06

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After all, a way to get people very upset is to tell them
(explicitly or implicitly) that they are not who they
claim to be or think they are.
(Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2013: 17)

This contribution focuses on the role of gender stereotypes in the emergence of verbal violence. Drawing upon selected examples from the VIOLIN corpus, a collection of narratives of problematic communicative encounters by Latin American migrants residing in Germany, we apply a combination of Narrative Analysis and Positioning Theory in order to elucidate how the perception of verbal violence can emerge from a sense of being unfairly positioned by members of the mainstream society. For this purpose, we use the stereotype of the "opportunistic female marriage migrant" as a case example. This widespread stereotype, prevalent in both German and many Latin American societies, suggests that women from economically-disadvantaged countries take advantage of their German husbands to secure residency and a better life. As emerges from our analysis, Latin American women often find themselves being positioned as "opportunistic marriage migrants", but vehemently reject such positioning in their narratives. However, they still tend to reassert and perpetuate the stereotype by using it as a foil to construct their own positions as honest, well-educated and independent, and thus as members of a distinct, and morally superior, category of migrant women in Germany.

1 Introduction

> Eh, los hombres se me acercaban pensado como <<imitating> ay es latina, llena de fuego> y así ellos me decían: "fuego tú eres" , entonces la gente e penSAba eso, como ah tu eres latina y, m, como diríamos en México, eres más fácil ¿no? ellos pensaban que: si ellos, no sé, me coqueteaban un poco yo iba a decir que sí por, por el pasaporte, y ese estereotipo todavía está [...] y yo dije ¿qué? ((laughter)) o sea para mí [...] es super doloroso.
>
> Yeah, the men would approach me thinking like they <<imitating> saying, Oh, she's a Latina, full of fire> and so they would say to me: "you're fire", so, people THOUGHT that, like, oh, you're a Latina and, um, as we would say in Mexico, you're easier, right? they thought: if they, I don't know, flirted with me a bit I was going to say yes because of, you know, the passport, and that stereotype still exists... and I said, what? ((laughter)) I mean, for me... it's super painful.

This excerpt is drawn from an interview with a young Mexican woman living in Germany, in which she shares her experiences as a migrant. It touches upon a familiar stereotype that circulates in Germany and also globally which portrays Latin American women as "hot" — implying that they are particularly passionate and sensual. Moreover, conventional clichés suggest that migrants from Latin America and other regions in the Global South are more susceptible to the advances of men from European countries, motivated by their desire to obtain a European passport. This, in return, grants German men a perceived sense of control over these women. However, the Mexican

woman rejects these notions as stereotypical and describes her reaction to the men's behavior in terms of distress (cf. *super doloroso* 'super painful'). Her response leads us to infer that she perceives the men's behavior as invasive, or even violent and aggressive.

This paper investigates the interconnections between gendered stereotypes about migrants and the emergence of verbal violence and aggression. Our analysis is based on a selection of so-called "critical incidents" from the VIOLIN corpus, a corpus of narratives in Spanish chronicling the experiences of Latin American migrants in Germany. Proposing a new framework that combines Speech Act Theory and Positioning Theory, we aim to examine how the imposition of stereotyped identities onto migrants contributes to the emergence of perceived verbal violence and aggression. As we intend to demonstrate, based on the example of what we call the "opportunistic marriage migrant", these stereotypes frequently blend gender, class and ethnicity-based perspectives about migrants, which clash with their self-perceived identities. Nevertheless, it can also be observed that the resistance to having gendered stereotypes applied to themselves does not necessarily prevent migrants from reproducing and reinforcing these same stereotypes.

The structure of our contribution is outlined as follows: Following the introduction, we provide an overview of the VIOLIN corpus in section two. Section three introduces the theoretical framework for our analysis, clarifies some essential concepts for studying verbal violence and aggression, and presents the stereotype of the "opportunistic marriage migrant". In section 4, we analyze two critical incidents under the perspective of verbal violence (and, to a lesser extent aggression) which emerge from reference to this stereotype. We end with the overarching conclusions from our study, reflecting on the role of positioning at the interplay between sexism, racism and classism in the emergence of verbal violence and aggression.

2 The VIOLIN corpus

This study is based on the VIOLIN corpus, which was established within the context of the Verbal Violence against Migrants in Institutions (VIOLIN) project, conducted at the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany) from 2019 to 2022 (cf. Jansen & Romero Gibu 2021, 2022). For the purpose of this study, we adopt a wide definition of violence, including any kind of behavior against individuals or groups that has negative consequences on their physical or mental integrity and health (cf. Iadicola & Shupe 2013; Barak 2003: esp. 26).

Following the methodology of the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan 1954), we conducted interviews with Spanish-speaking migrants from different Latin American countries who currently reside in Germany. Using a combination of a narrative stimulus and a semi-structured questionnaire, respondents were encouraged to share personal accounts of incidents or situations related to their migration experience in which they underwent negative emotional impacts (such as feeling offended, hurt, intimidated, threatened, annoyed, etc.) due to the manner in which others communicated with them, particularly in institutional settings. The corpus used for this study comprises 60 interviews (one of them with two participants), which span approximately 30 to

90 minutes. The majority of participants migrated for professional or educational reasons. They originate from 11 Latin American countries, with Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela being the most prominently represented. Additionally, one participant is from Spain, and another from the USA. Despite an age range of 19 to 62 years, the bulk of participants were in their (late) 20s or (early) 30s at the time of the interview. Of the 61 interviewees, 41 identified as women and 20 as men.

These interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to coding. A total of 192 critical incidents were identified within the broader interview data. Further, the Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) was employed to identify content categories that naturally emerged from the data. The discussion of gendered identities and gender difference emerged as a relevant category in 21 of the 192 critical incidents. In these cases, a verbal behavior that was directly or indirectly evaluated as sexism-in-action, sometimes intersected with racism and/or classism, was presented as a source of verbal violence.

Remarkably, nearly all of the critical incidents in our corpus in which gender is presented as a relevant factor are in some way connected to stereotypical images of Latina women. With the exception of one critical incident in which a male participant defended himself against a racist verbal attack by performing a hypermasculinized Latino masculinity, all the incidents revolve around stereotyped femininities, intertwined with clichéd ideas of Latin Americans as more sensual and sexual, but also more adhering to traditional patriarchal gender roles.

These ideas partly reflect perceived gendered immigration patterns in Germany and other industrialized countries. While men are frequently considered to migrate as labor migrants, female migration, particularly from the Global South to the Global North, is ideologically linked to 'caretaking work' (both paid and unpaid) in a broader sense. This can include being a sexual or romantic partner, a housewife, a mother, or a homemaker, but also a nannie, a maid, or even a sex worker (Zara & Mendoza 2011: 366; see also Moré 2015). All these roles are grounded in a traditional patriarchal understanding of femininity and gendered division of labor, although some are understood in emotional terms (particularly lover, housewife and mother), while others are related to a more professional function (among them nannie, maid, and sex worker). In this context, it is often assumed that Latin Americans (as well as other migrant groups in Germany) adhere to patriarchal family structures, traditional gender roles, and pre-modern values of female submission, in contrast to supposedly more "modern" and egalitarian gender norms in Germany and other Western countries (Gemende, Munsch & Weber-Unger Rotino 2007: 9-10; cf. also Robinson 1996; Magee 2023: 16).[1]

In line with these notions, the 21 incidents from our corpus in which verbal violence is related to gender depict scenarios in which participants are ascribed one of the aforementioned

[1] The contrasting of migrants' alleged "traditional", i.e. patriarchal home countries with "modern" gender arrangements in Germany in migration discourses has been explained as a means of discursively erasing gender inequality within German society (Gemende & Munsch & Weber-Unger Rotino 2007: 11, 21-22; Rommelspacher 2007: 51). Interestingly, many informants express their disappointment with the limited progressiveness of gender arrangements in Germany, which contradicts the notions they had of Germany as a modern and progressive country before emigrating.

fixed roles based on their gender and national origin. Such situations arise, for instance, when women are overly sexualized and presented as available sexual partners, as illustrated in the initial example. This also occurs when au pairs or Latin American spouses of German men feel they have been reduced to functional roles as domestic workers, rather than being recognized as family members and individuals with unique thoughts, abilities and personalities. For instance, one of the participants, who worked as an au pair in a German family, described feeling like "a vacuum cleaner that talks" ("una aspiradora que habla"). Another participant arrived in Germany after marrying a German, only to later experience exploitation, verbal abuse, and even domestic violence in her new home. She initially had the expectation of being treated as a family member, but soon realized that she was regarded as a Latin American domestic worker ("creo siendo yo que ellos buscaron que una mujer latinoamericana viniera a limpiarle la casa y atenderles a ellos como quisieron" 'I believe that they sought for a Latin American woman to come and clean their house and attend to them as they wished.').

In these stereotypes, the notion that women from the Global South are economically desperate and therefore easily controllable, or that they deceitfully take advantage of men's feelings also plays a role. When such stereotypical gender, ethnicity and class-based identities clash with the participants' self-conceptions, these situations leave them feeling offended, angry, or otherwise adversely impacted. Simultaneously, however, it can be observed in our corpus that the very participants who are subject to stereotypical role attributions also inadvertently reinforce these stereotypes by consistently referencing them in their own identity constructions, albeit dissociating themselves from them. In the following section, we will propose a theoretical framework that explains how referencing stereotypes can have detrimental effects on the emotional well-being of migrants, leading to the perception of verbal violence.

3 Research approach

In this section, we turn our attention to the research approach adopted for this study. We introduce narrative as a discourse genre, provide a short overview of previous approaches in research into verbal violence, outline positioning theory as a means of constructing identities in narratives, and clarify the notions of verbal violence and aggression in relation to identity positioning. Furthermore, we introduce the stereotype of the "opportunistic marriage migrant", which serves as a key case example for this study.

3.1 Narrative

We adopt a social-constructivist perspective, assuming that reality is constructed and negotiated in social interactions. One particular kind of knowledge-producing activity through language is narrative. While telling a story, speakers do not only convey a sequence of events or experiences, but also make sense of these events and experiences, constructing storylines that involve personal opinions and perceptions about what kind of persons they are, as well as about other people's identities and the motives for their actions. Verbal violence and/or aggression as we consider it (cf. section 2) is not an objectively observable phenomenon that exists independently of human percep-

tions and interpretations but rather emerges from subjective constructions of reality. Narratives are perfectly suited to observe these phenomena, not only because they provide empirical insights into migrants' lived experience, but also because they grant access to their feelings, attitudes and interpretations. This allows us to observe how in a critical situation their genuine self-conceptions are challenged or even contradicted through the imposition of stereotyped gendered (and often racialized) identities, as well as the individual meanings and emotions attached to these identities and the impact that such identity assignment has on them.

Traditional narrative approaches, particularly Labov and Waletzky 1967 (cf. also de Fina 2003: 12), have revealed that narratives possess specific structural properties, including the following key components: an orientation providing context about the setting and main characters, a complicating action, its subsequent resolution, and a coda that both concludes the story and links it to the present. The "skeleton" of the story is constituted by a chain of events that are presented in a chronological order, with the complicating action as its climax. The complicating action normally revolves around a "tellable" event, characterized by its unexpected, dramatic, or otherwise compelling nature. In addition to presenting events in a temporal order, to which Labov and Waletzky refer to as "referential information", the narrator also provides so-called "evaluative information". This kind of information is particularly important in the production of knowledge through narrative, as it offers subjective interpretations, evaluations, or judgments regarding the chain of events and the characters involved (for instance regarding their intentions and feelings). Thus, it serves to contextualize the referential information and to produce a consistent story.

In addition to evaluative information, inferences are particularly important for the semantic cohesion of the story. According to Grice (1975), speakers cooperate to make sure that communication is successful. This "cooperation principle" embraces four conversational maxims: Speakers should be 1. informative, i.e. not give more or less information than needed (maxim of Quantity); 2. truthful, i.e. not say anything they believe to be false (maxim of Quality); 3. relevant, i.e. say only things that are pertinent to the ongoing situation (maxim of Relation); and 4. clear, i.e. make their contributions brief and orderly to avoid ambiguity (maxim of Manner). In narrative analysis, deliberate violations of these maxims are particularly significant, as these violations guide the hearer to make inferences about implied meanings of the utterance. Grice refers to this as a "conversational implicature". Given that the speaker anticipates the hearer's inferences, meaning in conversation is co-constructed in a cooperative process between the participants. This of course also applies to the interview situations in which critical incidents were elicited. As we will see, widespread stereotypes about Latin American migrants are largely available as a discursive resource for inferences.

As the VIOLIN corpus consists of narratives about situations of verbal violence, the complicating event typically takes the form of a verbal utterance expressed by a character in the story, who is often depicted as an antagonist. The significance of this utterance is frequently underscored by presenting it in direct speech, a narrative technique referred to as "constructed dialogue" (Relaño Pastor 2014: 77). This term

emphasizes that these quoted statements should not be regarded as literal reproductions of the exact words spoken in the reported situation but constitute creative reconstructions of the original statements. In the following sections, we will discuss some theoretical concepts and approaches that are helpful to understand how an utterance can act as a stimulus for verbal violence.

3.2 Previous studies on verbal violence and aggression: Speech Act Theory

To date, research into verbal violence has largely drawn on Speech Act Theory (SAT), modeling verbal aggression and violence in similar terms to impoliteness (cf. Bonacchi 2017, Havryliv 2017). In this context, interpersonal verbal violence and/or aggression is analyzed in terms of a threat or damage to the hearer's face (understood as "an image of the self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes", Goffman 1967: 5) as a result of a particular speech act. It is generally assumed that the threat or damage to the hearer's *face* is perceived as more serious and harmful in the case of verbal violence/aggression as compared to mere impoliteness.

Havryliv (2017: 43) proposes an analytical distinction between verbal aggression and verbal violence. If the speaker has the intention to harm their interlocutor and deliberately selects linguistic strategies for this purpose, the speech act can be called aggressive. In contrast to this, verbal violence occurs when the interlocutor feels hurt because of the speech act, independently of whether this effect was intended or not. Within this approach, verbal aggression functions as a cover term for speech act types intended to harm, regardless of the actual effect on the interlocutor. In contrast, verbal violence refers to actual harmful effects that a speech act has on a hearer, regardless of the speaker's intention. Thus, within this model, verbal violence and aggression are situated on the level of the intended illocutionary force and the actual perlocutive effects respectively. While this model acknowledges that verbal violence and verbal aggression operate to a certain extent independently from each other, it does not theorize on the way in which verbal violence can emerge from non-aggressive speech acts. The aim of this contribution is to reduce this gap by incorporating Positioning Theory in a speech act theoretical framework, to which we turn our attention in the next section.

3.3 Verbal violence from a Positioning Theory perspective

Although we have previously applied Speech Act Theory to the VIOLIN corpus (Jansen & Romero Gibu 2020, 2021), our ongoing research has revealed a consistent interplay between the emergence of verbal violence and the assignment of undesired identities to the participants, rather than specific speech act types. As our research focuses on migration contexts, these imposed identities are often related to the depicting of migrants as the nationally, racially, ethnically and/or culturally "others", and tend to be highly stereotyped and disparaging in character. For instance, we encounter portrayals such as the "parasite" migrant who is perceived as living at the expense of the German state, or the "chaotic" and "undisciplined" Latin American, among others. In light of these findings, we adopt a slightly different approach for this contribution, incorporating Positioning Theory (cf. Davies & Harré 1990;

Talbot et al. 1996; Bamberg 1997) as an additional analytical tool. This framework posits that during discursive interactions, speakers position themselves and others in relation to one another, as well as within broader social configurations and ideologies, constructing themselves and others as social personae of a specific kind. In the process, they perform self-chosen identities, and either align with or resist the positioning imposed upon them by others. In this context, Davies and Harré (1990) distinguish between interactive positioning, "in which what one person says positions another" (Davies & Harré 1990: 48), and reflexive positioning, "in which one positions oneself" (ibid).

Against this backdrop, we argue that positioning is achieved through various forms of verbal actions, which may or may not belong to the realm of verbal aggression. For example, when a speaker uses an ethnic slur to insult another person, such as *maldito haitiano* 'damned Haitian' which is conventionally used in the Dominican Republic to denigrate Haitian immigrants, the illocutionary act directly implies positioning the addressee as both other (*haitiano* as opposed to *dominicano*) and inferior (*maldito*) compared to the insulter (cf. Jansen 2022). However, in the incidents contained in the VIOLIN corpus, positioning is mostly conveyed implicitly through different kinds of speech acts that fulfill different kinds of illocutive function while simultaneously positioning their addressees based on inferences, presuppositions, or implicatures.

Let us illustrate the importance of inferences based on the question "Where are you from?", which has been the subject of extensive debate in the German press and public due to its potential to be seen as exclusionary or even racist, when directed at someone whose appearance or accent does not conform to the stereotypical image of a German person. From the perspective of Speech Act Theory, it can be classified as a directive speech act in the first place, as the speaker seeks specific information from the hearer. However, simultaneously, this speech act accomplishes another action through inference, namely, assigning to the hearer the position of a foreigner and outsider, in comparison to the group that the speaker associates with. Depending on the hearer's individual self-identity, they may experience various perlocutive effects on a psychological level. For instance, if the hearer identifies with the speaker's group, they may experience feelings of exclusion, independent of whether the positioning was maliciously intended. Obviously, perceptions and interpretations of the same speech act can vary across situations and individuals. Expressed in a context where being from other places is part of the shared knowledge among the participants in a conversation (for instance in a meeting of international exchange students, or a migrant association), or towards a person who identifies as a non-German, the same question may not be perceived as violent (although it still positions the hearer in terms of origin).

This example thus shows that positioning is not entirely congruent with the notion of illocution, as it may be a secondary outcome rather than the central focus of the speaker's intention. Nor does it overlap with the notion of perlocutive effects, due to its relational nature, as opposed to the perlocution being limited solely to the hearer's thoughts, emotions, or actions. Thus, we propose that in addition to the locutionary, propositional, illocutionary and perlocutive act typically cited in Speech Act Theory,

there is a fifth force, which we refer to as the positioning act. Positioning acts can be performed referentially, for example when positioning someone relative to ethnic categories by using ethnic slurs, or to gender categories by using particular pronouns or terms of address. It can also be based on social indexicalities. For instance, addressing someone in a particular language positions this person as a speaker of this language, while addressing somebody in "foreigner talk" or English positions them as a non-speaker of the language that would be considered as the unmarked choice, and potentially, as an outsider. Finally, positioning can also be based on inferences, presuppositions, or implicatures, such as in the example above and in examples discussed in section 3.

The notion of positioning act can fill a gap that traditional Speech Act Theory leaves open, by capturing the relational, interactional and co-constructive dimension of negotiating identities in verbal encounters that mediate between the illocution (situated within the speaker) and the perlocution (situated within the hearer).

Positioning involves a minimum of two individuals who are positioned in relation to one another. In narrative discourse, positioning acts are observed on different levels, as outlined by Bamberg (1997). While telling a story, narrators not only position various characters with respect to one another within the story world (level 1), but they also position themselves in relation to the audience (which, in our case, includes the interviewer) within the interactional context (level 2). In our analysis, we distinguish these levels by using terms such as *protagonist* and *antagonist* for level 1, and *participant* and *interviewer* for level 2. Finally, narrators respond to culturally available knowledge, often referred to as "master narratives" in Positioning Theory (Talbot et al. 1996: 225). These "master narratives" encompass discourses and ideologies that delineate the available roles (positions) within a given society and their associated norms and expectations. On the third level of positioning, narrators position themselves and others relative to stereotypical images of social personae that circulate within a community. This happens both within the story world (level 1) and the interactive world (level 2). In the next section, we delve into a gender-based stereotype, namely the "opportunistic female marriage migrant", which serves as a distinctive "master narrative" that operates in the kind of positioning that can lead to verbal violence.

3.4 Gender stereotypes in positioning and verbal violence: the example of the "opportunistic female marriage migrant"

Although positioning is locally constructed in interactions and thus ephemeral, it draws on broader social meanings and processes. While positioning themselves and others, speakers necessarily react to a set of positions that are available within a given social framework, in order to be "readable" to their interlocutors:

> any narrative that we collaboratively unfold with other people thus draws on a knowledge of social structures and the roles that are recognisably allocated to people within those structures. Social structures are coercive to the extent that to be recognisable and acceptable a person we must operate within their terms. (Davies & Harré 1990: 52)

These social roles are often referred to as "enregistered identities" (Agha 2007; de Fina 2003), both in sociolinguistics and nar-

rative analysis. We can understand them as decontextualizable, often stereotypical images of seemingly stable social personae that circulate within a given society and are used as a discursive resource in positioning. Speakers bring them into interactions and index them or refer to them while negotiating their own identities and those of others within a localized context. Such enregistered identities are often encapsulated in group labels (e.g. "mother", "nurse", "women") and organized in pairs or complex configurations that define reciprocal roles (e.g. "mother/father/child", "doctor/nurse/patient", "women/man" in a marital relationship, etc.; Davies & Harré 1990: 50; Agha 2007: 243). They also encompass representations of the appearance, attitudes and behavior considered normal or appropriate for individuals occupying a particular role (ibid.). For instance, being placed in the category of "woman" or "migrant", or both, tends to trigger a default interpretation of one's identity, based on commonplace beliefs about what migrant women typically do or think. Often, this also implies a moral evaluation, for example when it is assumed that migrants are "backward-minded" because they are believed to support traditional patriarchal norms, allegedly lacking modern social advancements (cf. section 2 and section 4.2.). In this regard, enregistered identities are inherently linked to prevailing moral orders (Davies & Harré 1990: 48; Bamberg 1997). Due to their nature as taken-for-granted knowledge, enregistered identities are not always explicitly articulated, but are often simply implied through presuppositions or inferences.

German migration discourses allocate particular positions to migrants from the Global South, in which gender stereotypes intersect with ethnicity and class (Gemende, Munsch & Weber-Unger Rotino 2007: 9-10). The enregistered identity we focus on in this contribution is what we call the "opportunistic marriage migrant". This stereotype portrays women from economically weaker countries who enter marriages with EU or US citizens or residents, primarily for the purpose of obtaining immigration documents and economic benefits (Rushchenko 2016; Kim 2010: 718-719). It finds its most clichéd expression in highly derogative stereotypes such as the "mail-order bride"[2], whose marriage is arranged through an international matchmaking agency, or as the "purchased bride" who finds her partner in the context of so-called sex or romance tourism (Brennan 2001).

Two fundamentally different interpretations of the stereotypical female marriage migrant exist which ironically contradict each other - both carry sexist, class-based and racist connotations. Academic (particularly feminist) discourses often portray female marriage migrants as economically desperate and powerless victims of exploitation. In contrast, popular portrayals view these women as opportunistic tricksters who play with European men's emotions to gain material comfort and personal

[2] Alternative group labels for this enregistered identity include *money-grabbing trophy wife*, *gold-digger* (Rushchenko 2016: 14), *green-card sharks* (Schaeffer-Grabiel 2006: 345), or *cyberbride* (Starr & Adams 2016: 954). In the German context, common labels encompass *Importbraut* 'imported bride' or *Katalogbraut* 'catalogue bride'. Likewise, Branner (2001) refers to German men who travel to the Dominican Republic in order to find a girlfriend or wife as *bride shoppers*. All these terms are obviously biased and demeaning, emphasizing the perceived selfish economic interests associated with marriage migrants, or dehumanizing them by reducing them to commodities (Westphal & Katenbrink 2007: 139-140, 146). For this reason, in this contribution, we choose to use the term *female marriage migrant*.

benefits[3] (cf. Kim 2010: 718; Magee 2023: 15; Mendoza 2010: 367ff; Robinson 1996: 55; Rushchenko 2016; Starr & Adams 2016: 959). Correspondingly, marriage migrants' partners are either painted as unscrupulous exploiters of impoverished and powerless women, or as naïve victims who succumb to the charm of the "exotic".

Both perspectives portray marriage migrants as uneducated women who rely on their husbands for financial support. They are not viewed as pursuing working careers; and if they are viewed as working at all, they are typically imagined engaging in domestic tasks traditionally associated with femininity, such as childcare and housekeeping. These ideas align further with a belief that women from the postcolonial world, especially those from Latin America, are less "emancipated" than women from industrialized countries (cf. section 2). Overall, there seems to be "a strong association [in German society] of female migration and dependency, as opposed to work and autonomy" (Rushchenko 2016: 26; cf. Rommelspacher 2007: 51; Al-Rebholz 2015: 60).

The stereotypes associated with marriage migrants also carry important moral implications. On the one hand, the female migrant is construed as a "traditional" woman, devoid of feminist sentiments or interests, who thus supports masculine patriarchal sovereignty and control, embodying "a revision to the gender arrangements […] of a prefeminist past" (Starr & Adams 2016: 971; cf. also Schaeffer-Grabiel 2006: 334). On the other hand, she is depicted as undermining Western conceptions of romantic love according to which the only acceptable motive for marriage is pure and disinterested affection, devoid of materialistic considerations (cf. Kim 2010: 721; Robinson 1996: 64; Rushchenko 2016: 28, 111). Such attributions and moral condemnations are further reinforced by immigration laws, which put non-EU spouses in a vulnerable and dependent position because they rely upon their partners for residence or citizenship (Schäfter & Schultz 1999: 100), and also serve to portray marriages that do not correspond to the ideal of "romantic love" as fraudulent. Representing a transgression of both the ideals of romantic love and female empowerment, the female marriage migrant "operates as the ideal juxtaposition to archetypes of Western women" (Starr & Adams 2016: 963; cf. Rushchenko 2016: 31).[4]

The significance of the female marriage migrant figure as an enregistered identity that circulates globally, whether portrayed as an opportunistic trickster or a victim, is substantiated by studies that have examined the discursive representations of this stereotype across different countries worldwide. Among the most important arenas where these stereotypes are constructed and reproduced, we can cite media coverage of (often sensational) cases of arranged marriages or intimate partner violence in binational couples (Robinson 1996) as well as coverage of sex tourism (Brennan 2001: 643-47). The websites of international matchmaking agencies where women are advertised in a highly stereotypical way contribute to these portrayals (Magee 2023: 20; Schaef-

[3] This notion can be interpreted as one manifestation of the "parasite" view on migrants, which recurrently appears in our corpus.

[4] However, depending on the value standards applied, the "traditional" femininities attributed to Latin American women can also be interpreted in positive terms, making them "ideal" partners in the eyes of conservative Western men (Robinson 1996; Magee 2023: 16).

fer-Grabiel 2006; Starr & Adams 2016). Internet forums where Western men discuss romantic experiences with women from the Global South also play a role in shaping and perpetuating these perceptions (Branner 2001), as well as films and TV series featuring so-called "mail-order brides" (cf. Zara & Mendoza 2011; Sizaire & Ricordeau 2015), or men engaging in sex or romance tourism (e.g. the German TV show *Auf Brautschau im Ausland*, meaning 'In search of a bride abroad', Rushchenko 2016).

Needless to say, these stereotypes offer a reductionist and superficial view of marriage migration which oversimplifies the complex realities faced by female migrants, with their varying motives and forms of agency.[5] In this sense, they rely heavily on the semiotic process of erasure (Irvine & Gal 2000), through which information which is inconsistent with ideological construction is either ignored or explained away in order to present a homogeneous image of the group in question. Through the simplistic binaries of love vs. economic interests, victim vs. victimizer, and tradition vs. modernity to name just a few (Rommelspacher 2007: 59; Westphal & Katenbrink 2007: 149) female marriage migrants are presented as the pathetic or morally reprehensive "other" in comparison to Western women:

> Within the economy of knowledge-production about this group of women, racism, sexism, class-prejudice, and colonialist thinking combine to marginalize and stigmatize these women, effectively constituting them as 'Others' vis-a-vis the mainstream. (Zara & Mendoza 2011: 366)[6]

The pervasive presence of these stereotypes in the media and within broader society engenders ongoing suspicion of individuals from the Global South who reside in industrialized countries, being viewed as possible sex workers or marriage scammers (Brennan 2001: 644; Geoffrion 2018; Rushchenko 2016). Also in the VIOLIN corpus, participants report to have encountered doubts regarding the "authenticity" of their relationships. In the next sections, we analyze two examples in which the positioning of the participants as stereotypical "opportunistic marriage migrants" resulted in the perception of verbal violence.

4 Analysis

4.1 Example 1

The first example was provided by a 28-year-old student from Mexico, who recounts an incident with a German friend:[7]

[5] Indeed, research has provided a more nuanced perspective on marriage migration, revealing it to be a potential source of agency and empowerment (Hondagneu 1994; Kim 2010; Magee 2023). Quite often, even migrant women who advertise themselves on websites are not seeking mere financial support; rather, they aspire to establish a more egalitarian partnership with a "modern" husband, pursue career opportunities, and experience a sense of independence and adventure. Many of them belong to the middle class and are professionals, often holding higher educational qualifications and occupying more prestigious positions than their foreign husbands (Rushchenko 2016; Schaeffer-Grabiel 2006: 332; Starr & Adams 2016: 958).

[6] It goes without saying that the husbands are also painted in negative terms, assuming that they "failed" on the local marriage market, as they were unable to find a partner within their own society, for example for being too "ugly" or too "old".

[7] For the purpose of this study, which aims to analyze oral speech through the lens of narrative analysis, we use a basic transcript using GAT 2 notations, in order to provide essential linguistic information while ensuring readability.

PART: sí, ah un día una persona incluso me dijo | eh, cuando me preguntó "¿cuáles son tus planes a futuro?" | y yo le comenté pues | quedarme en Alemania ((laughter)) quiero después de estudiar seguir viviendo aquí | y esta persona me dijo "ah no te preocupes | tú no vas a tener ningún problema | para, para quedarte seguro encuentras a un alemán, te casas y ya tienes tu: | residencia permanente"
INT: okay
PART: y eso me dolió en lo más profundo ((laughter)) porque: |yo vine aquí como una persona | educada ((laughter)) no vine aquí a, a quitarle na nada nadie, ¿no? entonces sentí como si: | si yo (estuviera) aprovechándome de los alemanes, incluso del | de la sociedad alemana lo cual es nunca fue mi intención ((laughter))
INT: ¿te lo dijo en ese tono?
PART: sí ((laughter))
INT: ¿o sea, no, no fue un co= o sea? | ¿dirías que había cierta malicia, o fue un comentario torpe o:?
PART: no, malicia no | simplemente, siento que fue como honesto, que es lo que pensaba | eso de verdad piensa
INT: ¿y que:, era una amistad, al=alguien?
PART: sí | sí er= era un alemán | que, que era mi amigo, m | estábamos aprendiendo, yo aprendí alemán con él, y él español conmigo | y, m, sí, lo sentí como: | simplemente expresando su opinión, no sentí que dijo | a claro tú sólo quieres abusar, NO | simplemente así es su percepción | ah ya, como compartiendo algo que es así según él, de lo más normal | sí ((laughter))
INT: ya, ya, y: | y ese tipo comentarías me has explica= sea
PART: para mí también es claro porque: puede ser bastante ofensivo. ¿no? esto, esta idea
INT: y, y, claro | tú, tú eres una persona también con una formación fuerte, entonces te debe haber chocado un comentario así más, ¿no?
PART: sí, sentí si, me ha aparecido justamente eso, como | si yo quisiera, de veni=, e, de aprovecharme ¿no? de alguien | o sea la única razón por la cual yo quisiera casarme con alguien es para tener una residencia en Alemania
INT: ¿y, y a qué le atribuyes también en el plano interpretativo el que esta persona tenga esas ideas? | ¿ya es una idea que tienen (de) los, las latinas en general, o es algo que?
PART: sí, yo creo que tiene: | amistades que han hecho eso, ¿no?, gente:, ehm | sí, el mismo me dijo, ¿no? colombianas que, que han, que hacen eso, o: | o, y yo también misma conozco | mexicanas que se vinieron | porque tenían una pareja alemana en México por ejemplo
[...]
INT: sí sí | ya, así a mí, a mí entiendo lo que me cuentas, a mí alguna vez me felicitaron | yo ya estoy casada y me felicitaron por ca=, me <<f> me felicitaron> ese

41 sería el verbo, por casarme con un alemán, un alemán que la había hecho muy bien
42 PART: sí, sí
43 INT: imagínate es como <<imitating> que bueno te superaste> | ya te casaste con un
44 alemán ((laughter)) | sí, sí, ya se cumplió el objetivo de tu vida | ((laughter))
45 PART: sí, sí, sí | sí, un objetivo de vida más cumplido | sí, sí, entiendo

The incident starts as an informal conversation about the protagonist's future plans. Although the question "¿cuáles son tus planes a futuro?" 'What are your plans for the future?' (lines 1-2) is not explicitly related to residence status, her response ("quedarme en Alemania", 'stay in Germany', line 2) introduces the topic into conversation. The antagonist seems to infer that she may have concerns about the viability of her plans and raises the possibility of marrying a German citizen as a potential way to obtain a residence permit, given her non-EU nationality. Emphasized through a relatively long stretch of constructed dialogue (lines 3-5), this response constitutes the complicating event of the story.

However, the participant does not frame the complicating event as an aggressive utterance. Rather, the expressions "no te preocupes" 'don't worry' (strongly conventionalized in Spanish as a reassurance), "tú no vas a tener ningún problema" 'you won't have any problems', the adjective *seguro* 'sure' and the adverb *ya* 'already' (emphasizing the immediate and easy availability of the solution) can be interpreted as cues signaling the antagonist's intention to inspire confidence and provide comfort to the listener. Thus, the critical statement is presented as a directive speech act meant to make the hearer feel at ease rather than to cause distress. This is confirmed later in the interview when, in response to the interviewer's inquiry (lines 13-14), the participant affirms that she does not ascribe any malicious intentions to her friend. Instead, she acknowledges that he was merely expressing his taken-for-granted perspective on her situation as a migrant (lines 15-16).

Nevertheless, despite its sympathetic illocution, the speech act is presented in the narrative as a trigger for verbal violence as the participant describes its perlocutive effects in terms of emotional pain ("me dolió en lo más profundo", 'this hurt me really deeply', line 7) and, later in the interview, offense ("puede ser bastante ofensivo, ¿no?" 'this can be really offensive, can't it?', line 24).

As becomes clear in the second part of the narrative, these perlocutive effects emerge from her perception of the underlying positioning act in the antagonist's question. In lines 7 to 10, the participant depicts herself as a well-educated woman with no intentions of exploiting German men. Through the conjunction *porque* 'because', these representative speech acts are presented as an explanation for her emotional reaction to the antagonist's comment. Here, there is a violation of Grice's maxim of Relation, as topics concerning the participant's education or possible exploitative intentions do not seem to be directly related to her feeling of pain, and had not been previously addressed in the conversation. In order to make sense of them, the interviewer must infer that she perceived the antagonist's inquiry as an act of interactive positioning, categorizing her according to the enregistered identity of the uneducated third-world woman who unfairly utilizes German

men for personal advantages, such as attaining legal residence status. This enregistered identity is not explicitly referred to but is assumed to be part of the shared knowledge between the participants in the interview. The use of verbs such as *aprovechar* 'take advantage of' and *abusar* 'abuse', which carry strong moral connotations, suggests that the participant perceives this interactive positioning primarily in terms of ethics, feeling as though morally reprehensible behavior was being attributed to her. This is confirmed at a later point of the interview (lines 28-30), where she refutes the notion that she would marry solely for strategic reasons, aligning herself with the cultural ideals of honesty as well as of romantic, disinterested love – a behavior that, as we can infer based on Grice's maxim of Relation, she ascribes to the figure of the opportunistic marriage migrant. In general, her self-description in lines 7 to 10 and her alignment with the ideal of romantic love in lines 28 to 30 function as a means to resist what she perceives as the unjustified imposition of an identity onto her as a potential marriage scammer. She counter-positions herself as an educated and honest person, deliberately distancing herself from the enregistered identity of the marriage migrant and the immoral practices typically associated with this identity.

Overall, this incident demonstrates that verbal violence can emerge independently from verbal aggression, as the participant explicitly denies any aggressive intentions from her interlocutor. Further, it reveals that verbal violence can originate from the act of positioning implied in a speech act, rather than from its illocution. Lastly, it underscores the significance of enregistered identities in positioning acts perceived as violent.

While the incident proper spans only from lines 1 to 10, it is worthwhile to examine the subsequent development of the interview, as this allows us to observe how both the participant and the interviewer collaboratively contribute to the construction of the stereotype of the opportunistic marriage migrant and to negotiate their respective identities in relation to it. After discussing some further details of the incident (lines 13-24), the participant returns to the harmful perlocutive effects caused by the antagonist's comment. Using the tag question *¿no?* (line 24), she encourages the interviewer to align with her perspective. In response, the interviewer not only validates the participant's self-positioning as an educated woman ("tú, tú eres una persona también con una formación fuerte", 'you are also a person with a strong education', line 26), but also acknowledges the potential face-threatening nature of the antagonist's comment ("entonces te debe haber chocado un comentario así más", 'so this must have shocked you even more'). Consequently, the interviewer reinforces both the participant's identity construction and the stereotype of the uneducated marriage migrant.

In her reaction (lines 28-30) the participant shifts the focus back to the moral implications of the positioning act, which seem to have particularly affected her. The interviewer speculates about potential reasons behind the antagonist's perspective toward her, suggesting that it might be influenced by stereotypical notions of Latinas (lines 31-33). In response, the participant presents the existence of opportunistic migrant women as an empirical reality, supported by the personal experience of both her and her friend with Colombian and Mexican women who allegedly married

German men for the sole purpose of obtaining legal residency (34-37).

The last part of the extract functions as a coda that relates the reported incident to the present, particularly to the shared migration experience between the two participants in the interview, both Latin American women who moved to Germany to study. The interlocutors rely on their previous collaborative construction of female marriage migrants in order to build solidarity, and they construct a positive migrant identity by distancing themselves from the negatively depicted other. Reversing the communicative roles intended for the interview setting, the interviewer now recounts an episode in which she was congratulated (as we can infer, by fellow Latina migrants) for having "succeeded" to marry a German. At this point, she reveals her identity as a Latina married to a German ("yo ya estoy casada", 'I'm already married', line 40), a condition previously unknown to the participant. This is interpersonally delicate because of the negative image of Latina spouses of German men which had been discussed previously in the interview. However, the interviewer distances herself from the enregistered identity of the marriage migrant and expresses solidarity towards the participant in several ways. Firstly, she conveys her solidarity with the phrase "entiendo lo que me cuentas" ('I understand what you are telling me', line 39). She further empathizes by sharing her own story, which corroborates key aspects of the participant's narrative: the belief that numerous migrant women seek marriage with German men for papers and that such attitudes and behavior are objectionable, and the personal experience of being positioned as an opportunistic marriage migrant. In this context, the manner in which the interviewer rephrases the congratulations from other migrants in the form of constructed dialogue, specifically "que la había hecho muy bien", 'that I did an excellent job' (line 41) and "te superaste", 'you overcame yourself' (line 43), can be seen as parodic constructions of migrant women who see marriage "as a fast track to economic success" (Brennan 2001: 629). Here, the interviewer refers to notions which are stereotypically attributed to the enregistered identity of female marriage migrants: Their view of marriage (rather than career) as a personal achievement in life and the motivation to marry for economic reasons as opposed to genuine emotional bonds. Although these utterances potentially position the addressee as an opportunistic marriage migrant, they are not framed as problematic or face-threatening within this context, but they serve as a discursive strategy to portray other Latin American migrants in a negative light. By using sharp irony, the interviewer marks the utterances in constructed dialogue as "foreign" voices, distancing herself from her fellow migrants and positioning them as professionally unambitious and morally wrong others. In the last line of the extract, the participant aligns with the interviewer's view by engaging in the construction of Latina migrants who see marriage as a goal in life, and by expressing explicit understanding.

The second part of this excerpt reveals that while the topic of stereotyping briefly emerges during the interview, neither the participant nor the interviewer ultimately challenges the empirical validity of the stereotype of the "opportunistic marriage migrant", nor do they address stereotyping in itself as a problematic practice. Instead, they simply reject that the stereotype can be applied to their own situation, thus perpetuating and reasserting

the stereotype by using it as a foil to co-construct their own position as members of a distinct and morally superior category of migrant women in Germany. Consequently, this enregistered identity operates as an unquestioned and readily accessible role that shapes how they perceive the social world around them, interpret the actions and words of others in specific situations, and assign roles to both themselves and others.

4.2 Example 2

The second example comes from an interview with a 31-year-old Colombian woman, married to a German man, who works as a professional in an international company. It is important to mention that she explicitly positions herself as a feminist at the beginning of the interview. While the extract begins with a specific critical incident related to interactive positioning as an opportunistic marriage migrant, the participant portrays this form of positioning as a recurring experience for her and other Latin American women in Germany. As the interview unfolds, she recounts various stories to illustrate this phenomenon and gradually refines her discursive construction of the stereotype.

PART: por ejemplo la primera vez que viajé a | [NAME OF A GERMAN CITY] [...]
pues mi esposo me llevó a | [NAME OF A GERMAN CITY] | como a una:=a una
reunión familiar con los amigos de los papás y=y todo, ¿sí? =esto fue hace nueve años,
¿no? entonces: me acuerdo que: me acuerdo que hubo=uno una de las amigas de los
papás ¿sí? que ahora es un amor pero pues en ese entonces yo me acuerdo que
llegamos= estábamos ahí como en un asado, era verano, todo el rollo ¿sí? y yo estaba
fumándome un cigarrillo y ella también se estaba fumando un cigarrillo y en un
momento me dice =me dice, bueno y tú: ¿qué es lo que quieres con él? entonces yo
quedé como, ¿what?, ¿sí? eh, pero pues igual me lo tomé como super tranqui porque
pues ya sabes=o sea estaba como saliendo con e= con él, todo el rollo o sea como que
me gustaba ¿sí? ehm: pero fue=o sea obviamente quedé como=como fría, ¿sí? y yo
como=como nada, ¿a qué te refieres?, no, pues sí, o sea ¿qué=qué quieres con él?=o sea,
¿qué quieres con él? ¿sí? entonces:: me acuerdo que | me volteé super tranquila y le
dije, no pues yo creo que tú deberías preguntarte, él qué quiere conmigo, ¿sí? porque
él todavía estaba en la universidad, ¿no? y pues yo ya, ya me había graduado, ¿sí? o
sea le dije como yo soy | [JOB TITLE] | ya terminé mis estudios o sea en teoría, ¿sí?,
porque en latinoamérica como tenemos otro tipo de:: de diploma universitario pues
yo ya había terminado, yo no tenía que hacer un máster, ¿sí? entonces: le dije no, yo
creo que tú deberías preguntar a él qué quiere conmigo, ¿sí? o sea porque pues yo
llegué acá a trabajar y eso, o sea por=¿le has preguntado eso a él? y entonces ella=ella
se quedó mirándome como, ¿esta vieja qué? ((laughter)) ¿sí? pero obviamente fue=fue
incómodo, ¿sí? porque de algún modo
INT: [¿como qué]=como qué edad tenía ella más o menos?
PART: no pues, vieja, o sea por=pues por ahí como que cincuenta, cincuenta y cinco

INT: ok
PART: sí, una
INT: ¿[(qué te)) dio=qué te dio la sensación de qué=de qué quería=de qué quería escuCHAR como de respuesta? porque te hizo esta pregunta tan extraña
PART: no yo creo que era una=creo que era una situación como de:=como de tú eres latina y estás saliendo con: el alemán, como, ¿qué es lo que buscas?, ¿sí? pero entonces digamos creo que, o sea creo que lo que=lo que es interesante es que eso pasó ( ) o sea hace nueve años, lo que te digo ya estamos casados, ya esta=pues esta persona es un amor conmigo todo el rollo, ¿sí? ehm:: pero, pero siento que es algo como que=como que sigo estando ahí, ¿sí? | yo por ejemplo digamos en | [NAME OF A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] | no lo tenía, ¿sí? | en [NAME OF A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] | tal vez no lo tenía porque como te digo estaba en esa burbuja en la que todo el mundo trabaja en | [NAME OF PROFESSIONAL FIELD] algo que pues | [NAME OF A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] y [NAME OF A EUROPEAN CITY] | sobre todo es= pues está lleno de ese tipo de:=de profesionales | pero como que sigue=sigue ese= sigue habiendo como esa=esa sensación de=de tú eres latina, o sea y estás con el alemán o sea te, te pongo el ejemplo, por ejemplo eh, cuando | nos acabábamos de mudar a [NAME OF A GERMAN CITY] | ¿sí? | o sea pues obviamente al principio Alemania no es tan fácil como de hacer amigos, ¿cierto? y:: y además, ehm: por eso | o sea no sé como que en, en | [NAME OF A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] | está la burbuja [NAME OF PROFESSIONAL FIELD] | pero pues acá NO, o sea acá tienes la burbuja de otros, ¿no? | [NAMES OF GERMAN COMPANIES] | eh ese rollo, ¿sí? pero pues=no es= no es como tan fácil entrar ahí si tú no trabajas ahí | entonces me acuerdo que bueno empezamos= o sea nos hicimos amigos de:::=de una colombiana y:: <<acc> el novio es alemán> y estábamos en el cumpleaños de ella, ¿sí? y:: estaban como muchos amigos alemanes de él entonces era pues también o sea como un:=como un grill y todo el rollo y me empezaron=o sea como empezamos a hablar con los amigos, ¿sí? y entonces alguien me preguntó como, ah, tú eres colombiana, ah sí, chévere, y no se qué y alguien me dijo como=como, ay, pero tú estás acá pues POR ÉL, ¿sí? | y mi amiga, ¿sí? o sea mi amiga colombiana conoció al alemán en Colombia y en algún punto pues el alemán hizo lo posible para que ella pudiera venir a Alemania, ¿sí? o sea no se la trajo=no se l a trajo pero digamos en Colombia uno diría coloquialmente <<acc>como se la trajo>, ¿sí me entiendes? pero pues no fue tan así, o sea ella vino a hacer como au pair, aprender alemán, todo el rollo, ahora está en la universidad, todo el cuento, ¿no? pero entonces como que está esa idea del estereotipo de mujer latina que entonces o sea uno va | ¿puedo decir groserías en esta entrevista? bueno no sé, pero uno va a
INT: [sí, claro]
PART: [ah bueno], porque, o sea uno=uno va como al culo del man, ¿no? o sea uno va al culo del man | entonces=entonces, cuando me= o sea me acuerdo que era= me decía como o sea tú estás acá en | [NAME OF A GERMAN CITY] | por=por él,

claro=entonces yo, yo me volteé y le dije como=como, no, o sea, él está acá por mí, ¿sí? o sea porque la que se= la que consiguió el trabajo en | [NAME OF GERMAN CITY] | fui YO o sea mi= o sea mi esposo trabaja desde la casa desde siempre, ¿sí? |
[...]
PART: [...] te da la sensación a veces de que: la gente asume de que te viniste=de que estás en Alemania por=porque tu marido es alemán | sí y eso me fastidia sobremanera porque digamos cuando yo empecé a salir con él y vivíamos en | [NAME OF A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] | también desde= o sea desde=desde cierto= sobre todo desde latinos o sea pero eso fue al principio, ¿no? desde latinos era como esta idea de ah, con razón estás saliendo con el alemán, ¿sí? por el pasaporte <<ironic tone of voice> ha ha ha>
INT: ah::
PART: (¿sí?) | y eso me= o sea me fastidiaba hartísimo y perdí muchas amistades pues lo que te digo hace nueve años cuando empecé a salir con | [HUSBAND'S NAME] | o sea como esos comentarios así hartos que yo decía como como no pues, come mierda, ¿sí? o sea esto no es así ¿sí? pero entonces también todavía lo siento desde= o sea a pesar de todos estos años y pues de que yo me he desarrollado profesionalmente | o sea para mí mi carrera es super importante, o sea tengo treinta y uno que tú sabes que en Latinoamérica es como bueno, <<irritated tone of voice> ¿y los bebés? ¿y él bebé? y ya estoy casada y todo el cuento, entonces el bebé>
INT: [mhm]
PAR: y: y para mí digamos sí quiero tener hijos y quiero tener pues una familia y todo el rollo pero mi carrera es muy importante, ¿sí? entonces como que el hecho que me digan eso de que estoy acá en Alemania por él, o sea no pues, come mierda ((laughter)) ¿si me entiendes? o sea porque pues no es=no es fácil como decidir=además porque yo decidí, o sea yo llegué a| [NAME OF A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] | a trabajJAR / ¿sí? o sea trabajar, eh, pensando en en: pues ¿qué hago en [NAME OF PROFESSIONAL FIELD] en Colombia? o sea hace nueve años hubiera terminado como eh, dando clases, por ejemplo, ¿sí? que pues no es que estuviera mal porque yo quería como explorar esa parte práctica de mi carrera, ¿sí? | y pues todo está acá en el:: pues en el global north ¿no? eh, pero eso es como =esos son como=como contextos privados ¿sí?
[...]
PART: pero yo vine pues por una cuestión profesional, ¿sí? porque en Colombia ¿qué hubiera hecho? ¿sí? sencillamente porque las mejores escuelas de | [NAME OF PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE] | pues están en el su= en el=en el norte global, ¿sí? entonces como= como se el entendimiento eh por ese lado que fue la verdad muy muy incómodo ¿sí? o sea cuando además estaba en la mitad de un duelo, ¿no?
[...]
INT: entonces, más que como que cosas puntuales han sido como sensaciones que=que te=que te da la gente en reiteradas ocasiones, por así decirlo

105 PART: ¿en Colombia dices?
106 INT: eh: y=y en Alemania, por ejemplo eso de que: de que, no sé, de la imagen de la
107 latina dramática o de la imagen de la latina que se vino a Europa por su esposo.

At the outset of the interview, the participant establishes her identity as a professional, who relocated to Germany from another European country due to an enticing job opportunity within an international company. This construction of her identity as a professional, marked by a strong sense of personal initiative and autonomy, is evident throughout the interview. For instance, while she met her German husband in the first European country in which she lived it was upon her initiative that they settled in Germany.

The initial incident (lines 1-22) occurred at a family gathering. In the orientation (lines 1-7) of the narrative, two facts are introduced that, on the surface, may not appear directly connected to the incident: the revelation that it occurred nine years before, and the observation that the individual who is portrayed as the source of verbal violence can today be described as a "lovely person". These details serve as early indicators to the listener that the duration of her residency in Germany, the length of her marriage, and her relationship with her husband's family, are significant for grasping the essence of the main incident.

The complicating action begins when her interlocutor poses the question "¿qué es lo que quieres con él?" ('What do you want from him?', line 8). In the subsequent section, the narrator shares referential information about her verbal responses through constructed dialogue, along with insights into her internal and external reactions. Her initial reaction is one of profound astonishment, perhaps even bordering to outrage, emphasized discursively through constructed dialogue (which has to be understood here as an internal dialogue) and her switch to English (*¿what?*, line 9). Interestingly, she does not explicitly elaborate on why the question elicited this response from her, possibly assuming the reason to be self-evident within the context of the interview. However, considering that the antagonist is well aware of the protagonist's role as the partner of her friends' son, one can infer based on Grice's maxim of Manner that the antagonist assumes a deviation from the conventional expectations of a romantic relationship, and is actually realizing a directive speech act, asking the participant to provide further details on this presumed deviation. As the interview progresses, it will become increasingly explicit that the participant interprets the question as an unjustified positioning act that assigns to her the role of an opportunistic marriage migrant.

Although the description of her internal reaction reveals that the protagonist experiences the situation as verbal violence, her external responses are consistently described in terms of self-control and composure ("me lo tomé como super tranqui" 'I took it really easy', line 9; "obviamente quedé como fría" 'I obviously came across as cool', line 11, "me volteé super tranquila" 'I turned around very calmly', line 13, etc.). This recurrent emphasis on her cool demeanor, which violates Grice's maxim of Quantity, suggests that her response is remarkable. We can thus infer that a much more emotional, possibly an irritated or furious reaction would be considered normal in this situation, an inference that underscores the gravity

of the positioning act. This is confirmed later in the interview, when she describes her reaction to similar situations in terms of anger (*me fastida(ba)* 'that annoys/annoyed me'), lines 70 and 77). Her intense emotional response becomes notably evident in lines 87-89, where she constructs a hypothetical response to anyone who positions her as an opportunistic marriage migrant ("que el hecho que me digan eso de que estoy acá en Alemania por él, o sea no pues, come mierda" 'the fact that they say this to me, that I'm here in Germany because of him, well, no, eat shit'). The use of the vulgar and offensive slang expression *come mierda*, employed here to convey what could be considered an appropriate but socially unacceptable reaction, indicates a strong sense of disapproval and anger. Together with her declaration that she felt discomfort ("fue=fue incómodo" 'it was uncomfortable', lines 21-22; "fue la verdad muy muy incómodo ¿sí?" 'it was really very, very uncomfortable, right?', lines 100-101), this reaction clearly characterizes the incident as an instance of verbal violence. However, the participant does not explicitly ascribe harmful intentions to the antagonist, leaving us in uncertainty as to whether she perceives the situation as verbal aggression or not.

Returning to the complicating action, it can be observed that within the story world, the protagonist resists the positioning implied in the antagonist's question. Although the expectable reaction to an inquiry for information would be to supply this information, she actually responds with a counter-inquiry ("¿A qué te refieres?" 'What do you mean?', line 12). When the antagonist repeats her question twice, persisting in her quest for information (and, consequently, in her interactive positioning act), the protagonist counters by suggesting that it should be her husband who is asked what he wants from her, rather than the other way round (line 14). This response again diverges from the expected reaction to the speech act "question", thus violating Grice's principle of Relation. While refusing to provide the information the antagonist asked for, she rectifies what (as we can infer) she perceives as a wrong depiction of the reciprocal role relationship between her and her husband, and thus an unjustified positioning of her depending on him. All this shows that she is not primarily reacting to the illocutive force of the speech act (quest for information), but to the relational gender roles that are implied in its propositional dimension (*she* wants something from *him*), suggesting an alternative relationship (*he* wants something from *her*). In other words, the exchange can be understood as maximally cooperative under Grice's Principle of Cooperation if we understand it as an adjacency pair of positioning acts (interactive positioning that is perceived as unjustified, and reflexive counter-positioning), rather than illocutive acts. This underscores the usefulness of integrating Positioning Theory in a Speech Act Theory framework.

In the subsequent section, the protagonist provides information about her and her husband's educational backgrounds, clarifying that he was still a student while she had already completed her degree. Once again, this violates Grice's maxim of Relation since this topic had not been previously introduced. Together with the statement "pues yo llegué acá a trabajar y eso" 'I came here to work and all that' (lines 19-20), we can interpret this as another act of reflexive positioning. The protagonist portrays herself as an individual with higher education, greater professional ambitions, and more opportunities in comparison to her husband,

thus establishing herself as the more independent and powerful of the two. Through this and her previous positioning act, she counter-positions herself relative to the traditional patriarchal gender order implicitly assumed by the antagonist, where men serve as breadwinners and make migration decisions, while women depend on their husband's income and decisions (Hondagneu 1994). She also counter-positions herself against patriarchal practices such as hypergamy and patrilocality (Kim 2010: 721-722), i.e. the tendency for women to marry men of higher socioeconomic status, and to follow them to the place where they live.

When the interviewer prompts the participant to explain what exactly her interlocutor wanted to hear as a response in the recounted situation, she starts to provide more details that link her experience to the stereotype of the opportunistic marriage migrant. To begin with, she underscores the ethnic and national difference between herself as a Latina woman and her husband as a German man, implying that these differences typically raise questions about the Latina's motivations ("era una situación como de:= como de tú eres Latina y estás saliendo con: el alemán, como ¿qué es lo que buscas?" 'It was a situation like, you being Latina and dating a German, like, what are you looking for?', lines 29-30). As she does not provide an answer to this rhetorical question, the interviewer must rely on her understanding of the enregistered identity of the opportunistic marriage migrant to infer that the speaker alludes to stereotypical images of Latina women marrying German men for personal benefits.

Implicit reference to the enregistered identity of the opportunistic marriage migrant becomes even more evident in lines 33-34, when the respondent emphasizes again that the incident happened nine years ago, and that the person involved is much more friendly with her now, because she is "still there" ("como que=como que sigo estando ahí, ¿sí?"). Based on Grice's maxim of Relation, in combination with knowledge about the enregistered identity, the interviewer can infer that the antagonist finally understood that the protagonist is not a marriage scammer, based on the fact that her relationship continues, even though she could have left her husband a long time ago without losing her residence permit.[8] By presenting objective evidence supporting the legitimacy of her marriage, the participant also asserts her position as an honest person within the interview situation.

Starting from line 39, the participant becomes increasingly explicit about the enregistered identity of the opportunistic marriage migrant. She reiterates that mixed German-Latin American couples arouse suspicion, though she refrains from specifying the nature of these suspicions. However, the expression "sigue habiendo como esa sensación" ('that feeling still exists', line 39-40) suggests that she is referring to a stereotypical view that one could believe had been overcome in the past, but still in fact exists.

In lines 46 to 60, the interviewee shares another story which suggests that Colombian women continue to be positioned as opportunistic marriage migrants. This closely parallels the first incident, the primary difference being

[8] According to German law, a foreign partner must have been married for at least three years to obtain independent residency rights.

that the main character in this story is not her, but rather a Colombian friend of hers.[9] While the question that constitutes the complicating action is nearly identical to the one from the first incident ("ay, pero tú estás acá pues POR ÉL, ¿sí?" 'Oh, but you're here BECAUSE OF HIM, right?', line 53), the connection to the enregistered identity of the marriage migrant is more explicit because the nationality of the main character is emphasized ("ah, tu eres colombiana, ah sí, chévere" 'Oh, you're Colombian, ah yes, cool", line 52). Although no perloctionary effects are described, it can be inferred from the subsequent evaluative segment from line 53 onwards that the question is framed as an unjust act of positioning.

The description of her friend's relationship and migration trajectory (lines 57-58) directly addresses key components of the enregistered identity of the opportunistic marriage migrant. She underscores that her friend and her German partner had a true love story, in alignment with the ideal of romantic love and in contrast with the attitude stereotypically attributed to marriage migrants ("mi amiga colombiana conoció al alemán en Colombia y en algún punto pues el alemán hizo lo posible para que ella pudiera venir a Alemania" 'my Colombian friend met the German in Colombia, and at some point, the German did everything possible for her to be able to come to Germany', lines 54-55[10]). Furthermore, she highlights that her friend supported herself by working as an au-pair, and pursued her own career aspirations based on academic studies, thus challenging the widely-held stereotype of the economically dependent and uneducated marriage migrant. Based on Grice's maxim of Relation, these speech acts, although primarily representative in terms of illocution, can be interpreted as positioning acts through which the participant counters the identity imposed onto the main character.

This following segment of the interview is particularly intriguing as the participant becomes increasingly forthright in her depiction and rejection of the enregistered identity of the opportunistic marriage migrant. She uses colloquial and even vulgar expressions such as "se la trajo" ('he brought her along', lines 55-56) and "uno va al culo del man" ('one goes to the man's ass', line 62) which, while not entirely transparent, are highly conventional in some varieties of Spanish to describe the behavior of men and women to whom the stereotype is applied. Importantly, these expressions convey a disapproving attitude, explicitly referencing the two core stereotypical traits associated with opportunistic marriage migrants: dependence and lack of agency ("se la trajo"), as well as qualities like aggressiveness, cunningness and hypersexualization ("uno va al culo del man"). In lines 69 and 70 she becomes unequivocally explicit about the enregistered identity that has been subtly underlying the entire narrative. She explains "te da la sensación a veces de que: la gente asume de que te viniste=de que estás en Alemania por=porque tu marido es alemán" 'At times, you get the feeling that people assume that you came to Germany because your husband is German'. Later, she reinforces the same notion in constructed dialogue, paro-

[9] However, it is interesting to observe that the participant punctually uses the first person when telling her friend's story, what signals to which extent she identifies with it (lines 52 and 53).

[10] Cf. also Geoffrion (2018) on the efforts partners from wealthier countries have to spend to make their foreign partners come to their country as a proof for real love.

dying fellow Latin American's voices saying "ah, con razón estás saliendo con el alemán, ¿sí? por el pasaporte" 'Oh, I understand why you are dating the German guy, right? For the passport' (lines 74). This adds a dramatic effect and alludes to potential moral connotations regarding marriage migrants, as the use of the adverbial phrase "con razón" 'with reason' suggests that dating a German only seems logical if one's interest lies in obtaining a European passport.

As this comment is attributed to fellow Latin Americans and not to Germans, it marks a shift in perspective that parallels the example discussed in the previous section. We could interpret it as a kind of coda that links the complicating action of the two stories – a speech act perceived as an unfair positioning as a marriage migrant – to the wider context of Latin American culture, as well as to differences between the Global North and the Global South.

First, the participant expresses a stronger sense of disparagement regarding interactive positioning as an opportunistic marriage migrant when carried out by fellow Latin American migrants rather than by Germans (lines 72-73). One might speculate that this is a deliberate strategy to create a distinction between herself and the "general Latin American community in Germany".[11] In doing so, she positions herself as a unique type of migrant who does not conform to the prevailing stereotype – a highly educated professional leading a cosmopolitan and independent life, in contrast to the stereotypical uneducated and dependent migrant women. In fact, in this final part of the extract, several characteristics of what the participant perceives as Latin American culture are brought to the forefront and depicted in a negative light when contrasted with the Global North.

The participant articulates her dissatisfaction with being consistently positioned within traditional gender roles, even after years of professional development (lines 80-81). What follows is another story which illustrates her point, this time based on stereotypical views of women as mothers and caretakers, and men as professionals and breadwinners. In the orientation, the participant positions herself as a career-oriented woman, stating "o sea para mí mi carrera es super importante" ('I mean for me my career is very important', line 82). Furthermore, we can infer from her reference to her age ("o sea tengo treinta y uno" 'I mean, I'm thirty-one', line 82), in accordance with Grice's maxim of Relation and against the backdrop of prevalent discourses about age-related fertility decline and its tension with professional careers, that she is introducing the topic of being a potential mother.

The complicating action arises with the utterance in constructed dialogue "¿y los bebés? ¿y él bebé?" ('What about babies? What about a baby?', line 83), which is attributed to Latin American people in a very general sense. The evaluative statement "y ya estoy casada y todo el cuento, entonces el bebé" ('and I'm already married and all that, so the baby', line 84) contextualizes the inquiry "¿y los bebés? ¿y él bebé?" by linking it to the stereotypical female gender identity of being a wife and mother, where one implies the other. Thus, at this point, she refers to gender expectations according to

[11] This is also consistent with her explanation to have ended many friendships with Latin American friends, and her distancing herself from fellow migrants by framing their voices as "different" (cf. also section 4.1).

which as a married woman she is assumed to take the normative feminine role in the nuclear family. Despite the fact that these expectations are prevalent in Germany as well, she explicitly attributes them here to Latin America.

In her subsequent turn, she articulates a series of representative speech acts through which she positions herself as someone who indeed desires to have children but still places great importance on her career. Based on Grice's maxim of Relation and the contrast between having a family and valuing one's career constructed through the adversative conjunction *pero* 'but', we can infer that she feels unfairly positioned as a wife and, by extension, a potential mother (as these are seen as synonymous within the enregistered identity).

In the final segment of the extract, the participant goes into greater detail about her primary motive for emigrating, emphasizing career advancement, and frames her migration trajectory within the identity she has been constructing throughout the course of the interview. Once again, she underscores the disparities between Latin America (specifically, Colombia) and the Global North, highlighting the limited opportunities in her home country, as evident in the question "pues ¿qué hago en [NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD] en Colombia"? ('so what do I do in [NAME OF THE PROFESSIONAL FIELD] in Colombia?', lines 91-92). She contrasts this situation with the prospects offered by the Global North, stating "y pues todo está acá en el:: pues en el global north ¿no?" 'and well, everything is here in the:: well, in the global north, right?', lines 94-95; "las mejores escuelas de [NAME OF PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE] pues están en el su= en el=en el norte global, ¿sí?" 'the best schools for [NAME OF PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE] are in the south= in the=in the global north, right?', lines 98-99). In doing so, she once again positions herself as a cosmopolitan professional. It's worth noting that, despite her deep and enduring dissatisfaction with being positioned as a "trailing wife" (Kim 2010: 721-722), she also perpetuates some of the very ideologies that underlie these positioning acts. Namely, she reinforces stereotypical views of Latin American societies being bound to "traditional" concepts of femininity and characterized by backwardness and a lack of modernity and professionalism.

Overall, it becomes evident in this extract that the participant constructs the recurring experience of being positioned as an opportunistic marriage migrant as an enduring source of verbal violence (as also evident in the final line of the excerpt). Unlike in the previous example, her reaction primarily addresses the implications of this stereotype in terms of economic dependency, the absence of professional ambitions, autonomy and agency stereotypically attributed to marriage migrants, rather than its moral contradiction with the ideal of romantic love. She also contextualizes this specific enregistered identity within broader discourses on femininity not necessarily related to migration, encompassing patriarchal norms like hypergamy and patrilocality, as well as the prescribed role of women as mothers. The participant adopts a more critical stance towards gender stereotypes circulating in society in comparison to the example discussed in the previous section. Still, she uses the stereotype of the "opportunistic marriage migrant" as a negative reference point for her own identity construction, positioning herself as its complete antithesis. In doing this, she reproduces clichéd perceptions of Latin American migrants and the overarching assumptions about

disparities and hierarchies between the Global South and the Global North on which the stereotype relies.

5 Conclusions

The objective of the present paper was to introduce new perspectives for comprehending how language can function as a vehicle for violence, with a special focus on gender. It was argued that, at least in some instances, it is the act of positioning inherent in a speech act, rather than the illocutionary act, that can be held accountable for the emergence of verbal violence. Within verbal exchanges, participants are in a continual process of negotiating their subject positions, attributing positions to others, and claiming positions for themselves. As this happens through different kinds of illocutive acts, but also indexicalities and inferences that are not directly related to a speech act's illocution, we suggested to incorporate the notion of "positioning act" into the framework of Speech Act Theory. While positions are locally constructed within the verbal interaction, speakers also bring more enduring concepts of selfhood into the conversation, both in terms of their own self-perception and that of others. These are typically connected to a set of relatively fixed positions available within a given society, which, in line with Agha (2007), we have referred to as "enregistered identities". These enregistered identities are utilized as a discursive resource in positioning acts. Verbal violence can originate from acts of positioning when individuals have identities imposed upon them that are in tension or even conflict with their personal self-concept.

In order to illustrate the role of positioning acts in verbal violence, we have chosen to focus on the enregistered identity of the "opportunistic marriage migrant". This stereotypical role is characterized by the intersection of gender, migrant status, and social class. It repeatedly appeared in our dataset as an involuntary identity that was ascribed to female migrants across various everyday situations. Thus, Rushchenko's (2016: 114) finding that "[b]i-national couples where one of the spouses comes from an economically weak country are always under the suspicion of marrying each other with the sole purpose of providing one of the parties with a residence permit" finds empirical support in our corpus.

The two case examples we presented depict the experience of two young Latin American women who report that being labeled with the enregistered identity of the "opportunistic marriage migrant" had a detrimental effect on them, leading to feelings of pain and anger. Consequently, this labeling triggered perlocutive effects that can be categorized as forms of violence under the definition used here. However, given the absence of a direct link between these effects and the illocutionary force of the critical speech acts, traditional Speech Act Theory falls short in explaining the mechanism that gives rise to verbal violence in such instances. Instead, the perlocutive effects originate from the acts of positioning which can be inferred to have occurred through the critical utterances, along with the tension they create in relation to the listeners' self-identification. In the cases analyzed here, this tension arises primarily from perception of marriage migrants as antipodes of Western notions of feminism that emphasize women's agency and economic autonomy, as well as the ideal of ro-

mantic love. These findings underscore the significance of integrating Positioning Theory into the analysis and modeling of verbal violence and aggression.

The analysis substantiated a central tenet of Positioning Theory: that society shapes the available positions. These tend to be relatively stable; only their assignment to specific individuals within verbal interactions is subject to negotiation. As for the interviews analyzed here, the stereotype of the "opportunistic marriage migrant" seems to be so deeply engrained in the participants' representations of the social world that it is often implicit and goes unmentioned but is always available for inference without the need for explicit mention. Participants systematically use it to construct not only the identities of others but also their own. This may be further facilitated by the fact that not only the participants, but also the interviewers are female Latin American migrants, a setting that fosters an environment of assumed shared knowledge. Although empirical studies reveal a more complex reality than the stereotype suggests (particularly as demonstrated by Rushchenko 2016), its validity is never questioned. What the participants challenge is not the stereotype itself, but rather its applicability to their own circumstances, heavily relying on the semiotic process of erasure (Irvine & Gal 2000). As we have seen, they even confirm the stereotype by employing the enregistered identity of the opportunistic marriage migrant as a significant "other". This enables them to construct their own identities through discourses of romance, autonomy and professional success. In doing so, the participants also perpetuate negative discourses about female marriage migrants, placing them in a subordinate position within the moral and professional hierarchy in comparison to themselves. Within this context, a dichotomy is constructed between their own behavior and that of others, based on perceived differences in levels of education, moral values, professional commitment, willingness to perform and contribute, and more. These differences are thought to reflect general disparities between Latin America and Germany, or more broadly, the Global South and the Global North.

Rushchenko's explanation for the prevalence of negative stereotypes about marriage migrants is that the influence of mass media is so potent that these stereotypes permeate individual representations and "eventually become the lens through which individuals view themselves" (Rushchenko 2016: 101). However, we have also observed that the participants (including one of the interviewers) use Western concepts of female emancipation as a means of distinguishing themselves from allegedly "backward" and non-emancipated marriage migrants. This mirrors discourses of distinction that circulate in German society regarding gender arrangements among migrants deemed "backward" (Rommelspacher 2007: 52; Al-Rebholz 2015). Simultaneously, it reflects what Patiño-Santos and Márquez Reiter (2019) refer to as "banal interculturalism":

> Banal interculturalism emerges within discursive semiotic processes that allow the participants to display their (cultural) knowledge about co-ethnics and their practices, to position themselves in opposition to the 'others' within diaspora, and to justify their, typically negative, views towards other migrants. Sources of that knowledge can be experiential, though in most cases consist of hearsay evidence.

Thus, the cases analyzed here emphasize the joint involvement of both "victims" and "perpetrators" of verbal violence, encompassing migrants and members of the receiving society, as well as various genders, in upholding colonial and patriarchal ideologies and practices through unexamined reliance on enregistered identities. All of this underscores the pervasive and deeply rooted nature of sexist, racist and classist ideologies and practices within global societies.

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