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CHAPTER 6

Racializing the Language Practices of U.S. Latinos

Impact on Their Education

Ofelia García

All human beings, regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity, use language to communicate. It is perhaps because of our familiarity with language that we often do not recognize its discursive power and how we use it to construct ideologies. This chapter examines how U.S. schools perpetuate educational inequities between U.S. Latinos and others by racializing¹ the ways in which they speak. Bonnie Urciuoli (1996:15) explains the concept of racialization as follows: "[W]hen people are talked about as a race, . . . the emphasis is on natural attributes that hierarchize them." The Spanish language and bilingualism have become markers of being nonwhite, of being "out of place," thus minoritizing the position of U.S. Latinos and excluding them. The objective of the present chapter is to reveal how this racialization has impacted the education of U.S. Latinos through history and continues to do so today.

This chapter reviews the negative characteristics that have been assigned to both U.S. Spanish and bilingualism in the United States, preventing them from being used as a negotiable resource. The insistence on assigning negative static characteristics to a language, instead of acknowledging its use in social negotiations with others, is one way in which many nation-states have constructed imagined² national, ethnic, and linguistic identities, while protecting the legitimacy

of the dominant group. This chapter uses the theoretical framework of linguistic ideology to link the characteristics assigned to U.S. Spanish and its speakers to broader sociopolitical goals of U.S. nationhood.³

DEBASING U.S. SPANISH AND BILINGUALISM: THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

The Beginnings: Spanish as the Language of the Conquered and the Colonized

The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War, ceded nearly half of the Mexican territory to the United States (what today is California, Arizona, Texas, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming). The language people spoke, Spanish, was slowly eradicated from the territory, especially in schools.⁴ California became a state in 1850 and five years later, in 1855, English was declared the only language of instruction in schools (Castellanos, 1983:18). In 1850, the territory of New Mexico (including present-day Arizona and New Mexico) was added to the Union. When thirteen years later Arizona and New Mexico were separated as territories, around 50 percent of the population of New Mexico spoke Spanish. New Mexico was not admitted to statehood until 1912, when more Anglos had moved in and the majority spoke English. The pressure to linguistically assimilate was carried out, in part, by repressing schooling in Spanish and replacing it with schools in English only. For example, in 1874, 70 percent of the schools taught in Spanish, 33 percent were bilingual, and only 5 percent were conducted in English only. Fifteen years later, in 1889, 42 percent of the schools were taught in English only, whereas only 30 percent of the schools were conducted in Spanish, and 28 percent remained bilingual (DeL Valle, 2003). By 1891 a New Mexico statute required all schools to teach in English only.

No longer just the language of the conquered, Spanish became the language of the colonized. When Puerto Rico was occupied as a result of the Spanish-Cuban-American War in 1898, an English-only rule was imposed in Puerto Rican schools. Eighteen years later, Spanish was allowed only during the first four years of school. This education policy was in effect for thirty-two years until 1948, when Spanish was reestablished as a medium of instruction in Puerto Rico, after the massive failure of English-language instruction of Puerto Ricans had been acknowledged (García, Morín, and Rivera, 2001).

This view of Spanish as the language of conquered Mexicans and colonized Puerto Ricans and its exclusion from education contrasts sharply with the tradition of teaching Spanish as a foreign language to Anglos in the United States (for more on this, see García, 1993 and 2003). The elite Spanish teaching tradition focusing on the reading of the literature of Spain started at Harvard University in 1813 with George Ticknor and was continued by such well-known American *literati* as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Washington Irving. Its aim was not bilingualism but merely literary understandings of the Hispanic heritage.

In 1917, the American Association of Teachers of Spanish (now the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, or AATSP) was established. As German was excluded from schools after World War I, Spanish started to be taught at the secondary level. Yet, the first AATSP president, Lawrence Wrlkins, prevented the inclusion of Spanish in the elementary school curriculum and the hiring of U.S. Latinos, whom he viewed as “foreign” teachers. Spanish was taught at the secondary level in the same way that it had been previously taught at the university—that is, with an emphasis on reading and without regard to the Spanish spoken in the American Southwest (García, 1993, 2003).

The first editor of the AATSP’s journal *Hispania*, Aurelio M. Espinosa, was of Hispanic descent yet he was opposed to the hiring of native speakers and the teaching of a Latin American variety of Spanish. In an article titled “Where Is the Best Spanish Spoken?” Espinosa wrote, “The best modern Spanish . . . is that spoken by the educated people of Old and New Castile” (Espinosa, 1923:244). In another article, he wrote, “American teachers must do in the future 99 percent of the teaching of Spanish” (Espinosa, 1921:281), thus again showing his aversion to hiring teachers of U.S. Hispanic background. The model of Spanish to be taught in U.S. high schools and universities had little to do with the Spanish of its citizens. Castilian Spanish became the preferred variety to be taught to Anglos, while the Spanish of the new U.S. territories was relegated to an inferior position and restricted in all educational enterprises.

The Mid-Twentieth Century: Enter the Immigrants

The Bracero Program was established in 1942 to bring short-term Mexican contract laborers to the United States for agricultural work. Mexican children continued to be placed in segregated schools that used English as the only language of instruction. Reports on the education of Mexican Americans noted that Spanish-surnamed children were three years behind their Anglophone counterparts (Castellanos, 1983). Many were placed in special-education classes meant for disabled students. And yet, Spanish continued to be excluded from U.S. classrooms.

With the help of the Ford Foundation, the first bilingual program after World War II was set up in 1963 in Dade County, Miami, at the Coral Way Elementary School. Spanish, alongside English, was then used to educate the children of Cuban refugees who were thought to be in the United States only temporarily. At the same time, other bilingual schools in the Southwest were developed in order to educate children who were failing in the nation’s schools—two in Texas and two in the San Antonio Independent School District in 1964, another in New Mexico and Texas in 1965, yet another in San Antonio, and two in Texas in 1966. Also in 1966, two bilingual schools were established in California and one in Arizona, followed by another in New Mexico in 1967 (Castellanos, 1983).⁵ The renaissance of bilingual education to educate U.S. Latinos was a result of the Civil Rights Era—and it started, as Diego Castellanos (1983) has remarked, without any federal involvement.

In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—the Bilingual Education Act. Sponsored by Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas, this act defined its goal as the quick acquisition of English and limited its participation to poor students. The situation was dire. In the Southwest, Chicano children had, on average, only a seventh-grade education. In Texas, the high school dropout rate for Chicanos was 89 percent. Less than a half percent of college students at the University of California campuses were Chicanos (Mackey and Beebe, 1977:6). In 1960, of all Puerto Ricans twenty-five years of age and older in the United States, 87 percent had dropped out without graduating from high school and the dropout rate in eighth grade was 53 percent (Castellanos, 1983). The use of U.S. Spanish in bilingual education was thus a tool to improve the education of children of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent. It would soon be otherwise.

In 1965, the Immigration and Naturalization Services Act of 1965 (also known as the Hart Cellar or the INS Act of 1965) abolished the national-origin quotas⁶ that had been established by the National Origins Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act). As a result, an unprecedented number of immigrants from Latin America (as well as Asia and other non-Western nations) entered the United States, where they joined Latinos of Mexican and Puerto Rican descent.

Table 6.1 shows the number of immigrants who entered the United States between 1910 and 2000, according to the U.S. Census.⁷ The number of immigrants from Latin America rose sharply after 1970, when they accounted for one-fifth of all immigrants in the United States; by 2000, they constituted more than one-half of the total (51.7 percent). According to the 2000 census, there were 16,916,416 foreign-born Latin Americans in the United States, and approximately 15 million of them spoke Spanish.

As a result of this marked increase in the number of Spanish-speaking immigrants, Spanish began to be characterized as the language of foreigners. By 1974, when Title VII was reauthorized, bilingual education was defined as “transitional,” meaning that Spanish could be used only temporarily and that students needed to be transitioned to English-only classes.

The words of Samuel Huntington (2004:30, 45) reflect the racialized portrayal of Latinos as foreign Spanish-speaking immigrants outside of U.S. society:

Table 6.1 Region of Birth of Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 1910–2000 (in Percentages)

	1910	1930	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Europe	87.4	83.0	75.0	61.7	39.0	22.9	15.8
Asia	1.4	1.9	5.1	8.9	19.3	26.3	26.4
Africa	—	0.1	0.4	0.9	1.5	1.9	2.8
Oceania	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5
Latin America	2.1	5.5	9.4	19.4	33.1	44.3	51.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division No. 29 and Summary File 3.

The persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves—from Los Angeles to Miami—and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant dream. . . . There is no *American* dream. There is only the American dream created by an Anglo-Protestant society. Mexican Americans will share in that dream and in that society only if they dream in English.

As Spanish started to be recognized as only the language of immigrants, its status as the language of original settlers and even as the language of those who had been conquered and colonized was minimized or erased.⁸ As a consequence, bilingual education—specifically the use of U.S. Spanish in educating Latinos—came under increasing attack.

By the 1980s, the English-only movement had gathered force. (For more on this, see Crawford, 2004.) In 1981, Senator Samuel Hayakawa introduced the first constitutional amendment to make English the official language of the United States. With Dr. John Tanton, Hayakawa founded the organization “U.S. English” in 1983. Tanton had also established the Federation for American Immigration Reform. U.S. English was thrown into disarray when an internal memo authored by Tanton was circulated in 1988. In the memo Tanton wrote about the “threats” of U.S. Latinos, which he said included their tradition of the *monrda* (bribery), their Catholicism, their “low educability,” and their high birthrates.

Into the Twenty-First Century: Erasing Bilingualism and Blaming Spanish for Poverty

In a recent tabulation of Latinos at mid-decade, the Pew Hispanic Center (2006) reported 41,926,302 Latinos in the United States—that is, one out of every seven residents.⁹ Of these, 26,784,268, or 64 percent, are of Mexican descent. Twenty-five million U.S. Latinos are native-born, whereas 17 million, or 40 percent, are foreign-born. But are all these Latinos speakers of Spanish?

The language shift among U.S. Latinos has been widely documented and continues at an unrelenting pace even today (e.g., Alba and Nee, 2003; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 16 percent of Latinos born in Latin America are already monolingual speakers of English. For the most part, third-generation Latinos speak English only, and the second generation shows a strong preference for English over Spanish. According to the 2000 census, 22 percent of U.S. Latinos over five years of age, numbering almost 7 million, are English monolinguals. The remaining 25 million also speak Spanish. But is Spanish *the* language of U.S. Latinos?

Although Spanish is a language of Latinos, it is not *the* language of Latinos. Indeed, Spanish-English bilingualism is the predominant form of communication among Latinos. The U.S. Census asks those who speak Spanish how well they speak English. As shown in Table 6.2, the 2000 census indicates that 70 percent of U.S. Latinos over the age of five are bilingual.¹⁰

Table 6.2 English Proficiency of U.S. Latino Spanish Speakers (Over Five Years of Age)

	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Speak English "very well"	11,874,405	48		
Speak English "well"	5,323,330	22		
<i>Bilingual</i>			17,197,735	70
Speak English "not well"	4,675,560	19		
Speak English "not at all"	2,762,920	11		
<i>Monolingual Spanish speaker</i>			4,675,560	30

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, Summary File 3 and Table PCT11.

Almost 13 percent of all U.S. schoolchildren speak Spanish at home, and Spanish represents almost 70 percent of all languages other than English spoken by U.S. students aged five to seventeen. In California and Texas, one in three children—and in Arizona and New Mexico, one in four children—speaks Spanish at home. In Florida and New York, one in six children speaks Spanish at home. And one in seven children speaks Spanish at home in Illinois and New Jersey. Ignoring the Spanish that these children speak at home robs educators of the ability to build on the children's strengths and use an important pedagogical tool—the language spoken at home. It also removes from immigrant Latino parents the possibility of helping their children with homework. And yet, Spanish is excluded from most U.S. classrooms.

Spanish is used in bilingual education only in cases where the children are "limited English proficient" (LEP) or "English language learners" (ELLs). This naming practice is evidence of racializing language ideologies, for it denies that in learning English these students are "emergent bilinguals" (see García, Kleifgen, and Falchi, 2007). It is also important to note that most U.S. Latino schoolchildren who speak Spanish at home are proficient in English. As shown in Table 6.3, 30 percent of all Latino schoolchildren are already English monolinguals or at least speak English only at home. The remaining 70 percent speak Spanish at home. Adopting a broad definition of bilingualism that includes all those who speak English "very well" and "well," we find that 85 percent of all the schoolchildren who speak Spanish at home are also bilingual.¹¹ And by including those who speak English only at home, we learn that 90 percent of all Latino schoolchildren are proficient in English, although the great majority of these are bilingual.

Although we have information about the English spoken by U.S. Latinos, we know little about their Spanish, for the U.S. Census never asks about the degree of proficiency with which that language is spoken, as it does for English. Spanish-English bilingualism is typically portrayed as a "problem" rather than as a resource. Bilingualism is thus never assessed and Spanish-language education policies and practices, even those relating to bilingual education, often work against the development of that bilingualism.

In fact, it is precisely through erasure of bilingualism's potential that Spanish is racialized and constructed as the language of poverty. For example,

Table 6.3 U.S. Latino Schoolchildren (Five to Seventeen Years Old): Home Languages and Number of English Proficient and Emergent Bilinguals

	Number	Percent
<i>Speak English only</i>	2,590,250	30
Speak Spanish	6,005,055	70
Speak English "very well"	3,699,841	62
Speak English "well"	1,410,526	23
<i>Bilinguals</i>	5,110,367	85
<i>English proficient</i>	7,700,617	90
Speak English "not well"	693,051	12
Speak English "not at all"	201,637	3
<i>Emergent Bilinguals</i>	894,688	15
<i>Non-English proficient</i>	894,688	10

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, Summary File 3 and Table PCT62H.

although Spanish-English bilingualism characterizes the language use of most U.S. Latinos, research on language and income for U.S. Latinos focuses primarily on English-language ability or on Spanish monolingualism, without considering the impact of their bilingualism. The National Commission for Employment Policy (NCEP) has sponsored economic research since 1980 on the relationship between English-language ability and income differentials for Latinos. All of the NCEP studies reiterate that a deficiency in English-language abilities is one of the primary roadblocks for Latinos in the labor market. The gap in income differentials between Spanish monolinguals and English-speaking Latinos, despite comparable levels of education and experience, was also the subject of a study by David Bloom and Gilles Grenier (1996), who found that compared to English speakers, Spanish monolingual Latinos suffered income penalties of 8–15 percent in the case of men and 6 percent in the case of women.

These disparities in income when comparing Spanish monolinguals with those who speak English, as if they were two opposing categories, promote the gradual construction of English as the language of economic opportunity and of Spanish as one of limited opportunity and poverty. But most important, this comparison makes Spanish-English bilingualism nonexistent as a category of analysis, thus excluding the possibility of its use as a resource, whether at the individual or societal level.

Altogether different findings have been generated by scholars who consider bilingualism a valid variable in the relationship between language and income. For example, in a 1995 study, Ofelia García found that English monolingualism had no effect whatsoever on income, especially for Cuban Americans in Miami-Dade County, where Spanish had negotiated for itself a role not just for communication but also for economic value (García, 1995). These findings were confirmed by Thomas Boswell, who claimed that, for both Florida and Miami-Dade County, "Hispanics who speak English very well and speak Spanish have higher incomes,

lower poverty rates, higher educational attainment, and better-paying jobs than Hispanics who only speak English. The differential in mean income is especially apparent" (2000:422). In Miami-Dade County, Spanish-English bilingualism has begun to emerge as a valuable economic resource.

April Linton (2003:24) has also documented a "positive relationship between upward mobility and bilingualism." The development of this positive relationship is explained by Alejandro Portes and Rubén Rumbaut's (1996, 2001) theory of "selective acculturation," which refers to the ability of people to adapt to the majority culture while holding on to elements of their origin. According to this model, when ethnic networks and strong communities (such as that of the Cuban American population in Miami-Dade County) support children in their efforts to deal with prejudice, navigate the education system, and find a place in the labor market for their ethnic language, bilingualism can bring equal, if not greater, benefits to them. Affirming the value of Spanish-English bilingualism, Douglas Massey (1995:648) has written: "Increasingly the economic benefits and prospects for mobility will accrue to those able to speak both languages and move in both worlds."

Conflating Language and Ethnicity and Blaming Spanish for Poverty and Educational Failure

Another way in which Spanish is constructed as the language of poverty is through the conflation of ethnicity and language (see del Valle, 2006). For example, in 2005 the median income of U.S. Latinos was \$36,000, compared to \$50,000 for white non-Latinos—and the implication, according to many, is that Spanish is to blame for this lower income (and that Latinos are nonwhites). But native-born U.S. Latinos, all of whom are presumably English speakers, also fare much worse than white non-Latinos. In fact, in 2005 the median income of native-born U.S. Latinos, all English speakers, was \$39,000, higher than that of foreign-born Latinos (\$34,000) but much lower than that of white non-Latinos (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006).

The Swiss economist François Grin (2003) has argued that when one language is promoted to prominent status, its native speakers will have social and economic advantages precisely because of their competence in the prestigious language. The racialization of Spanish and the erasure of Spanish-English bilingualism do indeed appear to have privileged white English monolinguals while excluding U.S. Latinos. Moreover, U.S. schools have played an important part in both that construction and that racialization process. U.S. education circles promote the idea that the problem with the education of U.S. Latinos is the large number of "limited English proficient" students, but as Table 6.3 shows, only 10 percent of U.S. Latino schoolchildren do not speak English or speak it less than well. In light of these data, one wonders about the plight of the other 90 percent who are English proficient—and, even more seriously, about that of the 2,590,250 U.S. Latino schoolchildren who are English monolinguals.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, only 64 percent of Latinos between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four have completed high school, compared to 92

percent of white non-Latinos and 84 percent of black non-Latinos in the same age group. While the dropout rate for sixteen- to twenty-four-year-olds who are out of school and do not have a high school or GED diploma is 7 percent for whites and 13 percent for black non-Latinos, the percentage for Latinos is greater than the combined total for their white and black peers—28 percent. But because it is nearly impossible to differentiate among U.S. Latinos who are English monolinguals, those who are bilinguals, and those who are Spanish monolinguals, Spanish is made the culprit even though other factors, primarily the racialization of language ideologies in the United States, are responsible for the inequities in the education of U.S. Latinos. (For more on "emergent bilinguals," see García, Kleifgen, and Falchi, 2007.)

Another example of how the conflation of Spanish language and Latino ethnicity hides other factors is the way in which the status dropout rate⁶ is estimated. The 2000 U.S. Census reported that the status dropout rate for Latinos sixteen to twenty-four years old was 28 percent, significantly higher than the 7 percent dropout rate for white non-Latinos and the 13 percent rate for black non-Latinos. Breaking down these figures further, and considering only Latinos born in the United States who are all English speakers, we still find that the status dropout rate is higher than that for both whites and blacks. Second-generation Latinos have a 15 percent dropout rate, compared to 16 percent for those in the third generation. Clearly something is happening here besides the Spanish language, since even those U.S. Latinos born in the United States who speak English are doing worse than white and black non-Latinos. The racialization of U.S. Latinos, and not the Spanish language itself, largely explains the educational inequities to which they are subjected.

Erasing Spanish and Bilingualism in Education Today

No longer viewed as the language of original settlers, or even of the conquered and colonized who might be entitled to language and civil rights, but characterized as the language of foreign immigrants, often undocumented, and blamed for the poverty and the low level of education of U.S. Latinos, Spanish is held in contempt in political and educational circles. The language Latinos speak is often characterized as *Spanglish*, a debased and mixed-contact variety (Stavans, 2003). The words of comic character Dame Edna in an advice column reflect this position: "Forget Spanish. There's nothing in that language worth reading except *Don Quixote*... There was a poet named García Lorca, but I'd leave him on the intellectual back burner if I were you. As for everyone's speaking it, what twaddle! Who speaks it that you are really desperate to talk to? The help? Your leaf blower?" (quoted in Stavans 2003:116).

Kept on the back burner by those who refuse to understand that Spanish is a global language (for more on Spanish as a global resource, see Mar-Molinero and Stewart, 2006), that it is a valuable resource and economic commodity for many in the United States (see Carreira, 2000; García, 2007; García and Mason, forthcoming; Villa, 2000), and that bilingualism, in our globalized world, is an asset not to be ignored, U.S. Latinos are robbed of the possibility of nurturing their bilingualism

and becoming educated Spanish speakers capable of competing in the global market. U.S. schools have been the battleground on which the struggle for control over language, and the resources it can accrue, has been settled. By establishing a clear linguistic hierarchy with English on top, Spanish at the bottom, and bilingualism as nonexistent, U.S. educational policy ensures that educational privilege continues to be in the hands of English monolinguals. The battle has been fierce.

Spearheaded by Ron Unz, a Silicon Valley software millionaire, Proposition 227 (California Education Code, Section 305–306)—introduced as “English for the Children”—was passed in California in 1998, eliminating bilingual education in that state. Massachusetts and Arizona have also declared bilingual education illegal. In 2001, Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (the Bilingual Education Act) was eliminated as part of the authorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The silencing of the word “bilingual” from U.S. discourse is readily noticeable. Figure 6.1 displays some of the wording changes that have been made to erase what James Crawford (2004) calls “the B-Word.”

The high-accountability measures of NCLB require mandatory, high-stakes tests in English for all children (Menken, 2008; Wiley and Wright, 2004). As Crawford (2004:332) has noted: “In the name of ‘accountability,’ [the law] created new carrots and sticks that may ultimately prove more powerful than Unz’ initiatives in pressuring schools to adopt all English instruction.”

The attacks on the use of Spanish in teaching at the elementary and secondary levels of bilingual education have been curiously correlated with a growing

Figure 6.1 Changes in Naming and Silencing of the Word “Bilingual”

Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA) →	Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement and Academic Achievement for LEP students (OELA)
National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) →	National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA)
Title VII of Elementary and Secondary Education Act: The Bilingual Education Act →	Title III of No Child Left Behind, Public Law 107-110: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students, 2001

attention to the teaching of Spanish to bilingual U.S. Latinos at the secondary and tertiary levels (e.g., Roca and Colombi, 2003; Valdés, 1997). And yet, as Guadalupe Valdés and his colleagues (2006) make clear, theories concerning the teaching of Spanish to U.S. bilinguals remain underdeveloped, while teaching programs themselves, especially at the secondary level, are almost nonexistent. For example, according to James Draper and June Hicks (2002), programs of Spanish for Spanish speakers in the United States had 141,212 students during the fall of 2000, making up only 1.9 percent of secondary school students enrolled in Spanish courses. This is a minuscule figure compared to the number of children five to seventeen years of age who claim to speak Spanish at home—5,970,217. The U.S. school system is clearly not developing the potential for bilingualism that the sheer number of Latino students should otherwise make possible.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how U.S. policy has racialized U.S. Latinos, specifically by assigning negative characteristics to their variety of Spanish and bilingualism. Even more important, it has described how education—even when Spanish is used in teaching—has been instrumental in that racialization, inasmuch as it perpetuates the stereotype that the language practices of Latinos reflect their supposed intellectual deficits and inferiority as a people and race.

From its earliest contacts with the conquered inhabitants of the Southwest to its dealings with the colonized people of Puerto Rico, the U.S. government has maintained a policy of eradicating Spanish by encouraging a shift to English. It has done so by adopting a policy of debasing and racializing Spanish, linking it to subjugated populations: immigration, poverty, and lack of education. One result has been schools’ infrequent use of U.S. Spanish to educate meaningfully those who speak it. Only in the period immediately after the Civil Rights Era was Spanish used to educate equitably. But this period was short-lived. And in the twenty-first century, as the number of U.S. Latinos grows and as Spanish attains for itself a competitive global position both in the United States and throughout the world, the battle over U.S. Spanish is being waged ever more fiercely. Bilingual education has suffered great losses, except when it is two-way and includes English-speaking children, and when its activities are concealed behind another label—“dual language.” Classes of Spanish for native speakers have also not reached their potential.

The racialization of Latino ways of using language and the resulting inequities in their education have taken place, many times, with the consent of the U.S. Latino population. Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus* as “a system of dispositions common to all products of the same conditionings” (1991:59) is important in understanding how U.S. Latinos themselves have acquired, as a result of socialization in U.S. schools, ways of viewing and accepting English monolingualism as if it were second nature. Many Latino schoolchildren have been led to believe that they deserve the unequal treatment they encounter in U.S. schools—poorer teachers, narrow pedagogical approaches, crumbling school buildings—because

invalid high-stakes tests tell them that they are inferior, and that they do not meet academic proficiency levels. (For more on the inequities surrounding high-stakes tests for U.S. Latinos, see García, Kleifgen, and Falchi, 2007.) The racialization of the language practices of U.S. Latinos has been most successful, convincing many that only standard English monolingualism is normal and that Latino language practices are a mark of intellectual and racial inferiority, and thus a reason for exclusion from educational and social opportunities.

NOTES

1. The "racialization" of language practices refers to assigning negative characteristics to ways of using language, and transferring those characteristics to those who speak in these ways. Tove Skutnab-Kangas (2000) has referred to this process as "linguicism." See also Urciuoli (1996).
2. For discussion of the concept of the "imagined," see Anderson (1991).
3. The assigning of negative characteristics to minority languages is always ideological and enmeshed in social systems that reproduce inequities (see Gal, 1989; Irvine and Gal, 2000; Woolard and Schifflin, 1994).
4. See also García, 2008. As a reminder, note that Spanish came into the territories of Latin America as a language of conquest.
5. A list of these schools appears in Castellanos (1983:73).
6. As early as 1890, 2 percent of the total number of nationals were already in the United States.
7. Census data are based on self-report and may not be reliable. Undercounting of the undocumented also occurs.
8. Erasure is one of three semiotic processes of linguistic ideology (Irvine and Gal 2000:36).
9. Background information on this section can be found in García and Mason (forthcoming).
10. This analysis considers those who self-report as "speaking English very well or well" to be bilingual. The federal government, and specifically NCLB, calculates the number of "limited English proficient" students as all who speak English less than very well. I remind the reader that this information is based on self-evaluation.
11. See note 10 for explanation.
12. The status dropout rate refers to those who are out of school and have not earned a high school diploma or GED.

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