosotros* (= personal "we") first person singular reference

In order to discover whether or not these apparent relationships are, in fact, statistically significant, we ran two chi-square tests.

For the first test, we used the data from Table 1, taking the total number of collective and per-

sonal "we" tokens from all speeches. The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between year of speech and choice of first person plural referent. The alternate hypothesis was that there is such a relationship. The chi-square showed a significant ($p<.0005$) relationship. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between year of speech and choice of first person plural referent.

For the second chi-square, we used the data from Table 2, minus the data from the 2000 speeches, since Castro almost never referred to himself in the first person in those speeches (see Table 2). The null hypothesis was that there is no relationship between year of speech and choice of plural vs. singular forms of self-reference. The alternate hypothesis was that there is such a relationship. The chi-square showed a significant ($p<.0005$) relationship. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between year of speech and choice of plural vs. singular forms of self-reference.

The year from which a given speech of Castro's is taken has a significant effect both on how the shifter "we" is used to refer, and on Castro's choice of the first person singular or plural to refer to himself. In order to propose an explanation for why this is so, it is necessary to look more closely at these speeches and identify features of this discourse genre that may contribute to the observed variation.

4 Discussion

Our longitudinal reading suggests an iconic resemblance between salient shifts in Castro's oratorical style and the arc of the Cuban Revolution. We argue that such style shifts are intimately tied to his pronoun usage. In what follows, we approach Castro's first person subject pronoun variation through semiotic analysis. Such an approach finds precedent in the work of Greg Urban (1987, 1996, 2001), who has used quantitative data on pronoun usage to show how invocation of group identities moves through text and through time in political discourse.

Castro's speeches function much like U.S. Presidents' State of the Union Addresses. That is, Castro focuses most of his attention on the economic, social, and political condition of the Cuban state even though each speech event in our corpus is organized to commemorate a specific Cuban national holiday. Triumphs and difficulties become fodder for speech acts that promote Castro's and the government's aims through his discourse: inciting citizens to action, encouraging individual and collective responsibility, problem-solving, condemning "imperialist" foreign policies, especially the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba, and informing and educating. Such a performative mode entails systematic, if manipulable, appeal to solidarity through opposition.

In his examination of "we" usage in the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Urban (2001:99) suggests that the extent to which the signers of the document "[came] to think of themselves as a 'we' is inextricably bound up with the patterns of deployment of actual pronouns in specific ways." He goes on to argue that the repeated instantiation of an independent American "we" against a reviled, colonizing "they" and/or "he" (the British king) channels the discursive means for self-conscious appearance of that "we" through the text itself. Following Lee's (1997) discussion of the original function of the Declaration of Independence, Urban states that there was no American "we" as such before the drafting of that text (96). Our own analysis must attend to multiple formal and functional layers in the instantiation of a Cuban socialist "we". We turn here not to a text written as text, but to whole speech events funneled into transcription. In Castro's use of first person subject pronouns, we find allusions to the immediate staged settings for his speeches, the members of his audiences, and even the weather. Reference to his role as lifelong leader of the revolution and to his own administrative capacities alternates with appeals to Cubans' sense of investment and pride in upholding the embattled socialist state. Transcribers' notes indicate audience feedback, including ovations and chants such as *"¡Cuba sí! ¡Yankis no!"* ('Cuba, yes! Yankees, no!'). Though transcribed versions of live speech involve loss of paralinguistic data such as intonation and gesture, we maintain that these transcriptions represent a starting point for examining the malleability of deictic use in spontaneous discourse.

We propose that Castro's use of "litanies of complaint" (Urban 2001:118) provides clues to (a) how he intensifies key oppositional stances in his speeches, and (b) how these stances are achieved through shifting first person pronoun referents. Strings of grievances pepper Castro's speeches, patterned upon an oppositional "we/they" dyad that contrasts striving revolutionaries to

complacent bourgeoisie, selfless workers to irresponsible students, and a stubbornly independent Cuba to an aggressive, imperialist United States. Urban argues that such an aggrieved stance is effective in forming new collectivities, and indeed, we found a concentration of litanies of complaint in the earliest decade of our corpus. Table 3 indicates the total number of clauses devoted to litanies of complaint in each decade; these are cross-referenced with first person pronoun frequencies.

Era	Total litanies of complaint (by # of clauses)	Total *yo* (non-metadiscursive) tokens	Total *nosotros* (personal "we") tokens
1960	305	1 (2.4%)	41 (97.6%)
1970	14	15 (8.2%)	169 (91.8%)
1980	42	49 (58.3%)	35 (41.7%)
1990	65	20 (32.3%)	42 (67.7%)
2000	52	3 (25%)	9 (75%)
Total	478	88 (22.9%)	296 (77.1%)

Table 3: Clauses devoted to complaint and non-metadiscursive *yo* vs. *nosotros* by era

In Table 3, the number of *yo* ('I') tokens has been adjusted from Table 2 to reflect only the number of tokens used in non-metadiscursive functions. Repeated examinations of Castro's pronoun repertoire revealed that the majority of his first person singular pronouns served purely metadiscursive functions. Just over 77 percent of all *yo* tokens are represented by utterances that name Castro's discursive intentions: *"Quiero, en primer lugar, señalar"; "Repito"; "Yo les prometo que voy a terminar"* ('I want, in the first place, to indicate'; 'I repeat'; 'I promise you I'm going to finish') (7/26/1960, 7/26/1970, 7/26/1990). Metadiscursive tokens explain in part how Castro maintains control of the speech event and how he chooses to frame the information he shares. However, we wanted to know how his projection of self beyond the speech event was reflected in choice of pronoun. We decided to isolate the non-metadiscursive *yo* tokens as those most readily contrastive with Castro's use of personal "we" *nosotros*.

Castro's overwhelming use of litanies in his 1960 speeches confirms Urban's (2001) observation that "we" occurs more frequently in political texts enumerating grievances. Urban maintains that syntactic repetition and poetic opposition (see Jakobson 1960) between deictic entities epitomize the litany, by virtue of which a "collectivity assumes an existence in time, [… becoming] something more than the projected image off of one isolated occurrence of the pronoun" (101). Castro's lengthy complaints point to the newborn revolution's uncertain position and to its leader's need to consolidate his authority. Castro speaks in the name of a "we" that has been aggrieved by various "theys". In his role as orator, with minimal use of the first person singular, he articulates the precise causes of the victimization of the masses. The ***first person plural object clitic*** + third person plural verb constructions (highlighted below) showcase the compactness of "we" (***nos***) in relation to "they".[3] The audience's applause confers legitimacy upon his portrayal of U.S. machinations:

(1) *Entonces, los que ayer <u>prestaban</u> bombas y <u>prestaban</u> aviones y <u>prestaban</u> metralla y <u>entrenaban</u> esbirros [...]; hoy que no hay esbirros, hoy que una vida nueva y llena de esperanza surge, **nos** <u>quieren</u> ponchar la esperanza, **nos** <u>quieren</u> destruir el esfuerzo, **nos** <u>quieren</u> destruir el trabajo, **nos** <u>quieren</u> someter por hambre, **nos** <u>quieren</u> rendir por hambre, y **nos** <u>agreden</u>, y **nos** <u>arrebatan</u> nuestra cuota, y **nos** <u>confiscan</u> nuestros barcos y nuestros viones, y **nos** <u>acosan</u> y <u>amenazan</u> continuamente, pero como dice el refrán popular: "en el pecado llevarán la penitencia" (APLAUSOS).[4] (7/26/1960)*

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[3] Thanks to Jane Hill for this particular insight.

[4] "So those who yesterday loaned bombs and loaned airplanes and loaned machine guns and trained thugs […]; today, when there are no thugs, today, when a new life full of hope rises, they want to kill our hope, they was to destroy our efforts, they want to destroy our work, they want us to go hungry, they want to conquer us with hunger, and they attack us, they steal our share, and they confiscate our boats and our planes,

Here, the revolutionary "we" of the Cuban nation, purged of elite classists, stands steadfast in defense of a new way of life, buttressed by moral conviction borne of long suffering. This is a "we" that, in the "microtime of the text" (Urban 2001:101), establishes its timeless existence. Rooted in the present, Castro's "we" enumerates the threats it faces ("they want to destroy our work, they want to make us starve") but extends its enduring presence to past and future moments as well. Insofar as the awareness of a "we" can be said to subsume time, then that "we", a workers' "we," a socialist "we", can be said to have always existed. Discursively speaking, for the U.S. or any other country to try to fracture this collectivity runs counter to the eternal logic of its existence.

Castro's 1970 speech shows a sharp drop in the number of clauses devoted to litanies of complaint, along with a spike in the frequency of personal "we" *nosotros* tokens, four to 18 times greater than is found in the other speeches. These changes coincide with a shift in content and tone as Castro delineates the responsibilities of the revolutionary leadership concurrently with those of the Cuban collective. We argue that a clue to the startlingly different deployment of *nosotros* forms in the 1970 speech may be found near its opening, when Castro states, *"Vamos a hablar de* **nuestros** *problemas y de* **nuestras** *dificultades"* ('We are going to talk about our problems and our difficulties'). In this sentence, Castro introduces a speech that will be full of trouble talk, and in so doing, fluidly shifts from personal to collective "we". In other words, "*We*", meaning Castro, "are going to talk about *our* problems and about *our* difficulties" meaning Cuba's. Nowhere else in our corpus does Castro launch into such a discourse on the challenges the Revolution is facing.

By shifting his footing (Goffman 1983) to invoke humility, honesty, and sincere self-analysis, he engages his audience in a cathartic reflection upon past missteps: *"A todo esto hay que añadir una [cosa], y no de poco peso, que es* **nuestra** *propia ineficiencia, la ineficiencia,* **nuestra** *ineficiencia en el trabajo general de la Revolución"* ('To all this one [thing] must be added, and of no little weight, which is our own inefficiency, the inefficiency, our inefficiency in the general work of the Revolution') (7/26/1970). In the context of the 1970 speech, Castro may be using "we" more frequently to refer to himself in order to shift responsibility away from his person, as a potential source of problems, to the Cuban people, whom he encourages to work toward solving those problems. Castro employs a didactic style, relaying detailed statistics on various economic and social sectors and thereby suggesting that each citizen will be equipped to act in the interest of the collectivity. Here, litanies of complaint might well incite righteous anger, but not action, and action is what the state desperately needs.

In Castro's 1980 speech, we found about a 50 percent rise in non-metadiscursive *yo* tokens and a corresponding 50 percent drop in personal "we" *nosotros* tokens relative to the 1970 speech. The bulk of the 1980 speech is devoted to a celebration and defense of the one-year-old Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua, where Castro has just traveled. His reports of what he saw and did in Nicaragua account in part for his high use of non-metadiscursive *yo*, the highest among the five decades. He uses this speech to decry U.S. intervention in Nicaragua and U.S. aggression against socialist and communist movements worldwide. There is a rise in the number of clauses devoted to litanies of complaint in this speech relative to 1970, which has approximately twice the word count. Here, Castro appeals to a sense of "we" that transcends national boundaries and unites Cubans with an international struggle against capitalist imperialism. Significantly, Castro's litanies of complaint are accompanied here by "litanies of exaltation" intended to inspire and move listeners. Note his use of *yo* in the example below, an excerpt taken from the closing of the 1980 speech. That he relies so heavily on *yo* in closing a speech runs counter to Urban's (2001:104–105) finding that "we" use tends to rise over the course of "politically persuasive discourse":

(2) *Y cuando* **me pregunto** *qué es un comunista,* **tengo** *la respuesta cuando* **me encuentro** *un médico en Bluefields o una médica, que es esposa y es madre y puede ser capaz de separa se de la familia para ir a salvar vidas a miles de kilómetros de la patria (APLAUSOS); la* **encuentro** *cuando* **veo** *un maestro o una maestra en un apartado rincón del mundo; la* **veo** *cuando* **encuentro** *un combatiente cubano dispuesto a dar su vida en otras tierras para de-*

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and they harass us and threaten us continually, but as the popular saying goes: 'the penitence will pay for the sin.' (APPLAUSE)"

*fender una causa justa a miles de kilómetros de su patria (APLAUSOS). Y **pienso**: este es el hombre y esta es la mujer comunistas.*[5] (7/26/1980)

Interestingly, the poetic parallelism of this passage creates a sort of fixed, reiterative text that, though delivered spontaneously, invokes Castro's *yo* as a "shared" or "social" "I" (Urban 1989). As Castro refers to those he sees as ideal communist types, his sight confers legitimacy upon their presence; it acknowledges them. As individuals traced within the collective, they stand for a moment in the light he casts upon them, then merge once again into the whole. This *yo*, then, uses discourse to transfer its privileged sight so that its addressees might see themselves as they are seen by Castro himself: a people full of promise, integrity, and achievement. With U.S. intervention against the Sandinista movement, it is especially important that Castro draw his people near to him and to one another at this moment.

Like other speeches examined in this study, the 1990 Moncada speech addresses challenges and future projects in Cuban education, medicine, agriculture and infrastructure. The absolute count of litanies of complaint is the highest since 1970, and Castro favors *nosotros* over *yo* in this speech. Historically, he finds himself in a precarious position. A prolonged exodus of his citizens since the Mariel Boat Lift (April–October 1980) reflects a downturn in the economy and increased reaction against political repression. This combination of events requires that Castro address internal dissent as well as external aggression. He adopts a journalistic, if bitter, tone, recounting recent events in the ongoing crisis day by day, and condemning the hypocrisy of the world community. The excerpt below shows how his litanies of complaint become muted in their poetic structure:

(3) *Y si los yankis se embullan y quisieran recibir a tales ciudadanos tan acosados, perseguidos de que hablan, que pongan los barcos y las visas, que actúen con vergüenza, que actúen con sentido común, que actúen consecuentemente, que les den permiso. No somos nosotros, son ellos, los "eximios defensores" de los derechos humanos los que niegan las visas.*[6] (7/26/1990)

The ground that Castro ceded in allowing dissidents to flee has effectively called the unity of the Cuban socialist "we" into question. Accusations of human rights violations prompt a defensive shift in discursive footing. There is a sense in which Castro is insisting on the perpetuation of that "we" by deploying variable referents of *nosotros* and disfavoring *yo*; there is also a sense in which his insistence draws attention to the fragility of the collective.

In the 2000 Moncada and May Day speeches, there is a drop in overall first person pronoun usage and in length of speech. We analyzed three speeches from 2000, which averaged just over 3,000 words each, half as long as the next shortest speech in our corpus, from 1960. These speeches are delivered almost entirely in the passive voice, obviating the need for personal pronouns. Castro also adopts a far drier tone than before, relating events from the Elián González controversy and the pending U.S. presidential elections with journalistic efficacy and quoting extensively from *The New York Times*. Though these are short speeches with low pronoun counts, Castro devotes a high number of clauses to litanies of complaint, even more than in 1980.

Insofar as the above examples suggest a variable relationship between litanies of complaint and first person deictics, show variable invocation of the collective through use of personal "we", and reflect ideologically and pragmatically laden uses of personal pronouns over time, Castro's speeches justify expanding the analytic framework for deixis in political speech. Unlike the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Castro's speeches are meant to be heard, not read, and so his de-

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[5]"And when I ask myself what a communist is, I have the answer when I meet a doctor in Bluefields [Nicaragua] or a doctor who is a wife and mother and is able to separate herself from her family to go save lives thousands of kilometers away from her country (APPLAUSE); I find it when I see a teacher in a far corner of the world; I see it when I find a Cuban combatant ready to give his life in other lands to defend a just cause thousands of miles from his country (APPLAUSE). And I think: this is the communist man and this is the communist woman."

[6]"And if the yankees get excited and would like to receive the harassed, persecuted citizens they talk about, then they should provide boats and visas, they should act out of a sense of shame, they should act out of common sense, they should act consistently, they should give them permission [to go]. It's not us, it's them, the 'quintessential defenders' of human rights, who deny visas."

ployment of shifters requires consideration not only of text-internal relationships between pronouns and referents, but also of extra-textual elements, from the physical staging of the speech event to salient political controversies. As an adept political orator, Castro manipulates his pronoun usage in accordance with these factors. The "bundling" (Keane 2003) of factors internal and external to the speech event must therefore be accounted for from moment to moment within the stream of speech. This bundling constitutes the poetic structure of Castro's *discursos*, in which his strategies for self- and other-positioning make meaningful connections among layers of discourse within the speech event.

5 Conclusion

In our sampling of Castro's speeches, we had to account for his variation in tone and style from decade to decade. A strictly quantitative analysis left us with what Silverstein (1976:24) calls the "semantic residue" of unexplained indexico-referentiality. The process of coding *nosotros* tokens by referent brought the slipperiness of Castro's shifters to our attention. Pronouns are potentially ambiguous, readily manipulated elements of language that create challenges for quantitative analysis. In addition, quantitative methods alone failed to capture the complex interplay of pragmatic strategies Castro uses to achieve his discursive ends. The approach we have chosen in this paper combines the strength of quantitative analysis in crystallizing longitudinal trends with the strength of semiotic analysis in unpacking contextualized meaning.

Silverstein (1976) describes shifters such as pronouns as especially creative elements of language. Thus, they need not be bound by the identity of a given speaker. On the contrary, these referential indexicals project figures in statements as protagonists in a "world that is spoken about, not the world in which the speaking occurs" (Goffman 1983:147). The data analyzed in this paper form part of Castro's ongoing discursive construction of the revolutionary Cuba. Our attempt to account for Castro's self-positioning in these speeches, and the place of that self in the Cuban revolutionary project, is also an attempt to address two of Silverstein's charges to the Western tradition of linguistics: to analyze the multi-functionality of sequential speech and to account for the mainly non-referential functions of the elements that comprise a given speech event.

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