

Localizing power and solidarity: Pronoun alternation at an all-female police station and a feminist crisis intervention center in Brazil

ANA CRISTINA OSTERMANN

*Programa de Pós-Graduação em Linguística Aplicada
Centro de Ciências da Comunicação
Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – Unisinos
São Leopoldo, Brazil
aco@umich.edu*

ABSTRACT

This article brings the study of language to the social phenomenon of gender-related violence as it is currently being dealt with in institutional settings. It investigates the social significance of 2nd person pronoun variation and alternation in 26 professional-victim interactions in two parallel institutions created to address violence against women in Brazil: a police station with an all-female staff, and a feminist crisis intervention center. A quantitative analysis of patterns of use is complemented by a qualitative analysis of the interactional strategies of 2nd person pronoun alternation in the two settings. Pronoun switching is innovatively analyzed under the theory of code alternation developed by Auer 1995. The qualitative analysis demonstrates how pronoun alternation functions as a contextualization cue in face-to-face interactions. In particular, it shows the different ways in which pronoun alternation is used to contextualize phenomena such as preference organization and changes in frames and footings, and locally to exercise power and/or solidarity. (Pronoun alternation, domestic violence, language and gender, code-switching, contextualization cues, interactional sociolinguistics; conversation analysis, institutional interaction.)*

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is one of the major causes of women's physical injuries in nearly every country in the world, and in some countries it constitutes the major cause of hospital visits by women (Human Rights Watch 1995a, 1995b, 1995c). In Brazil, every four minutes the police register a case of violence by men against women (*Jornal da Tarde*, 2 January 1993, cited in Saffioti 1994b:159). Over 40% of the cases involve severe bodily injury caused by punching, slapping, kicking, burning of the breasts and genitals, and strangulation (*Jornal do Comércio*, 28 April 1990, cited in Human Rights Watch 1995b:351–52).

Violence against women expressed in its most diverse forms has long been part of the social organization of gender relations in Brazil (Saffioti 1994a:443). Domestic violence, specifically, has turned the private sphere into a focus of public attention not only in Brazil but also worldwide. In the past four decades, in particular, there has been increasing worldwide concern over this issue and over systems for addressing the pressing needs of female victims of domestic violence (Coomaraswamy 1997, Davis, Hagen & Early 1994, Kurz 1998, Leiman 1998, Ptacek 1998, Schuler 1992, Thomas & Beasley 1993).

Common institutional solutions to address such needs in developed countries are battered women's shelters and counseling programs, as well as telephone hotlines and legal clinics for battered women (Hautzinger 1997). Brazil found an alternative system to encourage the reporting of such violence through the creation of the unprecedented "all-female police stations." But previous to these specialized police stations, and of fundamental influence on their creation, were Brazilian feminist groups and organizations that began to form in the 1980s to address the problem of violence against women (Hautzinger 1997). Some of these groups later established crisis intervention centers.

The current study looks at the politically charged topic of domestic violence in this unique set of contrasting institutions. The data analyzed here were drawn from a larger study (Ostermann 2000) set up to investigate the discursive practices of these parallel institutions created to address violence against women in Brazil: an all-female police station (Delegacia de Defesa da Mulher, or DDM) and a feminist activist crisis intervention center (Centro de Intervenção na Violência contra a Mulher – CIV Mulher). By comparatively analyzing interactions with victims of domestic violence in these two settings, I will discuss how setting affects the reporting of domestic violence. Additionally, this study presents some contributions to the literature on diversity in the relationship between language and gender.

As will be discussed below, the specialized organizations whose professional-client interactions are analyzed here represent responses to violence against women that are unique in many ways and culturally situated. The DDM, in particular, is unique in the world and reflects the essentialist belief that underlay its creation – the assumption that female police officers would be inherently better equipped to deal with female complainants. The feminist intervention center arose from the grassroots women's movements after years of military government in Brazil and was the main force behind the creation of all-female police stations in the country. Thus, their forms of relating to the female community seeking their service deserve thorough attention.

Close investigation of the dynamics of recorded and transcribed spoken interaction of professionals and victims, as carried out in the current study, can enable us to assess whether and how institutional practices and roles are reflected in the talk of the professionals to their clients. The questions thus become: How does this innovation that started in Brazil work? Does it work well? Does it live to its ideological expectations?

More specifically, this study will discuss how these questions can be answered through an interactional analysis of 2nd person pronoun usage and its employment in association with local contextualization. As we know, pronouns have traditionally been thought of as indexing differences in power and solidarity, so we might expect these two woman-oriented settings to show similar use of pronouns to create solidarity.

The sociolinguistic approach used in the current study represents innovations in respect to previous sociolinguistic analyses of 2nd person pronoun usage in Brazilian Portuguese (BP). The analysis initially draws on the sociolinguistic notions of power and solidarity as conceptualized in the work of Brown & Gilman 1960. This quantitative analysis is later complemented by a discursive analysis of the interactional strategies involved in 2nd person referring expressions as they occurred during interactions at the two settings, and which are not accounted for by an analysis of the primary meaning of the pronouns. Interactional models of analysis that focus on the strategic activities of speakers (e.g. Gumperz 1982, Brown & Levinson 1987) are utilized to account for the phenomena observed in the data. In particular, this study innovatively applies an approach originally developed to explain code-switching in bilingual contexts (Auer 1984, 1995, 1998a, 1998b, Auer & Luzio 1992) to 2nd person pronoun alternation in the interactions.

BACKGROUND OF THE SETTINGS

History

In order to encourage Brazilian women to speak up about domestic violence against them, by the mid-1980s new projects were under way. In 1985, the first of a series of *Delegacias da Mulher*, entirely run in principle by and for women only, was created in São Paulo city. In the international arena, the creation of specialized police stations in charge of exclusively responding to, investigating, and prosecuting cases of violence against women represented an unusual institutional response to male-to-female violence (Hautzinger 1997, Nelson 1996).¹ As Sarah Hautzinger (1997:4) claims, the DDMs constitute a significant departure from the current, almost “formulate [sic] institutional strategy inspired by international feminism” centered on shelters and counseling programs for the victims. The creation of the DDM in Brazil was grounded on the essentialist assumption that female police officers would be “naturally” better suited to deal with domestic violence than male police officers, and that the general male-dominated environment of the regular police stations was not conducive to women’s reports of violence against them (*Correio da Gente* 1995b, Nabucco 1989, Station 1989, Nelson 1996, 1997).^{2,3}

As Hautzinger 1997 reports, even though the DDM were in general created by politicians, the driving force behind their creation actually came from the pressure exerted upon the government by grassroots feminist groups concerned with

the social problem of violence against women in Brazil. It was among these groups that CIV-Mulher – the crisis intervention center under investigation here – came into the existence. The main objectives of this and similar feminist service providers, which began to form in the early 1980s, were to break the isolation of women who suffered gendered violence, to help (re)empower them by offering emotional and legal support, to raise consciousness among victims that the oppression they suffered at home was a shared and gendered one, and to help in reporting the violent incidents to the police (Chauf 1984, Sorj & Montero 1984, Sorj, Montero, Rodrigues & Andréa 1984, M. A. Azevedo 1985, Nelson 1996, 1997). The feminists at the crisis intervention centers also considered violence at home to be an ideal moment for women to become aware of the relevance of feminist issues to them: “[It is] a moment for the woman to realize the extent to which the feminist issues concern her; a moment that can give rise to major solidarity which might free her from her individual experience” (Sorj & Montero 1984:104–5; my translation).

Problems pointed out by social scientists

Previous studies of institutions like DDM and feminist crisis centers carried out by social scientists (e.g. Sorj & Montero 1984, Sorj et al. 1984, Nelson 1996, 1997, Hautzinger 1997, 1998), though not focusing on professional-client interactions in those institutions, have pointed out communication problems in both settings. For instance, Nelson’s (1996, 1997) 16-month ethnographic study of the first DDM in São Paulo suggests that, in many ways, the DDM replicates several of the problems found in regular police stations. Her findings argue against essentialist feminist theory by demonstrating that female police officers are not “naturally” more sensitive to women’s issues than are their male counterparts. According to Nelson 1997, the female officials – who often do not choose to be placed in police stations specializing in violence against women,⁴ and who receive no specialized training to deal with it – show insensitivity to violence against women and are oblivious to the complexities of violence at home (see also Hautzinger 1997, Human Rights Watch 1995b).

Although the feminist crisis intervention centers do not share the problems cited above with the DDMs, they exhibit others arising out of their own philosophy (Gregori 1992). Gregori (1992:73–4) reports that the founders of crisis centers proposed having encounters aimed at creating an “affective basis” and an “intimate” atmosphere in order to ease the process of disclosure about violence, and to minimize feelings of fear, shame, and despair. However, the professionals point out that their own struggles to avoid any conduct that could distance themselves from the victims often created discomfort and dissatisfaction among their clients. Victims wanted a more “official” and more authoritative response; they “demanded specialized service and authority, so that their stories would be legitimized and they would get protection” (Gregori 1992:74; my translation). In addition, the “inculcation” of a feminist attitude the professionals wanted the victims

to acquire did not always happen as activists had hoped (Sorj, Montero, Rodrigues & Andréa 1984).

LINGUISTIC ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND

From deterministic to interactional models

One of the most influential approaches to the study of 2nd person pronoun use across different languages is certainly that of Brown & Gilman 1960. Brown & Gilman proposed that pronoun usage is governed by two dimensions or axes: POWER and SOLIDARITY. Their proposed model based on these two dimensions (later referred to by Brown & Ford 1964 as INTIMACY and STATUS) has proved to be powerful in explaining the usage of the 2nd person referring system in some European languages (Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990). However, the model has also received criticism (e.g. Gumperz & Hymes 1972, Hymes 1972, 1974, Kendall 1981, Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990) on the grounds that the two relational social categories that the authors propose cannot survive “as ubiquitous categories” when naturally occurring data are more closely investigated (Mühlhäusler & Harré 1990). Brown & Gilman’s model, according to Mühlhäusler and Harré (1990:148), falls short for overlooking the “expressive shifts,” or strategic changes, in the more dynamic flux of face-to-face interaction. The authors direct similar criticism toward studies of pronoun usage in Portuguese in particular.

Code alternation and contextualization theory in the current study

By drawing on the theory of contextualization, or the notion of contextualization cues (Gumperz 1982), Auer 1995 proposes a theory of conversational code alternation. According to Auer, one can look at code alternation as a type of contextualization cue, like any other contextualization cue.

“Contextualization” refers to all those activities performed by interactants “which make relevant/maintain/revise/cancel some aspects of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence” (Auer 1995:123). The aspects of context Auer 1984, 1995 and Gumperz 1982 refer to include larger-scale types of activities interactants are engaged in (speech genre) and smaller-scale types of activities (speech acts), as well as other aspects of communication such as topic change, type of information being conveyed (e.g. informative, evaluative, or metalinguistic talk), mode of interaction (more or less formality), the participants’ roles, and the social relationship between the participants, among others (Auer 1984, 1995).

Auer characterizes contextualization cues in the following way:

- (i) They do not have referential (decontextualised) meaning of the kind we find in lexical items. Instead, contextualisation cues and the interpretation of the activity are related by a process of INFERENCING, which is itself dependent on the context of its occurrence. . . . The same cue may receive a different interpretation on different occasions.

(ii) The way in which inferencing leads to contextual interpretation is two-fold: by contrast or by inherent meaning potential. . . .

(iii) Contextualisation cues often bundle together, e.g. there is a certain redundancy of ding which has specific interactional advantages. (1995:123–24)

Auer advocates that code alternation should be investigated as a contextualization cue in conversation because it shares the features above with other types of contextualization cues such as changes in stress and intonation, pauses, and hesitations (Auer 1984). According to Auer, investigating code alternation as a contextualization cue requires analytical procedures that look at the sequentiality of the interaction. This is because the meanings of contextualization cues are embedded in the sequential context of the interaction where they occur and therefore cannot be discussed without referring to that context. In this way, the analyst's interpretation is necessarily grounded in the participants' understanding of their utterances as expressed in the interaction.

Even though Auer's theory of code alternation as a contextualization cue was originally proposed to explain bilingual situations, such a theory, as will become evident below, is able to account for the pronominal alternation observed in the present data.

The Brazilian Portuguese 2nd person address system

Before moving into the analysis itself, some background on the Brazilian Portuguese (BP) 2nd person address system is in order. Southeastern BP is characterized by nouns or nominal phrases that became pronominalized, having acquired the grammatical characteristics of pronouns (Head 1976, Jensen 1981, 1984, Cook 1997).⁵ These are the singular forms *você* (neutral), *a senhora* (fem.), *o senhor* (masc.), and the plural forms *vocês* (neutral), *as senhoras* (fem.), and *os senhores* (masc.). Although *você*, *a senhora*, and *o senhor* and their plural counterparts are historically 3rd person, functionally they refer to the addressee. Such a system provides the speaker with options to express different degrees of intimacy with the addressee, with *a/s senhora/s* and *o/s senhor/es* as the deferential or non-intimate forms, and *você(s)* as the non-deferential or intimate ones (M. M. Azevedo 1981:273).

Brian Head's (1976) study of the use of 2nd person pronouns in Brazil suggests that the main conditioning social variable in the choice of addressee pronoun is the relationship between interlocutors. His findings show that in the larger southeastern cosmopolitan cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the reciprocal informal T-T (*você-você*)⁶ is used almost exclusively (97–100%) between new acquaintances of the same age, regardless of their sex (Head 1976:326–27). These findings are supported by Azevedo's (1981) study that also shows speakers' general preference for reciprocal *você*. Despite looking specifically at more traditionally asymmetrical dyads, Jensen's (1984) study of pronoun usage between teachers and students concurs to some degree with the studies above. Through an

investigation conducted in Brazil in 1974–1975, he demonstrated that, whereas in the outlying areas in Brazil the non-reciprocal use of pronouns of address was still dominant, in the urban central areas of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, speakers were already evenly divided between the use of asymmetrical and symmetrical modes of address.

As a pro-drop language, BP also allows for the ZERO PRONOUN choice in the subject position. However, null subject use has been undergoing change. There has been a documented increase in the use of overt subject pronouns in BP – i.e., a decrease in dropping pronouns (Galves 1993, Negrão & Müller 1996, Britto 1998, Kato 1999). Currently, the use of null subject seems to be limited mostly to environments in which the referent is anaphorically recoverable from the preceding discourse context (cf. Negrão & Müller 1996).

DATA

The data analyzed here comprise 26 audio-recorded first-time encounters between professionals and clients at a Delegacia da Mulher and at CIV Mulher, both located in Cidade do Sudeste, southeastern Brazil.⁷ There is a total of 13 interviews involving three different professionals per setting – three “triagistas” at CIV-Mulher and three police officers (also known as “frentistas”) at the Delegacia da Mulher.

The interactions recorded were limited to those involving female victims of violence in the home sphere, and violence that had been inflicted by someone of the opposite sex with whom they were or had been intimate (boyfriends, partners, husbands). With the goal of gathering a representative and comparable sample from the victims in the two settings, the data collection was limited to cases that involved victims of domestic violence who fit the general profile of the institutions’ clients. Such a profile, as sketched below, was informed by interviews with the chief police officer at DDM and the coordinator of CIV (Marcondes 1999, Moura 1999). Not surprisingly, the two institutions serve the same population. The demographic data of the women who come to CIV and DDM, and whose interactions were recorded, are shown in Table 1.

The pronouns relevant to the current discussion are *você*, *a senhora*, and null pronoun, and all are in subject position because that position has the greatest potential for indexing social meaning. All three forms are discussed in terms of general patterns, but only *você* and *a senhora* are looked at in depth. Moreover, the analytical focus here is unidirectional: on the professionals’ use of 2nd person address terms when talking to the victims. The reason for that choice is data-driven, since the victims rarely use address forms with the professionals.¹ Indeed, some do not use any address forms with the professionals, thus allowing very limited opportunities for the study of the negotiation of reciprocity in pronoun

¹ Victims’ use of address forms in relation to how many times they are addressed by the professionals in each setting is 2.3% at CIV and 4.1% at DDM.

TABLE 1. *Demographic data of DDM and CIV clientele*

age	18–45
socio-economic class	working class
occupation	housewives, or holding poorly remunerated jobs such as maids or street vendors
major types of violence	physical, sexual, and/or psychological
marital status	usually married or under “common law”; if not, having been in a “stable” relationship with the aggressor for longer than a year

usage. This unidirectionality in the use of the address system might be related to the preconceived sense of the event participants bring in: that it is the institutional representative who is in charge (and therefore in a more powerful position) of conducting the encounter, and thus the one who can ask, direct, instruct, advise, and ADDRESS the other participant.

ANALYSIS

Professionals' use of 2nd person subject pronouns

In this section, I discuss the frequency analysis of 2nd person pronoun distribution at DDM and CIV. A deterministic model of pronoun distribution shows that although the factor of age has some influence on pronoun selection, it cannot by itself explain the observed variation.

Figure 1 depicts the distribution of *você*, *a senhora*, and the null form in the two settings.⁹ A contingency analysis was carried out to compare the three forms of 2nd person pronouns as they were used by the professionals in the two settings. Although there were 263 tokens at DDM and 1,556 tokens at CIV, they were used by three professionals in each setting and therefore were not independent. A statistical analysis adjusting for this lack of independence showed a highly significant difference in the proportions of the three forms in the two settings ($p = .0038$).

As shown in Figure 1, *você* is the most frequent form in both settings. At CIV, there is a dramatic preference for *você*, accounting for 94% of all cases. At DDM, however, even though *você* is used in 44% of the cases, *a senhora* is used almost as often, accounting for 40% of the choices. Thus, whereas *você* is preferred in both settings, *a senhora* is equally important at DDM but not at CIV. Moreover, there are eight times more instances of the null form at DDM than at CIV, where null is hardly used at all.

Null pronouns in these interactions emerge as a consequence of ellipsis and thus are neutral with respect to distance and solidarity. Even so, it seems that their distribution may be a function of the different nature of the interactions in each

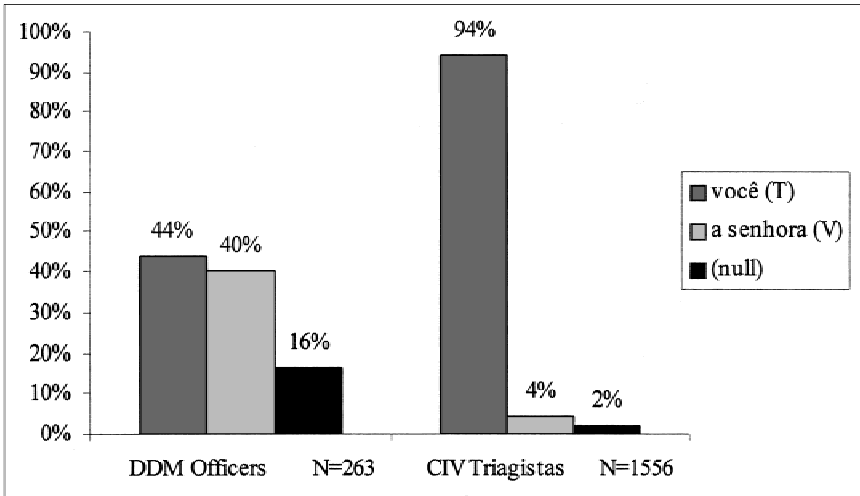


FIGURE 1: Professionals' use of 2nd person pronouns in the two settings.

setting. Therefore, even though null pronoun usage will not be discussed any further here, it is important to mention that its frequency at DDM may be accounted for by the very nature of the interactions in that setting. The rapid exchanges of information that tend to be more frequent at DDM than at CIV are where the higher incidence of pro-drop is found. In other words, the rapid elicitation of information at DDM limits the length of the turns as well as the introduction of new actors and topics of conversation, thus generating environments in which the ellipted referent is anaphorically recoverable from the preceding discourse context. In any event, one should not ignore the possibility that such rapid elicitation of information, which happens at the DDM but not at CIV, might, owing to its inquisitional character, collaborate in creating more distant and even dehumanizing interactions.

The overall distribution presented in Figure 1, however, provides no information about the local distribution of the forms among the professionals within each setting, nor does it present information about the use of different pronominal forms within each encounter. A more detailed representation of pronominal choice appears in Table 2, where the use of pronouns by speaker within each setting is summarized.

The data in Table 2 point out similarities as well as differences between DDM and CIV. Let us first consider the similarities, more specifically the role of age in pronoun choice.¹⁰ The professionals' use of 2nd person pronouns is similar in the two settings insofar as *a senhora* (V) is the modal form chosen to address the oldest victims. As Table 2 shows, the younger professionals in each setting choose

TABLE 2. *Pronoun use by professional within each setting.*

Setting	Professional	Age	Victim	Age	Professional's highest frequency in addressee pronoun choice	Total N pronoun	você (T) %	a sra. (V) %	∅ %
DDM	Elisete	32	Nadir	40	V*	29	0	83	17
			Parecida	35	V*	18	0	94	6
			Bete	34	V	13	38	54	8
			Délia	32	V	14	14	72	14
			Regina	31	T	28	79	3	18
			Elisete	21	T*	20	70	0	30
DDM	Alessandra	22	Elizandra	40	V*	32	0	94	6
			Carmen	34	V	19	16	63	21
			Pulsina	27	T*	21	90	0	10
			Joana	26	T*	11	73	0	27
			Karen	25	T	30	67	10	23
			Sandra	20	T	12	84	8	8
			Madalena	30	T*	16	75	0	25
DDM	Maria	33	Madalena	30	T*	16	75	0	25
CIV	Fernanda	26	Zuleica	45	V	101	29	67	4
			Leandra	35	T*	160	100	0	0
			Maria L.	32	T*	162	96	0	4
			Kênia	29	T*	117	99	0	1
			Oneide	29	T*	88	97	0	3
			Angelina	26	T*	119	100	0	0
			Helena	44	T*	47	98	0	2
CIV	Ivone	48	Geni	35	T*	228	100	0	0
			Neli	35	T*	50	90	0	10
			Carina	33	T*	102	91	0	9
			Zora	32	T*	75	99	0	1
			Teresa	31	T*	104	100	0	0
			Marina	36	T*	203	99.5	0	0.5

* indicates *exclusive* use of that form between the two *overt* forms.

Shading highlights interactions in which V is the modal form used to address the victim.

the form *V a senhora* to address the oldest victims, whereas the youngest are addressed as *você* (T). At CIV, the youngest professional – Fernanda, age 26 – usually addresses the oldest victim in that setting (45) as *a senhora* (V). Note, however, that *você* is still the preferred form in all other cases at CIV.

Similarly, at DDM age is a determining factor in pronoun choice. Note in particular that the exclusive (100%) choices of both overt forms, *a senhora* and *você*, fall at the opposite ends of the age scale. That is, at DDM, when *a senhora* is used exclusively, it is selected by the professionals (Elisete and Alessandra) to address the oldest victims interviewed by them, who are older than the profes-

sionals. The same happens with exclusive choice of *você*. That is, the form *você* tends to be chosen to address the youngest victims seen by those professionals.

A more thorough examination, however, reveals a more complex pattern. If age were actually as predictive as a conventional deterministic analysis would normally predict, *a senhora* would be used when the victim is older than the professional and *você* when the victim is the same age or younger. However, as we see in Table 2, even though the victim is older than the professional in thirteen interactions, *a senhora* is selected in only seven of the interactions, and in one of those seven as an exclusive choice between the two overt forms. In interactions where the professional is older, *você* is the form of choice in nearly all the interactions.

Such observations of pronoun usage in these settings suggest that factors other than age are also relevant. This is also suggested by the different overall preferences between the two settings. CIV professionals seem to opt for the more intimate, less formal pronominal form *você* as a norm of interaction (in all but one interview). Following deterministic, rule-based models of interpretation of address choice (e.g. R. Brown & Gilman 1960, R. Brown & Ford 1964, Ervin-Tripp 1972), it could be claimed that even though the CIV professionals and victims are not actually intimates, the solidarity factor seems to play a larger role in this setting, and that the power (or status) dimension is activated only when the victim is considerably older (approximately 20 years) than the professional.

Further complexities are involved in the only interaction at CIV where the professional uses *a senhora* (between triagista Fernanda and victim Zuleica). As discussed above, Zuleica is indeed the oldest victim interviewed by the triagista Fernanda. Nonetheless, the triagista learns the victim's age very early in the encounter, and it is not until the second third of the interaction that triagista Fernanda switches into the more formal variant, *a senhora*, as her primary choice of address. As will be seen in further details below, still other factors seem to be at play in the negotiation of pronoun choice in that particular encounter.

At DDM, by contrast, there was a tendency in the sample to use the more formal pronoun *a senhora* instead of the more informal *você*. As shown in Table 2, a very slight difference in age – and, in one case, no difference at all (between police officer Elisete and victim Délia) – is enough to trigger the primary use of the more deferential pronoun choice. Such facts make age a tenuous determining factor, suggesting that other factors, such as the desire to create or maintain social distance, may be at work.

Another interesting phenomenon in these interactions is that some speakers use one or another form exclusively, while others vary their choice of address terms. As shown in Table 2, even though the form *você* is the major choice in seven of the thirteen interactions at DDM, it is used exclusively (between the two overt forms) in only four. Similarly, in the six encounters in which *a senhora* is the major choice, it is used exclusively in only three. This leaves approximately half of all interactions at DDM showing alternation between *você* and *a senhora*,

with a range of 57%–97% for the most frequently selected pronoun. At CIV, in contrast, pronominal switch is a rare phenomenon. Except for the interaction between triagista Fernanda and victim Zuleica, the twelve other encounters are characterized by exclusive use of *você*. Fluctuation between one address term and another in the encounters characterized by alternation is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Pronoun alternation as a contextualization cue

As we have seen, the use of *você* and *a senhora* varies within and across settings and is not fully determined by age, nor does it present a static relationship with the professionals' stances toward victims in the two settings. In particular, a purely quantitative analysis – which looks at patterns across encounters but not within single encounters – might mask, for instance, the intricacies involved in the high incidence of pronoun-switching between *você* and *a senhora* in single encounters, which happens mainly at DDM. This phenomenon calls for an explanation. Thus, this section turns to a more local analysis of pronoun usage in the two settings, looking at the dynamics of the face-to-face interactions, in particular at the sequences where pronoun-switching takes place.

The interactional samples discussed in this section are representative of the types of switching that occur in the two settings. After looking at all instances of pronoun switching at DDM and CIV, I identified two main types: PRONOUN ALTERNATION CONTEXTUALIZING PREFERENCE ORGANIZATION, and PRONOUN ALTERNATION CONTEXTUALIZING CHANGES IN FRAMES OF INTERACTION AND FOOTINGS. Even though the settings share one of the types of pronoun alternation, the analysis of this alternation in the two settings is kept separate so as to highlight the distinctive ways in which it occurs in each institution.

Preference organization at the Delegacia da Mulher. One of the ways in which pronoun switching is used by police officers at the Delegacia da Mulher is to mark PREFERENCE ORGANIZATION, which has to do with the expectation in talk-in-interaction that certain pairings between sequential turns or certain courses of action are preferred, and that violations of these constitute “dispreferred” actions. For instance, a second-part pair agreement is preferred over disagreement for an “assessment” first-pair part, and an expected answer is preferred over an unexpected answer or non-answer for a “question” first-pair part (Levinson 1983:336). Another area of preference organization is the organization of “repair” (Levinson 1983, Heritage 1984, P. Brown & Levinson 1987), which generates a “ranking” of preference options, self-repair being the most preferred sequence of action and other-repair the least preferred (Schegloff, Jefferson & Sacks 1977).

Let us begin by looking at the encounter between police officer Alessandra and victim Karen, in which pronoun-switching is used as part of preference organization. Karen, 25 years old, came to the precinct accompanied by her mother to

file a complaint against her husband, who physically assaulted her. Karen has a nine-month-old child who was not brought along. The child also got hurt during the assault because the father was holding her while hitting Karen, and the child was accidentally slammed against the wall.

Throughout the interaction, PO Alessandra addresses the victim primarily by using *você* (20 times). However, she switches into *a senhora* at three specific points in the interaction. The exchange in (1) takes place at the very beginning of the encounter.¹¹

(1) Excerpt 1 (DDM8-AK).

- 1 PO Alessandra: ((*Puts the forms in the typewriter and types in the number of the next report.*))
 2 PO Alessandra: *Que que aconteceu?*
 ‘What happened?’
 3 Karen: *Bom, eu fui espancada. [Né?]*
 ‘Well, I was beaten, right?’
 4 PO Alessandra: [Vô]cê tem MARCAS da agreSSÃO?
 ‘Do you(T) have any INJURIES from the BEATING?’
 5 Karen: *Ele me deu tapas. Muitos tapas e [chutes na barriga–]*
 ‘He slapped me. Many slaps and kicks on my stomach–’
 6 PO Alessandra: [Mas a senhora]
 7 *tem marcas?*
 ‘But do you(S) have injuries?’
 8 Karen: *Não. [Eu–]*
 ‘No. I–’
 9 PO Alessandra: [Tá.]
 ‘OK.’
 10 Karen: *até ontem eu tava com a marca dos dedos. Agora*
 11 *sumiu. E na barriga eu passei no Hospital Monte Pascoal,*
 12 *tomei injeção pra dor, né, [tomei injeção–]*
 ‘Until yesterday I had bruises from his fingers. But now it’s gone. And on the stomach I stopped at Monte Pascoal Hospital, and had a shot for the pain, you see, I had a shot–’

This sequence is formed by a series of question-answer adjacency pairs. The police officer opens the exchange by asking a question (line 2) to which the victim replies (line 3). The police officer then goes on to a second question (line 4) in which she addresses the victim as *você*. In this case, however, instead of answering whether or not she has injuries, the victim produces a related answer providing the police officer with details about the physical assault (line 5) – not exactly the information that had been requested. In other words, despite producing a response that fills the slot for the second part of the adjacency pair, it is not the information PO Alessandra is seeking; in Levinson’s (1983:336) terms, it is not the “expected answer.” Furthermore, even though Karen’s response is quite pertinent to the assault – and in particular to the first question the police officer asked – it is not validated as such, but rather is treated as irrelevant to the strictly local negotiation of information. That is evidenced by PO Alessandra’s reiteration of the question as a second attempt to have it relevantly answered (lines 6–7). Her new attempt consists of an “other-initiated repair” (Schegloff et al. 1977). By

repeating her question, she points out the unsuitability of the victim's previous answer. Note that this attempt is "packaged" (Pomerantz & Fehr 1997) in a series of contextualization cues: (i) Alessandra switches from *você* to *a senhora* to address the victim; (ii) she begins her turn as an interruption to the victim's dispreferred response; and (iii) she prefaces her turn with the adversative discourse marker *mas* 'but', signaling that there is something about the immediately previous turn that is problematic. As Auer (1995:124) states, it often happens that contextualization cues "bundle together." According to him, such redundancy of cues provides even more grounded evidence to support the analyst's claims of the conversational functions of code-switching, in this case from *você* to *a senhora*.

Finally, further evidence for the claim that PO Alessandra is indeed awaiting the second part of her question is provided in line 9. Once the victim finally provides the police officer with an "on target" response to the question (line 8), PO Alessandra produces a token of acknowledgment confirming that the awaited second-part turn has now been satisfactorily done.

Changes in frames and footings at the Delegacia de Mulher. Code-switching, and in this case pronoun-switching, may also be employed as a contextualization strategy to signal changes in frames and footings (Auer 1984). Drew and Heritage 1992b call attention to the significant convergence between the linguistic notion of contextualization cues and the sociological concept of FRAME, introduced by Bateson 1972 and developed by Goffman 1974. Frame refers to the "definition which participants give to their current social activity – to what is going on, what the situation is, and the roles which the interactants adopt within it" (Drew & Heritage 1992a:8). The notion of FOOTING (Goffman 1981) is often related to the continuously changing nature of frames, as well as to the recurring reassessments and realignments that speakers and hearers may make as they shift within and between different frames. A change in footing, according to Goffman 1981, indicates a shift in the alignment, interactional stances, or positions participants assume to themselves and to others, as communicated in the way they handle "the production or reception of a certain utterance" (128).

Frame and footing are sociological notions that center on the social organization of individuals' experience of the events and contexts. Frames and footings inform the participants' interpretations of their own conduct and of the conduct of others in the same events. The notions of frame and footing are "linguistically relevant in so far as participants negotiate frames and communicate changes in footing through 'cues and markers' in speech" (Goffman 1981:157, cited in Drew & Heritage 1992a:8–9).

Ex. (2) takes place between PO Elisete and victim Bete. Bete, 34 years old, came to the DDM accompanied by her son, who was approximately 10–12 years old. Her husband broke a broom hitting her, bruising one of her arms. The passage quoted takes place when PO Elisete is finishing typing the report.

(2) Excerpt 2 (DDM5-EB).

- 1 PO Elisete: *Foi um pedaço de vassoura, uma vassoura, é isso?*
'It was with a piece of broom, a broom, is that right?'
- 2 Bete: *Uma vassoura, é.*
'A broom, right.'
- 3 PO Elisete: *((Types.))*
(3.7)
- 4 Bete: *Depois ele pegou o tênis e DEU na minha cabeça também.*
'Then he got a sneaker and HIT it on my head too.'
- 5 PO Elisete: *Você quer que chame ele aqui?*
'Do **you(T)** want him to be called here?'
- 6 Bete: *É minha mãe falou, "Faz isso né. Chame ele lá,*
7 *pra dá uma dura nele pra ver se ele::, fica com*
8 *vergonha na cara, né?"*
'Yes, my mother said, "Do this, you see. Have him called there, so that they give him a scold so that he finds shame in himself, you see?''
- 9 PO Elisete: *((Types.))*
(2.4)
- 10 Bete: *Por que se não tomar— separar não qué. Eu quero*
11 *separar e ele não qué.*
'Because if (unsp. subj.) doesn't find— (unsp. subj.) doesn't want to separate. I want to separate and he doesn't.'
- 12 PO Elisete: *((Types.))*
(8.7)
- 13 SON: *((Begins to fiddle with my tape recorder.))*
- 14 Bete: *Não mexe, meu filho, não mexe.*
'Don't touch it, son, don't touch it.'
- 15 SON: *Têm duas fita.*
'It has two tape.'
- 16 PO Elisete: *((continues typing))*
(10.6)
- 17 PO Elisete: *A senhora tem que fazer exame médico, atrás do*
18 *quinto distrito, onde faz identidade. Lá eles ficam até às sete horas.*
19 *Se não der pra senhora ir ho::je, pode ir amanhã cedo.*
'**You(V)** have to do the medical exam, behind the fifth district, where one does the ID card. You need to get there before seven o'clock. If **you(V)** cannot go today, \emptyset can go early tomorrow.'
- 20 PO Elisete: *Tá? Faz exame médico, mostra as marcas*
21 *pro médico, tá bom?*
'OK? (unsp. subj.) does medical exam, show the marks, to the doctor, OK?'
- 22 Bete: *Onde faz identidade?*
'Where one does the identity ((meaning ID))?'
- 23 PO Elisete: *Oi? Onde faz o RG, lá atrás do do quinto distrito.*
24 *Perto dos bombeiros. Tá.*
'What? Where one does the ID, there behind the the fifth district. Close to the fire department. OK.'
- 25 PO Elisete: *((Types.))*

In the passage above, we see a change in frames of interaction. The participants switch from an adjacency pair sequence formed by questions and answers, in which the police officer is in charge of asking the questions and the victim of furnishing the information requested (lines 1–12 and above), to provision of

information by the police officer (line 17 and onward) – intercalated with an exchange between mother and son (lines 14–15). That is, PO Elisete moves between a frame of eliciting information to giving directions. A new frame of interaction is marked against the old one by a shift in pronouns, moving from *você* to *a senhora* at the exact turn when activities are changed (line 17). In Auer's terms, what seems to be happening in the exchange above is that pronoun alternation is working as a contextualization cue by establishing "contrast and thereby indicat[ing] that something new is going to come" (Auer 1995:123–34).

Note that this sudden change in frames, in which the police officer moves from eliciting information to giving directions, and in which she also introduces an institution not mentioned anywhere earlier in their interaction (the Legal Medical Institute, or IML), seems to create some problem in the interaction. Bete does not provide any tokens of acknowledgment, evidenced by the 0.9-second gap preceding line 20 and the 5.3-second gap preceding line 22. Her confusion, caused by the change in frames and by the newly introduced information – directions in a very institutionalized, formulaic format – is further evidenced by her following request for clarification (line 22).

Excerpt (3) shows another case of change in frames and footing. It is different from the previous one in the sense that we see an alignment of the professional (though still an institutional representative) with the victim. The exchange takes place between PO Alessandra and victim Carmen Maria. Carmen Maria, 34 years old, came to the precinct accompanied by another woman of approximately her age. The victim has bruises on her arms and back and has a front tooth that was broken as she was trying to bite her partner's hand when he held her mouth shut.

The exchange in (3) followed a rapid sequence of questions and answers in which the participants requested and gave factual information about the victim, such as marital status and the existence of injuries.

(3) Excerpt 3 (DDM10-AC).

- 1 PO Alessandra: *Que que aconteceu ontem.*
'What was it that happened yesterday.'
- 2 Carmen Maria: *Ah, ele:: se envolveu com uma mulher, né, e:: com*
3 *isso ele tava me expulsando de ca::sa ((entonação*
4 *subindo)) É:: já me chamou num acordo pra se*
5 *separar, eu concordei em separar que eu::- que*
6 *se não deu, tudo bem. Só que:: ele quer- do do*
7 *jeito que ele quer pra mim não dá, porque ele*
8 *quer se separar de mim e continuar na mesma casa,*
9 *entendeu?*
'Ah, he got involved with another woman, and because of this he was already putting me out of the house ((rising intonation)) And already proposed to separate from me, I agreed with separating that I- that if it didn't work out, it's OK. But it's that, the way he wants it doesn't work for me, because he wants to separate and to continue in the same house, you see?'
- 10 PO Alessandra: *Vocês dois e [ela?]*
'You two and she?'

- 11 Carmen Maria: [É.]
‘Yeah.’
- 12 PO Alessandra: *Você, ele e ela tudo numa casa?*
‘**You(T)**, he and she all in one house?’
- 13 Carmen Maria: *Não, não sei se ele ia com ela. Mas como eu tenho*
14 *uma casa e junto embaixo eu tenho uma mercearia,*
15 *ele não quer deixar a casa por causa da mercearia.*
‘No, I don’t know if he would go with her. But since I have a house and a corner grocery together with it downstairs, he doesn’t want to leave the house because of the grocery.’
- 16 PO Alessandra: *Mas ele pode montá:: a mercearia noutro lugar, não pode?*
‘But he can put the grocery somewhere else, can’t (he)?’
- 17 Carmen Maria: *É, se ele vendê ele pode né. Aí ele quer que eu*
18 *more em cima, quer que eu passe pra cima, e quer*
19 *ficar na parte de baixo.*
‘Yeah, if he sells it he can right. Then he wants me to live above it, that I move upstairs, and wants to stay downstairs.’
- 20 PO Alessandra: ((Sitting with her chin on her hand, stares at the victim as she speaks.))
(0.5)
- 21 Carmen Maria: *Mas:: eu acho que não dá certo, porque quando*
22 *eu::– enquanto eu tô trabalhando, ele ia–*
23 *antigamente ele levava ela pra lá. Certo.*
‘But I think that it doesn’t work out, because when– while I am working, he would– in the past he used to take her there. Right.’
(0.9)
- 24 Carmen Maria: *Aí todo dia de eu ficá pegando no pé dele, daí*
25 *ela não foi nunca mais. Agora ele FALA que não tá*
26 *tendo nada com ela mais, mas só que eu não acredito, eu não*
27 *confio mais neles porque:: não é mais a primeira vez que ele trai.*
28 *Então eu perdi a confiança. Então eu falei pra ele que*
29 *não dava mais pra [viver junto]*
‘Then from my complaining everyday, then she never came anymore. Now he SAYS that he doesn’t have anything anymore with her, but I don’t believe it, I don’t trust him anymore because, it’s not the first time that he betrays (unsp. object). Then I lost the trust. And I told him that (unsp. subj.) couldn’t live together anymore.’
- 30 PO Alessandra: [A *senhora*] *tá tomando uma*
31 *decisão certa, porque a maioria das vezes não dá*
32 *certo mesmo. [Separar]*
‘**You(V)** are making the right decision, because most of the time it doesn’t really work out. To separate’
- 33 Carmen Maria: [É *porque*]–
‘Yes because–’
- 34 PO Alessandra: *e ficar na mesma casa.*
‘and stay in the same house.’
- 35 Carmen Maria: *Aí eu falei pra ele que já que não dá certo, já*
36 *que eu não confio nele então, mesmo que ele fale*
37 *a verdade, eu não sei se é verdade, então eu não*
38 *confio. Eu fico desacreditando. [Então eu–]*
‘Then I told him him that given that it doesn’t work out, that given that I don’t trust him anymore, then even if he tells the truth, I don’t know if it’s true, then I don’t believe it. I’m always suspicious. So I–’

PO Alessandra opens this sequence by asking the victim what has happened the day before (line 1). After the victim’s response, PO Alessandra produces a question to confirm that she has understood correctly the information that the victim’s

husband might be proposing that three of them (wife, husband, and his new partner) live together in the same house (lines 10). PO Alessandra reiterates her request for confirmation (line 12) after the victim's confirmation (line 11). While doing so, she uses *você* to address the victim.

In lines 13–15, 21–23, and 24–29, Carmen Maria produces a description of other circumstantial facts involving her husband, together with her negative assessment of them and her desire to separate from him. The pronoun alternation under scrutiny here (from *você* to *a senhora*) happens at PO Alessandra's next turn (lines 30–32), in which she affiliates with the victim, explicitly agreeing with the victim's decision to separate from her husband, given the circumstances.

Affiliation with victims is certainly not a common phenomenon at the DDM, but there is something special about PO Alessandra's affiliation in this exchange. At the same time that she agrees with Carmen Maria regarding the fact that legally separating but continuing to live in the same house is not a good option, PO Alessandra provides an explicit evaluation of the victim's behavior – framed in the binary assessment of “right or wrong decision” – and thus she does not move out of the “police officer” institutional role.

Another pronoun alternation contextualizing change in footing takes place in excerpt (4), between PO Elisete and victim Bete; see (2) for the context of this case.

(4) Excerpt 4 (DDM5-EB).

- 1 PO Elisete: *E a senhora vai querer chamar ele aqui pra*
 2 *conversa::r. Que que a senhora PRETENDE com a polícia?*
 ‘And do **you(V)** want to ask him here to talk. What is it that **you(V)**
 INTEND with the police?’
 (1.6)
- 3 Bete: *É. Seria bom chamá ele, né. Porque ELE depois de tudo,*
 4 *ele fala que não vai fazer mai::s, mas isso ele faz há*
 5 *OITO ANOS.*
 ‘Yeah. It would be good to call him, right. Because HE, after everything,
 he says he won't do it again, but this he's been doing for EIGHT YEARS.’
 (1.7)
- 6 Bete: *Eu falo pra ele que quero me separar dele, ele fala que*
 7 *não quer, que ele me ama, que ele me ado::ra, que não quer*
 8 *acabar com o nosso casame::nto, não sei o quê::*
 9 *((entonação subindo))*
 ‘I tell him that I want to separate from him, he says he doesn't want to, that
 he loves me, that he adores me, that (unsp. subj.) doesn't want to end our
 marriage, that this and that ((rising intonation))’
 (1.2)
- 10 Bete: *Aí:: vai deixand- fui deixando, deixando, né. Aí*
 11 *eu falei- uma vez ele me deu uma surra de chinelo,*
 12 *chinelo da Ryder, só porque eu bebi né. Eu tava já meio*
 13 *assim brigando com ele. Chateada né. Aí eu comecei a*
 14 *beber lá e fiquei meio tonta né. E ele chegou do serviço*
 15 *e me deu uma surra de chinelo, que eu fiquei com o corpo*

- 16 *todo marcado. Passou. Mas eu disse, “Dá próxima vez que*
 17 *você marcar o meu corpo eu vou dar, eu vou dar queixa*
 18 *de você.” Só que— isso aí foi na quinta à noite. Só que ele:—*
 19 *na sexta eu saí lá no XX, e.: segunda-feira ele tá em casa*
 20 *porque ele tá de férias, né. Aí depois eu vejo.*
 ‘Then (unsp. subj.) lets it g- I was letting it go, letting it go, right. Then I said— once he hit me with a slipper, a Ryder ((brand name)) slipper, just because I drank, right. I was already more or less arguing with him. Upset you see. Then I began to drink and I got a bit tipsy right. And he got in from work and hit me with a slipper, that I got marks all over my body. It went away. But I said, “Next time you mark my body I will make, I will make a police complaint of you.” But this— this was on Thursday evening. But then he— on Friday I left XX, and on Monday he is at home because he’s on vacation, you see. Then I’ll take care of this later.’
- 21 PO Elisete: *Mas você PRETENDE separar-se dele?*
 ‘But do **you(T)** INTEND to separate from him?’
- 22 Bete: *É, por mim eu até sepaRAVA, mas ele não QUER.*
 ‘Yeah, I myself would SEPARate, but he doesn’t WANT TO.’

Here PO Elisete moves from a frame of factual information elicitation, regarding the case and how the police should proceed about it (lines 1–2 and before), to what could be considered a more intimate frame of interaction, concerning what decisions the victim will make regarding her personal life (line 21) – a type of information that is irrelevant for the police and has no effects on what they do for the victims. Such a change in frames is cued with a change in the 2nd person address form from *a senhora* to *você*. In this case, even though PO Elisete does not actually provide any personal assessment of the situation as PO Alessandra does in (3) above, her question comes prefaced with the adversative particle ‘but’, signaling some problem or clash with the previous information.¹²

Thus, in both (3) and (4), the officers switch to a more intimate footing, but one that nonetheless confirms their institutional roles. However, the change in pronoun choice in (4) is the inverse of the one that takes place in (3). That is, whereas in (3) PO Alessandra switches into *a senhora* to move into a more personal frame – aligning with the victim’s decisions – here PO Elisete switches into *você*. This fact potentially supports Auer’s claim that code A or code B – or in this case, the pronouns *você* and *a senhora* – do not necessarily have fixed functions attached to them. That is, according to Auer, the two codes have interchangeable functions, and as a result, in many occasions it is not the chosen code that matters, but instead the simple fact that two codes are juxtaposed.

To make such a claim for pronoun alternation, however, would mean to disregard completely the inherent social deixis function of such forms. The use of the more distancing 2nd person pronoun *a senhora* by PO Alessandra in (3), when assessing that the victim has made ‘the right decision’, in fact reinstates the PO’s authority. It seems that approbation of a victim’s decision to leave is pragmatically more forceful if it comes from an institutional representative rather than from a friendly interlocutor.

CIV Mulher and change in frames and footings. In this section, I look at pronoun switching at CIV. In contrast to what I observed at DDM, there is only one type of pronoun switching at CIV detected in my corpus. Whereas at DDM pronoun switching contextualizes both preference organization and change in interactional frames and footings, at CIV it contextualizes only the latter.

Recall that *você* is used exclusively in twelve of thirteen interactions at CIV, and that the pronoun alternation happens only during the exchange between triagista Fernanda and victim Zuleica. Zuleica is 45 years old, the oldest subject recorded at CIV. This is a highly emotionally charged encounter throughout, and certainly one of the most severe and complex cases of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse I recorded. The CIV triagista who carried out this interview characterized the violence Zuleica had suffered as an ‘acute case of violence’, and she disclosed to me at the end of the encounter that she was disturbed by the complexity of the case.

Zuleica bursts into tears at various moments throughout the encounter with triagista Fernanda. She has a broken nose as a result of an assault by her former partner, Otávio, with whom she had lived for 10 years. Otávio had also tried to asphyxiate her. Zuleica, however, is not the only victim in her family. He exposed himself to Zuleica’s daughter from her previous marriage, and it is unclear from the interview whether the daughter was also sexually abused by him. Zuleica’s daughter-in-law was seduced by him. He also made Zuleica’s granddaughters take off their underwear and expose their bodies to him. In addition, Zuleica’s father, in his eighties, had a stroke after finding out about the latest incidents and had stopped speaking since then.

There are some peculiarities in the case. Triagista Fernanda addresses Zuleica 68 times as *a senhora* and 29 times as *você*. As suggested earlier, age seems to be an important factor in accounting for the professional’s selection of the 2nd person subject pronoun *a senhora* as her modal pronominal choice. However, there seem to be additional factors at work. The triagista knows the victim’s age from the very beginning of the encounter, but she starts off by addressing the victim as *você* and persists in that until one-third of the way into their exchange. At that point, the triagista switches to *a senhora*, which becomes her primary pronoun choice.

A factor evident both from the content of the interview and from Fernanda’s revealed feelings afterward seems to be the severity and complexity of the case. Thus, Fernanda’s change in her modal pronominal choice from consistently addressing Zuleica as *você* to less consistently, but more frequently, addressing her as *a senhora* could either be expressing deference and respect to the victim – in view of the acuteness of the problems experienced by her – or it could be an attempt by Fernanda to distance herself from the situation.

The first switch happens at the moment when Zuleica graphically narrates her former partner’s exhibiting himself to her daughter – a scene the victim saw herself – as shown in (5) and discussed next.

(5) Excerpt 5 (CIV14-FM).

- 1 Zuleica: [Ela só] chorava. *Aí um dia eu cheguei nela e*
 2 falei, “Filha, que que tá acontecendo?” *Aí ela falou,*
 3 “Mãe. (0.5) *A senhora quer saber a verdade?”*
 ‘She only cried. And one day I went and talked to her, “Daughter, what is happening?” And she said, “Mom. (0.5) Do you(V) want to know the truth?”’
 (0.9)
- 4 Zuleica: “*Esse homem que a senhora arrumou não presta.*
 5 *O meu irmão sabe de tudo.*” *Aí eu chamei o meu filho também.*
 6 *Que já era mocinho. Aí o meu filho falou, “Mãe, é verdade.”*
 7 *Aí ela falou, “Mãe, eu vô fazê um teste com a senhora. A senhora*
 8 *hoje não vai trabalhá. E ele não vai trabalhá hoje. Eu tenho*
 9 *certeza. Porque eu tô de férias. “Ela falô,” A senhora finje*
 10 *que vai lavá o quintal e eu vô passá roupa. E após uns quatro*
 11 *minutos, a senhora volta pra dentro.*”
 ‘“This man you’re(V) with is worthless. My brother knows everything.” Then I called my son too. Who was already an adolescent. And my son said, “Mom, it’s true.” And she said, “Mom, I’ll do a test with you (prepositional V). You(V) won’t go to work. And he won’t go to work today. I’m sure. Because I’m on vacation.” She said, “You(V) pretend that you’ll wash the back porch and I’ll do ironing. And after about four minutes, you(V) come back inside.’”
 (1.5)
- 12 Zuleica: *Foi TUDO o que eu vi com os meus próprios olhos.*
 13 *Quando eu entrei na minha cozinha, que eu entrei no corredor*
 ‘It was EVERYTHING that I saw with my own eyes. When I came into my kitchen, that I went into the hall’
 (1.2)
- 14 Zuleica: *Ele vinha vindo com rumo ao quarto, completamente,*
 15 *com tudo de fora pro lado da minha filha.*
 ‘He was coming towards the bedroom, completely, with everything showing towards my daughter.’
 (1.3)
- 16 CIV-Fernanda: *Ele tava nú (0.6) pela sala.*
 ‘He was naked (0.6) around the living room.’
- 17 Zuleica: *Saía do banheiro nú, ele pegava e fechava minha porta,*
 18 *e mostrava pra ela, e acenava pra ela. Minha filha passou*
 19 *por isso.*
 ‘He would leave the bathroom naked, he would go and close the door halfway, and would show everything to her, and he would wave to her. My daughter went through this.’
- 20 CIV-Fernanda: *E a senhora também, né. ((Suaviza a voz.))*
 ‘And you(V) too, right. ((Softens her voice.))’
- 21 Zuleica: *Eu também.*
 ‘Me too.’

Lines 1–19 in (5) comprise a narrative by the victim telling triagista Fernanda how she came to find out that her partner, Otávio, was exposing himself to her daughter. The triagista allows the victim to speak at length without providing any type of comment or verbal acknowledgment.¹³ The narrative is, in fact, punctuated by three pauses that are not taken up by the triagista as turns to speak – very likely because the narrative is still under production and clearly culminating in a resolution. It is only after that resolution (lines 14–15) and a 1.3-second pause

that Fernanda makes a statement which functions to confirm her understanding of the facts being narrated (line 16). Zuleica then reaches the coda of her narrative (lines 17–19), in which she produces an assessment of the situation, some sense of compassion for her daughter's lamentable experience. At this point in the interaction, triagista Fernanda conveys her alignment with the victim not only by acknowledging Zuleica's sympathy for what her daughter went through, but also by extending her own sympathy to Zuleica as well. This alignment is contextualized by cues that operate in a cluster: a switch into a different choice of 2nd person pronoun, from *você* to *a senhora*, and a change in voice quality (softening).

In excerpt (6), we see a more complex type of pronoun switching and alignment. This is another emotionally loaded moment in the interaction, during which Zuleica narrates her daughter-in-law's involvement with Otávio.

(6) Excerpt 6 (CIV14-FM).

- 1 CIV-Fernanda: *Mas pelo visto não é COM a sua filha especificamente.*
 2 *É com mulheres.*
 'But apparently it is not WITH your daughter specifically. It is with women.'
- 3 Zuleica: *É. Com mulheres.*
 'Right. With women.'
- 4 CIV-Fernanda: *E seu filho não também não mora mais*
 5 *com a senhora.*
 'And your son also no longer lives with you(prepositional V).'
- 6 Zuleica: *Não. O meu filho não. Porque ele (1.8)*
 7 *INFELIZmente teve relacionamento com a PRÓPRIA mulher*
 8 *do meu filho.*
 'No. My son doesn't. Because he (1.8) UNFORTunately had a relationship with my son's OWN wife.'
 (1.7)
- 9 CIV-Fernanda: *O seu companheir- - o: o [o Otávio.]*
 'Your partn- - your your Otávio.'
- 10 Zuleica: *[O Otávio.]*
 'Otávio.'
- (1.6)
- 11 CIV-Fernanda: *[A a-]*
 'A a-'
- 12 Zuleica: *[Enquanto] eu trabalhava em Sobrado (0.8) ele dormia*
 13 *com a minha nora, na minha cama. E enquanto meu filho*
 14 *trabalhava. ((Chora.))*
 'Because while I was working in Sobrado (0.8) he was sleeping with my daughter-in-law, in my bed. And while my son was working. ((Cries.))'
- 15 CIV-Fernanda: *E como é que vocês descobriram i::sso?*
 'And how did you(pl.) find that out?'
- 16 Zuleica: *Uma vizinha me alertou.*
 'A neighbor called my attention to it.'
- 17 CIV-Fernanda: *Você chegou a dá o flagrante ou não?*
 'Did you(T) actually see it or not?' ((softens her voice))
- 18 Zuleica: *((Cries.))*
 (3.8)
- 19 CIV-Fernanda: *Se a senhora deixasse seu coração falá um pouquinho*

- 20 *agora, né, não tão a cabeça-- ((entonação subindo))*
 'If **you(V)** let your heart talk a bit now, right, not so much your mind--'
 ((rising intonation))
- 21 Zuleica: ((Cries.))
- 22 CIV-Fernanda: *Dá pra falá ou não?*
 'Is it OK to talk or not?'
- 23 Zuleica: *Dá.*
 'It's OK.'
- 24 CIV-Fernanda: *Dá?*
 'Is it?'
 (1.6)
- 25 CIV-Fernanda: *Porque parece que é MUITA coisa, né.*
 26 *Muitas-- são MUITAS histórias.*
 'Because it sounds like TOO MUCH, right. A lot-- there are A LOT of stories.'

Prior to the exchange quoted above, triagista Fernanda has been consistently using the form V (*a senhora*) since her last switch (discussed above). In (6), as Zuleica narrates the involvement of her former partner with her daughter-in-law, she becomes very emotional again, and begins to cry (line 14). Probably realizing the pain the victim is expressing in retelling the facts, the triagista then asks Zuleica if she saw the incident herself (line 17). To do so, she packages her question with softer voice and shifts her pronoun into the T form *você*.

Zuleica does not produce a second-pair part to this question, but responds with more crying instead. In contrast to what we have seen happening at DDM in (3), in which PO Alessandra establishes and reestablishes her institutional right of receiving an answer and the victim's duty of providing her with one, here triagista Fernanda does not insist on her question, but instead waits for a response. Not receiving a response after a 3.8-second pause, the triagista abandons her question, thus not holding the victim accountable for her silence. Such an action resembles non-institutional, ordinary interactions, which seems to be more characteristic of the interactions at CIV in general. That is, a given question provides a slot for an answer that leaves a space for the addressee (in this case, Zuleica) to fill. This silence is the addressee's responsibility. However, in non-institutional interactions, speakers do not usually hold their addressees accountable for their silences. The choice of actually holding an addressee accountable for her silence triggers inferences about an interaction. For instance, such an action might establish or reinforce institutional roles – such as those of a teacher or judge insisting on receiving an answer from a student or a witness.

In the case under analysis here, Fernanda moves into a different question; with a topic that responds and aligns with Zuleica's pain, which is being expressed in her tears and difficulty speaking. That is, in lines 19–20, she invites Zuleica to "let her heart talk." In producing such a turn, triagista Fernanda switches pronouns again, in fact going back to the V form *a senhora*. Such a shift could perhaps be explained as an attempt to create space for Zuleica to cry more comfortably, with dignity and respect.

Once again, Fernanda shows attentiveness to the victim's reaction (crying) and abandons her turn halfway to check with the victim if she feels all right talking (line 22). Her attentiveness is further evidenced in her reiteration of the same question in line 24, confirming that it is indeed possible for Zuleica to talk at all, despite Zuleica's having already responded affirmatively. Triagista Fernanda's alignment with Zuleica is once again evidenced in her next turn, in which she herself speaks FOR the victim about why it might be difficult for Zuleica to talk about it, conveying in an emphatic way (with a louder voice) that Fernanda herself finds that there is "too much" involved in that case (lines 25–26). This sequence is particularly interesting because it shows in a more complex way the alignments and realignments of the professional with the victim and how the pronoun alternation helps in cueing such fluctuations in the interaction.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we have seen, the frequency analysis of 2nd person subject pronouns reveals the form *você* as the primary choice in both settings. However, despite its slightly higher frequency, the use of *você* at DDM is almost evenly distributed with the use of the form *a senhora*. Age as a determining factor was shown to explain this difference only partially. Moreover, whereas alternation between the two forms happened in only one interaction at CIV, it occurred in six of thirteen interactions at DDM.

The discursive analysis of the interactional strategies involved in 2nd person pronouns reveals the strategic malleability of pronoun-switching as a contextualization device in BP. In particular, it shows that pronoun alternation may be used like any other contextualization cue to manipulate different aspects of the interaction. However, pronoun alternation is not used as a contextualization cue in exactly the same ways in the two settings. Whereas at DDM pronoun alternation contextualizes preference organization and change in frames and footings, at CIV it contextualizes only the latter. Furthermore, the second type of pronoun alternation – contextualizing changes in frames and footings – is of a different kind in the two settings. As we saw in (3), even though PO Alessandra is able to shift footings so as to align with victim Carmen Maria in her decisions, her alignment is of an institutional kind, produced as an assessment of the victim's decisions and behavior in terms of right or wrong. Alessandra reinforces her alignment's institutional character by switching to the more formal, distancing pronoun, *a senhora*. In contrast, triagista Fernanda manipulates the pronoun system so as constantly to align and realign herself with the victim without expressing any evaluation of the victim's behavior, and to show a great deal of sensitivity to the complexity of emotions involved in the victim's narrative of violence.

The particular fact that it is only at DDM that we find the use of pronoun alternation to contextualize preference organization plays in synchrony with other aspects of the interactions at DDM that I have analyzed elsewhere (Ostermann

2000, 2002, 2003). That is, the interactions with the police officers seem to offer less room for deviations from the canonical shape of institutional discourse. Victims' breaks in adjacency pairs, provision of dispreferred responses, and even expression of disagreement with the police officers' agendas are not tolerated by the professionals, and manipulation of the pronoun system is used to signal that lack of tolerance.

These findings bring us back to the larger social issue motivating this study. Recall here that the specialized all-female police stations in Brazil arose as a reaction to the much-criticized male-dominated police system. Traditionally staffed by male officers, regular police stations were criticized for being unreceptive to reports of violence against women, and male officers were claimed to be insensitive to the problem of domestic violence – which is not only “domestic” but also social (Nabucco 1989, Nelson 1996, 1997). Grounded in an essentialist view of gender, the *Delegacias da Mulher* were created to respond to that criticism; it was believed that female police officers, in virtue of the single fact of being females, would be “naturally” more caring, solidary, and thus better suited than their male counterparts to deal with female victims' reports of violence.

A local investigation of the professional-client interactions as carried out in this study, however, reveals a different picture from the result desired for the *Delegacias da Mulher* in Brazil. These specific analyses of pronoun frequency and alternation have shown that the encounters at DDM are overwhelmingly characterized by distancing strategies as well as by a high degree of control over the interactions by the police officers. Professionals at CIV, on the other hand, seem to place special emphasis on diminishing the distance that exists between them and the victims, as well as on lessening the degree of face threat that an encounter of this kind might pose to the latter.

Analyses of other interactional aspects of the same data set (Ostermann 2000, 2002, 2003) corroborate the claims presented here. For instance, an investigation of professionals' facework through turn-taking and turn design (see Ostermann 2002) showed that the feminists draw primarily on positive politeness strategies, whereas female police officers draw less on politeness strategies of any type and are more likely to use bald on-record face-threatening acts, or FTAs (Brown & Levinson 1987).¹³ The analysis of the professionals' responses to the victims' turns demonstrated that the officers at DDM seem to devote less effort to preserving the victim's face and to redressing FTAs. The police officers are four times more likely than the triagistas to provide non-responses to the victims' turns, as well as four times more likely to change topics in their responses to the victim's previous turns. Interactions with the triagistas at CIV, in contrast, are characterized as highly cooperative overall, with a high occurrence of cooperative interactional strategies such as provision of continuers and topic-related responses.

A local analysis of the discursive aspects of professional-client interactions, as carried out in this study, should be able not only to advance our knowledge about

language and social interaction, but also to offer insights on the larger social nexus. For the civil police in Brazil, the findings presented here begin to point out possible directions in which materials could be developed for the training of officers dealing with violence against women. Being a female, as we have seen, does not ensure better or more effective treatment of female victims. Moreover, in light of the purpose underlying the creation of the Delegacia da Mulher – to offer more “humanized” (Station 1989) treatment to female victims of violence – the types of interactions actually being provided call for reassessment. As the interactions at the Delegacia currently take place, “solidary interlocutors” are not exactly what the victims find for their painful reports. On the contrary, victims receive quite distancing, authoritative, and many times even dehumanizing responses (if any) from female officers. Despite these claims, however, the merit of all-female police stations in Brazil should definitely not be underestimated. In fact, a diachronic glance at the ever-growing number of reports made at the Delegacia da Mulher in Cidade do Sudeste since its creation suggests the value of these specialized precincts in increased reporting: 1989, 3,611 reports issued; 1991, 3,863; 1995, 4,423.¹⁵

As for CIV, the accomplishment of their objective of creating a more “intimate” atmosphere to ease the process of disclosure of violence is clear and in fact seems to work quite well. Unlike the officers at the DDM, the feminists at CIV do not stay aloof from the victims’ displays of emotion and calls for alignments. CIV professionals respond to those moments by employing different linguistic strategies – in particular, as seen here, by exploring the malleability of the pronoun system for creating alignment.

This brings us back to the ethnographic study of feminist centers carried out by Gregori 1992. Gregori suggests that the feminists’ more affiliative strategies often created discomfort and dissatisfaction among victims, who seemed to want a more “official” response and legitimization of their stories. Again, however, it is important to recall that the investigation undertaken here looks only at FIRST encounters at CIV, the first time a victim seeks help from the center. The more “official” response from CIV does not normally happen during these interactions, but later, when she is referred to one of the CIV lawyers or psychologists for follow-up sessions at the center. Thus, first encounters at CIV seem to attend faithfully to their stated purpose, which is to start a relationship with the victim. According to the CIV coordinator, Tânia Moura, that encounter is only the first of a series of encounters the victim will have at the center, and therefore, it is a crucial opportunity to set the relationship between institution and client “on the right foot.” It is a moment to create empathy with a victim. Or, as triagista Fernanda puts it, “The ideal *triagem* [‘first encounter’] is when you’re able to create some type of bonding with her [the victim].”

Finally, it is also important to point out the potential contribution of the findings presented here to broadening our understanding of the links between language and gender. In particular, this work bears a part in the body of research

interested in “exploding the gender dichotomy” (Stokoe 1998) by questioning homogeneous definitions of the “female” gender in its relationship to language. It becomes clear from this investigation that the interactional styles we have studied cannot by any means be collapsed within a single category called “female speech.” The females whose interactional practices were characterized here are better understood as members of distinctive “communities of practices” (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1992, 1998), with distinctive ideologies and power relations, and these clearly present differing ways of carrying out their professional activities and, of course, their ways of interacting.

APPENDIX

The transcription conventions used in the excerpts were adapted from Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Paolino, & Cumming (1992) and are as follows:

CAPS	increased volume
bold	part of the transcript emphasized for the analysis
<u>underlining</u>	stretch of talk that overlaps with the activity of typing
,	continuing intonation
.	stopping falling intonation
?	rising intonation
[]	stretch of talk of current speaker which is overlapped with the bracketed stretch of talk of the next speaker
-	truncated word
—	truncated sentence
=	latched talk
::	prolonged sound or syllable. Sound elongation notated in the Portuguese is not reproduced in the English translations because it is not always obvious where the corresponding elongation would take place.
(0.0)	length of time in seconds (0.4 or above) during which there is no talk (when in minutes, marked as such; e.g. <i>3 min 4 sec</i>)
(info)	linguistic information that might have been lost in the translation; e.g. grammatical gender (masc.) and (fem.), and number marking (pl.) and (sing.)
(())	factual information about the exchange or translation clarification
{ }	stretches of uncertain transcription
X	stretches that are inaudible; each X represents approximately one syllable

NOTES

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¹ The structure of the police system in Brazil is quite different from that in the United States. In Brazil, in general, there are two types of police. The military police are a preventive force, an armed and uniformed group that patrols the streets; they go to the scene of the crime and bring the suspect, victims, and witnesses to the civil police station for a police report. The civil police, including the Delegacias da Mulher, are investigative; they work in regular precincts that deal with all types of

crimes, in others that deal with specific crimes (e.g. homicide, crimes against women), make official police reports, investigate, and prepare cases for trials; they do not wear uniforms.

² According to a statement made by chief police officer Carmen Teixeira to a local newspaper, “[The] Delegacias da Mulher have a more maternal atmosphere, conducive to the service of children, contrary to the regular police stations, [that are] full of criminals” (*Correio da Gente* 1995a; my translation).

³ As Silva 1992 reports, until the 1980s there was a lot of resistance from the police and society at large to intervening in the “sacred” sphere of family life, even if it was a stage for brutal violence. The popular aphorism in the country – also the title of her book – illustrates this belief: *Em briga de marido e mulher, ninguém mete a colher*, literally ‘In fights between husband and wife, nobody sticks in a spoon’ – somewhat equivalent to the English saying, “What goes on behind closed doors is none of our business.”

⁴ There is no specific mechanism for placing police officers. Since the DDM police is state-run, it is the state officials who arbitrarily decide where the available officers will be placed.

⁵ Following previous studies of 2nd person pronouns in BP (e.g. Head 1976), here I refer to the forms that have acquired the grammatical characteristics of pronouns – the noun *você* and the noun phrase *a senhora* – as actual pronouns.

⁶ T-T is not to be understood as *tu-tu*. *Tu* is a rare form of address in the Brazilian Southeast, where, instead, its counterpart form *você* is used.

⁷ In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants in this study, all personal names, the name of the city, names of hospitals, streets and other locations, as well as names of the local newspapers have been replaced by fictitious ones.

⁸ Victims’ use of address forms in relation to how many times they are addressed by the professionals in each setting is 2.3% at CIV and 4.1% at DDM.

⁹ The percentages shown in Figure 1 are relative to the number of total occurrences within each setting presented as “N=x” in the graph.

¹⁰ It is relevant to mention here that age is disclosed at different times in the two settings. At CIV, the encounter begins with the professional already knowing the age of the victim. Such information is disclosed to the front desk attendant before the victim is called in to talk to one of the triagistas, and is noted in the victim’s file that the triagista takes in with her. At DDM, age is disclosed when the victim is asked to present her ID. That usually takes place approximately one-third of the way into the encounter. (See Ostermann 2000 for a description of the overall structural organization of the encounters in the two settings.) We have to consider, however, that in first-time acquaintance situations, interlocutors rarely ask/disclose their ages explicitly, and the other party’s approximate age is usually judged based on assumptions about the other party’s physical appearance and other traits.

¹¹ See the Appendix for a key to the transcription conventions employed here.

¹² See Ostermann 2000 for more on how the professionals feel in relation to the victims and in relation to the choices they make with regard to staying in the relationship vs. separating.

¹³ Unfortunately, I do not have many field notes on this specific moment in their interaction, but my general notes about triagista Fernanda describe her constantly nodding as the victims speak. Therefore, my sense is that Fernanda, despite not producing any verbal acknowledgement tokens, would be nodding here.

¹⁴ Similar findings are presented in Bogoch & Danet 1984 and Bogoch 1994 with regard to lawyer-client interactions in a Israeli legal aid office.

¹⁵ It is certainly the case that the growing number of reports issued at the DDM might be due to an increase in violence against women, or perhaps to women reporting violence more frequently. Unfortunately, however, there are no data available to argue for one or another possibility.

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