

# 14

## ¡Ya basta!

The term Hispanic, coined by technomarketing experts and by the designers of political campaigns, homogenizes our cultural diversity (Chicanos, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans become indistinguishable), avoids our indigenous cultural heritage and links us directly with Spain. Worse yet, it possesses connotations of upward mobility and political obedience.

Guillermo Gómez-Peña

9.7 million Latino/a citizens reported voting in the 2008 presidential election. This was an increase of 47 percent from 2004.

Voting and Registration in the Election of 2008, <http://goo.gl/5cJPN>

## Counting in Spanish

The U.S. Census Bureau reported an approximate 48.4 million persons of Latino/a origin in 2009, about 15.5 percent of the current total population. Figure 14.1 provides a view of immigration over time. On this basis it is quite easy to see how it is that the Census Bureau projects that people of Latino ancestry will make up almost 25 percent of the nation's population in 2050.<sup>1</sup>

The government uses “Hispanic” as an umbrella term for everyone who is of Spanish-speaking national or ethnic origins. Figure 14.1 draws attention to how broad this category is, how many different national identities, world views and cultures are subsumed into the idea of *Hispanic*.

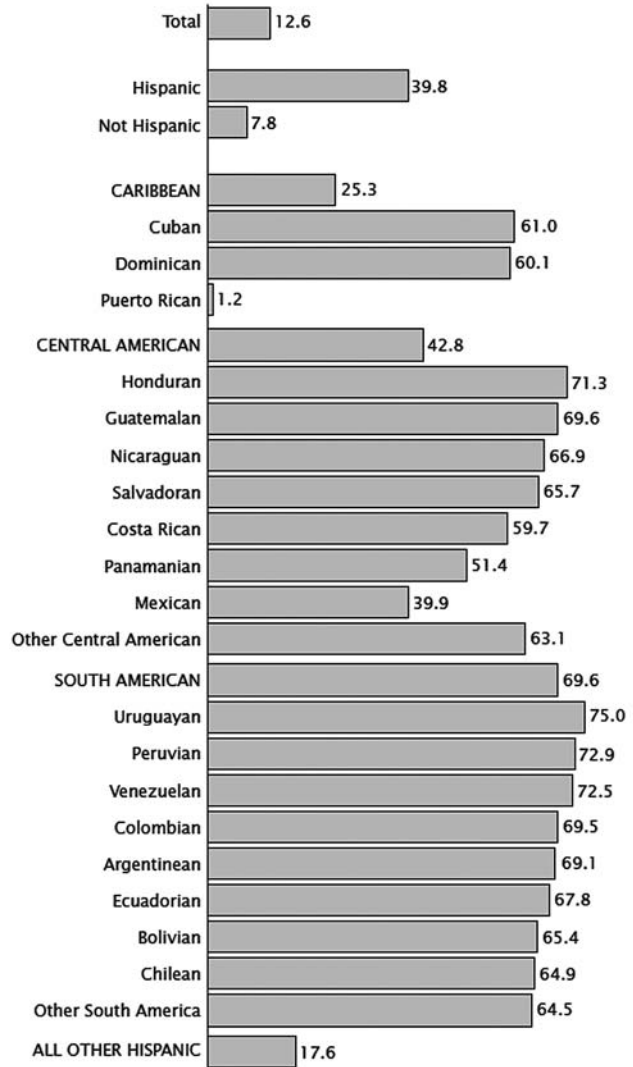
## Diversity over space<sup>2</sup>

One indication that Latinos/as retain strong ties to homeland and heritage can be seen in settlement patterns (Figure 14.2). For example, large-scale immigration from Cuba began with Castro's rise to power in 1959. Those immigrants formed communities in southern Florida (such as “Little Havana” in Miami) and the metropolitan New York area. Cubans – especially those who feel strongly about returning to the homeland and regaining political power – maintain strong ties to Cuba, its culture, and to each other. There are neighborhoods in the cities and towns of southern Florida where Spanish is the dominant – and sometimes the only – language (Figure 14.3).

On the West Coast, Spanish-speaking (largely Mestizo) communities were well established when the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848, formally transferring much of the west and south-west territory from Mexico to the U.S. The treaty had many provisions that were meant to protect Mexicans' rights, most of which were broken.

Figure 14.1  
Latino population by country of origin

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007  
Community Survey

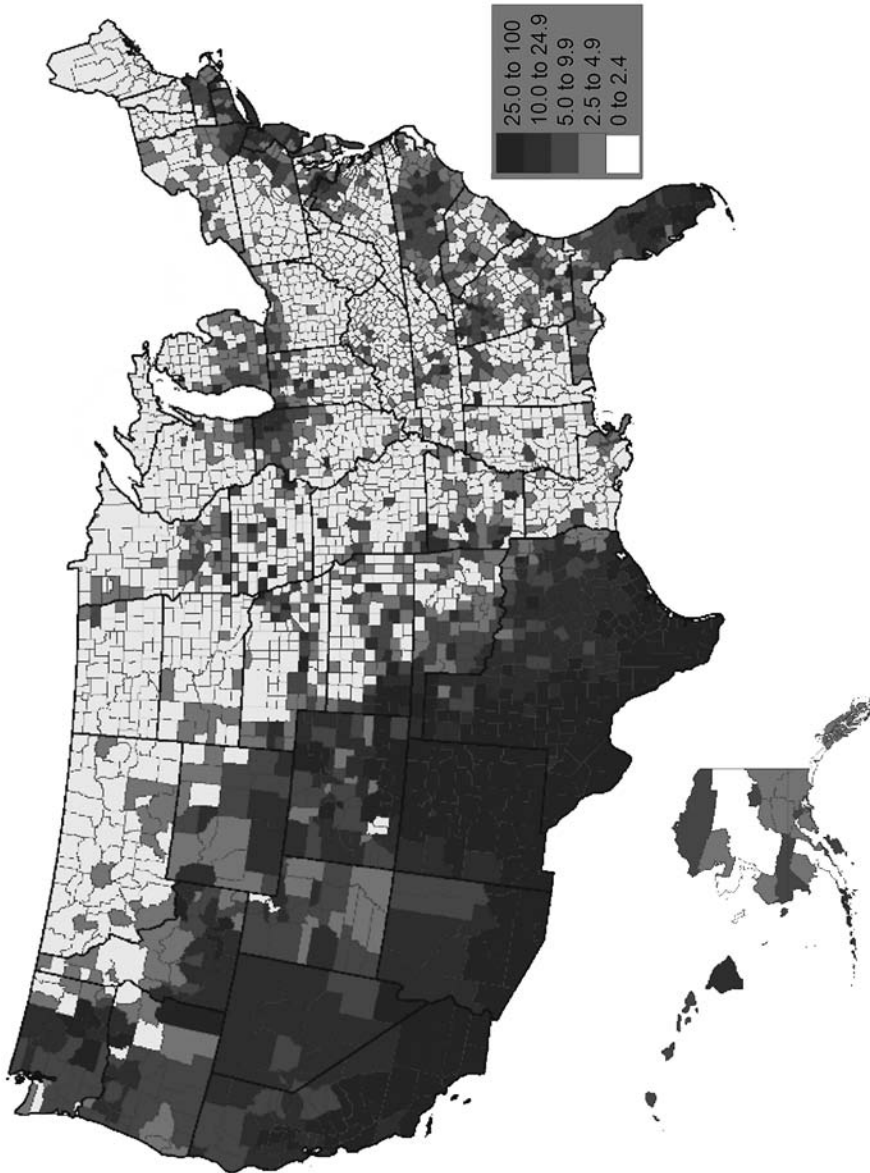


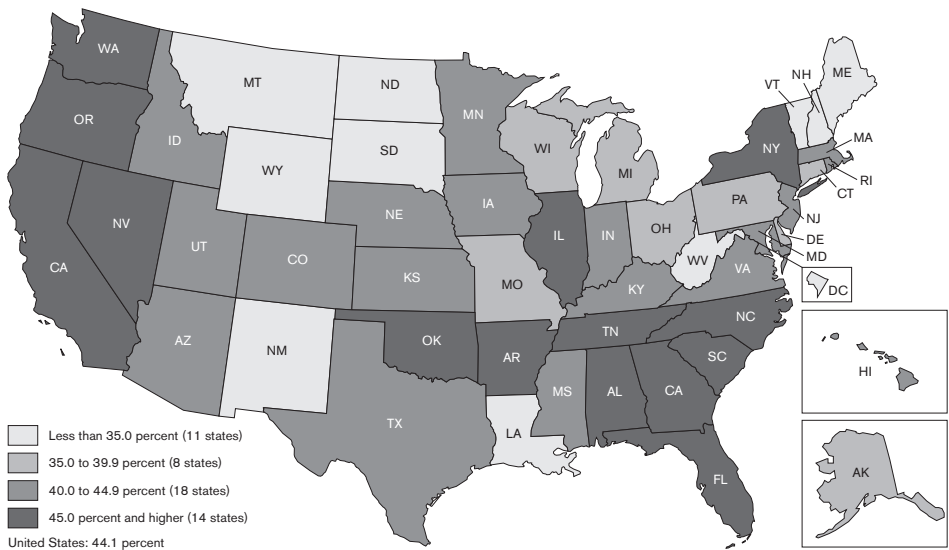
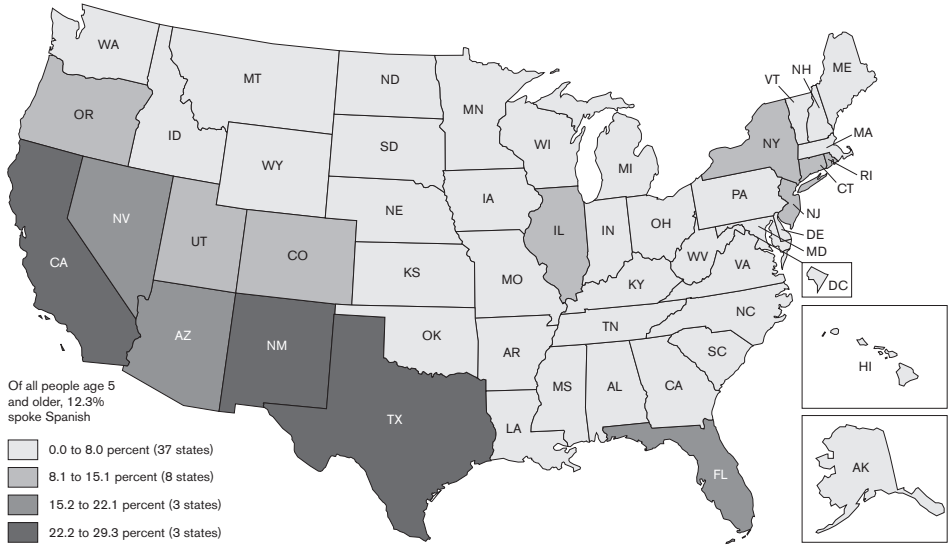
Many historians see the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as the beginning of systematic racism and discrimination toward Mexicans and Spanish speakers more generally.

The many bicultural and Spanish dominant communities along the border can document a long history of discrimination in every aspect of daily life. The Chicano movement of the 1960s and 1970s was an organized, large-scale effort to address such inequalities (Figure 14.4).

Currently the term *Chicano* is generally understood to be reserved for those of Mexican origin who were born and raised in the U.S., but who do not identify themselves in the first line as Americans. According to Rubén Salazar, “A Chicano is a Mexican-American with a non-Anglo image of himself” (June 2, 1970).<sup>3</sup> More recently Gustavo Arellano, author of the popular and often controversial *Ask a Mexican!* newspaper column for California’s *Orange County Weekly* has written at length about intercultural tensions

Figure 14.2  
Latino/a communities over  
space  
Source: Adapted from 2009 U.S.  
Census Bureau





**Figure 14.3** (a) Language other than English spoken at home; (b) Percent of the population speaking a language other than English at home who spoke English less than “very well”

Note: Population 5 years and older. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey

between well-established Chicanos and those newly arrived from rural Mexico. Chicanos may refer to such Mexicans as *Chúntaro*, while the newly arrived use the term *Pocho* (rather than Chicano) for an Americanized Mexican (Arellano 2007).

The history of Puerto Ricans in the U.S. is very different. With the Jones–Shafroth Act of 1917, Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship,<sup>4</sup> so that there is no discussion of



Figure 14.4 Texas restaurant sign, 1949

Source: Photo by R. Lee, 1949. Reprinted by permission of The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History

immigration quotas, work visas or resident status. Puerto Ricans have no need for visas, but they have been the focus of discrimination for a long time in the North-east. This is probably due, at least in part, to the strong ties between Stateside Puerto Ricans and Puerto Rico and the fact that many of the communities in the U.S. prefer their own culture and language to assimilation. The largest wave of Puerto Rican immigrants (often referred to as “the Great Migration”) began with the Depression and lasted through World War II and into the 1950s. Puerto Rican communities settled in East Harlem, on the Lower East Side, Upper West Side, in Chelsea, and Hell’s Kitchen, as well as in Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Despite differences in their history and culture Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans have all been identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as *Hispanic*. What unites them and the other countries in that group is a strong allegiance to the homeland and family, a common religion (primarily Roman Catholic) and an inclination to hold onto Spanish as a primary language.<sup>5</sup> Oboler’s work with Spanish-speaking immigrants from nine countries (all ages, both genders) employed as garment workers in New York also establishes the importance of solidarity within national origin groups (the wish to be identified as Cuban or Puerto Rican or Dominican), while at the same time, workers take pride in the commonality of language (Oboler 1995, 2006). Others have made similar observations:

Latinos in the United States predominately self-identify as “Hispanic” and/or “Latino” *in addition to* their national origin, but they do not self-identify as “American.” Undergoing a process of “racialized assimilation,” Latinos are not viewed by other U.S. citizens as “unhyphenated Americans” but as, specifically, “Latino and Latina Americans.”

(Vasquez 2010: 48 original emphasis; citations excluded)

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There is a twist to this discussion of labels, however, and it is an instructive one. In 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau wanted to develop better methods to identify Spanish-speaking people before the next (1980) census. The 19 committee members were predominantly of Mexican ancestry and included the leaders of civil rights organizations. It was this group that recommended use of the term *Hispanic* as one that would embrace all persons of Latin American origin (Gómez 2007: 150–151). Today the term is contested for a variety of reasons, but the Census Bureau shows no interest in re-evaluating its usefulness.

Zentella (1996) provides another perspective on the matter of labels imposed on peripheralized populations. She speaks and writes of what it was like for her as a child to have had a singing and dancing Chiquita Banana as a solitary Latina figure in the public eye. She uses the term *chiquitafication* to describe public policies and practices which homogenize Latino/a cultures and languages into a tidy and digestible package for the rest of the nation, identifying three specific misconceptions arising from this practice: (1) the idea of a homogeneous “Hispanic community” that refuses to learn English; (2) the belittling of non-Castilian varieties of Spanish; and (3) the labeling of second-generation bilinguals as semi- or alinguals (ibid.: 1).

As seen in Figure 14.5, the individual’s allegiance to national origin patterns quite strongly to that person’s language preference. That is, a person who speaks primarily Spanish is far more likely to name a specific national origin, such as “Mexican” or “Guatemalan” or “Peruvian” rather than the less specific *Latino/a* or *Hispanic*. The group that is most likely to self-identify as American is composed of those who report that they speak primarily English.

There is reason to be wary about attempts to demonize immigrant populations. John Tanton, the founder of many different extreme anti-immigration groups and periodicals, has been vocal about his belief that Mexican immigrants pose a real threat to Americans: Tanton has warned of a coming “Latin onslaught” and proposed that high Latino birth rates would lead “the present majority to hand over its political power to a group that is

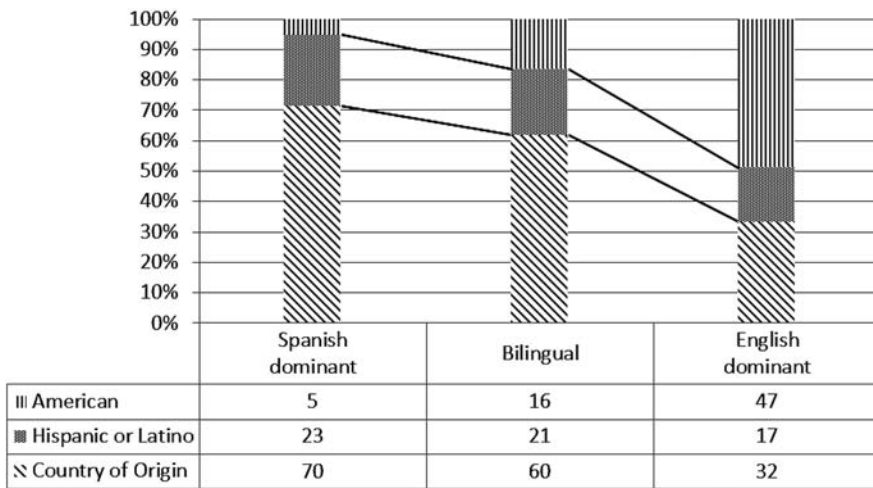


Figure 14.5 How individuals self-identify national origin, by language preference and use in answer to the question “In general, which of the terms that you use to describe yourself is the term you use first?”

Source: Adapted from data provided by the Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2010

simply more fertile.” Tanton repeatedly demeaned Latinos in the memos, asking whether they would “bring with them the tradition of the *mordida* [bribe], the lack of involvement in public affairs” and also questioning Latinos’ “educability” (Beirich 2009).

In their study of the representation of Latino/as in the media, Penfield and Ornstein-Galicia (1985) note general trends: Latino/as are almost always portrayed as violent and with explosive tempers; Chicanos/as in California’s large cities are drug-pushers, gang-members, pimps. In rural areas they are migrant farm workers. Just as Disney never thought to give the character of a carpenter (or a fire fighter, or a street sweeper) a French accent, film makers find it difficult to imagine Latinos/as as accountants, copy shop owners, engineers or veterinarians.

**The Spanish universe**

Some Latinos live in communities of monolingual English speakers, where a Spanish accent stands out. Others live in communities where multiple varieties of English co-exist in relative harmony, in which Spanish, English, and Chicano or other varieties of Latino English each have a place. Chicano English, Puerto Rican English and Cuban English in Los Angeles, New York and Miami are distinct from each other, with distinctive syntactical, morphological and discourse markers (Jenkins 2009; Villa and Rivera-Mills 2009, García and Otheguy 1988; Penfield and Ornstein-Galicia 1985; Valdés 1988; Zentella 1988).

When Zentella protests the labeling of second-generation Spanish-language immigrants as *semi-lingual* or *alingual*, she is referring to code switching, the orderly (grammatically structured) alternation between two or more languages, a subject of great interest to linguists and one which is widely studied.<sup>6</sup> This complicates the picture of the Spanish-speaking universe considerably. We have distinct languages, each with its own stylistic repertoires: Spanish and English. To these we add more recently developed but distinct varieties of English, for example, Chicano English and Chicano Spanish as they are spoken in the south-west and west. Now we have also the phenomenon of living and working with three languages, and switching among them as determined by language-internal (syntactical and morphological) rules as well as social ones. In comparison, style switching may seem to an unsympathetic outsider nothing more than a language hodge-podge, one often labeled *Spanglish*.

I would argue that whether the object of subordination is the *act* of style switching, or pressure to use one specific language rather than another, the ultimate goal remains the same: to devalue and suppress everything Spanish. To call code-switching *Spanglish* in a dismissive way is just another subordination method with a long history: to deny a language and its people a distinct name is to refuse to acknowledge them. There is a shorthand at work here, and that is, there is only one acceptable choice: it is not enough for 44 million Spanish speakers to become bilingual: they must learn the right English – and following from that, the right U.S. culture, into which they must assimilate completely. Certainly Spanish speakers feel that discrimination toward them has more to do with language than with immigration status, skin color or economics (Figure 14.6).

On rare occasion, there will be public commentary which makes clear that the offer we make to immigrants is contingent on a certain kind of English, as in this radio broadcast (May 23, 1994) which begins with images of confusion and bloodshed in a multiethnic urban setting:



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Puerto Rican  
English, Cuban  
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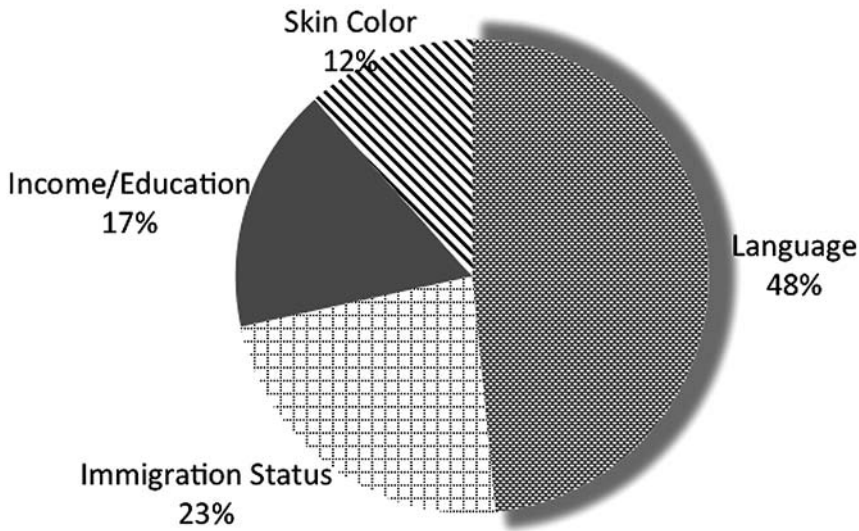


Figure 14.6 Percent of Spanish speakers who identified each category as primary source of discrimination

Source: Adapted from Hakimzadeh and Cohn (2007)

Los Angeles has cosmopolitan eyes and ears. We know a Korean billboard from a Chinese one even though we may not read either language. Those bloody names that spill out of the television every night – Gorazde, San Cristobal. They don't sound so foreign here as they might in the Dakotas. So, why are we frustrated at the sound of our own voices?

Note the blunt tactic of a straightforward demand for cooperation: *We are frustrated by ourselves, by the multilingualism of Los Angeles*. By coercing participation in this way, the commentator makes his frustration everyone's frustration. Thus, a great deal of latitude can be assumed in matters where he might not otherwise feel entitled to impose his opinion:

It's because over the counters in our banks, over the tables in our restaurants, and over the phones in our offices, in job interviews and in meeting rooms, Los Angeles speaks not just with dozens of foreign languages, but with dozens of variations of English, not to mention our own native accent, from Ice-T to Beverly Hills 90210. It's all English, we're all speaking the same language, but that doesn't mean we're communicating. How do you bring up something that's more personal than bad breath and more embarrassing than an unzipped fly? How do you tell people who are speaking English that it's a kind of English we can't understand? Mostly we don't even try. We say, "Thank you," and then we hang up the phone and call back a few minutes later, hoping that someone else will answer.

(ibid.)

Morrison first assumes that all immigrants want to be bilingual, but then shifts the focus of outrage from *no English* to the *wrong (accented) English*, or English that literally stinks



of unwashed humanity. There are no excuses made for rejecting the communicative burden; it is acceptable just to “hang up the phone.” He moves on to make some concessions: accent is immutable past a certain age, even when people would like to acquire a perfect English.

The newcomers want to learn English . . . The cruelest thing about this is that learning the words is the easy part; learning the accent may never happen. An expert in these things says that after puberty, muscles that have formed one language for years just can’t change very easily to a new one.

Finally, we come to the heart of the matter. Certain accents are frustrating and disturbing and worthy of reduction (he has already admitted that accent *elimination* is an impossibility). He wants to reduce these accents, but there’s a complication: in so doing he is making a negative statement about the social identities to which they are attached.

In order to soften this blow and render accent reduction more palatable, Morrison employs another tactic: the concern with fairness is labeled “politically correct,” a neat and very quick way to render an idea trivial, petty and worthy of rejection. *I know that this is wrong on some level*, the commentator is saying, *but it is done so much – why fight it?*<sup>7</sup>

### The changing colors of Mexico

Before looking more closely at language-focused discrimination in the Southwest, it is important to consider how issues of race, ethnicity and language work together.

From the time of the first U.S. Census in 1790 to the 1850 Census, there were only two possible choices for race: *white* or *black*. After 1850 the Census Bureau started experimenting with different levels of classification, and included categories such as *Mulatto* and *Amerindians*. In 1930, for the first and last time, the Census Bureau included *Mexican* as a race. The protests of the Latino community were organized and persistent, with the result that in 1940 this practice was stopped (Gross 2007; Leeman 2004). The term *Mestizo* would likely have been acceptable to Mexican-Americans, but the Census Bureau chose not to pursue that possibility, and in 2010 that is still the case.

*Mestizo* is a category officially recognized in most of Central and South America as a reference to persons of mixed ancestry, descended from both the indigenous peoples of the south-western U.S., Mexico and Central America, and the Europeans who colonized them. There are many communities of indigenous peoples in Mexico, but some large portion of the rest of the population could be seen as *Mestizo*. Miguel Barriento, an advocate for the *Mestizo* community in Nevada, summarized the situation: “We are not White. We are not Black. We are a mix of White and Indian, which is *Mestizo*” (March 23, 2010).

Latino/as may be any race, but “the general image of Latinos is that of the *Mestizo*. In other words, the supposed ‘Latin look’ is that of the *Mestizo*” (Baker 2009). Baker makes this point in support of the drive to add *Mestizo* to the choices for race offered by the Census. He also notes that because the *Mestizo* population outnumbers the Afro-Latin and other Spanish-speaking populations, the contributions of those groups are minimized as a result:

[B]aseball star David “Big Papi” Ortiz (black) does not physically look like actress Cameron Diaz (white), and that soccer legend Pele (black) looks nothing like

funnyman George Lopez (Indio/Native American), and so on. Yet, they are all Latinos here in the U.S.

(ibid.)

While social scientists and politicians debate this issue of race, the public has come to its own conclusions. Anglos do see Mexicans as racially *other*: not white or black, but brown. Barrett (2006) took a job as wait staff at an Anglo-owned Mexican restaurant in California to study Anglo/Mexican language ideologies in a realistic, unarranged setting. The casualness with which staff and managers acknowledged the color line (wait staff is Anglo; kitchen staff is Latino) is seen in this example of an exchange between Barrett and a manager:

*Manager*: Oh, your check isn't in this pile, this is the brown pile.

*Me*: They're divided that way?

*Manager*: Well, you know, kitchen and wait staff.

(Barrett 2006: 176)

A comparison of the official stance (Mexicans are *white*, according to the U.S. Census Bureau) and the reality documented by Barrett and many others (Cobas and Feagin 2008; Gómez 2007; Hill 2008; Niemann *et al.* 1999; Rinderle and Montoya 2008; Santa Ana 2002, among others) suggests that Mexican-Americans occupy an ambiguous position in the social order that has rendered them *off-white* (Gómez 2007).<sup>8</sup> This is what Foley (1998) calls, quite aptly, “a parallel universe of whiteness” (as cited in Powers 2008: 62).

The relevance of these complex issues of race will become clearer in the following sections on specific kinds of discrimination.

### **We're not going anywhere: performing race**

In teaching an annual course on language and discrimination, I found that arguments rarely escalated past the usual soft-voiced and apologetic differences of opinion. One exception came during a class discussion on English-Only. A Mexicana student raised the subject of the growing Latino population in California and what that meant to a majority-rule-based electoral system and language rights. The tension in the room was immediate.

Another student said to her, quite defensively, “WE settled California” to which she responded with a short, concise history of Spanish settlements in the South-west that predated Anglo settlements by a good margin. There was an awkward silence.

Then the other student said, “We're still the majority.”

To which she said, “We were there first, and we're still there and we're not going anywhere.” She might have added, *and it won't be so long before we're the majority, bucko*, but she withheld, quite sensibly, that obvious fact.

Another student, quiet until that point, raised the question of individual liberties, the Bill of Rights, and language, and the conversation veered away. It is my practice to allow such conversations to run their natural course without interruption or manipulation, though in this case I was sorry the discussion ended so quickly.

This kind of exchange repeats itself daily, in all kinds of communication acts in every possible setting and tone. One way to look at such interactions is by means of performance theory.

Human beings are by nature performers; we project our identities again and again to ourselves and everyone else, in an act that provides a kind of psychological cultural grounding. In our everyday lives we “simultaneously recognize, substantiate, and (re)create ourselves as well as Others through performance . . . performance becomes a ubiquitous force in our social and discursive universe” (Madison 2005: 73–74).

In a classroom where societal racism is discussed and confronted, the performance of race and ethnicity can become emotionally extreme. In such situations there is more than factual knowledge at stake, there is also the individual’s sense and understanding of self. The exchange in my classroom was immediately fraught, because by asserting herself, the Mexicana student was challenging the conventionally taught history of the United States, among other things. At that, some or all of the Anglo students felt the need to reassert their own identities, preferring their own narratives to hers.

There are commonalities in such situations that have been widely studied. In this kind of classroom situation:

[Anglo student responses] range from overt racism, to entrenchment in white supremacy, to refusing to listen to others, to actively denying the importance of racism and student complicity in it. Furthermore, students typically present themselves as moral and responsible social actors who would rather not be identified as racist and subsequently attempt to persuade others that they support equality and justice.

(Johnson *et al.* 2008: 114)

The discussion in my classroom was an excellent example of how individuals perform race and ethnicity. That is, the Mexicana student presented or performed herself to herself and to the class as a confident, knowledgeable, assured woman of color who knew exactly where the flaws in the other student’s arguments were. She would not be intimidated. The student who challenged her responded by *performing whiteness*. Johnson *et al.* provide another example, from their own work with college students in Southern California. From a student essay:

I am “white,” but at my high school “white” people were the minority. Quite frequently I would be walking in the halls, unable to understand anything being said around me. At one of my jobs, my co-workers would talk about me and my friends, right in front of our face, in a different language.

(*ibid.*: 126)

There is a structured racism here that is so deeply embedded that it becomes normative and invisible to the privileged. The student is sharing information about an experience he or she found hurtful and unsettling. On the surface many reading her short statement will nod in agreement, thinking *yes, it is rude for people to speak Spanish in front of me, as I can’t understand them*. One way to challenge this mindset is to ask a simple question: Is it equally rude to speak English in front of a Spanish speaker with limited or no English skills?

The answer to that question gets to the heart of the matter: as an English speaker, the student who complained about being excluded believed she or he was reasonable in expecting everyone to accommodate to her/him.

It can certainly feel uncomfortable to not understand languages being spoken in one’s presence, and yet: “*Discomfort is not oppression*. It is a sign of privilege when white students believe they should be able to understand everything going on around them or never have their racial embodiment questioned publicly” (*ibid.*: 126–127; emphasis added).

This mindset is at the very heart of long-standing conflicts between the U.S. and Mexico. Our common history is very old and checkered, and most of it is unknown to those people who are most adamant about halting immigration from Mexico. This might be seen as a failure of our education system, but that kind of policy is not made in a vacuum; the impetus was born out of a communal agreement that may have been founded in apathy or jingoism. Grand narratives (also called meta narratives) may be flawed, but many feel a strong allegiance to the stories which provide a comforting cultural buffer zone.

### The everyday language of white racism<sup>9</sup>

The importance of language to identity and to ethnicity has been well established by sociolinguists and anthropological linguists. For people of Mexican heritage living in California, there is a lot of data to suggest that for these Latinos/as, language is perhaps the primary marker of allegiance (Arellano 2007; Fought 2002a; Gómez 2007; Hidalgo 1986; Mendoza-Denton 1999; 2008; Salazar 1970; Santa Ana 1993).

In studying the connection between language and ethnicity, Fought interviewed adolescent Latinos/as to explore how language choices reflect life choices (Fought 2002a, 2006). The relationship between language choice and assimilation/solidarity may seem like simple common sense, but as we have seen, many common-sense beliefs about language are not factual. In this case, the use of language features to signal solidarity with one community over another was only theory until Labov's groundbreaking work on the island of Martha's Vineyard off the coast of Massachusetts. Using quantitative methods and statistical analysis, he examined the diphthong /ai/ and found that the first element was raised in the speech of fisherman and others who showed a dislike of or resistance to the many summer visitors to the island, and a high degree of pride in local heritage. In the course of his fieldwork he also established that adolescents who intended to move off the island as adults and live on the mainland began to give up local language markers well before that day came, while those who intended to stay and take up traditional employment were far more likely to retain local language markers such as the raised first vowel in /ai/.

It is this kind of pattern that Fought found among Chicanos/as in California. People who grew up speaking Spanish and who speak it fluently sometimes choose not to speak it at all; at the other extreme are those who never learned Spanish and who see this as a lack in themselves, because it is seen that way by the rest of their community or peer group.

Consider Fought's interview with Veronica, a 17-year-old from Los Angeles who identifies herself as Mexican, but (as she relates) is then corrected by other Chicanos/as. She is told that she can't be Mexican, because she doesn't speak Spanish. In a similar way, another student, Amanda, is often told that she's a disgrace because she doesn't speak Spanish at all, a statement that will be delivered with differing degrees of disapproval (Fought 2002b: 201).<sup>10</sup>

The link between nation and language is so strong that the terms for the two are often used interchangeably. For example, it is not uncommon to hear one person ask another, "Do you speak American?" *Mexican* and *Spanish* are also used interchangeably:

CF: Even if they're Mexicans, some people don't speak Spanish.

E: No! Some people are like that. I hate people like that, that are Mexican, and they try to act like if they don't know Mexican. So – but some of my friends that are Mexican, and – they don't know how to speak Mexican.

(ibid.: 202)



Martha's Vineyard

Another example from a study conducted in Texas by Achugar and Pessoa indicates that this mindset is not exclusive to California:

[T]here you know I have met some Chicanos here that don't speak any Spanish but that seems to be because their parents came from some other part of the country where they try to be white or something and so they don't speak any Spanish, but hopefully . . . I've met some white people that have lived here all their life and they don't know any Spanish, like none. And I'm like, "How can you not know any?," I mean, don't you hear people talking ever? Like, I don't understand that. So, yeah, they just must be very, like, secluded, like all their friends are white.

(Tania, English-dominant, cited in Achugar and Pessoa 2009)

For the rest of this chapter the discussion will focus primarily on the experiences of Mexicans, Mexican Americans, Chicanos/as and Latinos/as in the South-west. It is important to note that there are large populations of Cubans, Salvadorans and other Spanish-speaking individuals in southern California; however, the nature of the data does not allow me to separate these groups when discussing, for example, housing discrimination.

**A sampling of discriminatory language-focused practices against Latinos/as**

- 1 San Jose, CA: A 58-year-old Latino speaking on his cell phone in Spanish was punched in the face by a 28-year-old Anglo male, who shouted "Speak English!" (Dee 2009).
- 2 Pennsylvania, 2008: In hearing a criminal case on conspiracy to commit robbery, a judge offered four Spanish-speaking defendants a choice: learn English or go to jail for two years (Weiss 2008).
- 3 "[A professor] in college refused to believe that I had written an essay . . . because she assumed that Mexicans don't write very well and so therefore I couldn't have written this paper" (Cobas and Feagin 2008).
- 4 In Beaufort County, North Carolina, a county commissioner asked the health and social services departments to keep count of the number of clients with Spanish surnames. He wanted to determine how many undocumented immigrants were using city services (Collins 2008).
- 5 Texas, 2009: Over at least a three-year period police officers wrote citations for "non-English-speaking driver," a law that does not exist. In every case the person ticketed was a native speaker of Spanish. As soon as this practice came to light, the police department began an investigation of all involved officers for dereliction of duty. Fines collected from drivers (\$209 each) were refunded and charges dropped. A representative of the League of United Latin American Citizens drew attention to the fact that there were active police officers who believed that it was a crime not to speak English (Goldstein 2009).
- 6 Connecticut, 2010: A study of traffic tickets issued by the East Haven police department over an 8-month period established that while Latinos/as make up less than 6 percent of the population, they accounted for more than 50 percent of tickets issued. In addition, the study found that police officers routinely misrepresented the race of the person receiving the ticket in their reports (Macmillan 2010).
- 7 Tennessee, 2005: A family court judge tells a mother from Mexico she must learn English and use birth control. That same judge threatens to terminate parental rights

of a mother if she could not speak English at a fourth grade level when she appeared before him in sixth months (Barry 2005).

- 8 Texas, 1995: A judge scolds a mother who speaks only Spanish to her 5-year-old daughter: “You’re abusing that child and you’re relegating her to the position of housemaid. Now, get this straight. You start speaking English to this child because if she doesn’t do good in school, then I can remove her because it’s not in her best interest to be ignorant. The child will only hear English” (Verhovek 1995).

### The most vulnerable

Cirila Baltazar Cruz is a native of the Oaxaca region in isolated southern Mexico, one known for its anthropological riches and for its extreme poverty.<sup>11</sup> Cruz is a member of the indigenous *Kitse Cha’rño*, or Chatino tribe, which speaks a language which falls under the Zapotecan branch of the Oto-Manguenan family. Chatino is nothing like Spanish; there is no mutual intelligibility. For example, here is a sentence in Chatino compared to Mexican Spanish and English:

CHATINO: N-da nu xni’ ndaha ska ha xtlya ?i nu ‘o.

N-da	nu	xni’	ndaha	ska	ha	xtlya	?i	nu	‘o
give	the	dog	lazy	one	tortilla	Spanish	to	the	coyote

SPANISH: El perro flojo le dió un pan dulce al coyote.

ENGLISH: The lazy dog gave a sweetbread to the coyote.<sup>12</sup>

Cruz is a native speaker of Chatino; she speaks very little Spanish and no other language. As is common in her village, she never learned to read and write. Nevertheless, she left her children in her mother’s care and came to the U.S. to find work that would allow her to send money home to Oaxaca. She took employment at a Chinese restaurant in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and was supplied housing by her employer (Abierta 2009; Byrd 2010a, 2010b; Cruz 2010; Macedo and Gounari 2006; Padgett and Mascareñas 2009; Southern Poverty Law Center 2010).

In November of 2008, Cruz went to the Singing River Hospital and gave birth to a healthy daughter. Subsequently a Spanish-speaking patient advocate of Puerto Rican heritage and a social services representative came into Cruz’s room and questioned her. Cruz understood very little, but the social worker and patient advocate kept asking questions. At some point Cruz’s cousin, a fluent speaker of Spanish and Chatino came to visit, and offered to translate. One of the social workers told him “that she was talking to [Cruz] and to keep his mouth shut.”<sup>13</sup> The social workers insisted he wait in the hall.

Rather than call in a Chatino translator, the social services representatives constructed a set of reasons to remove the child from her mother’s custody, including the charge that she traded sex for housing, that she had stated an intention to put the child up for adoption, that she was unprepared to care for the child and had not even purchased formula or a bassinet. Reporters from Mississippi’s *Clarion Ledger* were allowed to review documents outlining these charges and others, which included language-related charges:

Cruz was charged with neglecting her child, in part, because “she has failed to learn the English language” and “was unable to call for assistance for transportation to the

hospital” to give birth. Her inability to speak English “placed her unborn child in danger and will place the baby in danger in the future.”

(Byrd 2010b)

Without investigating or documenting any of these charges or presenting any evidence, the Mississippi Department of Human Services’ representatives used this narrative when they went before a judge, first to gain permission to remove the child from her mother’s care, and later, to request termination of Cruz’s parental rights.

Cruz was discharged from the hospital and told she could not take her daughter with her. When she returned the next day with her cousin to ask for her baby, she was told the child was no longer there. That day, two different social workers associated with the hospital contacted state and federal immigration authorities to report Cruz as an illegal alien (Padgett and Mascareñas 2009).

The official complaint filed by the attorneys representing Cruz outlined the charges:

The individual defendants conspired to remove [Cruz’s newborn daughter] from her mother in order to place the infant child in the custody of a white local attorney couple who were seeking to adopt and who frequently practiced before the same judge who sanctioned the removal. In doing so, the individual Defendants deliberately took advantage of Plaintiff Baltazar Cruz’s indigence, inability to speak or understand English, and lack of familiarity with the U.S. legal system in order to attempt to remove [the child] permanently from her mother.

As of this writing, the case has not yet gone to court, but the defendants have been charged with conspiring to violate Cruz’s constitutionally protected rights (due process, equal treatment, unreasonable seizure) and further, to deny Cruz and her daughter their constitutional rights to family integrity. The charges are based on the accusation that these actions were taken on the basis of race and/or national origin.

It wasn’t until the child was a year old that she was returned to Cruz, who then took her daughter home to Mexico. This very tardy reunion came about not because Mississippi took any steps to rectify the situation, but because of an investigation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Office for Civil Rights and Administration for Children and Families. The letter written by the last agency to executive director of the Mississippi listed a number of infractions and violations of procedures. HHS expressed concerns about this case not just because of the nature of the violations, but because “The MDHS staff interviewed did not see these issues as problematic. This leads us to conclude that this may be how business is conducted and that this is not an isolated incident” (Byrd 2010b).

**The workplace**

As was seen in Chapter 9, Latinos/as are actively discriminated against in the workplace. Earlier in this chapter Barrett’s study of language ideology in an Anglo-owned Mexican restaurant provided another example in the form of a linguist’s first-person account. Two generalizations might be made at this point: first, Barrett’s study shows how deeply rationalizations for discriminatory behaviors are engrained, and, second, that the systematic, almost obligatory use of racist language and racist treatment toward Latinos/as is just obscure enough to keep such practices out of the courtroom.

1 Stepping back, it is clear that all employers, good, bad or indifferent, take a number of  
 2 features into account to make initial, sometimes very hasty, yes/no hiring decisions. This  
 3 happens as a matter of course, and for the most part, below the level of consciousness.  
 4 Markley's study of employers in Texas established that individuals were willing to make  
 5 judgments on such things as intelligence and diligence on the basis of a recorded voice  
 6 alone (Markley 2000).

7 Such preconceptions mold the employers' expectations for workers before they begin  
 8 employment, and extend to strategic decisions with long-term impact (which individuals  
 9 are suited for which positions, assumptions about skill sets and intelligence, who to train  
 10 further).

11 Maldonado (2009) set out to interview "forty employers from twenty-six farm opera-  
 12 tions and firms (packers/shippers, equipment and input suppliers, warehouses) repre-  
 13 senting the various sizes and types of agricultural operations in Washington" to gather  
 14 data on Anglo/Latino relations in such settings. Of the 40 employers interviewed, 28 were  
 15 Anglo, and each described without hesitation a division of labor based on race. Employers  
 16 sometimes reacted with irritation or direct anger when asked about race or ethnicity; all  
 17 had a set of arguments to rationalize or neutralize the inherent racism in their employment  
 18 practices. Here is one example of an employer who has so naturalized racism in his view  
 19 of the workplace that he doesn't hesitate to provide answers that are clearly illogical:  
 20

21 [T]he workers are one hundred percent Hispanic . . . [O]n all the ranches that I run  
 22 . . . we have no Caucasian people at all . . . And the reason being is that we don't get  
 23 anybody applying for it. It's mostly been just Hispanic people were applying.  
 24 (Interviewer: How do you think it became that way?) Supply and demand, you know.  
 25 Basic economics.

26 (ibid.: 1024)

27  
 28 The role of language in the racialization process comes out in an almost matter-of-fact  
 29 way in another interview with an employer who rejects the necessity of talking about  
 30 ethnicity or race at all:  
 31

32 I, it just [laughs] I could, I could go into a whole soapbox in my opinion . . . Race,  
 33 race is an issue in this country mainly because those populations want to keep it an  
 34 issue in this country. When you really get to the hiring and, and firing and who's on  
 35 your team type situation . . . it's based, as far as I'm concerned, on performance. I  
 36 don't care if you're from Mars; if you can do the job and you can communicate with  
 37 me . . . and do it effectively, hey, you're hired.

38 (ibid.: 1023)

39  
 40 The employer begins a sentence "If you can do the job and communicate with me" and  
 41 then pauses. That pause signals the speaker's reaching for a phrase that will qualify and  
 42 restrict the first part of the sentence. "If you can communicate with me and do it  
 43 effectively" could be read thus: *There are two necessary qualifications if you want to work with*  
 44 *me. You have to be able to do the job, and you have to be able to make me understand you.* Thus  
 45 the employer is anticipating communication breakdown and handing the responsibility  
 46 for successful communication to the worker alone. This is, in itself, not a violation of any  
 47 law; an employer may reasonably require that an employee be able to communicate with  
 48 him or her. What is interesting about this exchange is the tone.



Racism is often expressed in this off-hand way, just as the rationalizations offered are usually pretextual, and the logic spurious. As in this case:

He told me quite frankly that he would never hire anyone with a strong foreign accent, and especially not a Mexican accent. I asked him why. His only response was, “That’s smart business. I have to think of the customers. I wouldn’t buy anything from a guy with a Mexican accent.”

(Spicher 1992: 3–4)

Whether or not it is actually smart business to willfully ignore the needs and wants of a population of many millions of consumers is doubtful. Nevertheless, this anecdote is more useful than any number of statistics, because it makes some things painfully clear: the degree of accent is irrelevant when the focus is not on content, but form. The businessman cannot conceive of a middle-class, Spanish-speaking population with money to spend, and therefore the entire Mexican American population is worthy of rejection.

### Education in the South-west

There is a long and well-documented history of discrimination toward Spanish-speaking populations in the South-west. Some of the most destructive policies have been practiced in education,<sup>14</sup> where Mexican children were routinely segregated into poorly staffed and overcrowded schools. Such practices ended – in theory – in 1954 with *Brown v. Board of Education*, when the Supreme Court struck down *separate but equal* policies. The most blatant forms of segregation lessened, but Latino/a children were – and are still – peripheralized, segregated, unfairly and incorrectly funneled into special education classrooms, denied opportunities readily available to Anglos, and forbidden to speak their own language even in one-on-one conversations on the playground.

Gandara and Orfield (2010) and Po (2010) present a stark picture of linguistic segregation in Arizona schools while Bratt’s “Violence in the Curriculum: Compulsory Linguistic Discrimination in the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands” (2007) is a sobering look at the way institutionalized linguistic discrimination puts teachers and children on opposite sides of a great gulf, creating an antagonism that can, in extreme moments, end in physical violence. In Bratt’s experience in Arizona, school districts create extreme English-Only policies tougher than the State guidelines, so that “teachers in more than one elementary district in rural Arizona are summarily fired if they are heard speaking Spanish, even to prevent an accident on the playground” (ibid.: 3).

Structured programs designed to help English language learners toward proficiency have had exactly the opposite result (Gandara and Orfield 2010), in large part because English speakers and English learners rarely interact, so that those with limited English proficiency are isolated from those situations where English is spoken:

Our analysis of the hyper-segregation of Hispanic students, and particularly Spanish-speaking [English language learners], suggests that little or no attention has been given to the consequences of linguistic isolation for a population whose future depends on the acquisition of English . . . For ELLs, interaction with ordinary English-speaking peers is essential to their English language development and consequently to their acquisition of academic English.

(Gifford and Valdés 2006: as cited in Gandara and Orfield 2010)

1 There have been periods when Arizona's policies emerged from the grip of moral panic  
 2 to more inclusive approaches.<sup>15</sup> A broad bilingual-education program was put in place  
 3 in the 1990s, which resulted in the hiring of several hundred native Spanish-speaking  
 4 teachers, some from outside the U.S. (Gandara and Orfield 2010). Even in such open-  
 5 minded and progressive periods, the underlying ideology has been anti-immigrant and  
 6 anti-bilingual "serving to privilege the English-speaking Anglo majority and to marginalize  
 7 and disenfranchise the Spanish-speaking Latino minority" (Cashman 2009: 45). And  
 8 indeed, the progress of the 1990s was being reversed by 2000 when a ballot measure  
 9 forbidding use of any language other than English in the classroom was passed.

10 Issues around language are tied to questions around immigration, arguably the most  
 11 divisive topic in Arizona's post-colonial history. As is usually the case with immigration-  
 12 focused extremism, anti-immigration rhetoric flares up in times of economic downturn.  
 13 At the writing of the second edition of this book, the U.S. is "in the midst of the largest  
 14 influx of immigrants in a century. . . a record in absolute numbers but still somewhat  
 15 smaller proportion of the total population than was the case a century ago" (Hakimzadeh  
 16 and Cohn 2007).

17 Certainly the country's fragile economy contributed to the fervor around two bills  
 18 signed into law in April 2010 by Arizona governor Jan Brewer. State Bill 1070 aims to  
 19 "identify, prosecute and deport illegal immigrants" (Archibold 2010a) in ways that  
 20 opponents and critics find extreme to the point of violating basic human rights set forth  
 21 in the U.S. Constitution. The targeting of the Mexican population has earned 1070 the  
 22 nickname the *Breathing while Brown Bill* (Lemons 2010) an indication of the extreme  
 23 anxiety the bill evokes among the Latino population, whether they are citizens, legal  
 24 residents, or undocumented workers (Archibold 2010b). McKinley's report from Arizona  
 25 quoted one bystander: "If they look at someone and they are of Mexican descent, they are  
 26 going to be guilty until proven innocent," she said. "It makes you guilty for being brown"  
 27 (McKinley 2010).

28 Challenges were quickly filed in the court by civil rights scholars and activists, professors  
 29 of law and linguistics, the Mexican government, the ACLU and the U.S. Justice  
 30 Department (McKinley 2010). Vivek Malhotra, the advocacy and policy council for the  
 31 American Civil Liberties Union, summarized Arizona's new immigration laws quite neatly.  
 32 "This law does nothing short of making all of its Latino residents, and other presumed  
 33 immigrants, potential criminal suspects in the eyes of the law" (Archibold 2010d).

34 SB 1070 was written and publicized in a combative tone that caught the media's atten-  
 35 tion. HR 2083, also signed by the governor in April 2010, was launched more quietly.  
 36 This newer bill was strikingly different in one important way. While SB 1070's focus was  
 37 undocumented workers, HR 2083 focus shifts to the rest of the population, those who  
 38 were born in the U.S. or came to the country through official routes, but who still self-  
 39 identify as Mexican.

40 HR 2083 prohibits schools from offering courses at any grade level that advocate ethnic  
 41 solidarity, promote overthrow of the U.S. government, or cater to specific ethnic groups.  
 42 Observers posed many questions raised by the odd wording:

43  
 44  
 45 Are Arizona schools in the habit of promoting the overthrow of the government? Is  
 46 there an implicit accusation here?

47 Does the school board mean ethnicity distinct from race? Would this include any  
 48 ethnicity? So for example, a course offered to advanced students in high school on

the French Revolution, the Irish–English conflicts, the economics of the Middle East, these would all be prohibited?

Advocating ethnic solidarity – could that include discussion of our own Revolution?

In fact, the purpose of this law is very narrow: it was written to dismantle a popular and successful Mexican-American studies program in the Tucson school district.

(Calefati 2010; Kurowski 2010; Strauss 2010a, 2010b)

The law was written and promoted by Tom Horne, the state superintendent of public instruction, a man in a heated race for attorney general against an opponent known for his extreme stance on immigration. Khimm (2010) quotes Horne as he justifies the bill as a way to target specific courses in Tucson where Latino/a students are inculcated with “‘ethnic chauvinism’ . . . he skips straight to the inflammatory charge that [ethnic studies classes] could encourage students to revolt against U.S. government, effectively legitimizing fears of a Mexican ‘reconquista’” (ibid.). In this view of ethnic studies, students and teachers are all seen as secessionists.

Horne’s personal animosity toward a specific program attended by 3 percent of the 55,000 students in the Tucson school district has wide-reaching implications (Calefati 2010). Latinos may fill almost 50 percent of the classrooms in Arizona, but because Horne has a vested interest in the moral panic he is fostering, children of Latino/a, African or Asian backgrounds will be forbidden to learn about their heritage in school.

Finally, the State Education Office took the opportunity provided by the passage of these two bills to put new policies in place that target teachers who speak Spanish as a native language, or English with an accent. Reportedly based on the federal No Child Left Behind Act, the Arizona provision requires that teachers who teach English to English language learners (that is, Latinos/as who speak Spanish as a first language) must be “fluent in every aspect of the English language” (Calefati 2010). The person at the Arizona department of education who is charged with enforcing this new rule has been quite specific on the record:

“The teacher obviously must be fluent in every aspect of the English language,” said Adela Santa Cruz, director of the Arizona education-department office charged with enforcing standards in classes for students with limited English. The education department has dispatched evaluators to audit teachers across the state on things such as comprehensible pronunciation, correct grammar and good writing.

Teachers that don’t pass muster may take classes or other steps to improve their English; if fluency continues to be a problem, Ms. Santa Cruz said, it is up to school districts to decide whether to fire teachers or reassign them to mainstream classes not designated for students still learning to speak English.

(Jordan 2010)

Very little information is publicly available on the details of this policy. Strauss (2010c) interviewed a spokesperson from the Department of Education, who provided a list of school districts that were being monitored, for example: “2009–10 school year – The education department monitored 61 districts and found 9 districts were cited for fluency” (ibid.). The school district stated that no teachers were dismissed or transferred on the basis of lack of fluency, but there was no further information or documentation.

Neither was there any background on the inspectors, what kind of training they had to qualify them, or whether there was any conflict of interest (for example, will any of them make a living in the accent reduction business?). There are no definitions of accent or grammar or even of the concept of fluency. Yet these inspectors hold the fate of hundreds of teachers in their hands.

As we have seen before, teachers are also protected under Title VII, and may not be dismissed or refused promotion on the basis of accent linked to national origin unless that accent makes it impossible for the employee to accomplish assigned work. Thus, if any teachers are reassigned or dismissed on this basis and they pursue a legal challenge, it would be up to Horne to prove that a native Spanish-speaking teacher is detrimental to the educational welfare of a Spanish-speaking child.

Aside from the question of civil rights and Title VII, the logic presented here is spurious. If only native English speakers should teach those who come to school with limited English proficiency, then by extension French classes must be taught by native French teachers, and Japanese by native Japanese speakers. The study of second language acquisition – and common sense – are enough to establish the fact that speaking a language is not sufficient training to teach it effectively.

Taken as a whole, these two new laws and the new educational policy present a disturbing picture of a state and population in the grip of a moral panic, where common sense and (some would argue) common decency have been sacrificed in order to assuage fears. As is usually the case in a moral panic, there is some rationale not very far in the background: demographics will continue to shift toward a Latino/a majority, so that sometime in the not too distant future, Anglos will no longer have numerical superiority. The question is, does it make sense to alienate and anger those people who will one day be the majority?

### **Hypothetically speaking**

Consider this set of possibilities:

The U.S. Census estimates that in the year 2030 Arizona will be only 30 percent Anglo or native English speakers. Another 58 percent will be Spanish speaking, and the remainder are Native American tribes who govern themselves and set their own policies.

Imagine that in 2031, the State government of Arizona votes new legislation into place, which splits pretty much 30/65 percent along ethnicity and language lines. The governor vetoes the bill; the legislature overrides the veto. Spanish is now the official language of Arizona. The new bill includes the following sections:

Article I: Spanish is the official language of the state of Arizona.

Article II: The civil administration, the health services and social services, the public utility enterprises, the professional corporations, the associations of employees and all enterprises doing business in Arizona will institute Spanish-only policies.

Article III: All governmental offices and parliamentary structures will conduct business in Spanish.

Article IV: Workers will not be required or encouraged to speak any language other than Spanish.

Article V: All consumer information must be in Spanish.

Article VI: All public education at all levels is to be conducted exclusively in Spanish. English will not be used or heard in any Arizona school with the exception of classes in which the English language is being taught.

Article VII: Product labels, their instructions, manuals, warranty certificates as well as restaurant menus and wine lists must be in Spanish. All street signs, including shop signs, must be in Spanish. Violations will be heavily fined.

Article IX: Catalogues, brochures, folders, commercial directories and other such publications, must be in the official language. All software (for example, video games and operating systems) must be available in Spanish by the year 2035.

This will most likely strike you as absurd. It’s too extreme in the way it simply nullifies the rights of native and/or monolingual English speakers. Such sweeping legislation must be challenged immediately in the courts.

But such things have happened, and there’s a present-day example very close to home.

In 1763, the French withdrew from North America and at that point Canada became a British possession. The British colonial policy was to *make the world England*, and that process began immediately with a new English-speaking government and upper class dominating business and social circles. With the immigration of large numbers of British people, business trade shifted away from the traditional French merchants; the fate of the French who had been in Quebec since the first European settlements were made clear: you must assimilate.

French speakers were shut out of the most influential aspects of official life, and a tiered system developed in which Anglophones (English speakers, the British) constituted the governing classes; to be a Francophone was to be associated with the laboring classes. Francophones were at a marked disadvantage in every way; their children were segregated from Anglophone schoolchildren and had fewer possibilities in terms of education and training.

Of course, French did not die out. A large, healthy, well-established language community does not simply buckle under in the face of governmental decree. The Francophone population regrouped and began to find their way back.

In 1974, a new Francophone-dominant province government passed an Official Language Act with the intention of making French the normal, everyday language of work, instruction, communication, commerce and business. Another Bill (*Loi 101*) was passed in 1977 which went into much greater detail. In fact, all of the provisions suggested above were included, almost word for word in Bill 101.<sup>16</sup>

As is so often the tendency when power structures are concentrated in a small section of the community, the oppressed had become the oppressors (Freire 2000 [1970]).<sup>17</sup> The Francophone government asserted its right to exclude all things Anglophone, and they do so still. One example of many is Bob Rice’s story.

A Québécoise from birth and an Anglophone, Bob ran into trouble with an apostrophe, and it cost him dearly.

One day in 2004, Bob Rice received a ticket in the mail. Its intention wasn’t very clear, but eventually he figured out that he was being fined by the *Office Québécois de la langue française* (Quebec Office of the French Language) because they had a complaint from a neighbor about the apostrophe on the sign for his plumbing company: Bob’s (Figure 14.7).

# Bob's Plumbing

Figure 14.7 Bob's Plumbing

The Quebec office of the French Language is responsible for enforcing the language legislation, which outlaws apostrophes in public signs. The reasoning here is that the province laws stipulate French-only on all public signs, and there is no apostrophe in the possessive form *Bobs*, in French.

Bob was given a \$599 fine and a \$187 delivery charge for the ticket. If he did not pay within the week, his pickup truck, farm tractor and car would be sold at an auction in his yard. Bob paid the fines, and solved the problem of the apostrophe by covering it up with a sticker of the Canadian flag.

## Summary

Americans tend to think of monolingualism as the default. For whatever reason – educational gaps, ideology, mythology – most of us imagine that Spanish is spoken in Spain, Polish in Poland, and so on.

In fact, monolingualism is the exception across the world's populations, and that is the case even if you exclude consideration of immigrant languages. This is quite logical if you consider for a moment that national political boundaries change over time, usually as the result of war or its aftermath. The current boundaries of France include areas which were once Spain, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. When the borders moved, the populations (for the most part) stayed put. For example, Occitan is a romance language closely related to Catalan. There are native speakers and small Occitan language communities in France, Monaco, Italy, and Spain. Occitan is just one example of the dozens of indigenous languages in Spain other than Spanish.

A government may make laws declaring one language to be the official language of the nation, but the facts indicate a different reality. This is true of every country in Europe and the world. It is true of the United States. Every few years a wave of protest washes over us, and a subset of the people demand that English be acknowledged as the country's one true language. In some cases it seems that people actually believe that such a thing is possible, and all it will take is a law to render us monolingual.

Such laws are primarily symbolic, of course. The demand for an English monolingual U.S. is akin to saying: *We're first. We're best. Everybody needs to acknowledge that, and unwillingness to do so is . . . un-American!* There are no rational arguments for this position. English-Only proponents can only appeal to majority rule, but even that can be challenged by invoking the Bill of Rights, and in any case, numerical superiority is slipping away in many places.

The U.S. is a multilingual nation, and our two most prevalent languages are English and Spanish. Whatever laws we pass, whatever language planning documents we write, those facts are undeniable. In the end, language will not be legislated.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES**

- Listen to Andre Codrescu's essay "Arizona Education Loses the Accent of America" (2010) on National Public Radio. Does his perspective change your thoughts about anything in this chapter? How is it relevant to the chapter – and book – in a broader sense? Radio link is available at: <http://xrl.in/72w0>.
- Davila (Davila *et al.* 1993) undertook a preliminary, explorative statistical analysis of earnings by three groups of workers in the U.S.: Mexican Americans, German Americans and Italian Americans who speak their heritage language at home (and thus, Davila *et al.* postulated, spoke with an accent). In fact, the analysis indicated that those of Mexican ancestry earned significantly less than the other two groups. They suggest that Mexicans who have a closer affinity to their heritage culture pay a penalty for that preference, but they also list a number of other possible reasons for the discrepancy in earnings. Discuss what you think those reasons may be. Think in terms of immigration history and trends, geographic distribution, and legal considerations in addition to ethnicity and language.
- Consider the history of discriminatory practices taken against Native Americans as described briefly in Chapter 7, and compare that information (and any other research you might do on this topic) to Padgett's *Time Magazine* article about the Cruz case in Mississippi. What similarities do you see? How relevant are they to language-focused discrimination?
- Make a list of terms for people of Latino origin. (If you are yourself Latino/a, you can still undertake this exercise – but you should concentrate on non-Spanish speakers when collecting data. (If you are not comfortable with this, you could take a different approach, and make a similar list of Spanish language terms for non-Spanish speakers in the U.S.) Ask acquaintances, friends, family for help. In class, find a way to divide all the terms collected into groups. Are some terms purely derogatory and racist? Are there neutral terms which seem to be fairly safe; that is, they won't offend the majority of Latinos? How many of the terms do you use yourself, and which ones do you avoid? Can you reconstruct what goes through your mind if/when you use a term like "wetback"? This is not meant to be an exercise in blame; the purpose is to pinpoint the way you have learned to think about a particular ethnic group.
- Consider the Arizona School Board's intention to send out inspectors to decide whether a teacher speaks English fluently enough to work with Spanish-speaking children who are learning English. Can you imagine putting together a program (training the investigators, etc.) that would reach judicious, consistent evaluations? What would that look like?
- How is the language situation in Quebec relevant to the conflicts in the U.S. South-west? Do you feel the Francophone laws in Quebec were well founded? Reasonable? Understandable? What do you think might happen if/when the Spanish-speaking population of Arizona reaches a strong majority?
- Explore the Pew Hispanic Center Web site by following the link to "Reports." Identify an issue that is (a) language related; and (b) could be addressed, at least in part, by "making the invisible visible" to Anglos.
- Consider the Census maps from the 2007 American Community Survey in this chapter. Note that those areas of the country which are most heavily bilingual Spanish/English

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are not necessarily the areas where English language facility is lowest. Why might that be, for example, in New Mexico?

- “*Discomfort is not oppression*. It is a sign of privilege when white students believe they should be able to understand everything going on around them or never have their racial embodiment questioned publicly.” Discuss.
- Pursue the issue of the Mexican-American Ethnic Studies Program in the Tucson school district. A few places to start:
  - Strauss, V. (2010) Why Arizona Targeted Ethnic Studies. *The Washington Post*, May 25. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72an>.
  - Arizona, in the Classroom [Editorial] (2011) *The New York Times*. January 17: A22. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72ks>.
  - Tucson United School District Mexican American Studies Department Presentation to the TUSD Governing Board January 12, 2010 Director: Sean Arce, M.Ed. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72ar>.
  - The full text of an e-mail exchange between Dr. Rodolfo Acuña and KGUN9 News director Forrest Carr. For ease of reading, Carr’s questions are highlighted in yellow. The non-highlighted portions are Dr. Acuña’s responses. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72au>.
  - May 24 (2010) What ethnic studies students are learning: an inside look. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72av>.
  - June 3 (2010) Author Slams Arizona Education Boss over Ethnic Studies Ban. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72ao>.
  - October 19 (2010) Does TUSD’s Ethnic Studies Program Violate Arizona’s New Law? Available at: <http://xrl.in/72ap>.

## Notes

- 1 All figures provided here originate from one of two primary sources: (1) the U.S. Census Bureau publications available online, and (2) the PEW Hispanic Center research reports and materials, unless otherwise noted.
- 2 Lipski (2008), Zentella (1997, 2004), and Silva-Corvalán (2004) are good resources to consult for detailed descriptions of Spanish as it is spoken in the U.S.
- 3 Salazar was a major figure in the Chicano movement. A respected journalist and writer for *The Los Angeles Times*, Salazar was killed by a sheriff’s deputy while reporting on a Chicano protest of the Vietnam War. His death helped focus the country’s attention on discrimination against Chicanos.
- 4 Originally the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo guaranteed that Mexican citizens who stayed a year in the territories newly ceded to the U.S. would be granted U.S. citizenship. Like other provisions of the treaty, Congress summarily deleted these promises before ratification.
- 5 It is important to note that Spanish is not the only language spoken in the countries identified as Hispanic. The Mexican population of more than 104 million includes more than 8 million speakers of indigenous Indian languages (about 8 percent of Mexico’s total population), of whom almost half a million are monolingual and speak no Spanish at all (Lewis 2009). Guatemala’s population of 9.3 million is approximately 55 percent Indian and 44 percent Mestizo. The Indian population includes



- some 20,000 speakers of Kanjobal, 5,000 of whom are reported to be in Los Angeles (ibid.).
- 6 It is important to remember that the *study* of code-switching does not imply any kind of endorsement of code switching as the basis of language policy in educational setting.
  - 7 In her (1995) book *Verbal Hygiene*, Cameron has an excellent discussion of the term “politically correct” that is well worth reading.
  - 8 Gómez uses the term “off-white” but notes: “I might just as easily use the term ‘off-black’ to describe Mexican Americans’ in-between status. Employing the term ‘off-white,’ however, invites focus on Mexicans’ striving (but rarely succeeding) for white status and equality with whites” (2007: 163).
  - 9 With apologies (and thanks) to Jane Hill, whose groundbreaking work in this area has been invaluable.
  - 10 Fought’s interviews with Latinos/as in Los Angeles also included discussions with bilingual speakers to explore the range of opinions on this subject.
  - 11 Less than 4 percent of Mexico’s population lives in Oaxaca, which contributes about 1 percent to the national economy. Over 60 percent of the population lives in poverty; only 6.4 percent of the population finishes grade school. Available at: <http://xrl.in/72qu>.
  - 12 The Chatino example originates from Pride (1965); subsequently I had help with it and its translation into Spanish. Thanks to Monica Macaulay, Joe Salmons, and George Aaron Broadwell. All imperfections are, of course, mine alone.
  - 13 All direct quotations come from the complaint that was filed with the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, Jackson Division, naming the Mississippi Department of Human Services and Singing River Health System as defendants.
  - 14 This was true also for African Americans and Native Americans. In the case of Native Americans (see “Good Enough English” in Chapter 7), children were often forcibly removed from their families to boarding schools in a last ditch attempt to break resistance to assimilation, in part by denying them their own languages. While Latino challenges to segregation in the schools had some success, the African American efforts in the courts did not (Powers 2008: 470).
  - 15 If you are not familiar with the concept of “moral panic,” you may want to read the first case study on moral panic in Oakland in Chapter 16 before continuing.
  - 16 The current version of Bill 101 is available online in both English and French: [http://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/charte/reperes/Loi\\_22.pdf](http://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/charte/reperes/Loi_22.pdf).
  - 17 Paulo Freire is considered one of the founders of critical pedagogy; his most cited work is *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000 [1970]). The irony is that Horne has banned that particular book in Arizona schools:
 

Mr. Horne goes way overboard in trying to keep high school students from studying works like Paulo Freire’s ‘Pedagogy of the Oppressed,’ a classic educational text, or any effort to deepen students’ understanding of history, and their place in the world.

(Arizona, in the Classroom, 2011)

**Suggested further reading**

Achugar, M. and Pessoa, S. (2009) Power and Place: Language Attitudes Towards Spanish in a Bilingual Academic Community in Southwest Texas. *Spanish in Context* 6: 199–223.

El Paso is possibly the most bilingual city in the U.S., and accordingly, attitudes toward Spanish are markedly different than they are in other urban areas, such as San Diego or

1 Chicago. Achugar and Passeo's 2009 article is a study of attitudes in El Paso, focusing on  
 2 a particular social/educational group. The article itself includes extensive quotes from  
 3 interviews, both in English and Spanish, with no translations of either language. What  
 4 does this say about the author's own attitudes and opinions?

5  
 6 Cashman, H.R. (2009) The Dynamics of Spanish Maintenance and Shift in Arizona:  
 7 Ethnolinguistic Vitality, Language Panic and Language Pride. *Spanish in Context* 6(1):  
 8 43–68.

9 This article provides interesting analysis of a language panic in Arizona, or the use of  
 10 attitudes about language as a means to advance the social and political agendas of dominant  
 11 groups. The author also looks at the opposite social force: the actions (or lack of actions  
 12 in the form of passive resistance) that Spanish speakers take in order to resist external  
 13 pressure to abandon Spanish for English.

14  
 15 Lipski, J. M. (2008) *Varieties of Spanish in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown  
 16 University Press.

17 For information on variation in Spanish in the U.S., this is a good source of information.

18  
 19 Mendoza-Denton, N. (2008) *Homegirls: Language and Cultural Practice among Latina Youth*  
 20 *Gangs*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

21 This is a linguistic/anthropological study of Mexican American girls of high school age.  
 22 Anyone interested in Chicano culture, especially in northern California, would find this  
 23 a very worthwhile read.

24  
 25 *A Class Apart:*

26 Particularly worthwhile is this PBS American Experience documentary:

27 “From a small-town Texas murder emerged a landmark civil rights case. The little-known  
 28 story of the Mexican American lawyers who took *Hernandez v. Texas* to the Supreme  
 29 Court, challenging Jim Crow-style discrimination.” The documentary is available online:  
 30 <http://goo.gl/8s3U>.