1. Introduction and objectives

Nina²: “Our parents would take us to wherever they had to do business so that we’d speak for them you know. They’d go oh we’re going to the bank now I want you to tell the d- you know in English. I want you to speak to them […] my mother would say oh you go with Vera because you know she can’t speak to the doctor. And here you are in the doctor’s office with an older lady that’s gonna be examined you know ((laughs)). I never thought about that but that’s some of the things that that we did because you know we could”.

The quotation above is excerpted from a conversation I had with Nina, an Italian-Canadian woman in her early 60s who emigrated to Border City, Ontario as a child in the 1950s. Nina’s discussion represents the experiences of many participants in the research presented here: she is a child language broker turned family interpreter.

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² Names of all individuals, locations, and organizations are pseudonyms. The use of the researcher’s own first name in relevant transcripts is excepted.
This paper is part of a larger project concerning the simultaneous pressures of linguistic shift and maintenance among multigenerational Italian-Canadian families in Border City, Ontario. The community and participants are in a rapid shift process in which the oldest living generation (1st Gen) is Italian dominant, their children (2nd Gen) are productively bilingual, and the third generation (3rd Gen) and fourth generation (4th Gen) use English almost exclusively. This generational language shift trajectory has been shown to be a very general pattern for North American immigrant groups (e.g. Giampapa 2001; Zentella 1997).

The primary goal of this paper is to explore conversational and social aspects of family interpreting. The family interpreting explored in this paper is a conversational phenomenon in which (mostly) 2nd Gen family members interpret from English to Italian or Italian to English for the perceived benefit of their first-generation and third-generation family members in mundane family interactions.

All participants who now interpret in family contexts once interpreted as children for their parents and other Italian-dominant relatives in public English-speaking contexts. But what does interpreting in family conversations today have to do with serving as a child language broker more than fifty years ago? If we assume that all the recorded interactions collected for this research are related to all other interactions that the set of participants has had, and to larger social structures, practices, and pressures (see e.g. Bucholtz and Hall 2005; Irvine 1996, 2001; Williams 2008), we can begin to understand the sociolinguistic perceptions and expectations that drive the interpreting demonstrated in these family interactions.

Data on family interpreting demonstrate that the 2nd Gen interprets to negotiate between the push for a shift to English and the pressures to maintain Italian in family discourses. Many 2nd Gen participants claim that they interpret so that family members of flanking generations (e.g. grandparents and grandchildren) will be able to understand one another and interact meaningfully. However, metalinguistic and conversational data show that it is usually not the case that 1st and 3rd Gen family members do not understand one another. I argue that 2nd Gen participants interpret as a means to (re)create their own Italianness through
demonstrations of their Italian language fluency. They create themselves as the family members who are most expert in both Italian and English. While interpreting is a means of Italian maintenance for some participants, it also often discourages younger generations from using Italian productively and assumes that their receptive competence is low. Thus, family interpreting also encourages younger generations to use only English, effectively contributing to language shift.

Through analyses of spontaneous multigenerational conversations and information gathered in informal interviews and ethnographic fieldwork, this paper illustrates some of the pressures, processes, and sociolinguistic outcomes of linguistic shift and maintenance in a multigenerational North American immigrant community.

2. Theoretical Approach

2.1. Interpretation and translation as brokering activities

Many recent studies approach non-professional interpreting as a complex language brokering activity in which bilinguals (often children) interpret for non-bilinguals (usually adults) in institutional settings (e.g. Shannon 1990; Tse 1995; 1996; Valdés 2003). Most language brokering research focuses on bilingual children or adolescents brokering between language minority group “insiders” and majority group “outsiders”, finding that child language brokers have more power and responsibility than children are traditionally believed to have, and that brokers become bicultural to adapt to “competing demands of two cultural worlds” (Weisskirch and Alva 2002: 2). Acoach and Webb (2004) assert that brokering practices simultaneously promote assimilation to the host culture and maintenance of the native culture, through frequent contact with and negotiation between the two. However, non-professional interpreting is still poorly understood, and Acoach and Webb (2004) and Weisskirch and Alva (2002) call for an exploration of the impact of language brokering on family language use.
Unlike the aforementioned research, this paper focuses on adults who used to interpret as children and who now broker within bilingual family interaction and the ways that familial roles and ideologies (re)emerge in this conversational practice. Second-generation family members in this study have served as interpreters in institutional contexts since they immigrated as children approximately fifty years ago. They extend this practice today to the family context, brokering among family members just as they do among family members and outsiders. Using a conversation analytic (CA) approach to bilingual interaction (e.g. Alfonzetti 1998; Auer 1984; 1995; 1998; Li Wei 1994; 1998; Milroy and Li Wei 1995), I explore these interpreting practices as sites of emergent roles and identities, which are informed by ideologies, perceptions, and expectations of past selves or “brought along” identities (Auer 1992; Williams 2008).

Additionally, language brokering research often focuses on situations in which brokers interpret out of necessity because of differences in language repertoires and communicative competence. This research, however, demonstrates situations in which non-professional interpreting is employed without such necessity in most cases.

2.2. Shift and maintenance

I have argued elsewhere (Del Torto 2008) that shift and maintenance are intertwined processes in a dynamic sociolinguistic system, and are not always distinguishable ends of a language contact continuum. In the type of immigrant contact situation explored in this research, shift and maintenance are not dichotomous; rather they work in concert with one another. The data in this paper illustrate that participants create and contend with simultaneous pressures from shift and maintenance in informal family interaction.

Throughout this paper, I refer to the shift-maintenance system and shift-maintenance pressures and processes. Shift-maintenance system refers to an
overall dynamic context of the language contact situation that participants are experiencing. This is a sociolinguistic system that simultaneously encompasses ideologies, practices, expectations, social norms, identities, and language use. Processes of shift and maintenance within this system are motivated by ideological and social pressures for the use of English and the use of Italian resulting from participants’ immigration to Canada and the changing social dynamics of their generations of settlement there. The system and its pressures are neither unidirectional nor static.

3. Methodological and ethnographic considerations

3.1. Participants and setting

Most participants who take on the interpreter role in multigenerational family contexts share common demographic and ethnographic characteristics: they are in their late 40s to early 60s; they were either born in Canada soon after their parents’ migration, or they immigrated to Canada as children; in interviews they discuss acting as language brokers in public contexts as children and as adults; and they often discuss mediating between flanking generations to maintain family cohesion.

Participants delineate families by generations and perceive intergenerational variation in the use of Italian and English. They talk about generations as a combination of age cohorts, relative immigration generation, and relative familial generation (who was born to whom). Those of the same age cohort tend to be part of the same immigration and familial generation. For the most part, in this research I refer to participants in their 70s and 80s as 1st Gen, those in their mid 40s to 60s as 2nd Gen, those in their 20s, 30s, and early 40s as 3rd Gen, and those under the age of 18 as 4th Gen.

The participants refer to themselves as Ciociari. The Ciociari are from the Frosinone province, southeast of Rome in the Lazio region of Italy. The participant
families settled in Border City in the 1950s, and most had no intention of returning to Italy. Migration in the 1950s resulted in close-knit, settled communities of Ciociari in the US and Canada. The participants identify as part of a larger Italian-Canadian community in Border City, as well as a community of Ciociari in the area.

The families in this study speak local varieties of Italian associated with the particular towns they are originally from, which they classify under the umbrella term Ciociaro, referring to a variety associated with the Frosinone province. Throughout this paper I refer to the languages speakers use as Italian and English. For most 1\textsuperscript{st} Gen participants, English is an Italian-accented English acquired during post-migration adulthood. For most other participants, English is a mainstream Canadian variety.

3.2. Data and methods

The corpus I collected for this research consists of approximately 65 hours of recorded family conversations and 45 hours of recorded sociolinguistic interviews. Approximately 150 Italian Canadians in Border City took part in this research project. All conversational data were recorded in participants’ homes at mealtimes with family members of multiple generations, and I was present during each of those events. I recorded most interviews in one-on-one informal settings.

Conversations have been transcribed using modified methods of CA transcription in order to treat participants’ speech as part of an interactional event. The Italian that participants use is a non-standard (and often stigmatized) variety with no accepted orthography. I use a generally standard Italian spelling, with some modified orthographic and lexical features that represent a Ciociaro variety.

I use methods of CA to locate recurrent patterns in family interaction. CA focuses on the sequential choices speakers make in the moment-by-moment unfolding of conversation and assumes that social meaning emerges from those choices.
Interpreting these meanings, however, calls for investigating ideological and social links between linguistic and social structures.

3.3. Ethnographic background on language use and interpreting in the participant community

In discussions about language, most participants have told me that younger generations are losing the Italian language; most 1st and 2nd Gen participants feel that the 3rd and 4th Gens use and have access to less Italian than their older relatives. This older set of participants believes that the 4th Gen will no longer use or understand any Italian when they are adults. Third-generation participants claim that they have full receptive knowledge of Italian and more productive knowledge than they often use, but that social norms for the use of Italian and English in family conversations dictate that they use only English, with the exception of an occasional Italian emblematic expression. At the same time that 3rd Gen participants feel a push to use only English, they also feel pressure and desire to maintain Italian identities and the Italian language at some level.

Many participants discuss the relationships and interactional dynamics between 1st and 3rd Gen family members because those family members are seen as more sociolinguistically distinct than the 2nd Gen is from either flanking generation. For instance, Carolina, a participant in her 50s, told me that she takes on a mediating role between her children and her parents in family interactions and elsewhere. She said that she often has to explain her children’s actions to her parents because they have different expectations and beliefs about social behavior. Yet she told me that her children and her parents are close and they interact several times per week. Like all other 2nd Gen participants, Carolina identifies herself as someone who understands their differences in behaviors and attitudes and who takes on a role of mediating these distinctions.
Second-generation participants’ comments suggest that multiple discourses come into play in interpreting in public contexts. Nina, for instance, told me her mother can read and understand English but that she “just feels more comfortable” with her children interpreting or translating for her, also noting that interpreting was a “responsibility” that members of her generation took on at a young age. Brokering practices and roles are related to orientations to linguistic and cultural competence. Additionally, participants’ brokering practices are linked to orientations to helping family, particularly older relatives.

It is unusual for those under age 40 to claim childhood brokering experiences or to interpret in family conversation. Most participants in the younger age cohorts are interpreted-for and are not themselves family interpreters. One exception to this generalization is that some under-40 family members participate in interpreting surrounding single lexical items (discussed in Section 4.1 below). Most 3rd Gen participants told me that they do not need Italian-to-English interpretation, but interactional data show they get it anyway.

As I have also argued elsewhere (Del Torto 2008), orientations to perceived responsibility and brokering practices in public contexts impact family interaction. Ideologies of assimilation and roles established in child language brokering reemerge and are maintained in multigenerational family contexts. This paper explains how seemingly separate discourses, interactional contexts, and time periods come together to produce local interactional roles.

4. Interactional data and analysis

Four patterns of interpretation emerged from the data, and they are grouped into two categories. Triggered interpretation includes sequences in which speakers

3 I do not use the term trigger in the same way as other code-switching researchers (e.g. Clyne 1987, 2003) use it. Here the trigger is not a particular word or phrase (such as a bilingual homophone) but the perception of a sequential problem, word search, or request for clarification.
search for single lexical items, make direct requests for information clarification, or perceive problems in the conversational sequence. *Non-triggered interpretation* consists of excerpts in which participants interpret when it is neither requested nor triggered by apparent turn-sequence problems in the immediate interaction. However, I argue that this type of interpreting is triggered by expectations and norms of family interactional roles and Italian sociolinguistic expertise, and by past interpreting encounters and experiences.

This section begins with a description of the types of interpreting patterns found in family interactions, along with analysis of the conversational dimensions of those patterns. The paper continues by exploring the social and relational dimensions of family interpreting.

4.1. Conversational dimensions of family interpreting: triggered interpreting

4.1.1. Word search

Interpreting single lexical items is a cooperative practice, and one that demonstrates participants' perceptions of linguistic and cultural expertise. This type of interpreting is often the result of a search for an uncommon word or phrase. In the following excerpt, for instance, the participants discuss the medical use of leeches in Italy, searching for the Italian interpretation of *leech*. 
1. Ida (2) They used to put the uh how do say leeches?
2. Nina (2) **Magnotte.** [Magnotte right ma?
Leeches.
3. Ida (2) [Magnotte. Magnotte
Sei conosciut signore Michele?
Leeches. Yeah. Leeches. Mr. Michele was. Did you
know Mr. Michele?
5. Ida (2) Um. Well *si ma eva piccola quando si è morto ma si.*
yes but I was little when he died but yes.
6. Ada (1) Evi piccola. Ok. Ma iss mi veniva quando c’aveva
sette otto anni. Mi è fatto male la schina.
L’infezione:: o cosa non mi ricordo. Co cosa cosi.
E mi veniva e mi mettevano le magnotte per la
schina.
You were little. Ok. Well he came to me when I was
seven or eight years old. My back hurt. An infection or
something I don’t remember. Something like that. And
he came to me and he put leeches on my back.
7. Nina (2) Oh my goodness I can’t imagine.
8. Marc (3) What is that leeches? They put leeches.
9. Nina (2) Yeah. They put leeches on her back to help with I don’t
know some condition she had. She doesn’t remember.
10. Maria (3) What is it *magnotte?* [Magnotte is leeches?
11. Nina (2) [Yeah *magnotte. Leeches
12. Ida (2) [Magnotte are leeches. They
used to use them to help you with different things.
They thought it would clean your blood or something.
13. Marc (3) Hm. Leeches. *Magnotta is a leech?*
15. Maria (3) Hmm.

While the content of this exchange contains a narrative on Ada’s experience with
leeches, the participants also do a great deal of work surrounding clarification of a
single lexical item. In this short excerpt, *magnotta/e* is uttered 12 times, and

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4 Transcripts of multi-party conversations include generation number in parentheses after
participants’ pseudonyms.

5 *Magnotta* is a Ciociaro dialect term. The Standard Italian is *mignatta.*
leech/es is uttered nine times. This repetition creates cohesive ties throughout the exchange, linking parts of a discourse (individuals’ utterances) with other parts (other speakers’ utterances), and indicating cooperation among interlocutors (Halliday and Hasan 1976). Angermeyer (2002) claims that in this type of bilingual repetition “a lexical item is no longer defined in relationship to the lexicon of the language in whose context it occurs, but rather by the cohesive tie in which it participates” (361). Lexical cohesion through repetition is an important element in the cooperative nature of bilingual word searches in these data.

Nina and Ida do more brokering work than a strict interpretation of the single lexical item. Ida and Nina cooperate to broker linguistic and cultural knowledge, claiming an expertise that other participants do not. While Ada has arguably more experience with leeching, Nina and Ida claim the expertise to explain this older Italian practice to the younger generation of English-speaking, Canadian-born participants. This cultural brokering maintains Italian cultural knowledge. Ida and Nina encourage shared knowledge among multiple generations by intervening as linguistic and cultural experts.

Extended word search sequences surrounding English terms are rare. There are instances in which participants (usually 1st Gen) request an English word. However, what follows those requests is often simple: the English term is given and the discussion moves on. Word search interpreting demonstrates a special expertise negotiation around the Italian language.

4.1.2. Direct requests for clarification

The pattern introduced here does not demonstrate requests for interpretation per se, but interpreting episodes that result from requests for information clarification. The transcript below, excerpted from a mealtime conversation among the De Santis family, illustrates this pattern.

1. Nando (2) What year was it?
Although we cannot be sure that Tina did not understand the year given in English, it is highly unlikely since she participated in this exchange almost exclusively in English. What is more likely is that Tina simply did not hear. Thus, I analyze this as a direct request for information clarification rather than a request for interpretation based on a language comprehension problem. Nonetheless, what is significant here is Gia’s perception that Tina’s question came from a language issue – that she did not understand the date in English. Gia is brokering between her children and her cousin-in-law. It is clear in this exchange and in the rest of this four-hour interaction that Tina understands 3rd Gen participants’ English and that she is perfectly capable of responding in English. Gia’s impression, however, is that misunderstanding or need for clarification comes from a difference in linguistic repertoires between her daughters and her cousin-in-law. She is negotiating shift-maintenance on a micro level, operating under the assumption that particular people (of particular generations) prefer a particular language.

Having very few instances in the corpus of directly requested interpretation beyond a single lexical item suggests that there are very few language comprehension problems among participants. Nonetheless, interpreting patterns indicate an assumption that interpretation is necessary (perhaps as perceived by the interpreter).

4.1.3. Resolving dispreferred conversational sequencing
A third type of triggered interpreting demonstrates instances in which a participant interprets because of a perceived problem in the conversational sequence.
Sequential problems take the form of pauses (perceived lack of uptake) and dispreferred second-pair parts. The following transcript, also an excerpt from the De Santis family, illustrates interpreting triggered by a .5-second pause.

1. Nando (2) You had to make so many points to be allowed in Canada.
2. Lisa Oh yeah? I didn't know that.
3. Nando (2) [Yeah. A certain number you needed.
4. Gia (2) [Oh yeah.
5. Elena (3) How do you make points?
6. Nando (2) It was uh first of all if you're employable and healthy and everything else. And then they start looking at different things. (.)

[And you were two points short?
7. Lisa [Was it the same to go to the States do you know? With the points? And like you needed a sponsor?
8. Franco (1) Two points short.
9. Gia (2) Franco was it the same thing to go to the United States too?
10. (.5)
11. Gia (2) Si tu voleva anda a gli Stati Uniti invece Canada? If you wanted to go to the United States instead of Canada?
12. Franco (1) [Uhhh:

No. No. No. It was a different story. No.

Gia perceives the pause in turn 10 as lack of uptake from Franco. She reformulates her question into Italian to get the requested second pair part. The dispreferred sequencing interpreting pattern demonstrates that participants use multilingual resources to manage conversational sequencing while simultaneously maintaining Italian in family conversations and accommodating what interpreters perceive to be differences in linguistic repertoires. Whether or not sequencing issues are actually the result of language miscomprehension is irrelevant; what is interesting here is that linguistic outcomes of processes of shift and maintenance have encouraged them to treat such sequencing issues as language problems that can be resolved through bilingual reformulation.
Despite the lack of apparent language comprehension problems, family members continue to treat language as a source of trouble in multigenerational interaction. This finding suggests that they draw lines around flanking-generation family members, which are determined by (1) the belief that they have distinct linguistic resources and competencies and (2) the belief that the interpreters are the only family members who share enough resources with each distinct group to be able to assert a bridging role. Family interpreters orient to an attitude that it is their responsibility more than anyone else’s to move between Italian and Canadian worlds, brokering to maintain continuity and regularity in family conversation, and, by extension, to maintain cohesion among family members. They identify (and are identified) as the only family members who are effectively bilingual and bicultural, and are positioned into interactionally-specific roles as interpreters for parties who are perceived as linguistically and culturally distinct. This is partially a product of interactional negotiation, partially an outcome of family members’ perceptions of one another, and partially a product of orientations to pressures for shift and maintenance and early socialization.

4.2. Conversational dimensions of family interpreting: non-triggered interpreting

Non-triggered interpretations are sequences in which family members interpret even though there are no apparent requests or turn-sequence irregularities. I argue that past encounters and experiences of interpreting trigger what I have labeled non-triggered interpreting. Thus, we may consider non-triggered interpreting as interpreting that is triggered not by immediately-spoken linguistic or sequential elements, but by sociolinguistic and interactional roles, perceptions, and expectations. For instance, in the following exchange, Gia interprets her daughter Pamela’s utterances in turns 8-11 without pause or hesitation. Gia does not wait to see if Tina will demonstrate understanding of Pamela’s English utterances; she perceives it as her next turn to interpret.
1. Gia (2) Did you try to look up Italian movies made uh in in Frosinone?
2. (1.5)
3. Victor (3) Uh I don’t know if you can [do that.
4. Pamela (3) [That’s gonna be a little harder.
5. Gia (2) Yeah? Ok. That’s fine. The other one she couldn’t find.
6. Tina (1) She can’t find that one
7. Gia (2) Because if you can’t give me a title. If you have the title [or or,
8. Pamela (3) [or a director.
9. Gia (2) O il direttore. Or the director.
10. Pamela (3) Or an actress.
12. Tina (1) Yeah.

Gia is not only brokering what she perceives as differences in linguistic repertoires, she is also doing some cultural brokering. In earlier exchanges about this topic, Tina has suggested that she does not know how to search the Internet for this information. Gia has likely concluded that Tina needs not only language brokering but also cultural/generational brokering based on a technology with which she is not familiar. Linguistic and cultural brokering go hand-in-hand.

Interlocutors’ brought-along past selves influence their actions and the way others interact with them. Thus, I argue that all cases of interpreting are triggered at some level: either a conversational level which makes itself apparent in the CA analysis of an exchange, or a social participant-based level which makes itself apparent only through ethnographic, historical, ideological, and attitudinal data. Interview data reveal participants’ expectations of interactional roles, and the interactions themselves reveal these roles. Interpretations go mostly uncontested by interpreted-for members despite the apparent lack of language comprehension problems. This acceptance legitimates family interpreters as those who have authority in a relational role between their interpreted-for family members.
Interactional triggers are significant to our understandings of interpreting practices because they assist in illustrating relational roles, assumptions of language competence, and the linguistic shift and maintenance processes in family interaction. However, an analysis of these behaviors must acknowledge identity and ideology. Thus, the remainder of this analysis focuses on social and relational dimensions of family interpreting.

4.3. Social and relational dimensions of family interpreting

This section explores the following key points about interpreting as a family sociolinguistic device: (1) asserting roles and defining relationships and expectations, (2) self-interpretation, (3) generational variation, and (4) interpreting as socialization and symbolic maintenance among the youngest generation. Within each of these sections, I also elaborate on what interpreting practices tell us about shift and maintenance processes.

4.3.1. Asserting roles, defining relationships, brokering, and cooperation

This section attends to the ways in which interpreting events allow participants to define relational roles in interaction as interpreter or interpreted-for. Such role relationships reaffirm and are informed by brokering and bridging identities and rely on cooperative strategies in conversation.

The following De Santis family exchange centers on a discussion of the invitations for Elena’s baby shower celebration. Before Elena can explain the purpose of an ultrasound invitation insert, Gia interrupts her to explain it to Tina in Italian. What is perhaps analytically interesting here are the ways in which participants assert roles as brokers, define relationships, and construct Italianness.

1. Gia (2) Isn’t that cute?
2. Tina (1) Yeah. E quille è l’ultrasound?
And is that the ultrasound?

3. Gia (2) Yeah. **Quille è l’ultrasound.**
   *That’s the ultrasound.*

4. Elena (3) That’s just an insert to tell people=

5. Gia (2) =This is the ultrasound *e sta dice che invece la cartolina ci da le* storybook.
   *and it says that instead of a card to give a storybook.*

6. Tina (1) O:::::::h

7. Gia (2) You know. **Ci da le** storybook. Cause she has a lot of
   *Give a*
   storybooks. And this is the ultrasound. Isn’t that nice?

8. Tina (1) Yeah. It’s so nice.

Regardless of the language Tina uses, Gia sees Tina as someone with whom she uses Italian. Gia is not only brokering perceived linguistic differences but is also making attempts at including Tina in this discussion, which is happening at one end of the table, while Tina is sitting at the other. Gia’s attempts at inclusion and brokering use code switching as a resource. As such, she can single Tina out as the recipient by using Italian.

The following Ricci family excerpt similarly demonstrates the assertion of brokering roles and assumptions of relationships between interactants. The excerpt also provides an example of the combination of interpreting patterns and CS strategies that happen in longer stretches of discourse. The first interpreting sequence (turns 20-24) represents a direct request for clarification, and the second (turns 28-30) is not interactionally triggered.

1. Lisa I went to see her and she took me to um the Paese Pizza [in Michigan.

2. Tess (2) [Oh you did?

3. Nina (2) Oh yeah?

4. Lisa Yeah.

5. Nina (2) Oh great. Yeah I think you were saying that.

6. Lisa Yeah? I told you about that?

7. Nina (2) Oh no actually I think Loretta told me that.

8. Tess (2) When did Loretta tell you?

9. Nina (2) Who told me that? Oh yeah I think it was her. It was Loretta that told me that.
10. Maria (3) Where?
11. Fred (2) [John’s restaurant.
12. Tess (2) [John’s restaurant. In Michigan.
13. Maria (3) Oh yeah? You went there? Is it near you uh near where you live?
14. Lisa No. Not really. But I have a cousin who lives like 20 minutes from there so.
15. Maria (3) Oh ok. Nice.
16. Lisa Yeah. So when I went to see her a couple of weeks ago she took me there for lunch. It was really nice.
17. Nina (2) [Oh yeah. How nice. Did you meet John there?
18. Maria (3) [Oh nice.
19. Lisa Yeah. No. John wasn’t there when I went. But then when I went to see Vic and Loretta it was just a couple days later and I told them about it that I went. And they said next time that I want to go they’ll call John and tell him that I’m coming and maybe he’ll meet me there.
20. Ada (1) Where did you go?
21. Lisa [I went to Det-
22. Tess (2) [Al ristorante di Zio Giovanni. 
To Uncle Giovanni’s restaurant.
23. Fred (2) [Da Zio Giovanni. È ida log a do sta. 
To Uncle Giovanni’s. She went there where it is.
24. Ada (1) Oh yeah? You went there?
25. Lisa Yeah.
26. Ada (1) Oh. That’s so nice that you go there.
27. Lisa Yeah. I liked it.
28. Maria (3) But she didn’t meet John there. No one [none of them were there.
29. Fred (2) [Ma non si è incontrat a John. Non ci steva. 
But she didn’t meet John. He wasn’t there.
30. Ada (1) Oh. Non ci steva? No one was there? Maybe on Sunday they stay home.
31. Maria (3) Yeah. Must be.

Fred and Tess, Ada’s son and daughter-in-law, both take on interpreter roles in this exchange. Rather than allow me to provide clarification to Ada (as I begin to do in turn 21), they reformulate part of my narrative into Italian. Fred and Tess are asserting themselves as bilingual language brokers here, and denying my attempt
to provide clarification monolingually. They are language brokers and I am not. Fred and Tess have been providing interpreting for Ada for decades outside the home and extend this practice into the family setting. My role as a family friend who is identified as similar to Ada’s grandchildren in that I prefer English and use very little Italian (and also perhaps as a researcher) does not allow me to take on an interpreting role. The use of English as the primary language medium in this exchange results from norms and expectations that push for language shift. Yet simultaneously, participants like Fred and Tess contribute to maintenance of Italian language and Italianness by inserting the language into these types of interactions. As they do so, they also assert their own identities as brokers and maintainers of Italian language and cultural knowledge.

Interactional roles and expectations are clearly illustrated in the following excerpt, taken from a Bianchi family conversation. The family is discussing Padre Pio, an Italian Roman Catholic priest who was canonized as a saint, and is regarded as a major religious figure of the 20th century. Giulia tells her family about a time when she met him. This excerpt includes two interpreting sequences in which Jerry acts as interpreter and demonstrates his orientations to family sociolinguistic norms and roles.

1. Giulia (1) [I remember Padre Pio veneva a do uh vicino a do abitavamo you know? Padre Pio came to uh near where we lived]
2. Lisa Mhm.
3. Giulia (1) And uh I was I was tredici quattordici anni no? thirteen fourteen years old
4. Mia (3) [Yeah.
5. Jerry (2) [Did you meet him? Ti sei incontrat? Did you meet him?]
6. Giulia (1) Oh yeah. A do steva là vicino. Where he was close to us.
7. Jerry (2) Really?
9. Jerry (2) Too bad you didn’t get his autograph ((laughs))
10. Lisa ((laughs))
11. Jerry (2) It’d be neat to have the autograph of a saint.
12. Giulia (1) Yeah.
13. Mia (3) He had the wounds of Christ?
15. Jerry (2) [I think he did. The s- stigmata?
17. Jerry (2) Iss teneva le ferite sante?
   *He had the holy wounds?*
18. Giulia (1) Tutti i fianchi e per le mani teneva.
   *All over his sides and on his hands he had them.*
19. Jerry (2) They were all over his hands and on his sides.
20. Mia (3) Mhm.

Jerry’s utterance in turn 5 takes the form of a self-repair. He utters his question first in English and then in Italian immediately after. As with other non-triggered interpreting examples, Jerry has interpreted here without any gap, dispreferred pair parts, requests, etc. It might be argued that this is a participant-related switch (Auer 1984) because the question is directed to Giulia, who is believed to prefer Italian. However, not all participants in this family do this sort of participant-related switching. Jerry, however, claims the linguistic repertoires and interactional roles that allow him to do this.

A second interpreting sequence in this excerpt represents an attempt to specifically direct a question to Giulia. In turn 13, Mia asks if Padre Pio demonstrated the wounds of Christ. Jerry is not certain of this and directly requests information from his mother-in-law, Giulia, (who is perhaps seen as more of a cultural expert on the subject than anyone else in the family) by reformulating Mia’s English question to Italian.

The family interpreting discussed in this research can be used as a conversational management resource, but it is also very much tied to expectations, identities, and established familial roles. Jerry can do this, but Mia cannot. In this sense, participants draw on the interaction of linguistic shift and maintenance processes with additional resources that they might not otherwise have. A switch into Italian
at this point allows Jerry to manage conversation and select the next speaker because in the shift-maintenance system only 1st Gen participants prefer Italian and expect that a switch to Italian is specifically directed at them. Although language shift is often seen as a negative aspect of migration, participants have been able to take advantage of it in creating new resources for conversational management, recipient selection, collaboration, cooperation, and cohesion.

4.3.2. Self interpretation

As demonstrated in the previous excerpt, interpreting is not limited to bridging flanking generations; brokers may choose self-interpreting as a conversational and sociolinguistic device. For instance, Jerry perceives the micropause in turn 2 in the excerpt below as a lack of uptake from Giulia. In response, he reformulates his question, repeating it in Italian. Interpreters may reformulate their own words as a means of repetition when they deem it necessary to maintain the flow and cohesion of an interaction; a second pair part is expected and can be elicited through a code switch and reformulation when it is not initially provided.

1. Jerry (2) Did you go see Dr. A today?
2. (.)
3. Jerry (2) Siête andati [al’officina di Dr. A? Si?
*Did you go to Dr. A’s office? Yes?*
4. Giulia (1) [Yeah.
5. Jerry (2) He said it was really busy today.
6. Giulia (1) Oh yeah. Really busy. Lots of people was there. **Pure all’una e mezza eva** busy.
*Even at 1:30 it was busy.*

Self-interpreting is different from language brokering between generations. In this case, Jerry is not brokering communication between two other parties who are thought to have distinct linguistic competencies and repertoires. Rather, he is interpreting his own utterance, an action that shows that interpreters do not live in an in-between space defined only by flanking generations. Interpreters interpret to
assert their own identities and their relationships to other participants, not only as an act of accommodation or negotiation.

The excerpt below is from a Ferrari family interaction. Gino self-interprets as a device for getting family members to follow instruction while he photographs them. The first three turns are instruction surrounding a picture that Gino is taking of his mother, Livia, and his nephew, Christian. Turns 5-9 are instructions surrounding a picture that Gino is taking of his sister, Daria, and his father, Angelo. These segments are separated by 45 seconds of other speech (represented in turn 4). This excerpt illustrates that reformulation may be used not only as a resource for conversational management but a resource for managing other types of interaction as well.

1. Gino (2) **Nonna. Look nonna** so I can see you.
2. (1)
3. Gino (2) **Ma. Guarda iech.** *(Look over here.)*
4. (45)
5. Gino (2) Daria. Daria get close to your father.
6. (2)
7. Gino (2) Look at the camera. Smile. Angelo smile for a change.
8. (1)
9. Gino (2) **Guarda iech.** He closes his eyes.

When Gino's mom (turns 1-3) and dad (turns 7-9) do not follow his direction, he reformulates into Italian. In this scenario Gino uses his ability to switch into Italian as a means of getting his parents’ attention so they will follow his directions. While he does not necessarily expect verbal uptake and the pauses do not in themselves indicate sequential trouble, the lack of gestural uptake (not looking at the camera, not smiling, not keeping eyes open) triggers a reformulation.

In the shift-maintenance system, 2nd Gen interpreters are not just defined by the sheer fact that they are a chronologically in-between generation who negotiates shift and maintenance between their children and parents. They resolve dispreferred sequencing by interpreting their own utterances when in fact they may not have to. They are a generation of people who assert themselves as brokers,
interpreters, and bilinguals. They contribute simultaneously to shift and maintenance and manifest this in their practice of interpreting themselves. Using bilingual resources as a means of managing conversation allows participants to encourage maintenance in their families and by extension in the community at large.

4.3.3. Generational variation

Regardless of their competence and access to Italian, most 3rd Gen participants have said that it would not be within the norms of family conversation for them to use Italian. These younger-generation participants claim that if they were to use Italian in family interactions they would be questioned; 3rd Gen use of Italian in family conversations is neither expected nor sanctioned by their established roles and identities. An exception to this is that they do participate in providing Italian terms in word search events.

The example below demonstrates a search for the English equivalent of the Italian frutti di bosco. Frutti di bosco literally means “fruits of the forest” and refers to berries. The excerpt is taken from a recorded mealtime conversation with the Gallo family. Don and Donna are Marina’s son and daughter. Liz is Don’s Italian-Canadian wife and Kevin is Donna’s non-Italian husband. The whole family participates in this word search. Don, Donna, and Liz are younger than most interpreters, and generally do not take on interpreter roles in their family. But in this lexical search, they claim authority as interpreters at various points.

1. Donna (3) Ma what’s this on top?
2. Marina (2) Frutti di bosco jam. Berry
3. Donna (3) Where do you buy that? Frutti di bosco jam?
4. Marina (2) I don’t know. I just bought it.
5. Don (3) It’s a mix. It’s a mix. Uh wild berries. Wild fruit.
7. Liz (3) It’s just mixed berries.
9. Don (3) But you can put any jam.
10. Donna (3) [Frutti di bosco jam ((laughs))
11. Don (3) [Why don't you put nutella? Put nutella on here.
12. Liz (3) Yeah. You could.
13. Don (3) Yeah. Sure you could.
15. Marina (2) Here Donna. Here it is. This one. ((shows Donna the jar of jam))
16. Donna (3) Oh wild berry.
17. Marina (2) Yeah. It's wild berry.
18. Don (3) It says frutti di bosco on there ((laughs))
19. Donna (3) ((laughs)) Yeah where’s frutti di bosco jam? ((laughs))
20. Marina (2) [((laughs)) Well I know ((laughs))
21. Kevin (3) [Frutti di bosco what does that mean?
22. Don (3) Bush uh from the bush.
23. Kevin (3) [Oh:::. Oh.
24. Marina (2) [From the forest. The berries.
25. Donna (3) [From the trees. The berries. The berries from the trees.
26. Kevin (3) Oh. Ok.
27. Don (3) They're wild.
28. Donna (3) Hmmm. Very good ma. I won't I won't go to class but I'll take the recipe.

There is no single family interpreter in this exchange; this word search relies on the combined efforts of all the interlocutors. Don, Liz, and Donna are not usually interpreters in their family interactions and were not child language brokers. Because frutti di bosco literally means “fruits of the forest”, a direct word-for-word reformulation does not provide enough information for an English speaker to understand its meaning as berries. Thus, the speakers do more work to interpret the item so that Donna (earlier in the exchange) and Kevin (later) get the most appropriate and meaningful reformulation. Only after Don, Liz, and Marina have contributed to Donna’s understanding of the term can Donna then claim adequate knowledge to take on the role of interpreter for Kevin. Each participant, with the exception of Kevin, takes on an interpreter role in this collaborative exchange. Even Donna, who begins this exchange as interpreted-for, acquires the linguistic expertise to become interpreter once her family members have reformulated the term for her.
Similar interpreting roles, linguistic and cultural expertise, and cooperation are illustrated in the word search event below. Although Gia generally takes on the interpreter role in her family’s multigenerational exchanges, she cannot in the earlier part of this interaction because she cannot remember the Italian term for *trolley* and calls on her family members to provide it. They are unsuccessful in finding the term, and Gia ultimately relies on notes in her travel journal.

1. Gia (2)  
   **Come si chiama la la la trolley? Come si chiama?**
   *What do you call the the the trolley? What is it called?*

2. Tina (1)  
   Oh I don’t know **come si chiama**.
   *what it’s called*

3. Nando (2)  
   Yeah I don’t remember what we used to call it.

4. Gia (2)  
   In Capri we took it.

5. Nando (2)  
   Yeah.

6. Gia (2)  
   Pamela do you remember when we went to Capri we took that little trolley? What was that called?

7. Pamela (3)  
   Yeah. (1) I don’t remember what it was called.

8. Gia (2)  
   Yeah. I can’t remember what it was called.

9. Pamela (3)  
   I’ll think of it.

10. Victor (3)  
    **Tira** something.
    *Pull*

11. Gia (2)  
    What?

12. Victor (3)  
    **Tira** something.
    *Pull*

13. Gia (2)  
    It’s it’s like a way to get uphill.

14. Lisa  
    Oh it’s like a cable car?

15. Gia (2)  
    [A cable car. Yeah

16. Elena (3)  
    [A cable car

17. Pamela (3)  
    Yeah but in Italian it’s something else.

18. Gia (2)  
    Yeah. That’s it but what’s the Italian word though? ((laughs))

19. Pamela (3)  
    I don’t know. I forget.

20. Elena (3)  
    They sometimes call those **gondolas**.

21. Victor (3)  
    Yeah.

22. Gia (2)  
    Yeah. But that’s not it.

23. Pamela (3)  
    That’s not it.

24. Elena (3)  
    No?

25. Pamela (3)  
    No. It had its own name. I forgot what it was.

26. Elena (3)  
    Look it up on the internet ((laughs))

27. Pamela (3)  
    ((laughs))

28. Gia (2)  
    I’ll have to look it up in my notes.
29. Elena (3) In your journal?
30. Gia (2) Yeah.
31. Pamela (3) Yeah. In her diary.
32. [...] 
33. Gia (2) **Funicular.**
34. Nando (2) That's it. It's a **funicular.**
35. Victor (3) A **funicular.**
36. Elena (3) Like that song.
37. Lisa What? That's what that thing is called?
38. Elena (3) Yeah. **Funicular.**

This word search, like others in the corpus, is a cooperative one, involving several family members who are simultaneously attempting to provide the requested interpretation. Gia tries using Tina, Pamela, and her journal as resources for interpretation. She attempts to pass the interpreter role to her interlocutors because her knowledge (or memory) does not hold up for this particular lexical item. While some of the family members come up with Italian items that might work as interpretations of *trolley*, they are not the words Gia is searching for. Ultimately, Gia still serves as the interpreter and takes on a linguistic expert role here by using her travel journal as a resource for the searched-for term, **funicular**⁶. Gia’s role as the usual interpreter in her family is still maintained even in this instance when she cannot recall an Italian lexical item.

### 4.3.4. Symbolic maintenance and socialization among the youngest generation

The following excerpt demonstrates a similar cooperative negotiation surrounding the term *baffi* (mustache). Anthony is Donna and Kevin’s eight-year-old son who attempts to act as an interpreter in this excerpt, demonstrating and claiming knowledge of Italian.

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⁶ Whether or not **funicular** is an Italian or an English item is arguable. The standard Italian term is **funicolare**, and the English is **funicular**. Perhaps **funicular** is cognate enough to the Italian **funicolare** to be understood as an Italian term. Perhaps **funicular** is a Ciociaro dialect term. Regardless, participants demonstrate in this exchange that they identify **funicular** as an Italian term.
1. Anthony (4) How do you say mustache in Italian?
2. Kevin (3) [Mustascio.]
3. Don (3) [Baffo. Mustache.]
4. Donna (3) [Mustascio.]
5. Don (3) [Mustascio.]
6. Kevin (3) ((laughs))
7. Anthony (4) It’s baffi. mustache
9. Donna (3) His pronunciation is very good.
10. Kevin (3) How do you say it?
11. Anthony (4) Baffi.
12. Donna (3) [Baffi ((laughs))]
13. Don (3) [Baffi ((laughs))]
14. Kevin (3) ((laughs))
15. Donna (3) You better teach Daddy.
16. Kevin (3) I didn’t even know that.
17. Lisa How did you know that?
18. Anthony (4) What?
19. Lisa How did you know that? Cause he just told you or you knew that before?
20. Anthony (4) No. I knew that. Nonno keeps telling me. Nonno keeps on telling me Italian words.
21. Lisa Oh wow.
22. Don (3) You’re supposed to listen to nonno when he teaches you Italian words.
23. Donna (3) Well he understands him. And mom. It’s Stephen that doesn’t really.

In this exchange, Anthony is demonstrating some competence in Italian language and simultaneously negotiating his Italianness. After Kevin, Don, and Donna respond to Anthony’s request for the Italian term for mustache, Anthony corrects them. This move suggests that Anthony is not actually asking for an interpretation of the term because he does not know it; Anthony asks because he does know the word and is looking for an opportunity to demonstrate that to his family. Although

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Kevin, Donna, and Don’s utterances of mustascio in turns 2, 4, and 5 are examples of Stylized Italian English (see Del Torto 2008).
he certainly would not be considered an interpreter or broker in his family, Anthony wants to participate in interpreting practices and demonstrate Italian linguistic knowledge, and his question creates an opportunity to that end. He uses this word search as a strategy for sociolinguistic identification, to claim membership in an Italian-Canadian bilingual family. The family’s many ways of encouraging Anthony (laughing, direct verbal praise, asking him to repeat the term, Donna’s assertion that he understands Italian) demonstrate Anthony’s success in this endeavor to claim Italianness and to indicate knowledge of the Italian language.

In encouraging Anthony to learn Italian and to use the Italian that he knows, his family is in effect contributing to pressures for linguistic maintenance on this youngest-generation family member. Although Anthony’s age cohort uses and understands very little Italian, most families demonstrate that it is important for the youngest children to learn what Italian they can and to use it when they can. Although they acknowledge and accept shift to English, they also encourage maintenance of Italian.

Similarly, in a Ferrari family interaction, eight-year-old Christian attempts to demonstrate understanding of his grandmother’s Italian utterance with his question in turn 7 (“they lay down?”). Although Christian utters this in the form of a question (with rising pitch contour), Diana interprets this as an indicator of understanding (“you understood huh Christian?”) and remarks that even the youngest children have some access to Italian.

1. Livia (1) [Did you see ((laughs)) did you see the picture of all those guys? They go to the beach and they all lay down and sleep.
2. Diana (2) ((((laughs)))
3. Christian(4) ((((laughs)))
4. Gino (2) What do they look like? On the beach?
5. Livia (1) Uno si fa così e uno si fa così. [Uno così e l’altro così.
One goes like this and one goes like this. One like this and the other like this.
6. ALL ((((laughs)))
7. Christian(4) They lay down?
If we look at earlier points in the exchange, presented in turns 1 and 4 we can see that all of the relevant information that Christian would have needed to claim that he understood Livia’s Italian description are given in English. For instance, Gino’s question in turn 4 coupled with Livia’s gestural representations during her Italian description in turn 5 would give Christian enough information to be able to understand her description even if he did not understand a word of Italian.

A sequential analysis raises the question: Does Christian actually understand Livia’s Italian, or has he gotten the relevant information from English-medium portions of the discussion? The answer to this question cannot be a certain one, but it is less relevant than Christian’s attempts to show that he has understood and Diana’s assumption that he has understood Livia’s Italian. Christian is laying claims to Italian, and Diana is validating these claims. In her validation, Diana encourages linguistic maintenance more generally.

While most 4th Gen children do not use Italian productively, many families believe they understand Italian (at least) at a lexical level. Participants have expressed beliefs that Italian language and culture are maintained to some degree even in this youngest generation, and that they too claim Italian identities. They are socialized to believe they are part of Italian families who claim Italianness, speak Italian, and do Italian things. Although interpreting is a resource generally exploited only by those over age 40, the type of interpreting practice that Anthony and Christian demonstrate is a resource through which the youngest generation can construct and demonstrate Italianness. This practice illustrates interpreting as identity work and demonstration of knowledge, while *not* being used to mediate or broker.
5. Concluding discussion

The sequential aspects of this analysis show that interpreting is used as a resource for conversational management. Interpreters maintain cohesive interaction by manipulating turn taking and responding to requests. When we combine this sequential approach with perceptions, ideologies, and identities we see manifestations and sources of the simultaneous pressures for shift and maintenance. In the shift-maintenance system that these participants are a part of (and participating in), being able to use both Italian and English and insert both languages into a family conversation creates cohesion, is a cooperative element of interaction, and is seen as a way to keep conversation going and keep a family together. Regular interaction is very important to the participant families and most family members interact at least several times a week. Mundane conversation is an arena in which family relationships get (re)established. Part of the family relationship involves the practical aspects of linguistic shift and maintenance processes and the pragmatic necessities of English that go hand-in-hand with efforts to maintain Italian for purposes of heritage, culture, and identifying with a family and a community.

Language shift began as soon as these migrants arrived in Canada, whether they knew it or not, and whether they tried to prevent it or not. Speaking English was a necessity in terms of education, employment, and the regular business of life in Border City. Just as the use of Italian and maintenance of Italianess were encouraged in the home when the 2nd Gen were children, the use of English and shift to Canadianness were encouraged in schools, businesses, and among peers, and progressed further for subsequent generations. The practice of interpreting in public encounters demonstrates simultaneous pressures for shift and maintenance: shift in being able to use English well enough to interpret for older relatives, and maintenance in being able to communicate with family members in Italian. These pressures are still manifested in public and business encounters, but are now also being manifested in multigenerational interactions at home.
This discussion brings us back to a theoretical assumption that began the paper: that all interactions are informed by all other interactions, expectations, ideologies, interactional roles, and identities. Various linguistic strategies reaffirm mediating roles and the ways in which participants negotiate the pressures for shift and maintenance. Every time participants interact with one another, the role of interpreter and identity of language broker get (re)established, (re)claimed, and (re)constituted. Interaction and identity construction are processes of constant negotiation and do not rely on single exchanges; they are the sum of all interactions, behaviors, attitudes, and expectations. The simultaneous pressures for shift and maintenance have been negotiated so that participants use the practical realities of those pressures as linguistic and cultural resources for identity construction and role definition in interaction. Family members also rely on the identities, competencies, sociolinguistic norms, attitudes, and expectations of others to define themselves.

The interpreting explored in this study is a highly perspectival interactional phenomenon. With the exception of word search events, interpreting in this corpus effectively acts as maintenance for 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Gen participants, while it discourages 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} Gen participants from using Italian and demonstrating their knowledge of the language in family interactions. At the same time, interpreting is a family resource that allows participants to claim Italianness for the family as an aggregate.

All participants, not just those of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Gen, are involved in a balancing act between the simultaneous pressures of shift and maintenance. This research takes a step in providing deeper and more nuanced understandings of the complex ways in which child language brokering impacts family interactions and relationships as well as shift-maintenance systems. Additional exploration of bilingual adults who were once child language brokers would provide further insights into the ways in which social and ideological factors affect processes of shift and maintenance and sociolinguistic outcomes of practical language contact situations.
Works Cited


**Appendix 1. Transcription Conventions**

Name (2) Speaker pseudonym with generational category in parentheses.

. Tone group boundary within an utterance. A stopping fall in tone.

(.) Micropause.

(1.5) Pause or gap given in half-seconds.

((laughs)) Paralinguistic information and contextual notes.
Lengthened syllable. Multiple colons indicate a more prolonged syllable.

Rising intonation contour.

Continuing intonation.

Simultaneous speech (overlap).

Latched utterances with no gap.

Cut-off.

Unintelligible speech (indicated with number of syllables).

Inbreath.

Outbreath.

Utterances in Italian.

English translation below Italian utterance.

Indeterminate or bivalent items.