Learning ethnolinguistic borders: language and diaspora in the socialization of U.S. Latinas/os

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AmeRícan, defining myself my own way any way many ways, Am e Rícan, with the big R and the accent on the í!

…

AmeRícan, speaking new words in spanglish tenements, fast tongue moving street corner "que corta" talk being invented at the insistence of a smile!

(Tato Laviera, from "AmeRícan")

The rapid rise of the U.S. Latina/o population, now the nation's largest demographic minority group, has heightened concerns about the future of American identity and brought increased attention to the management of ethnolinguistic diversity. As institutions charged with the interrelated tasks of facilitating language socialization and reproducing the nation's identity, schools become central sites in which to track processes of ethnolinguistic identity formation. The educational experiences of U.S. Latinas/os, whose identities are constructed in close relation to ideas about linguistic practices (Zentella, 2009), involve learning the ways that minute features of language are positioned as powerful emblems of national affiliation.

This chapter explores the school-based creation of Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities by drawing on the theoretical lens of *language ideologies*. Defined broadly, language ideologies are "models that link types of linguistic forms with the types of people who stereotypically use them" (Wortham, 2008, p. 43). Latina/o students are often faced with language ideologies that

stigmatize their English *and* Spanish linguistic practices, and promote their assimilation to English monolingualism. This stigmatization positions Latinas/os on the margins of the U.S., regardless of whether they are born and raised within its borders. Thus, language, education, and U.S. Latinas/os become linked as part of an ideological bundle that is articulated in generic models of assimilation. These models define assimilation as a binary process through which (im)migrants and their descendents come to identify as "American" by dis-identifying with some previous national identity. "Americanness" is generally equated with a presumed English-speaking U.S. monoculture, and institutions of public education are understood as primary settings in which assimilation to "Americanness" takes place. Furthermore, assimilation is frequently conceptualized as an individual choice that reflects one's desire to be or not to be American, and language use becomes framed as a clear-cut cultural practice by which to gauge the success of any assimilationist project. Without ever explicitly stating it, these models of assimilation are ultimately anchored in anxieties about a distinct, but related process: *diasporization*.

In this chapter, I reconsider the process of assimilation by locating its directionality vis-à-vis diasporization. I analyze how language ideologies and linguistic practices mediate the creation of diasporic Latina/o identities in New Northwest High School (henceforth NNHS), a highly segregated Chicago public high school whose student body is more than 90% Puerto Rican and Mexican. In this setting, boundaries of Puerto Rican and Mexican difference are alternately emphasized and erased as students engage with ethnolinguistic emblems to negotiate modes of diasporic identification. I show how students' language ideologies and practices unsettle taken-for-granted notions about the nature of ethnolinguistic identities. I argue that the Spanish language is far from a ready-made vehicle for the production of Latina/o diasporic unity *and* that the English language is far from a straightforward symbol of assimilation to Americanness. As one example of the ways that NNHS students reconfigure the symbolic value of English and Spanish forms, I point to a set of linguistic practices that I call *Inverted Spanglish*. By denaturalizing "Spanish" and "English" as distinct and monolithic linguistic categories, we can come to see the ways that specific English and Spanish forms become linked to the creation of diasporic Latina/o identities. This analysis of the negotiation of ethnolinguistic borders demonstrates how the concept of diasporization provides a productive tool for rethinking assimilation.

Language ideologies, assimilation, and diasporization

As powerful institutions of language standardization and socialization, schools are key contexts in which to analyze the ways that language ideologies

participate in the creation of Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities. Developed by linguistic anthropologists (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998; Silverstein, 1979), the language ideologies framework has frequently been employed and innovated by linguistic anthropologists of education (Wortham & Rymes, 2003). This is because "schools are important sites for establishing associations between 'educated' and 'uneducated,' 'sophisticated' and 'unsophisticated,' 'official' and 'vernacular' language use and types of students" (Wortham, 2008, p. 43).

The language ideologies framework has also been effectively incorporated into language socialization research (Garrett & Baquedano-López, 2002; González, 2005). Language ideologies allow us to understand the hegemony of the English language in the U.S., the educational manifestation of which involves language policies that promote socialization to English monolingualism (García & Torres-Guevara, 2010). This hegemony stems from long-standing ideologies of "one nation–one language," which are tied to the emergence of modern nation-states. By reframing these perspectives as *language ideologies*, we can come to see how the construction of monolingualism as a national norm simultaneously obscures the widespread empirical reality of multilingualism throughout the world, *and* serves to secure positions of power for particular sectors of a given society by requiring the assimilation of ethnolinguistic diversity. Language ideologies also make it possible to identify the profound erasures through which Latina/o students' bilingual linguistic practices are understood as problems to be overcome rather than resources to be developed. Silences around the limitations of normative English monolingualism frame language as a liability for students whose linguistic repertoires could be viewed as more expansive than those of many of the educators, administrators, and policy makers who serve them. The lack of irony in this situation is informed by language ideologies that play a central role in reproducing forms of stigmatization and marginalization that coincide with efforts to assimilate U.S. Latinas/os.

Theories of assimilation can be critically refined when viewed through the lenses of language ideologies and linguistic practices. In his analysis of language and identity among second-generation U.S. Dominican high school students, Bailey (2007) suggests that linguistic practices reveal the shortcomings of both "straight-line" and "segmented" theories of assimilation.[1] Briefly, straight-line theory suggests that assimilation to Americanness and upward socioeconomic mobility occur naturally over time. Segmented theory suggests three possible trajectories: (1) upward socioeconomic mobility and assimilation to Americanness; (2) socioeconomic marginalization similar to other U.S. minority groups; and (3) maintenance of cultural values and

some socioeconomic stability within a strong immigrant community. For Bailey, both straight-line and segmented theories "rely on relatively monolithic, idealized identities as reference points for immigrant acculturation" (2007, p. 178). Zentella (2005) argues that this essentializing tendency is a characteristic "pitfall" associated with research on language and identity development. In contrast, Bailey shows how the students in his study engage in linguistic code-switching between English and Spanish, and how they draw on ideologies of language, race, and ethnicity to identify themselves and others in differing ways depending on the context. Bailey provides multiple examples of individuals who alternately identify as "Dominican," "Spanish," "Hispanic," "American," "Black," and "White," among other categories. These shifting identifications reveal the inability of straight-line and segmented theories to capture the nonlinear trajectories of assimilation that are characteristic of (im)migrant experiences.

In popular and scholarly discourse, English language usage is consistently equated with assimilation to Americanness. Despite the fact that Latinas/os "are undergoing [Spanish] language loss similar to, and even exceeding, that of other groups in U.S. history" (Zentella, 2009, pp. 331–332), their purported unwillingness to learn English is often cited as evidence of their "failure" to assimilate (Huntington, 2004). These perspectives depend on the rigid distinction between national identities (i.e., American and non-American), as well as the rigid distinction between linguistic identities (i.e., English-speaker and Spanish-speaker). The language ideologies that inform these views problematically erase widespread bilingualism (i.e., the millions of people in the United States for whom "English-speaker" and "Spanish-speaker" are not mutually exclusive), flatten out infinite linguistic heterogeneity by constructing English and Spanish as monolithic categories, and equate English with Americanness and Spanish with non-Americanness.

Bailey complicates this relationship between language and assimilation by suggesting that an "urban, non-White language style can even serve as a unifying language for Hispanics who speak identical, urban forms of English, but who speak different regional varieties of Spanish, e.g., Guatemalan, Colombian, or Dominican Spanish, based on their families' origins" (Bailey, 2002, p. 12). While Bailey's otherwise deft treatment of code-switching is absent in this formulation, he rightfully points out the possibility for English language practices to mediate shared identification among U.S. Latinas/os across national subgroups. The Spanish language does not play a strictly unifying role for U.S. Latinas/os, because differences among varieties of Spanish (e.g., Mexican Spanish, Puerto Rican Spanish, etc.) are often the clearest ways to distinguish between Latina/o national subgroups. In contrast to prevailing

language ideologies, particular kinds of U.S.-based English language use can be constructed as non-American at the same time that particular kinds of U.S.-based Spanish language use can be constructed as American. Thus, Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities take shape as distinctly U.S.-based phenomena *and* as diasporic categories that potentially redefine "Americanness" by linking the U.S. to Latin America in newfound ways.

Approaches to understanding national identities in theories of assimilation often involve the implicit invocation of ideas about diasporization. If assimilation encompasses forms of immigrant acculturation, then diasporization directs attention to the creation and maintenance of linkages (e.g., cultural, ideological, political, economic, etc.) across national divides (Lukose, 2007). While diaspora and diasporization make it possible to consider the multidimensional nature of ethnoracial identities, there is the potential for these concepts to be just as rigid as theories of assimilation. Building from the insights of Appadurai (1996) and Hall (1990), Flores (2009) explains that "[i]n much thinking about diaspora, undue emphasis tends to be placed…either on continuity and tradition or on change and disjuncture" (2009, p. 17). In order to avoid these tendencies, Flores suggests "thinking diaspora from below":

> The grassroots, vernacular, "from below" approach helps to point up the many diaspora experiences that diverge from those of the relatively privileged, entrepreneurial or professional transnational connections that have tended to carry the greatest appeal in scholarly and journalistic coverage. That approach, guided by a concern for subaltern and everyday life struggles of poor and disenfranchised people, also allows for special insights into ongoing issues of racial identity and gender inequalities that are so often ignored or minimized in the grand narratives of transnational hegemony. (2009, p. 25)

The analysis of language ideologies and linguistic practices among urban Latina/o youth serves as a prime opportunity for "thinking diaspora from below." By not taking for granted the existence and/or nature of ethnolinguistic categories such as "Puerto Rican," "Mexican," and "Latina/o," it becomes possible to track the dynamic processes through which diasporic identities are constructed, enacted, and transformed.

New northwest high school and Latina/o Chicago

NNHS was opened in 2004 to offset overcrowding at a nearby Chicago public high school. As an open-enrollment, "neighborhood" high school, NNHS draws its students from several communities in close proximity to it. Based on the highly segregated demographics of these communities, more than 90% of NNHS's roughly 1,000 students are Latina/o.[2] The majority of these

students are Puerto Rican and Mexican. These demographics led me to select NNHS as a field site in which to analyze the relationship between language, race, and ethnicity among Puerto Ricans and Mexicans in Chicago. In preliminary fieldwork that I conducted in schools and communities throughout Chicago, I was struck by the frequency of discourses surrounding the relationships between Puerto Ricans and Mexicans. Based on these discourses, it became clear that Chicago is an important context in which to investigate the everyday construction of Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities.

Chicago is the only U.S. city in which Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, the two largest U.S. Latina/o national subgroups (Bureau of the Census, 2011),[3] have been building their lives alongside one another in large numbers since the mid-20th century. Chicago contains the fourth largest Mexican population of any U.S. city,[4] the fourth largest mainland U.S. Puerto Rican population,[5] and the fifth largest U.S. Latina/o population (Bureau of the Census, 2011).[6] NNHS students make sense of Puerto Ricanness and Mexicanness in relation to long-standing histories of face-to-face, frequently intimate interactions across generations that render their differences all the more tangible and, oftentimes, negligible. They are classmates, boyfriends, girlfriends, teammates, neighbors, and family members. There are many students with one Puerto Rican and one Mexican parent, a situation that has led to the creation of "MexiRican" and "PortoMex" as identifiable categories (Potowski & Matts, 2008; Rúa, 2001).[7] One such student, Victor (Mex[mother], PR-[father], Gen. 3, Gr. 11),[8] said that he identifies primarily as Latino because he does not "want to leave anyone out." Rivera-Servera (2012) characterizes these dynamic intra-Latina/o relationships as forms of "frictive intimacy."

I conducted ethnographic and sociolinguistic fieldwork in NNHS and its surrounding communities between 2007 and 2010. This fieldwork consisted of observations and interviews with students in grades 9–12, school employees (including administrators, teachers, and support staff), and community members. During school hours, I worked as a tutor in multiple classrooms. Outside of school, I tutored students in their homes, helped them to complete school projects and apply for jobs, accompanied them to restaurants and barbershops, communicated with them over the phone and via cellular text messages, and brought them to the college classes that I was teaching. I attended various extracurricular events such as soccer games, pep rallies, local school council[9] meetings (I was elected to the local school council as a community representative), and the prom. I also participated in local community organizing efforts at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, which is located nearby NNHS.

Throughout the fieldwork period, I lived four blocks away from the school. This allowed me to walk to and from the school with students each

day, and to accompany them to local restaurants and stores. These interactions with students outside of school played a crucial role in helping me to understand what was going on inside NNHS. I was able to notice the Mexican and Puerto Rican flags juxtaposed in storefronts, apartment windows, and cars; I also encountered the Mexican and Puerto Rican food items stacked side by side on the shelves at the Walgreens and Cermak Produce stores near the school. These experiences clearly demonstrated that Puerto Rican–Mexican displays and interactions are conventional components of everyday life on the Near Northwest side of Chicago.

While my study focused on 1.5-, second-, and third-generation Puerto Ricans and Mexicans with native or near-native English language skills, I used different varieties (e.g., Puerto Rican and Mexican) and registers (e.g., standard and nonstandard) of English *and* Spanish to navigate a bilingual cultural context in which students and school employees make use of expansive linguistic repertoires consisting of a range of English and Spanish language proficiencies. My Spanish language skills also allowed me to interact with first-generation students classified as English language learners. Students regularly informed me that my Spanish language practices, physical features, and personal style allowed them to rightly identify me as Puerto Rican. As a result, I alternately occupied insider and outsider roles while conducting this fieldwork. The remainder of this chapter explores the politics and practices of ethnolinguistic recognition (Silverstein, 2003).

Findings: language ideologies and competing constructions of Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities

Puerto Rican and Mexican students' language use within NNHS involves socialization to at least three ethnolinguistic categories: "Puerto Rican," "Mexican," and "Latina/o." These ethnolinguistic categories redefine English and Spanish language practices by anchoring them in relation to processes of diasporization. As a public school in a national context in which English language hegemony prevails and monolingualism is framed as the norm, NNHS is charged with the job of teaching students what comes to be viewed as the language that "ideally express[es] the spirit of a nation and the territory it occupies" (Gal, 2006, p. 163). National, state, and municipal educational language policies, as well as various English-only movements, reflect language ideologies that frame the U.S. as a nation in which English is and should be the dominant language (Crawford, 2007; Santa Ana, 2004; Woolard, 1989). Latina/o NNHS students are faced with English-language hegemony that ultimately stigmatizes their English *and* Spanish language practices. These

stigmatizations involve "cultures of standard" (Silverstein, 1996) within the school that include students' and school employees' language ideologies about the value associated with varieties of English and Spanish.

While New Northwest High School's Puerto Rican and Mexican students possess varying levels of proficiency in Spanish and English, Spanish is stereotyped as the primordial Latina/o tongue. This is because one of the primary ways Latinas/os come to be imagined as a coherent ethnolinguistic group is through what linguistic anthropologists describe as a Herderian language ideology of one language–one people (Bauman & Briggs, 2003; Irvine, 2006). However, many analysts have noted that the Spanish language, if even spoken at all, oftentimes provides grounds for the recognition of intra-Latina/o difference, not similarity (De Genova & Ramos-Zayas, 2003; Ghosh Johnson, 2005; Mendoza-Denton, 2008; Zentella, 2007). Spanish is by no means an unequivocal unifying force for Latinas/os because many Latinas/os possess limited Spanish language proficiency, some Latinas/os who are native and/or proficient Spanish speakers prefer not to speak Spanish due to its stigmatization in the U.S., and varieties of Spanish are frequently the most ready-made signs of intra-Latina/o difference. Importantly, this means that neither Spanish *nor* English is a ready-made vehicle for the construction of Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities. In the sections that follow, I provide evidence for this point by analyzing: (1) non-Latina/o perspectives on Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities within NNHS; (2) Latina/o constructions of "Spanish" within NNHS; (3) Latina/o constructions of "English" within NNHS; and (4) Latina/o constructions of "Spanglish" within NNHS.

Out-group perspectives on Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities

Many non-Latina/o students and employees were unfamiliar with intra-Latina/o distinctions prior to their exposure to NNHS. From these perspectives, Puerto Rican–Mexican difference is often misinterpreted as strife, or erased altogether. Ms. Ginsberg, a popular young White teacher, said she thinks that the distinction between the NNHS's Puerto Rican and Mexican students is one of the most striking things about the school. Ms. Jackson, the school's well-liked librarian and one of the few African American employees, explained that she never would have thought that there is a "big difference" between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans before she started working at NNHS. Sierra, an African American student who graduated from NNHS in 2008 and came back to volunteer in the library with Ms. Jackson, alternated between grouping Puerto Rican and Mexican students together as "Hispanic," and drawing clear lines of distinction between them:

> The best part about this school would be the population because it's a Hispanic school and they're really funny, but it's also lonely because I was the only Black person in a lot of my classes. I felt like sometimes they was being bogus because they would sit in their own little groups and be talking Spanish and don't nobody know what they're talking about…but the main groups of students in this school is the Mexicans and the Puerto Ricans. That's one big divide. Like I used to mistakenly call a Mexican a Puerto Rican and they would get mad like I'm supposed to know the difference. I thought they was just all Hispanic, but they got on me the whole time I was going here about mistaking the two. And they all look the same to me! That's just like an Asian person coming up to you and you call them Chinese, and they Vietnamese and they get mad, like how am I supposed to know what's the difference between ya'll? Ya'll all look alike, but they, they be tripping [getting mad for no reason]…ya'll all do look alike, I'm sorry. I don't know the difference between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, other than what they told me.

Sierra enjoyed attending a "Hispanic"[10] school because Hispanics—as a group—are "really funny." She also felt alienated at times because she was often the only African American student in her classes. For Sierra, attending NNHS involved learning the distinctions between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, which she described as a "big divide." In Sierra's view, "Hispanic" is a racialized panethnic category that is similar to "Asian." From her perspective, the difference between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans is analogous to that between Chinese and Vietnamese people; essentially, Hispanics, like Asians, all look alike. Still, Sierra learned that for Mexican and Puerto Rican students, it is crucial to be able to recognize their differences. Importantly, Sierra comfortably alternates between using the umbrella category "Hispanic" and emphasizing differences between Latina/o national subgroups.

Despite her nuanced perspective, Sierra takes "Spanish" for granted as a unifying characteristic among Latinas/os. Puerto Rican and Mexican students alike shared humorous stories about African American students and White teachers who think that everything "Hispanics" do is "just Spanish." These ideas about "Spanishness" became a point of contention at NNHS's 2009 prom. On prom night, there were two problems concerning the music. The first was that Dr. Baez, the school principal, did not appreciate the sexually suggestive manner in which students were dancing with one another to the hip-hop and juke[11] songs. Dr. Baez marched up to the DJ, reminded him that she was writing his check, and told him that if he wanted to get paid at the end of the night he better respond to her requests before those of the students.

The DJ promptly switched genres and began playing merengüe, salsa, bachata, reggaeton, cumbia, and durangüense. This led to the second problem. Tasha, an African American senior who was one of three girls in the

running for prom queen, became visibly upset by the abrupt musical transition. She complained to the DJ and then sat down at a table near the dance floor with a small group of African American students. Tasha pointed out that "they" (i.e., the Latina/o students) were dancing just as suggestively to the "Spanish music" as everyone had been dancing to the hip-hop and juke music. As the DJ shifted between genres, however, Puerto Rican and Mexican students went back and forth between their tables and the dance floor after almost every song. From Tasha's perspective, cumbia, reggaeton, salsa, merengüe, bachata, and durangüense are all part of a single genre: "Spanish music." Meanwhile, Mexican students complained that the DJ was playing too much salsa and Puerto Rican students complained that he was playing too much cumbia.[12]

Tasha's out-group perspective, which channels broader cultural presumptions about Latina/o homogeneity, rests on intuitions about a cultural quality of "Spanishness" that is associated with music, food, and, most importantly, language. For Tasha, these genres of music can be lumped together as "Spanish." Tasha views the Spanish language as a homogeneous organizing concept. NNHS's Latina/o students do not view "Spanishness" is this way. From their perspectives, there are distinct varieties of "Spanish" music (e.g., cumbia, reggaeton, etc.) and linguistic practices (e.g. "Mexican," "Puerto Rican," etc.). Despite in-group recognitions of intra-Spanish heterogeneity, the concept of "Spanishness" is in many ways the most powerful emblem of Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities. This highlights the central role that language ideologies play in processes of Latina/o diasporization.

Constructing and differentiating "Spanish"

Contrary to their non-Latina/o counterparts, the "Spanish" language is not simply a unified concept for Latina/o NNHS students. Latina/o students invest great energy in distinguishing between varieties of Spanish. For example, David (PR, Gen. 3, Gr. 12) stated that Puerto Rican Spanish sounds "cool, like salsa [music]," whereas Mexican Spanish sounds "lame, like banda [music]."[13] Similarly, Victor (Mex[mother]/PR[father], Gen. 3, Gr. 11), the "MexiRican" student described above, claimed that Puerto Rican Spanish is better than Mexican Spanish because Puerto Rican Spanish is "what's up" (i.e., cool), but Mexican Spanish is more correct. When I prompted him to provide examples of Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish, he told me that whereas Mexicans would say *"¿Cómo ustedes están?"* (How are you all doing?),[14] Puerto Ricans would say, *"¿Cómo uhtede ehtán?"* (How are you all doing?).[15] In fact, Victor's placement of the pronoun *ustedes* before the verb *están* characterizes both examples

as Puerto Rican Spanish usages. Moreover, the /s/ aspiration/deletion that Victor seeks to highlight in his Puerto Rican impression is also somewhat present in his Mexican impression. He went on to explain:

> Hands on down, man, Puerto Ricans got that shit in the bag.… They can knock out any Spanish thing, bro…like all these other languages, they ain't got nothing on Puerto Ricans. It sounds way better…because like the way it flows.… Like you be hearing some reggaeton music and you hear the way they got flow? Like that.

Victor associates Puerto Rican Spanish with reggaeton, a genre of music with Spanish-language lyrics, Latin American/Caribbean/hip-hop roots, and predominantly Puerto Rican artists. His claims about Puerto Rican Spanish's "flow," a common term used to characterize one's lyrical prowess in hip-hop music (Alim, 2006) are tied to the increasing popularity of reggaeton among U.S. Latinas/os during the first decade of the 21st century (Rivera et al., 2009).[16]

In contrast, Mayra (Mex, Gen. 1.5, Gr. 11), who was born in Mexico City and came to the U.S. with her parents and younger brother at the age of 8, said that one of the main differences between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans is "the language." She provided examples such as the Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish words for "sidewalk," *banqueta* and *concreto*, respectively.[17] She said that she used to think that the best Spanish is spoken in Spain, but that changed when she heard that the best Spanish is actually spoken in Mexico. She also explained that she definitely would not go to Puerto Rico to hear good Spanish because Puerto Ricans "don't say the words right…they miss some words…like sometimes they lose the 'r,' sometimes they lose the 's,' and it's really weird…and with Mexicans…they know how to talk!" Mayra explicitly articulates the stereotype that Puerto Rican Spanish is nonstandard, especially as compared to Mexican Spanish.

Students continually evaluated one another's speech, tracking the circulation of linguistic forms associated with Puerto Ricanness and Mexicanness. Yesi (PR, Gen. 1.5, Gr. 12) was told by her Puerto Rican friends that her Spanish is slow and that she has a Mexican accent. They questioned whether Yesi, a Puerto Rican, was trying to sound "smart" in Spanish. These students invoked the idea that Mexican Spanish is more proper. Carlos (Mex, Gen. 2, Gr. 9), a self-described bilingual student, explained to me that every Latina/o national subgroup has its own variety of Spanish. He pointed to my stereotypical Puerto Rican pronunciation of /r/ as /l/ in the word *verdad* (really) as an example of how Puerto Rican and Mexican Spanish differ. Carlos went on to say that Mexican Spanish is probably a little bit better than Puerto Rican Spanish because it is more correct. He based this claim about "correctness"

on the predominant use of Mexican Spanish in NNHS's Spanish language classes and in Spanish-language television and radio programming. He told me that he mostly listens to Spanish-language Mexican music, such as cumbia and durangüense, but also some reggaeto*n*. On the other hand, he joked with me about the fact that he had only recently learned from friends in NNHS that words such as *chévere* (cool/awesome) and *bochinche* (gossip) are in fact Puerto Rican, *not* Mexican Spanish terms.[18] Thus, Mexican students draw on linguistic forms that are understood to be Puerto Rican and vice versa.

In these examples, students recognize Mexican Spanish as correct (yet "lame") and Puerto Rican Spanish as "cool" (yet incorrect); note that these stereotypes are mirror images of views associated with Standard American English (which is racialized as "White" and seen as uncool, yet correct) and African American English (which is racialized as "Black" and seen as cool, yet incorrect). This mirroring is also evident in the stereotype that Puerto Ricans can effectively produce Puerto Rican *and* Mexican Spanish forms, whereas Mexicans are understood to be incapable of producing Puerto Rican forms; this is similar to the notion that African Americans often switch between African American English and Standard American English, as opposed to Whites who are understood to be incapable of effectively producing African American English forms. These familiar stereotypes structure debates between Puerto Ricans and Mexicans (and members of other Latina/o subgroups) about what practices and characteristics—linguistic and otherwise—constitute an ideal U.S.-based diasporic Latina/o identity. In these debates, it becomes clear that "Spanish" is anything but a singular concept that unifies a Latina/o diaspora in straightforward ways, and that distinctions between varieties of Spanish are continually renegotiated.

Constructing and differentiating "English"

At the same time that Spanish plays a central ideological role in constructing Latina/o ethnolinguistic identities, English language hegemony in the U.S. relies heavily on schools as flagship institutions for language standardization. This positions English both as a public educational norm and as the surest linguistic vehicle for the acquisition of administratively valued cultural capital. While NNHS students and employees speak different varieties of Spanish and English, Standard English is the normative language variety for official business. Most school-wide announcements are made in English, and all staff meetings are conducted in English. Meanwhile, the Spanish-dominant NNHS employees occupy subordinate hierarchical positions as security guards, custodians, and lunchroom workers. In this sense, the Spanish language is the object of indirect stigmatization.

Students clearly receive and report these ideas about English language hegemony. When I asked David (PR, Gen. 3, Gr. 12) whether he has an accent, he responded, "No!…I think I might though." He explained that while playing an Internet-based video game that allows players to hear one another's voices through a microphone, one of his virtual opponents told him to "[S]hut the fuck up, you Mexican!" David went on to describe the confusion that this attack prompted: "Whoa! He came real hard at me. Why you say I'm Mexican? I was just talking English and they come and say I'm Mexican out of nowhere…so yeah, I think I might [have an accent], but I don't know." To be clear, David neither wants to possess an accent nor does he want to be misidentified as Mexican. From his perspective, it does not make sense that one could "sound Mexican" in English; Mexicanness sounds like Spanish.

David's ideas about Spanish and English reflect not only monolingual ideologies that associate "one people" with "one language," but also "monoglot" (Silverstein, 1996) ideologies that erase the infinite heterogeneity within a given language and position a particular variety as the only acceptable norm. David was surprised to learn that he might possess an accent because he understood himself to be speaking unmarked English. Importantly, his ideas demonstrate how monoglot ideologies simultaneously figurate more than one language. The idea that he might "sound like a Mexican" led David to emphasize that he "was just talking English," thus positioning Mexicanness outside of the English language. In this case, monoglot ideologies position Mexican Spanish as "the" Spanish.

However, Mayra (Mex, Gen. 1.5, Gr. 11), who began learning English when she arrived in the U.S. at the age of 8, described feeling self-conscious about having a "Mexican" accent when speaking English. This notion of accent was a common concern among NNHS students. The "accented" English of Mr. Burgos, a popular Dominican math teacher, was a regular topic of discussion and a model for parodic performances. At times students attempted to mimic him directly, like when he told them, "you need your book," pronouncing the /y/ in "you" and "your" similar to the beginning of the English words "June" and "Journal," respectively. In other cases, they repeated his speech with exaggerated Spanish pronunciations. For example, when Mr. Burgos told them that they must use the order of operations and work from "left to right always" to solve arithmetic problems, students impersonated him by trilling the /r/ in the word "right" even though he uttered the word using its conventional English pronunciation.

Not surprisingly, this policing of "accented" English creates a divide between NNHS students designated as English language learners and "mainstream" students. While English-dominant students could learn a lot from

English language learners and vice versa, few students move across this divide. In order to do so, English language learners would have to risk bringing attention to their "accented" English (thereby becoming potential fodder for mockery) and English-dominant students would have to risk bringing attention to their limited Spanish proficiency (thereby calling into question their ethnolinguistic authenticity). However, in the context of English language hegemony, English language learners are ultimately at a great disadvantage in these negotiations.

"Unaccented" English is celebrated at the same time that it stigmatizes *all* Latinas/os. David and Mayra, the students described above, have very different experiences learning the English language. Whereas David was born in Chicago and identifies as English-dominant, Mayra was born in Mexico and identifies as Spanish-dominant. Yet, they both face questions about their "accented" English because in the U.S. they are similarly racialized as "Latina/o." Ideas about race inform perceptions of accents; this corroborates the notion that "race has been remapped from biology onto language" (Zentella, 2007, p. 26; see also Urciuoli, 1998, 2001). As opposed to unifying Latinas/os, the English language is differentiated based on shifting, racialized assessments of "accent."

Rethinking Spanglish

The various students discussed throughout this chapter are similar in that they value the ability to speak "unaccented" English at the same time that they are invested in the significance of Mexican and Puerto Rican varieties of Spanish. These sociolinguistic commitments present Puerto Rican and Mexican students with a paradoxical task: They must signal their Latina/o identities by always sounding like they could speak Spanish *in* English, while carefully preventing too much Spanish from seeping into their English. In order to manage these competing attachments, students draw on voicing practices that simultaneously signal their intimate knowledge of Spanish and their ability to speak "unaccented" English. Frequently, this involves the incorporation of Spanish words and phrases into English discourse. When I asked Victor (Mex-[mother]/PR[father], Gen. 3, Gr. 11), one of the students quoted above, to describe his mother's Spanish, he said that she speaks "[r]egular Spanish, like she just learned it from *Inglés sin Barreras*" ("English without barriers"). Here, Victor is referencing an English language learning course, *"Inglés sin Barreras,"* which is widely advertised on Spanish-language television and radio. At first glance, this might appear to be an unremarkable example of code-switching from English to Spanish. However, Victor used his conventional English

phonology (i.e., pronunciation) throughout his entire response to this question, even when pronouncing the words *Inglés sin Barreras*. This means that his pronunciation of the word *barreras* ("barriers") sounded like the "bu-" at the beginning of the English word "but," followed by the English words "rare" and "us." But his pronunciation of the word "reggaeton" in the interview quotation above included a "hard" trill of the /r/ at the beginning of the word. Thus, it is clear that Victor could have pronounced *Inglés sin Barreras* with Spanish phonology. Why would he pronounce it using English phonology? What shapes students' alternation in the use of linguistic forms associated with the English and Spanish languages? I refer to these practices as "Inverted Spanglish" because they invert both the pronunciation (from Spanish to English) and ethnic identity (from non-U.S.–based to U.S.-based) conventionally associated with Spanish or so-called "Spanglish" forms (Rosa, 2010). Unlike Jane Hill's notion of Mock Spanish (1998), which she defines as the incorporation of "Spanish-language materials into English in order to create a jocular or pejorative 'key'" (1998, p. 682), Inverted Spanglish focuses on how U.S. Latinas/os simultaneously draw on English and Spanish forms to meet the demand that they speak Spanish *in* English without being heard to possess an accent. An example of a token of Inverted Spanglish is "Latino," which some Latinas/os playfully rhyme with a hyper-anglicized pronunciation of the Spanish word, *platano* (plantain). They do so by pronouncing "Latino" in such a way that "Lat" sounds like the begininning of the English word "latitude," "in" sounds like the English word "in," and "o" sounds like the English word "oh." This contrasts with the "Spanish" pronunciation of "Latino," in which "La-" sounds like the beginning of the English word "Lollipop" and "-tino" sounds like the beginning of the English word "denote." As a word that is often pronounced in "English" yet understood as "Spanish," "Latino" is a quintessential token of Inverted Spanglish.

Tokens of Inverted Spanglish mix patterns of word and sound recognizability. In some cases, NNHS Latinas/os apply their normative English pronunciation to in-group Spanish words in interactions with fellow Latinas/os. In other cases, NNHS Latinas/os use exaggerated pronunciations to parody non-Latinas'/os' pronunciation of widely recognized Spanish words in mixed Latina/o and non-Latina/o company. One example of the former is the phrase *con permiso* ("excuse me"), which Ms. Muñiz, a young Puerto Rican teacher, pronounced in such a way that these Spanish words sound like the English words "cone," "per," "miss," and "oh." In this example, Ms. Muñiz juxtaposes an in-group Spanish phrase with her conventional English pronunciation. Conversely, Ms. Muñiz often asks students to do something by following a request with *por favor* ("please") in such a way that it sounds

like the English words "pour" and "favor," with the "fa" sounding like the beginning of the English word "fate" and "vor" sounding like the end of the English word "waiver." Here, she produces a hyper-anglicized pronunciation of a widely recognized Spanish phrase. Note that unlike the previous example, she does not pronounce "favor" using her conventional English phonology; this would sound like the "fu" in the English word "fun" and "vor" in the English word "voracious." In each case, these usages signal Latina/o solidarity. Ms. Muñiz said that she talks like this "all the time" and that it is "just something that Latinos do."

Traditional approaches to code-switching and code-mixing cannot grasp the meaningfulness of these linguistic practices, because code-centric accounts often overlook the social significance of voicing (Bakhtin, 1981) and the invocation of models of personhood through language use (Agha, 2009). In Inverted Spanglish, double voicing allows Latinas/os to signal their native English and Spanish abilities by combining their English pronunciation with in-group Spanish words, or by combining exaggerated pronunciations with widely recognized Spanish words. The erasure of Puerto Rican–Mexican Spanish difference in these usages introduces a U.S.-based Latina/o diasporic voice. This language use positions 1.5-, second-, and third-generation Latinas/os as prototypical members of this category. Because its characteristic features are knowledge of Spanish words, the ability to speak "unaccented" English, and the presumption of one's Latina/o identity, Inverted Spanglish mediates between the stigmatization that members of these generations face when speaking "English" or "Spanish" as separate codes.

Inverted Spanglish is not a straightforward contributor to the hegemonic position of monolingual English dominance, nor is it a clear-cut critique of this hegemony. In the process of creating an emergent register of language, Inverted Spanglish erases Puerto Rican and Mexican Spanish difference. Whereas Spanish-dominant communication becomes a prime ideological site for the recognition of Mexican and Puerto Rican difference, English is imagined as a linguistic medium in which Puerto Rican and Mexican difference is much more difficult to hear. As one 9th-grade girl (PR, Gen. 1.5, Gr. 9) explained to me:

> You can tell when someone is Puerto Rican or Mexican from their accent in Spanish.… You can hear when someone is Latino from the way they speak English [be]cause they got that something…that spice! I don't know what it is, but you can hear it.

In this example, the student invokes the stereotype that Latinas/os are "spicy." Importantly, she associates this Latina/o panethnic spice with *English.* Thus,

ideologies that locate Puerto Rican–Mexican difference within the realm of Spanish and flatten out this difference in English contribute to the fashioning of a diasporic Latina/o subjectivity among U.S.-based Latinas/os.

My focus on Inverted Spanglish is not intended to provide a general model of English-Spanish bilingualism among students at NNHS. There are numerous ways in which students move within and across varieties of English and Spanish, many of which mirror existing accounts of monolingual style-shifting and bilingual code-switching. Following García's (2009) Bakhtin-inspired model of "translanguaging" and other recent approaches to "language across difference" (Paris, 2011), I seek to highlight the ways that NNHS students not only navigate, but also transform social and linguistic boundaries. This perspective presents an analytical framework that can be used to understand the translingual practices of students who might otherwise be approached separately as monolingual or bilingual. Inverted Spanglish moves beyond this binary by showing how students simultaneously voice in-group knowledge of Spanish and English. Still, Inverted Spanglish is exclusive to those U.S. Latinas/os for whom "unaccented" English is a part of their linguistic repertoire, so most English language learners are prevented from participating in these particular linguistic practices and social identities. Thus, Latina/o ethnolinguistic diasporization is a complex, power-laden process that is shaped by a range of institutional dynamics and forms of inequality.

Conclusion

The quotation at the beginning of this chapter from famed Puerto Rican poet Tato Laviera points to several characteristic elements of diasporization that I have sought to highlight in this chapter: (1) diasporization involves remappings in which ideas about national identities transform borders between and within languages; (2) diasporization is dynamically linked to processes of ethnolinguistic socialization that take place in institutions such as schools; and (3) disaporization is neither a naturally occurring phenomenon nor merely a matter of personal choice, but a political process in which people (re)define the ethnolinguistic identities to which they are socialized as they navigate their everyday lives. I have introduced the notion of *Inverted Spanglish* in an effort to capture the unique ways that Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Latina/o diasporic identities are constructed in New Northwest High School and its surrounding communities.

Returning to the discussion of assimilation with which this chapter began, it should now be clear that identifying with the U.S. can in fact be a way of engaging in diasporic practices. As a public educational institution with

a fraught relationship to social reproduction and transformation, NNHS becomes a context in which students are linked to varying trajectories of diasporization. Constructions of ethnolinguistic identities emerge as key practices by which to track these trajectories. The English language is far from a straightforward sign of "Americanness," and the Spanish language is far from a straightforward unifier across Latina/o national subgroups. Inverted Spanglish positions particular features of the English and Spanish languages as linguistic vehicles through which diasporic Latina/o identities are rendered recognizable. This focus on diasporization allows us to problematize narratives of assimilation that deny the legitimacy of multiple national affiliations. Such narratives obscure the historical and contemporary experiences that inform the embrace of U.S.-based Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Latina/o identities. After all, the forms of inequality that anchor the creation of these diasporic identities in schools and communities are as American as apple pie.

Notes

1. Bailey shows how neither Warner and Srole's (1945) "straight-line" theory nor Portes and Zhou's (1993) "segmented" theory provides a productive model for understanding the ways that U.S. Dominicans experience assimilation. Straight-line theory attempted to generalize from the experiences of late 19th-century and early 20th-century European immigrants, to suggest that assimilation occurs linearly "across time and generations" (Bailey, 2007, p. 159). In order to distinguish between the experiences of these European immigrants and the post-1965 "New Immigration" largely from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia, Portes and Zhou developed the theory of segmented assimilation described above.
2. Almost all of the school's non-Latina/o students are African American.
3. In 2010 Mexicans constituted approximately 65% of U.S. Latinas/os, while Puerto Ricans constituted 9.2% of the U.S. Latina/o population.
4. Los Angeles, Houston, and San Antonio have the largest U.S. Mexican populations.
5. New York, Philadelphia, and Orlando have the largest U.S. Puerto Rican populations.
6. New York, Los Angeles, Houston, and San Antonio have the largest U.S. Latina/o populations.
7. Some students claimed that individuals with one Puerto Rican and one Mexican parent would most likely identify as Puerto Rican since it is "cooler." In fact, I found that this happens in both directions, and that it frequently involves identifying in the same way as the parent with whom students understand themselves to share the closest relationship.
8. Latina/o students are coded using abbreviations of self-ascribed categories such as "Mexican" (M) and "Puerto Rican" (PR), as well as generation cohort with respect to (im)migration and grade year in school. For example:
   Pedro (PR, Gen. 3, Gr. 10)
   Name (self-ascribed identity, immigration cohort, grade year)
   Generation 1: born and raised outside of the U.S. mainland until the age of 9 or older

Generation 1.5: born outside of the U.S. mainland, but raised within the U.S. mainland before the age of 9
Generation 2: born and raised within the U.S. mainland by parents who were born and raised outside of the U.S. mainland
Generation 3: born and raised within the U.S. mainland by parents who were born and raised within the U.S. mainland
I use the phrase "U.S. mainland" to distinguish between the continental United States and its territories and possessions. Puerto Rico is a U.S. commonwealth. Thus, someone born in Puerto Rico is born "outside of the U.S. mainland." This allows for a unified designation for people born in Puerto Rico or anywhere else in Latin America.

9. Each Chicago public school has a local school council, which consists of parents, teachers, community residents, a student representative, and the school's principal.
10. "Hispanic" and "Latina/o" are used interchangeably by both Latinas/os and non-Latinas/os in NNHS.
11. "Juke" is a Chicago music style popularly described as "ghetto house"; it is characterized by its grinding rhythms and sexually explicit lyrics. Importantly, the vast majority of hip-hop and juke lyrics consist of English language forms.
12. In a broader Latin American perspective, cumbia is a music genre that is often associated with Colombia and Panama. In this Puerto Rican/Mexican-dominant setting, cumbia is most often associated with Mexico.
13. The music genres of salsa and banda are stereotypically associated with Puerto Ricans and Mexicans, respectively.
14. Most Spanish usages are italicized with English translations in parentheses.
15. This /s/ deletion is characteristic of Caribbean Spanish and takes two forms here. Before a consonant, as is the case with the first /s/ in *ustedes* as well as in *están*, /s/ is realized a laryngeal fricative /h/. In absolute word final position, such as the second /s/ in *ustedes*, /s/ is realized as an alveolar sibilant.
16. While many NNHS students are reggaeton fans, others such as Jimmy (PR, Gen. 3, Gr. 12) want nothing to do with it. Jimmy, a self-proclaimed hip-hop fanatic, claimed that reggaeton is lame and that it only has one beat. He also said that he could not understand the highly vernacular Puerto Rican Spanish lyrics. Much to Jimmy's dismay, his best friend, Damon, a fellow Puerto Rican senior, listens to reggaeton all the time.
17. She provided other examples such as *pato*, which is Puerto Rican slang for "gay," but simply means "duck" in Mexican Spanish; she also pointed out the counter-example of *puñal*, which means "gay" in Mexican slang, but simply means "knife" in Puerto Rican Spanish.
18. This demonstrates the ideological nature of assessments of the relative "Puerto Ricanness" and "Mexicanness" of different language forms. These qualities are not intrinsic to the forms themselves; they are constructed and potentially reconfigured in context.

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