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## Latin America

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As the chapters in this book attest, scholars have studied the relationship between language and identity, not only from different disciplinary stances but also by varying theoretical frameworks. This chapter adopts a constructivist/post-modern framework to highlight the complex situational and contextual character of language and identity in Latin America. Clearly, the link between language practices and identity in Latin America has to be examined within its particular sociohistorical and political context.

We start this chapter by considering some of the complexities in examining Latin America's languages and identities: we then move on to describe how the present constructions came into being and are being narrated today. Latin America, however, is far from a homogenous and monolithic landscape of social, cultural, and linguistic practices. Because of its great complexity, we focus on the region of Latin America that was conquered by Spain, paying only scant attention to an important Latin American country—Brazil—and to other countries where languages other than Spanish predominate. Given this diversity of contexts and practices that characterizes Latin America, we offer two case studies—Guatemala and Mexico—that examine in depth the link between language and identity as it has been played out in the construction of language policy.

### Constructions of Latin America and Latin American Identities

Ethnolinguistic identity in Latin America is necessarily situated under the broader context of national identities and the complex interaction among the states and the numerous language practices that make up the region. Mignolo (2005: 2) asserts

