Public Legacies: Spanish-English (In)authenticity in the Linguistic Landscape of Pilsen, Chicago

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Abstract

The present study examines the linguistic display of Spanish and English in Pilsen, Chicago, a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. The space of Pilsen is characterized by its strong Latino diasporic presence (mostly from Mexico) since the 60s, but also for the increase of a white population in the last decade that has lead to a strong perception of gentrification in the neighborhood. With the aim of capturing potential gentrification effects and to empirically study the relationship between language, sign and space, we adopt Coupland's (2012) adaptation of Goffman's (1974) theory of frames and propose a replicable and scalar quantifiable method of frames, combining it with a qualitative analysis of space that we refer to as *The Holistic Model of Frame Analysis*. To this aim, we analyze 414 signs according to LANGUAGE, LOCATION (street) and FRAMES of Authentication Processes (Bucholtz and Hall 2005) (Migrant, Familial, Established and Alternative). Results show that there is a scalar relationship between frame and language: the more alternative the frame, the more English is used, whereas the use of mixed Spanish and English fluctuates between Established Community and Familial Authentication Processes. Although all frames were equally distributed in all of the main streets, the proportions of language use vary significantly. We argue that the static use of frames and dialogic relationship between languages and location are strongly linked to the social dynamics of specific areas of Pilsen, a variation that we capture using a variationist sociolinguistic approach.

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1 Introduction

The study of language and identity has been the focus of many sociolinguistic studies (Bucholtz and Hall 2005). The variationist tradition has focused on describing the linguistic and stylistic variation of the "real" use of "real" speakers' language from specific communities linked to the territories to which they politically belong (Labov 1972). In the Spanish-speaking world, this variation is frequently studied in contact situations where Spanish may be the majority language (Sanchéz 2004) or a minority language (Silva-Corvalán 2008, Otheguy and Zentella 2012), exhaustively describing contact effects on *vernacular variation* and "new" or "authentic" identity formations. However, little is known about the *portrayal* of language in diasporic settings. These "new spaces" of contact deserve special attention to deepen our understanding of Linguistic Landscapes in which public displays of language work as *processes* of "authentication" pertaining to notions of heritage and space. Therefore, the goal of the present study is two-fold: (1) contribute to understanding of language display in bilingual urban communities in the US and (2) to provide a replicable framework for further research in similar communities.

This study examines displays of Spanish and English in Pilsen, a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood located in the lower southwest of Chicago. Urban spaces are notorious for "new" changes and Pilsen is no different: once characterized for its long-established Hispanic community, Pilsen recently has been undergoing gentrification. This presents an opportunity to empirically study the relationship between language, identity and space in light of drastic changes affecting the community. To this end, the present study aims to respond to the following questions: (1) how do local portrayals of authentication processes manifest in the language that is displayed in a bilingual community? And (2) what is the relationship between English and Spanish in a community undergoing perceived processes of gentrification?

In order to characterize Pilsen's linguistic landscape, we follow Coupland (2012) and others' adaptation (Kallen 2010) of Goffman's theory of frames (1974), and further propose a quantifiable method in which we advocate for the study of frames of "authentication" as a dialogic (non-static) scalar component.

2 Pilsen, Chicago

Pilsen is located in the Lower West Side of Chicago. Constituting an area of 2.80 square miles, it is home to approximately 44,000 inhabitants. Inhabited by German, Irish and Czech immigrants in the 19th century, Pilsen has been predominantly inhabited by Hispanic residents since the 1970s. According to the 2010 US Census, 89% of the population is Latino (chiefly from México), followed by a 10.1% white and a small presence of black population (0.9%). Among those 89% Latinos, it is estimated that 37% are non-US citizens (U.S. Census 2010).

In terms of income, Pilsen is divided in three main areas. The northern area to the main street of Cermak constitutes the lowest income, with an average of $10,086 per year. The southernmost part follows with salaries ranging between $10,087 and $16,409 with a small area in the northernmost East with an estimated per capita income of over $24,210. These values do not perfectly correlate with the median property values, however. As seen in Figure 7, the main separation can be thought of as west or east of Ashland Avenue. To the west, the median property value is homogenous (ranging from $70,000 to 113,000 (light blue)) whereas the East shows a small divi-

sion: far east is the most expensive area to purchase a house ($170,000 or greater (red)) whereas moving west, the housing values decrease (less than $70,000 (dark blue)). This important division could be linked to a recent increase of white residents in the area (i.e., perceived gentrification). This perception has been reported both visually (Figure 1) and verbally by local inhabitants in Pilsen: "There is a new mix of people on the streets, but there is also an awkward separation. It's like two communities in the same space. Together, but apart" (WBEZ 2012).
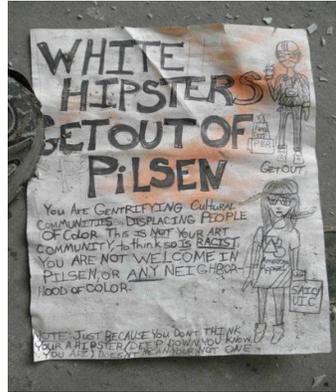

Figure 1: Image of perceived gentrification.

The tensions felt in Pilsen between a perceived long-established Mexican and Mexican-American community and white newcomers is exemplified in the flier shown in Figure 1, which criticizes the presence of "white hipsters" (the perceived harbingers of gentrification) and comments "this is not your art community". This refers to the strong connection between Pilsen's art (consisting of murals, galleries and community projects) and a sense of an "authentic" Pilsen community. Pilsen is Chicago's largest art district, with a rich history of Mexican-American culture and art. The National Museum of Mexican Art's (located on West 19th) mission statement is to display Mexican culture as *sin fronteras* (without borders). Although it hosts several temporary collections, its permanent exhibit called *Mexicanidad: Our Past is Present* is strongly linked to a collective heritage identity of the Pilsen community. Drawing from the cultural theorist perspective on memory and identity, this identification link could be regarded as nostalgic within the diasporic setting of Pilsen. This nostalgia refers to the "transcendence of the irreversibility of time" that allows the reconstruction of "selective positive experiences and aspects of the past" that converts into a recuperative 'self'" (Spitzer 1999).

Sin fronteras shows that the connection between the Pilsen community and the Spanish language is a significant one. According to the 2010 US Census, Pilsen houses a large body of educational institutions (13 elementary schools, 5 high schools and a community college) that offer dual language programs or some type of bilingual education.[1] Thus the sense of a shared Mexican heritage in Pilsen is cultivated and constructed through programs at various schools and organizations in the community and artistic expressions (murals).[2] Perceptions of identity of Pilsen as a public 'space' (*what* Pilsen is and *who* "belongs" in it) are inextricably linked to those institutions in celebrating a sense of a collective Mexican heritage in which Spanish plays a significant role.

3 The Study

We aim to contribute to understanding of language display in bilingual urban communities in the U.S. To this aim, we studied 414 signs in the Spanish-English bilingual community of Pilsen, Chicago. Our second goal is to provide a replicable framework in which we study the relationship between language, space and authentication processes both in a quantitative and qualitative man-

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[1]Invested in education, *Annual Pilsen Education Summit* hosted a conference in 2012 targeting their bilingual education with a special session on studying, living and working in a bilingual community.

[2]We only include signs with language, excluding artistic murals. We leave murals for future research.

ner. Thus, this study takes Goffman's theoretical framework of Frame Analysis (also used in previous in Linguistic Landscape literature, such as Coupland 2012) and operationalizes it in a quantifiable manner using methodologies common in variationist sociolinguistics (Tagliamonte 2006).

Three variables were investigated: frame type, language and location (in terms of street). Quantitative analysis will study the distribution of different languages according to proposed frames, which are then situated in accordance to their location of display. Before we explore the relationship between these three factors, we present our operationalization of frame analysis.

3.1 Operationalizing Frame Analysis

The present study begins with the assumption that the Linguistic Landscape (LL) is a "visual ideology" that can be defined as "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" (Landry and Bourhis 1997:23). One of the principles of LL study is to examine the relationship between specific signs and their social context, for which a symbolic value is given (Cenoz and Gorter 2006). With this principle in mind, Goffman's theoretical framework of Frame Analysis becomes extremely useful. Although Goffman (1974) did not supply a clear definition of what Frame Analysis consists of, it has been used towards unpacking the idea of *context*. We follow Scheff's (2005:375) definition of frame as the abstract representation of a word, phrase or a proposition that defines recursive levels of mutual awareness; in essence, viewing frames as a way interactive beings answer the question "What is it that is going on here?" (Goffman 1974:46).

Based on this definition, we argue that Frame Analysis is closely related to Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) theoretical notion of *intersubjectivity*, which takes frames as a representation of how humans understand and contextualize experience. This sets up the idea that context is the result of the "scaffold of any credible story" for which any visual segment (word, phrase or proposition) takes a *symbolic* value whose meaning cannot be understood outside of its space (both ideological and geographic) (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010).

In the study of LLs, frames represent different points of view that add up to the structure of context needed to understand a "strip of discourse" (Scheff 2005). This approach was taken up by Coupland (2012) who studied the linguistic display of English-Welsh bilingual signs in Wales, using Goffman's (1974) Frame Analysis. In his study, Coupland (2012:22) proposed five frames in which each signals a different version of Wale's linguistic culture. These "points of view" are tied in a "frame within frame" manner (Figure 2) in order to capture ideological representations of the power dynamics of two languages in a specific contact situation. Although this analysis is
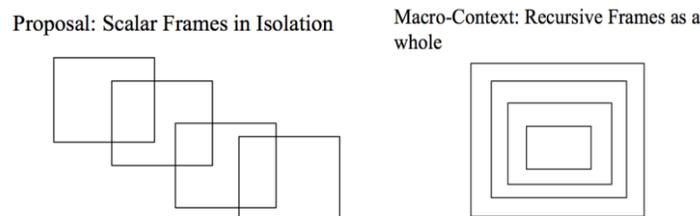

Figure 2: Scalar and Cumulative Approaches to Frames.

suitable to understand the notion of space in contexted situations, it provides little explanation for the relationship that each frame has towards other frames in specific spatial contexts. We propose that these points of view on display are scalar in isolation but recursive as a whole. Therefore, we take a step back in the analysis of frames with the aim to operationalize and quantify the frames in order to capture the salient relationships between frames and space to study these "points of view" as a scalar component within a larger theme of "frames of authentication".

3.2 Frames of Authentication

As our first variable is concerned, we proposed that frames (or isolated points of views) are a consequence or representation of an ideology of "real" speakers that adhere to what Bucholtz and Hall

(2005) call "authenticity effects" or "authentication" processes. In this approach, identity is regarded as an outcome of constantly negotiated social practices and authenticated in a new or diasporic social space. Because authentication processes can always be denaturalized, we follow a strategic essentialism perspective: we explore how authenticity emerges from the sociopolitical conditions in Pilsen.[3] Thus, we propose four frames of authentication processes to represent four different conceptions of identity in Pilsen: Migrant, Familial, Established and Alternative.

The frame of *Migrant* represents a migrant ideology, which refers to the realm of a migratory population in Pilsen. This frame is characterized by the use of vocabulary related to the topic of immigration, lawyers and income taxes. Use of the word *abogados* 'lawyers' and *inmigración* 'immigration' is overwhelming in these frames (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Sign representing the *Migrant* frame.

Often Mexican flag colors (Red, Green, White) are used to symbolize identity as related to a perceived homeland. These signs represent "authenticity" for Pilsen's migrant population.

The frame of *Familial* represents a strong link to the "nostalgic" past or heritage in Pilsen that is not characterized by its "legal" status. Three important indexical features mainly characterize this frame. First, names of geographical places in Mexico and specification of local products from their native locations (for example the name *Veneno de Nayarit*) is common. Second, family names (such as *Luciano,* see Figure 4) represent a sense of an authentic Hispanic identity that oftentimes appears with the German genitive case marker *'s* to express some sort of "belonging". In this regard, it can be said that the *Familial* frame cultivates a sense of "authentic" identity by drawing on a sense of "collective memory" associated with both geographical and heritable features (such as place and family names).

Figure 4: Sign representing the *Familial* frame.

The *Established* frame represents a community based in Pilsen that predominantly offers services to Mexican-born U.S. citizens or members of a perceived "established" Pilsen community. These services usually come in shape of established institutions such as schools, churches or certain types of stores (flowers, hardware, liquor, clothing, shoe repairing, or bakeries, as shown in Figure 5). It is in these signs that processes of authentication with indexical connections to an identity are characterized by simultaneity (both established community members within an American neighborhood *and* carrying an imagined Mexican heritage, see Woolard 1998).

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[3]Any study on identity authentication has to deal with the problem of essentialism, which assumes that groups can be clearly defined and that group members in those groups are alike. On the contrary, strategic essentialism takes these assumptions into account in order to present a descriptive analysis that should be further developed through other components of identity formation (i.e., adequation *vs.* distinction, authentication *vs.* denaturalization and authorization *vs.* Illegitimatization) (Bucholtz and Hall 2005).

Figure 5: Sign representing the *Established* frame.

The *Alternative* frame represents an identity best characterized as "hipster". The "hipster" is part of a subculture of pop culture typically identified with college students or college graduates who privilege nihilistic or anti-establishment aesthetics and behaviors. The identit(ies) of a "hipster" are varied and difficult to define, but a common stereotype of hipsters is typically white middle class youth, who patron local art and music scenes (Hendlin et al. 2010) and engage in contemporary trends of "back-to-basics" consumerism (such as buying organic food, do-it-yourself projects and locally produced products and cuisine). Because this identity disregards social "conformity" and values "other forms of expression" (typically other forms of expression used by members of perceived lower classes) the main characteristics of this frame include spaces in which these values can be enacted and recreated. These refer to social spaces (coffee shops, art galleries, bars) and small businesses where more "natural, healthy, local" products as well as "authentic" experience are advertised in a "hip" aesthetic, proclaiming a new sense of identity (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Images of signs representing an *Alternative* frame.

3.3 Language

The second variable concerns the use of the language in different signs. In this regard, signs have been coded categorically but in a scalar manner according to five possible language combinations of English and Spanish. The ends of the linguistic spectrum constitute monolingual representations of signs, that is, whether the sings are either only in Spanish (i.e., *Birrieria Reyes de Ocotlán*) or only in English (i.e., *Shop Local—Shop Healthier: Your Neighborhood Market Cafe*). Mixture of Spanish and English constitute whether the sign is mainly in Spanish but with some English (i.e., *Pasteleria: German Chocolate, Tres Leches, Cheesecake, Pudin*) or mainly in English with some Spanish. Finally, signs were coded as to whether the message appears both equally in Spanish and English (i.e., *Targetas Telefonicas—Phone Card's*).[4]

3.4 Location

The third variable is sign location. We recorded signs located in main streets (represented by lines) and in residential areas (represented in circles) to note any difference. As such, data have been coded for five locations: West 18th, East 18th, West Cermak, West Ashland (residential) and East Ashland (residential). This is important, as sign type is also dependent on if the sign is associated

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[4]The use of non-standard features (omission of orthographic accents and n-bars (ñ) also known as grassroots literacies (Blommaert 2008)) will not be discussed here due to space limitations.

with an establishment in a business area (where particular types of establishments are more likely to occur) or residential (where schools or churches are more likely to be located).

We are interested in possible gentrification effects of location on frame. As shown in Figure 7, Pilsen is divided by the main street of Ashland. West of Ashland is regarded as a more established area, whereas the east side (between Ashland and Halstead) is where house values have increased for the last decade and additionally is known for a higher presence of younger white residents. This presence of white population has led to an increased perception of gentrification. Our hypothesis is to observe more polarized frame instances in signs (Migrant *vs.* Alternative and Spanish *vs.* English) mainly on these streets characterized as "gentrified" (chiefly East 18th).
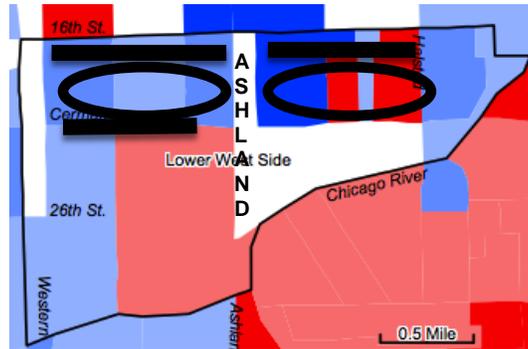

Figure 7: Map of property value (red: most expensive, light blue: less expensive, dark blue: least expensive).[5]

4 Results

4.1 Quantitative

To investigate the relationship between language, space and identity each sign has been coded for frame or combination of frames it represents, the language combinations it contains and the street in which they are located. The collected corpus consists of 414 signs, which are not equally distributed. The vast majority of the signs were found in the non-residential main streets (21.3% in West 18th, 16.7% in East 18th, 42.2% in West Cermak, 15.5% in W. Ashland and 4.3% in East Ashland). This distribution is not unexpected, given the commercial nature of these streets.

Alternative	Established	Familial	Migrant	TOTAL
74 / 414	47 / 414	2 / 414	10 / 414	133 / 414
17.8 %	11.4 %	0.5 %	2.5 %	**32.2 %**

Table 1: Table of Categorical Coding for Pilsen Frames.

Alternative	Alternative Established	Established	Established Familial	Established Migrant	TOTAL
74 / 414	54 / 414	47 / 414	44 / 414	125 / 414	344 / 414
17.8 %	13.1 %	11.4 %	10.6 %	30.2 %	**83.1 %**

Table 2: Table of Scalar Coding for Pilsen Frames.

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[5]http://www.newcommunities.org/communities/pilsen/maps.asp

Frames were coded according to strict categorical classifications described (Alternative, Established, Familial, Migrant). As shown by Table 1, this was shown to be extremely problematic, as only 32.2% of all of the variation in the data could be accounted for. By using a scalar approach (each sign could represent more than one frame and thereby accounting for overlap between categories) 83.1% of the variation could be accounted for, as shown in Table 2.

To investigate the relationship between language, frame and location, we performed nine binary logistic regression models in *R* (R Core Team Development 2015). By fitting the distribution of languages in frames as well as the distribution of streets within our frame documentation to a regression curve, we are able to isolate those languages or frames that can be said to significantly (i.e., more than chance) predict what time of frame is manifested (in our investigation of language distribution) or what type of street (i.e., what level of gentrification) can be predicted by the frames observed.

4.1.1 Language and Frame

The first analysis focuses on distribution of languages in frames for which five binary logistic regression models were completed. In all models, English was set as the baseline category. The average distributions of each frame are shown in Figure 8 below.
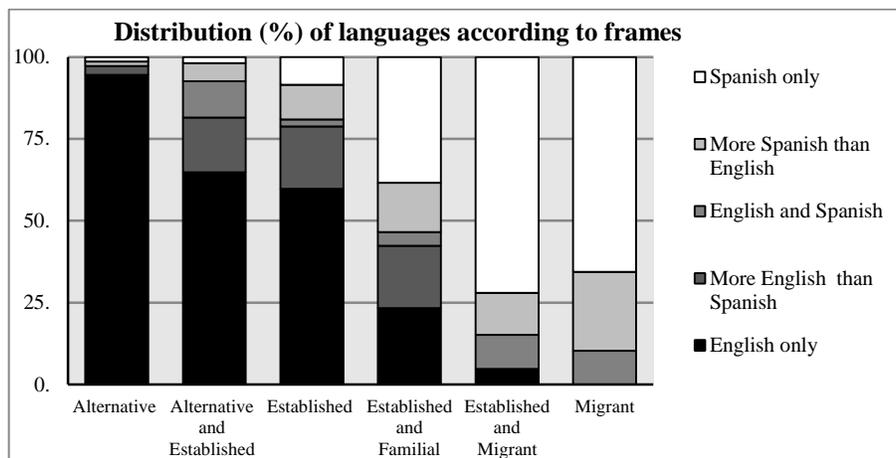

Figure 8: Language and Frame Results.

Results of our binary logistic regression models show the presence of English as statistically significant when compared to all other languages in the *Alternative* frame ($\beta = 4.8$, $z = 3.28$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests the *Alternative* frame is mainly represented in English. For the *Established* frame, only Spanish was found to be significant ($\beta = 2.03$), $z = 3.65$, $p < 0.01$). For the *Alternative-Established* frame, the significance was in Spanish only ($\beta = 3.59$, $z = 3.514$, $p < 0.01$) and Spanish with some English ($\beta = 1.28$, $z = 2.03$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that the combinations of these frames are characterized by English-only or both English and Spanish signs but not monolingual Spanish. In the *Established-Familial* frame, only mostly English with some Spanish was found to be significant ($\beta = -1.73$, $z = -3.77$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that these signs are either in Spanish or English (but not necessarily equally translated). For the *Established-Migrant* frame, all language combinations were significant with the exception of more English than Spanish ($\beta = 17.08$, $z = 0.023$, $p > 0.05$), suggesting that the presence of English is governed by the presence of Spanish, the latter outranking the former.

These results show two important aspects of the distribution of languages. First, they demonstrate that frames cannot be equated with a sole language, that is, variability is present. Second, the presence of one language is dictated by the predominance of the other, thus forming a continuum: the more *Alternative* the sign is, the more likely that it will be represented in English. If Spanish is used to represent the *Alternative* frame, it can only do so with the presence of English. Similarly,

if English is used in a migrant framing, it can only do so in the presence of Spanish. The *Established* frames fluctuate in languages depending if an Alternative or Migrant frame is attempted.

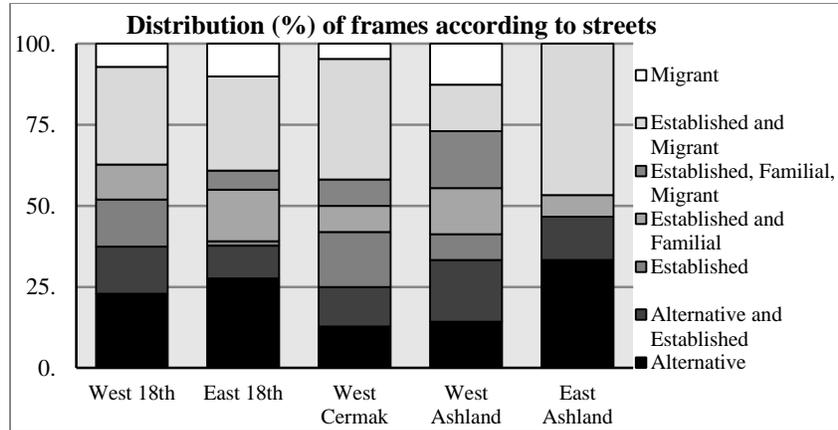### 4.1.2 Frame and Location (Streets)

Figure 9: Frame and Street Results.

The second series of models, an analysis of the distribution of frames in streets, involved five binary logistic regressions, one for each street. In all models, the Alternative frame was established as the baseline category. The results are shown in Figure 9 above.

West 18th, East 18th and West Cermak are main commercial streets and West Ashland and East Ashland refer to more residential zones. Because the presence of white population is higher in East 19th, where property values are also higher, it was hypothesized that more polarized signs will be found. Results of the regression models confirmed this by showing that presence of Alternative frames (26.7%) on East 18th was significant compared to Established frames (1.4%) (β =2.93, z = 2.74, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest that on East 18th the Alternative frame has overtaken instances of a "categorical" Established frame. For West Cermak, Established and Established Migrant frames were found to be significant (Established: $\beta = 1.53$, $z = 3.69$, $p < 0.01$, Established Migrant: $\beta = 1.05$, $z = 2.317$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that signs on West Cermak can be characterized as either Established-only or a combination of Established and Migrant frames. Residential areas West and East of Ashland show different patterns that are reflective of property value: For West Ashland, the Alternative-Established-Migrant frame, the Established-Familial-Migrant and the Migrant frame were significant (Alternative-Established-Migrant: $\beta = 2.95$, $z = 2.24$, $p < 0.05$; Established-Familial-Migrant: $\beta = 2.14$, $z = 3.36$, $p < 0.01$; Migrant: $\beta = 1.82$, z = 2.57, $p < 0.05$). These results suggest that signs on West Ashland occur on a more robust continuum of frames than other streets investigated. For West 18th and East Ashland no significant frames were found, suggesting that there is no recognizable difference in distribution of one frame from another in these areas.

Results show that the type of variation seen in frame distribution is influenced significantly by location: the more gentrified the area (East 18th) the more categorical the alignment of frames. The less gentrified the area (West Cermak, West Ashland) the higher the presence of combined frames.

4.2 Qualitative

The results above have provided three insights on the distribution of languages and frames in Pilsen: 1) frames cannot be equated to a single language, 2) instances of languages in frames form a continuum (from English to Spanish), 3) instances of frames on streets also form a continuum (from categorical to combined). We now locate these findings in the Pilsen context.

Thus, we advance an approach called the Holistic Model of Frame Analysis or HMFA. The HMFA approach combines observations garnered by inferential statistics (continuums or Scales of

Authentication) and situates those observations within community-wide frames specific to the sociocultural community context: Frame of Economic Changes and Frame of Heritage Collective Memory (Figure 10). Pilsen's larger frames are retrieved by looking at the dynamics of diasporic populations in a contact context. We refer to Frame of Heritage and Collective Memory as a diasporic space, or what Jaworski and Thurlow (drawing from Harvey 1989) refer to as "imaginery of place" defined as "an important resource for diasporic communities in maintaining their sense of national or ethnic identity and through which to express their longing and nostalgia for the 'lost' homeland… *place* facilitates and creates the 'collective memory' of diaspora" (emphasis added, Jaworski and Thurlow 2011:8). It is this "collective memory" of diaspora that is on display and in dialogue with the changing socioeconomic context of Pilsen (the Frame of Economic Changes). This frame is informed by population changes (in this case, the recent growth of white residents on East 18th) that also bring economic change. These two frames are in constant dialogue with each other, and affect the way signs are displayed linguistically and geographically. When signs are studied in isolation to see a continuum of authentication, and then placed into these major frames, a scaffold or structure is revealed with which to understand the significance of gentrification effects (Figure 10).

This model can be characterized as an effect of contact: In streets undergoing more advanced gentrification and the consequent perceived contact of different "points of view", there are more instances of categorical frames (Alternative *vs*. Established, Familial and Migrant), specifically seen in a strong alignment to those frames with indexical connections to an "authenticity" located in *heritage*. In less "gentrified" areas such a dramatic distinction is not present: More alignment to frames located on multiple scale points are observed (such as Alternative-Established; Established, Familial, Migrant, etc.). Importantly, this model may help understand that an Alternative sign in East 18th has a different meaning from the same sign on West 18th. These social meanings can only be captured once the standpoints of the population that characterize Pilsen are taken into account, the next step towards our understanding of sign, space and language.
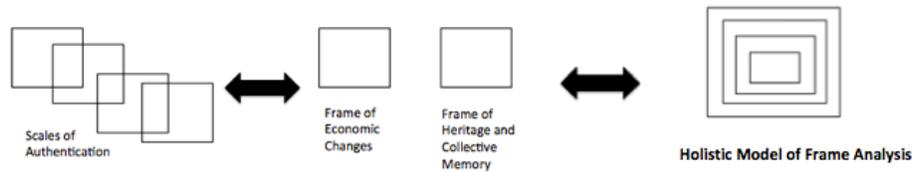

Figure 10: Unpacking the Pilsen Context: The Holistic Model of Frame Analysis (HMFA).

5 Conclusions

The present study shows that perceived gentrification effects can be studied through the LL of a contact area. Quantitative results showed that those areas undergoing advanced gentrification show a stricter alignment to categorical representations of authentication processes that index heritage and collective memory. Conversely, in those areas in which processes of gentrification are not as salient, signs are distributed in frames occupying multiple points on our proposed scale. In its investigation of Pilsen, this study proposes a new model for the study of salient frames operating in bilingual urban contexts, and situates the use of language in this space through the theoretical implementation of frames as a Scale of Authenticity. Future research would benefit from analyzing these saliency effects within the community by incorporating attitudinal data from members of the Pilsen community in order to gain a better understanding of authentication processes of localized heritage and integrated identities in other urban spaces.

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