PERFORMING ACCENTS AND DIALECTS IN THE THEATRE:

AUTHENTICITY, REPRESENTATION, AND INCLUSION

FACULTY MENTOR: MARIE RAMIREZ DOWNING
ABSTRACT

The theatre is a place to produce plays about the diverse people who populate this world. The International Dialects of English Archive (IDEA) website was created to be a repository for real people to contribute their accents and dialects for theatrical study. It is used by professional actors, students, directors, and voice and dialect coaches when producing plays that require accuracy and authenticity when telling stories of various regions around the globe. We seek true representation of Mexican and Chicano voices from the northern, central, and southern areas of California. The current database for Mexico and California needs to be updated and expanded. As Associate Editor for those regions, we plan to collect new accents and dialects that represent and include every unique detail about our subjects and give them a platform to tell their stories through a written and recorded transcription process and eventual performance by our SSU students.

For our full proposal narrative please see this link
MEET THE STUDENT SCHOLARS

Marisabel Flores is a 19-year-old second-year Biology major studying at Sonoma State University who is aspiring to pursue a career in nursing. She grew up in Santa Rosa, California and is very family-oriented. Throughout her life, she has been heavily involved in theatre and has been part of numerous productions. She spends most of her days completing assignments for school and studying. On her down time she enjoys painting, going out for walks with her dogs, and watching movies with her loved ones.
Manny Deleon

Born and raised in Santa Rosa California, as Mexican-American actor, I’ve spent much of my life indulging in the world of acting. It is for me, the very essence of my soul. I actively participate in Social Justice Theater spreading awareness and performing in community based theater in my area. I started my career in 2009 with a local group called The Imaginists. We worked on devised theater and that’s when I fell in love with the craft. I will be receiving my bachelors degree in Theater with my concentration in Acting and also Chicano/Latino Studies with an emphasis in Social Science from Sonoma State University.
Reilly Milton is a graduating senior theatre arts major with a concentration in acting. Reilly is not new to the research scene at Sonoma State. She entered in the CSU Student Research Competition in 2020 and with her presentation, "Biraciality on the American Stage: The Dramatic Performance of the Role of Margaret in Origin Story by Nathan Alan Davis," she discussed and analyzed her work performing in the play produced by the Department of Theatre Arts & Dance in October 2019. As part of the competition, Reilly submitted a five-page summary of her work on this creative project as well as photos and video from the show; gave a ten-minute recorded Zoom presentation; and participated in a live Zoom Q&A session with faculty judges from around the CSU. Reilly’s was one of six Sonoma State projects selected from a campus-wide competition to represent SSU in the statewide competition. In the final statewide round, she competed against a joint pool of undergraduate and graduate students.
Phi Tran was born April 7th, 1996 and raised in Marin County, California, Phi Hoang Tran has always had a thing for the spotlight. With a Vietnamese/Chinese identity and upbringing, making people laugh and smile comes easy. Phi got into dancing in middle school, followed by acting in high school. Now he continues life at Sonoma State University where he looks to close his undergraduate journey soon enough.
PART 1: IDEA WEBSITE ACCENT CONTRIBUTIONS
MARISABEL FLORES ACCENT/DIALECT CONTRIBUTION

Go here to listen to the whole entry

https://www.dialectsarchive.com/michoacan-2
Marisabel interviewed her uncle for her accent contribution: These are the descriptions on the website: https://www.dialectsarchive.com/

**Michoacán 2**

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**Biographical Information**

**AGE:** 49

**DATE OF BIRTH (DD/MM/YYYY):** 19/05/1971

**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Uruapan, Michoacán, Mexico

**GENDER:** male

**ETHNICITY:** Hispanic/Mexican

**OCCUPATION:** maintenance technician

**EDUCATION:** some high school

**AREAS OF RESIDENCE OUTSIDE REPRESENTATIVE REGION FOR LONGER THAN SIX MONTHS:**

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The subject moved to California, in the United States, in 1989 and has lived there ever since (32 years). Specifically, he has lived in Clear Lake and Santa Rosa, in northern California.

**Other Influences on Speech:**

Though the subject has lived outside his representative region for the past 32 years, Spanish is the language he speaks most, and therefore his accent has not been impacted.

The text used in our recordings of scripted speech can be found by clicking here.

**Recorded By:** Marisabel Flores

**Date of Recording (DD/MM/YYYY):** 23/01/2021
Hello, I was born in Uruapan, Michoacán, Mexico, uh, in 1971 in the month of May. I came to the United States, uh, in 1989. Since then, I've been living my whole life in this country. I love this country. Now I have my family. I have three beautiful daughters, and now I have three grandchildren. So, I like to — I like this country. I like to be in this country ...

[The subject speaks Spanish]: Hola. Yo nací en Uruapan, Michoacán, en 1971 por el mes de Mayo. Eh, llegué a los Estados Unidos en el año de 1989 y desde entonces he residido en este país. Me gusta mucho este país, aquí he trabajado, aquí tengo mi familia, y estoy contento. Gracias.

[English translation: Hello. I was born in Uruapan, Michoacan, in May of 1971. Uh, I came to the United States in 1989 and have lived in this country since. I like this country a lot. I work here. I have my family here, and I am happy. Thank you.]

TRANSCRIBED BY: Marisabel Flores

DATE OF TRANSCRIPTION (DD/MM/YYYY): 26/01/2021
Manny Deleon’s Dialect/Accent Contribution

- Go here to listen to the whole entry
- https://www.dialectsarchive.com/california-14
Manny interviewed his Mom for his contribution: These are the descriptions on the website: https://www.dialectsarchive.com/

**California 14**

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**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**AGE:** 41

**DATE OF BIRTH (DD/MM/YYYY):** 21/02/1979

**PLACE OF BIRTH:** Santa Rosa, California

**GENDER:** female

**ETHNICITY:** Mexican

**OCCUPATION:** N/A

**EDUCATION:** some high school

The speaker lived in Jalisco, Mexico, for about four years (from age of 3 to 6). She also lived in Utah for about a year as a child.

**OTHER INFLUENCES ON SPEECH:**

The speaker grew up in a traditionally Mexican household with immigrant family members who spoke little to no English. In addition, there are many prominent Mexican accents from the subject's hometown of Santa Rosa, California. She also spent some portions of her life visiting a ranch with her grandparents, who did not speak English at all.

The text used in our recordings of scripted speech can be found by clicking here.

**RECORDED BY:** Manny De Leon

**DATE OF RECORDING (DD/MM/YYYY):** 30/01/2021
A positive memory of my childhood? I used to ride horses with the neighbor. She had a horse named Diajni, and the horse was not tame, but she was teaching me to ride it, and she had another horse and it was fun to ride the horses, and I like horses. When I traveled before, we went to Utah, and we stayed at a YWCA camp where we were working, and some people used to come from the CBs, which are military personnel like reserves for the army and their families, and they would come and stay on the cabins, and we would play with their kids, and we played Clue and Tag and other things, made crafts, and I rode horses there too!

[The subject speaks Spanish]: Estaba muy bueno el lugar y estaba las montañas, y allí estaba el río y pescados la gente fueran a pescar allí mucho. Y, La gente? Pues, era bien. No era mucha gente allí porque era un lugar que estaba cerrado parra en verano pero nosotros quedaron allí a todas maneras y casi no miramos gente no mas el señor que trabajaba allí pero había muchas animales, muchas vacas y tuvimos que caminar lejos para agara la agua.

[English translation: The place was beautiful, and there were mountains, and there was a river and fish. The people would go and fish there a lot. And the people? Well, they were good. There was not much people there in the place because it would close in the summer, but we would stay there anyway and we’d almost never see people, no more than the man who worked there, but there were many animals, lots of cows, and we had to walk far to the river to get the water.]

TRANSCRIBED BY: Manny De Leon

DATE OF TRANSCRIPTION (DD/MM/YYYY): 30/01/2021
Phi Tran’s dialect/accen contribution

• Go here to listen to the whole entry
• https://www.dialectsarchive.com/vietnam-5
Phi interviewed his mother for his accent contribution: These are the descriptions on the website: https://www.dialectsarchive.com/

Vietnam 5

Biographical Information

Age: 53

Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY): 08/03/1967

Place of Birth: Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), South Vietnam

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Vietnamese

Occupation: Manicurist

Education: High school and beauty college

Areas of residence outside representative region for longer than six months:

At the time of this recording, the subject had been living in California, in the United States, for 31 years (since 1989).

Other Influences on Speech:

The subject's speech was mainly influenced by her education, but she also learned from other people throughout her life. Although she has lived in the United States for multiple decades, she still has a Vietnamese accent, as she still predominantly speaks Vietnamese.

The text used in our recordings of scripted speech can be found by clicking here.

Recorded By: Phi Tran

Date of Recording (DD/MM/YYYY): 28/01/2021
Um, I'm Vietnamese. I was born in Saigon, March 8, 1967. That the — in Viet— uh, International Women Day. So I have a nice family, um, two sister and two brother. So I came to America by 1989, and I live in California, and we started, uh, going to beauty college with sisters, and after that we take a license and work for somebody for one year, so we wanna open 1990 a shop for three of us. I have two sons and a nice family. Everyone we sharing and help each other, and then I'm happy for now.

[The subject reads a passage from a newspaper in Vietnamese]: Fresno — Một người dân ông đang ở tam tai nhà cha mẹ đã đốt trui luôn cả ngôi nhà, sau khi anh ta dùng bình xịt lửa để đốt nhà. Lực lượng cứu hỏa đã nhận được tin báo cháy tại một ngôi nhà ở Fresno, California, vào tối thứ Ba. Người dân ông trong ngôi nhà 2 tầng “đã ra quyết định sai làm khi dùng lửa để giết nên thay vì thuốc diệt côn trùng.

[English translation: Fresno — One man who stayed at his parents’ house for a while burned the whole house down after he attempted to use a blowtorch to kill spiders. The Fresno fire station had received a call regarding the incident, which took place in Fresno, California, on Tuesday evening. The man in the two-story house realized he had made the wrong decision using fire to kill the spiders instead of using bug spray.]

TRANSCRIBED BY: Phi Tran

DATE OF TRANSCRIPTION (DD/MM/YYYY): 29/01/2021
PART 2: INTERVIEW
“VERBATIM THEATRE”
PERFORMANCES
MANNY AS ALEXANDRA

Manny’s Full Interview here
CLICK HERE FOR MANNY’S INTERVIEW AND PERFORMANCE

- Alexandra is a short, Mexicana very animated woman. When she talks she is very expressive and laughs a lot. I think it comes from her ability to make anything funny or a good time. Her accent is very subtle, often mixed with what people would describe as a “latina with a valley girl sound”. She speaks high pitched and in her nasal area. Her voice does fluctuate from time to time but usually she sounds almost out of breath from all the laughing she does. This required the efforts to talk from the front of the head. The interview was done over the phone via IMovie. She is sitting in my room wearing her PJS. She was holding the pillow on my bed to keep warm, hitting it when she laughed.

- Question: Tell me one of your favorite childhood memories

- Alexandra:

- AHAHAHAHAH I don’t have any good memories, my childhood was awful! AHAHAH Oh I used to uhm play marbles with the boys and beat them. I was like a little tomboy uhm yeah but these hands were good for uhm WOOO, these fingers were good for aiming. Haha I don’t know! ahaaha
Marisabel’s Interview Here.
Description of the Interview: Miguel Caballero Valle

Miguel had just gotten off of work prior to this interview and was therefore tired but he tried to be enthusiastic. However, one can tell that he was nervous due to the consistent “um’s” and “uh’s” he used when responding to the interview questions and he was also fidgeting in the chair he was sitting in. He looked up and to the side a lot as he was remembering events that took place during his childhood and young adulthood. When discussing memories that brought him joy, his face lit up as he relived the moments. The interview was conducted in a leasing office. He was sitting at the desk with a calendar in front of him. Closed blinds covering a window can be seen in the background along with filing cabinets and a bag of almonds. No props were used during this interview.

WATCH PERFORMANCE HERE
Marisabel: **What is your name?**

Miguel: **My name is Miguel Caballero Valle.**

Marisabel: **Which city were you born in and where did you grow up?**

Miguel: **I was born in Uruapan Michoacan Mexico and I grew up uh in the same city, Uruapan Michoacan.**

Marisabel: **How old are you?**

Miguel: **Um at this moment I am forty nine years old.**

Marisabel: **What is your occupation?**

Miguel: **Um my occupation uh is I'm a maintenance supervisor.**

Marisabel: **What was your upbringing like?**

Miguel: **My childhood I had a great childhood uh happy um well happy and sad depends but I'm mostly happy, everything.**

Marisabel: **What are your parent's native languages?**

• (Continue next page)
Miguel: UH Spanish both of them.

Marisabel: Where were your parents born and where were they brought up? Miguel: They were they both were born in Mexico Michoacan I don’t know the cities but Michoacan state.

Marisabel: What are their vocations? Occupations.

Miguel: UH my mom in Mexico she always was always at home uh my dad was working at uh lumberjar all his life in Mexico and when they came to the United States my my dad was working where fish company and also for uh the um ice making company too uh my mom worked for the um mail uh (pause)

Marisabel: It’s okay um do you want me to move on to the next question? Miguel: Uh si

Marisabel: Okay, can you describe a funny or sad event from your childhood? Miguel: Well the s- I had I have a sad event when when my both parents came to the United States um me and my brothers, my sisters we um we all lived together in Mexico with my grandma uh for five years until my parents went back to Mexico to meet us again uh so all those five years uh it was it was sad for us, well for me. (2:09-2:42)

Marisabel: Okay um what is your best or favorite memory in life?

Miguel: Oh I have uh uh my best memory in life is when my my first daughter was born um it’s hard for me to describe the feeling um but uh um the same day that that she was born I I lost my job they they fired me at the the place where I was working EH so I had uh on one side no job and

then on the other side um my daughter was being born and uh uh it was a feeling EH I I can’t describe it but I it was one of my best memories that I have. (2:49-3:35)

Marisabel: What are you passionate about?

Miguel: Oh I play I play music, I play the keyboard. I learned how to play the keyboard when I was about around twenty years old and then I um I got into church uh playing at the church and I’ve been playing at the church since then but because of the uh pandemic uh we haven’t played for a whole year at the church but I’ve been playing at home.

- Marisabel: Thank you.
Description of the Interview: Gabriel

Gabriel and I are outside of our work at Mary’s Pizza Shack. He’s in his manager uniform. We are on the side of the building it is a pale color. We are sitting on the green milk crates. It’s a fairly sunny day. Gabriel asked if he could answer the question on film in his car. I allowed it because he seemed very anxious to do this interview. All my transcript is written from my notes and from the speaker’s mouth exactly. I noticed the whole interview Gabriel’s breathing was very shaky. He seemed uncomfortable having to talk so much about himself in English. English is his second language. His placement is very much in the back of his mouth and takes a long time to get through sentences so he tends to keep them shorter. He struggles to pronounce words sometimes and stumbles through until he gets to the correct one.

Watch Reilly’s performance here.
ME: Tell me about you who are you? And about your family?

GABE: Well hi my name is Gabriel, Um I’m from Mexico….Um and I’m 30 years old. I have uh like a medium family, not too big….Um I have uh 3 older sisters. And uh two youngers and I have one old brother and a younger brother and uh plus me so we eight. We are eight and I have like a medium family my sisters and my brothers they have kids all my sister the older they have like 5,6. My brothers they have like 3,4. So my family it’s not too big there’s like probably like 25, 30 with my niece nephews and my sisters brothers. So my early memory um what I know remember it’s being in Mexico it’s been, it’s been nice cool plus when I was in Mexico I never thought….um something like Covid is gonna happen. So when I was in Mexico it was everything nice….. and now Im here in California um that’s it.
ACCENT DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION AND OTHER SOURCES USE IN THE PROJECT

- HTTPS://WWW.DIALECTSARCHIVE.COM/SUBMISSIONS-GUIDE
- IDEA FIELD RECORDING GUIDE
- MAKING THEATRE FROM INTERVIEWS