

My Spanish is a Jumble: An examination of Language Ideologies in Teachers with Low-Prestige Dialects

Trudie Clark McEvoy
Indiana University-Perdue University Indianapolis

Abstract

An investigation of the Spanish language ideologies of teachers in a dual immersion setting is the focus of this paper. Teachers with low-prestige dialects, specifically heritage U.S. Spanish varieties and Puerto Rican Spanish varieties, were selected for this qualitative study because they are underrepresented, and are as much a promised solution to language hegemony as they are disparaged by it. An analysis of stance, in data taken by teacher interviews, elucidates two language ideologies, namely: the dialect hierarchy ideology and ethnicity gatekeeping ideology. Statements made by these teachers regarding their own and others' language use indicate that the representation of speakers of low-prestige dialects in education is desperately needed, but insufficient. Although individuals create and reproduce language ideologies, a given individual cannot be held responsible for changing institutionalized language ideologies. A shift that validates low-prestige varieties in dual immersion and heritage education requires further support for teachers and students who speak low-prestige varieties.

I. Introduction

Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) states, "If you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language I cannot take pride in myself. Until I can accept Chicano Texas Spanish, Tex Mex Spanish and all other languages I speak, I cannot accept the legitimacy of myself" (p. 81). Throughout her novel Anzaldúa discusses her experience of working to accept who she is across many intersections: sexuality, gender and, as highlighted in this quote, the speaker of several low-prestige contact varieties of Spanish. Her important and transformative struggle of legitimizing her own dialects is not isolated, in fact, low-prestige dialects are common, and increasing among Spanish speaking students in the U.S. as the Hispanic population continues to grow. The vast majority of these students, however, do not hear their dialects utilized by their teachers (Howard, Sugarman, & Christian, 2003). In the limited number of cases where instructors are able to legitimize the use of low-prestige dialects, as teacher/leaders in the classroom, students benefit (Norton & Toohey, 2011; Valdés et. al., 2003). Being a teacher does not, however, take away the negative ideologies which speakers of low-prestige dialects face. It is crucial that research regarding Spanish speakers and Latino students acknowledge this struggle in order to better support the unending process of engendering respect toward one's own dialect.

Differing scholars have offered a wide range of terms to describe negative ideologies directed towards Spanish and Spanish speakers in the U.S. namely: linguicism, xenophobia, masked racism, and, most specifically, hispanophobia (Hill, 2000; Ortega, 1999; Schmidt, 2002; Zentella, 1997). Spanish speakers and Latinos hold negative ideologies about one another, creating intergroup conflict and hierarchies between particular socially constructed identities and means of

speaking (Bills, 2005; Ortega, 1999; Schreffler, 2007). Regarding language, speakers must contend with the hegemony of certain dialects, the rejection of naturalistic bilingualism, linguistic requirements for ethnic authenticity and many others (Fitzsimmons-Doolan et. al., 2015; Urcioli, 2008; Valdés, 2003; Villa, 2002.) Individual speakers are forced to negotiate and position themselves in relation to language ideologies embodied and expressed by non-Spanish speakers, other Spanish speakers, and even their own internalized beliefs. Personal philosophies of language are uncommonly stated directly but are the normalized and underlying frameworks that administrators and teachers draw on in order to make programmatic and pedagogical decisions. Since underlying frames are not often articulated directly they will be analyzed in this paper using an analysis of stance or indirect commentary and positioning of one's self in relationship to others (Jaffe, 2009; Martínez, 2006). This project will focus on the longstanding struggle to negotiate negative language ideologies as expressed in interviews by teachers who are speakers of low-prestige dialects.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language Ideologies and U.S. Latinos

Woolard and Schiefflin (1994) refer to language ideologies as the “mediating link between social structures and forms of speech” which they further describe to be the reason why and how languages have come to stand for social identities (p. 61). Like the diversity of language speakers in any given culture, these ideologies are not coherent or stagnant standards; they are dynamic systems with permeable boundaries (Train, 2007). Martínez (2006) explains that ideologies are largely pre-reflective in nature, rather than being within our awareness, they are part of a lived experience with language. Given that they are pieces of implicit cultural perspectives or deeply seated assumptions, it is uncommon that they are stated directly, instead, as Gee (2008) and Ruíz (1988) describe, they are a part of discourses with particular orientations toward the world that create and express societal norms. This essay defines language ideologies as a collection of implicit beliefs and perspectives that exist at the societal level but both impact and are held, created or subverted by individual speakers.

Scholars have worked to bring language ideologies into an explicit discussion in order to analyze, question and, in many cases, subvert them (Hill, 2000; Leeman, 2007; Martínez, 2006; Ortega, 1999; Train, 2007; Valdés et al., 2003). Broad-ranging discussions of Spanish as a minority or heritage language have illuminated how it is positioned in relation to education, language policy, and society at large (Ortega, 1999; Ruiz, 1988). Some have discussed ideologies concerning monolingualism and the denigration of naturalistic bilingualism in the U.S. (Gee, 2008; Ortega, 1999). Others have expressed valuing standard over non-standard language, as well as native over non-native speakers (Cameron, 1995; Train, 2007; Valdés et al. 2003; Villa, 2002). Language ideologies have been investigated through interviews and analyzing textbooks (Ducar, 2007; Valdés, et. al. 2003). This essay investigates language ideologies regarding Spanish and U.S. Latinos within a dual-immersion setting through interview data.

2.2. Language ideologies in Heritage and Dual Immersion Programs

Although the term Heritage Language Learner (HLL) is used primarily at the University level HLLs frequently populate K-12 dual-immersion and bilingual settings. Scholars acknowledge

that, despite great in-group diversity, HLLs are defined by their familial or cultural connections and language proficiency (Carreira, 2004; Valdés, 1997). Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) suggests that the language proficiency aspect of defining HLLs is the most contested. In fact, most University programs are not designed to accommodate the needs of lower level HLLs (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005). For this essay, I will include the entire spectrum of childhood naturalistic language exposure and familial connections. Within this definition many students and occasionally teachers in dual-immersion settings are HLLs.

Schools that educate HLLs both within dual-immersion and University Heritage programs must contend with ideologies that are present within society at large. These societal language ideologies that impact language policy, dual immersion programs, as well as college level Heritage programs have been well studied (Barker et al., 2001; Coryell, Clark, & Pomerantz, 2002; Ruiz, 1988; Schmidt, 2002; Wiley, 2000, Zentella, 1997). In his seminal work, Richard Ruiz (1988) identified three overarching language ideologies present in bilingual education language planning and policy: language as right, language as resource and language as problem. Scholars have gone on to investigate extensively the language ideologies present in political rhetoric used by the English only movement (EOM) which sought to eradicate bilingual education (Barker et. al. 2001; Espinosa-Aguilar, 2001; Johnson, 2010). The most widely accepted language ideology promoted by this movement conceptualizes Americanism as a promise of national unity through the adoption of a single language (Schmidt, 2002; Wiley & Lukes, 1996; Wiley, 2000, Zentella, 1997). Scholars have also discussed the related and occasionally overlapping monolingual ideology, nativism ideology, and assimilationist ideologies as contributors to EOM rhetoric (Schmidt, 2002; Wiley, 2000).

In the bilingual programs that remain, as well as their heritage program counter parts, programmatic, administrative and pedagogical decisions are impacted by societal ideologies as well as passed through the ideological filters of administrators, teachers and students. These three groups do not necessarily hold similar ideologies or coincide in their vision and implementation of teaching practice. Negative language ideologies can be absent in administrative levels but still be present in classroom practices. Potowski (2007) found, for example, that in a dual-immersion program where the administrative decision-making and discourse embraced the equality between English and Spanish, classroom practices demonstrated English dominance. Programmatic decisions can also foster environments, which diminish student identity needs. For example, Carreira (2004) suggests that the common decision to exclude lower level heritage language learners from Heritage programs and instead place them in the L2 track creates erasure of ethnic identity and ignores student identity exploration needs. Teachers may accept or even promote negative language ideologies within their departments and classrooms. Valdés et. al. (2003) examined the language ideologies of professors in four university level Spanish programs. She and her colleagues found that these teachers accepted language hierarchies between Spanish dialects. Fitzsimmons-Doolan et. al. (2015) conducted a large scale mixed methods analysis of teacher language ideologies during the period of transition to bilingual education where she and her colleagues identified eight language ideologies. This paper will focus on teachers who work in a dual-immersion setting.

Research on dual immersion schools suggests that teachers rely on their own beliefs for program implementation over explicit training (Jackson, 2001). This makes teachers contribution of particular interest when considering program development, implementation and the general environment of language ideologies of a given school who serves HLLs. Despite the well-known increase in Hispanic students, often speakers of low-prestige Spanish varieties, teachers

who speak US or Caribbean Spanish varieties are scarce in U.S. bilingual education (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003; The National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Valdés et. al. (2003) found that the majority of college professors are primarily Spaniards, Latin Americans or advanced L2 speakers. In other words, there is an underrepresentation of what she describes as the least prestigious dialects, U.S. Latino and Caribbean dialects. Teachers who are speakers of low-prestige dialects are a growing yet underrepresented population within leadership whose positionality offers great insight to teachers, administrators, policy makers and researchers alike. The current piece examines the language ideologies of dual immersion teachers who speak a low-prestige dialect. It will explore the interplay between who these teachers are, their perceptions of the dialect they speak and the ideologies that they express during their interviews.

2.3. Language Ideologies and Stance

It is important to note that ideologies are pre-reflective in nature (Martinez, 2006). Observing the way that a person indirectly builds identity through positioning herself or himself, against or with another group through stance-taking is, therefore, an excellent means of exposing and analyzing underlying language ideologies. More specifically, stance can be used to index oneself, pass judgment, and create a particular socially constructed identity (Bucholtz, 2009; Jaffe, 2009). Jaffe (2009) maintains that stance “saturates talk about others, in which speakers engage in both explicit and implicit forms of social categorization and evaluation... and lay claim to particular social and/or moral identities” (p. 9). When individuals take a stance towards forms of speech, they inevitably evoke, create, or subvert language ideologies.

This study draws on the work of Bucholtz (2009) and Shenk (2007), who have used stance to study language ideologies. Bucholtz (2009) demonstrates that the “relationship between stance, style, and identity is formed both from the bottom up, as it unfolds in local interaction, and from the top down, through the workings of broader cultural ideologies” (p. 147). Therefore, overarching cultural ideologies are directly related to the means by which we frame ourselves in relation to others, a given concept, and within society. Shenk (2007) uses stance to discuss ethnic authenticity among Mexican American youth. As recommended by these two researchers, stance can serve to explore and reveal language ideologies.

Although Bucholtz (2009) and Shenk (2007) have explored stance within conversation, stance taking can still occur when an interlocutor speaks about a group that is not present. Du Bois (2007) defines the term “object” as the concept or group being employed as a reference point to build identity. Each stance, in his view, should be analyzed according to the object as well as the speaker’s identity. He asserts that each stance is a response to both specific and general collections of previous stances, which could otherwise be named, ideologies. For the purpose of this study stance is defined as a personal positioning in relationship to an identifiable object. The following research questions will be used to guide the analysis of teacher interviews.

3. Research Questions

1. How do the teachers (as speakers of low-prestige dialects) use stance taking to position themselves within their dual immersion context in relationship to their students and other speakers?
2. Which language ideologies do these teachers with low-prestige dialects promote or subvert through stance taking?

4. Methodology

4.1. Data Collection

This article is part of a larger ethnographic study of a dual immersion school in the Midwest. Data were collected between March and April of 2010. A total of 20 interviews were conducted along with classroom observations (which totaled approximately 6 hours of recordings). Two teacher interviews (which totaled 77 minutes of recording) were selected for analysis, since the teachers in question low prestige dialects. All student interviews were excluded from the study as well as interviews with teachers who do not speak a low-prestige dialect.

4.2. Context

This dual immersion school starts in kindergarten with a 90:10 instructional model in which the majority of instruction is in the students' dominant language. The L2 language of instruction gradually increases in time (by 10 percent each year), until all students receive 50 percent of their instruction in Spanish starting in 4th grade. Instruction is then 50:50 through 6th grade. The model shifts in 7th and 8th grade where all instruction is in English except for the Spanish Literacy course for an hour each day. Students are separated upon entering the school into two groups according to language dominance; however, all of the students are heritage speakers of Spanish since they have a connection or lineage to a Latino identity (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005). Likewise, although the students are grouped by dominance, the entire bilingual continuum is represented.

4.3. Participants

Mrs. G stated that this is her 16th year teaching at the same school. She was born in Puerto Rico and came to the United States as a graduate student in a master's program. She previously taught elementary Spanish content courses. The interview was conducted during her first year of teaching Spanish literacy at the middle school level. She expressed great affection for her students, some of whom she has known since they were in kindergarten. She speaks of them as if they are her children.

Mr. M was born in Venezuela, but came to the U.S. as a young child. His mother is Venezuelan and his father is American. He spoke only Spanish with his mother until late elementary school, when he refused to respond to her in Spanish. In high school, his parents sent him to Venezuela by himself for a summer, at which time he began to produce Spanish again. It is important to note that Mr. M is a speaker of a contact Heritage variety or a U.S. variety of Spanish. His trip to Venezuela was a start to producing Spanish again but he lived and continued to learn Spanish in the U.S. with speakers from many backgrounds. Mr. M stated that he had taught at the school for many years in the elementary grades in Spanish and middle school in English. He is very committed to the dual immersion vision of the school, which encourages language maintenance, an opportunity he was not afforded as a child.

5. Data Analysis

In order to answer the research questions the data were first reviewed to identify the stance

sections that related to language ideologies. In total, 27 stance sections were identified that had identifiable objects and related to language ideologies. Grounded theory suggests that categories emerge, as part of an iterative process of data analysis instead of being imposed by previous research (Charmaz, 2001). Taking the initial stages of grounded theory, categories in this analysis emerged from the data. Stances were grouped according to language ideology themes. Within this thematic analysis three general trends were identified, dialect hierarchy, monolingual norm and ethnicity gate keeping. The first two categories were then collapsed into one due to their extensive overlaps within many stance sections.

5.1. Defining Dialect Hierarchy Language Ideology

The first language ideology within the analysis, dialect hierarchy ideology, adheres to an established hegemony of particular Spanish varieties. Using broad strokes, this ideology suggests that the Spanish of Spain is the most prestigious Spanish, followed by Latin American dialects, highly proficient L2 speakers of prestigious dialects, Caribbean varieties, and, finally, U.S. varieties (Espinosa, 1923; Ortega, 1999; Schreffler, 2007; Valdés et. al. 2003).

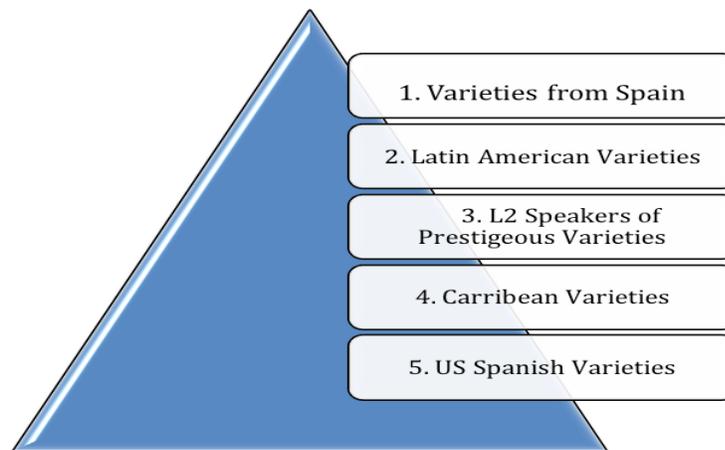


Figure 1. Dialect Hierarchy Chart

This means that dialects, as displayed in Figure 1, are either prestigious (1-3), or low-prestige (4-5). An important factor within the dialect hierarchy language ideology is that monolingualism is the norm against which all other language experiences should be judged (Gee, 2008; Ortega, 1999). Valdés et al. (2003) suggest that individuals who take monolingualism as the norm view bilingualism as suspicious or even considered harmful to children. This view stems from the peculiar assumption that a bilingual person should behave like a combination of two monolinguals (García, 2009). This ideology constrains the definition of native speaker to middle-class monolinguals, or speakers of an idealized standard language (Davies, 2003; Kramsch, 1997; Lee-man, 2012; Ortega, 1999).

5.2. Defining Ethnicity Gatekeeping Language Ideology

The second language ideology reviewed in this essay conflates language and ethnicity. Ur-

ciouli (2008) describes the foundational assumption of this language ideology which is that language and ethnicity are things “which naturally laminate onto each other” (p. 259). Within this ideology, language can be used as a gatekeeper to ethnic authenticity (Leeman, 2012). Carreira (2004) expressed her concern for the programmatic exclusion of lower-level heritage speakers since it disarticulates their ethnic ties and their language competence. For example, an English monolingual who has Latino blood and cultural knowledge is excluded from membership as a Latino person. Shenk (2007) found a similar trend in interview data with Mexican-American youth who used Spanish to demonstrate their ethnic authenticity. In its most extreme version, with language as the sole litmus test for ethnicity, an L2 speaker may claim an ethnic identity, even though (s)he has no genetic relationship and was not raised in the community. In an ethnicity gatekeeping language ideology, then, language serves as the gatekeeper to ethnic identity.

The following analysis focuses on the stances taken by each teacher in relation to the dialect hierarchy and ethnicity gatekeeping language ideologies. In this data set teachers construct identities while creating, reproducing and/or subverting ideologies. It is important to note that in what follows, however, language ideologies are not treated as a means of singularly categorizing individuals or insinuating blame. Furthermore, the analysis is not a critique of this school or these particular teachers. The data from this research is not representative of all teachers with low-prestige dialects. It is productive, however, to explore the details of language ideologies in a unique and underrepresented but important context.

The analysis examines the use of stance found in the individual interviews of two teachers in a dual immersion school who are speakers of low-prestige dialects. Their stances will be analyzed in terms of their relationships to the underlying language ideologies, as well as their construction of these ideologies, in regard to dialect hierarchy ideology and the ethnicity gatekeeping ideology. As recommended by Du Bois (2007), each stance will be evaluated and discussed in terms of the speaker’s identity, the object of the stance, and the ways in which these two entities reflect on the teacher’s underlying ideologies. The analysis pays close attention to the means by which stance is used to construct identity, the object each stance uses as a point of reference, and the commentary it makes about a given language ideology.

5.3. Analysis of the Ethnicity Gatekeeping Ideology

Mrs. G and Mr. M have had different reactions to the ethnicity gatekeeping language ideology, indicating that language, in this case Spanish, is an essential means of claiming an authentic ethnic identity (Leeman, 2012; Shenk, 2007). Mrs. G is a native speaker from a monolingual setting, whereas Mr. M is a bilingual raised in the United States. Despite the unique colonial and bilingual history of Puerto Rico, Mrs. G does not question her ethnicity, but states several times that she is Hispanic and Puerto Rican. By contrast, Mr. M expresses a complex experience as a person who was brought up bilingually in a state that still promotes English monolingualism. His Latina mother and African-American father raised him in a predominantly African-American neighborhood. He explains that Latino icons were not part of the U.S. narrative during his childhood and English was so dominant that language loss was rampant.

Mrs. G states several times that everyone is part of the same cultural group. For example, when I ask her what is so special about the school where she teaches. She responds by stating:

Mrs. G

oUno es que nos identificamos todos porque somos todos de la misma

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

cultura

02 even aquellos maestros Americanos como tú.

03 Tú como estudiante fuistes a México.

04 Estuviste mucho allá y te acostumbraste mucho a los costumbres de ellos.

Interviewer

05 Sí y no lo puedo arrancar de mi identidad pasó

Mrs. G

06 Exactamente, aquí hay maestros americanos que hablan como tú el español

07 y enseñan español

08 entonces nos identificamos

Mrs. G constructs her identity as an authentic Latina woman who can afford or deny others membership in her group. The objects of her stance are the American teachers in her school, the interviewer (myself), and Latinos who do not speak Spanish. She aligns herself with the American teachers (Ln 01) and, subsequently, with me, since I have lived in Mexico (Ln 04-07). She evaluates me as part of the same group because I adapted to the cultural norms in Mexico (Ln 04). Mrs. G aligns herself with the other American teachers in the school precisely because they speak Spanish as I do (Ln 06). She implies that speaking Spanish as I do is sufficient to identify oneself with the Latino community. Indeed, her conflation of ethnicity and language relies on language skills as the sole indicator necessary to identify with the Latino community.

Spanish is so salient, in fact, that according to Mrs. G. lack of fluency can be the exclusive means of denying someone membership within the Latino community. She takes the following stance toward a Latino student who does not speak Spanish:

Interviewer

01 He's Mexican, he told me.

Mrs. G

02 Yeah he's mix.

03 Pero there's more,

04 but I know that family and they speak English

05 they don't speak Spanish.

Interviewer

06 Yeah his father is from Tijuana

07 but I think he has been in the U.S. for a long time

08 and he doesn't speak Spanish anymore.

Mrs. G

09 But he's big but he's like a little baby tough, clumsy

Mrs. G effectively takes two distinct stances toward her student, a contradiction that implies that she believes in the ethnicity gatekeeping ideology. On the one hand, she affords the student the identity of being mixed (Ln 02). On the other hand, she evaluates him as being from a home where only English is spoken (Ln 04-05). Despite my insistence that the student told me he identifies as Mexican (Ln 01) and that his father is from Tijuana (Ln 06), Mrs. G never affords him a Mexican identity because his family no longer uses Spanish at home. At the end of her state-

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

ment, she refuses once again to afford him this identity by pulling the conversation in a different direction (Ln 09). The student's heritage is not sufficient. Although he indirectly asserts his identity as Mexican to her through me, his claim is not legitimate. According to her, language use is a perfectly sufficient criterion by which to afford or deny a person his or her ethnic identity.

Mr. M takes a much softer position than Mrs. G concerning the connection between language and ethnicity. He expresses gratitude to his parents for sending him to Venezuela on his own and contrasts this experience to that of his peers:

Mr. M

01 Because initially I think that they think I'm the same as them

02 Well, yep I'm Venezuelan but I probably can hardly speak

03 But once they see that I can speak and what not

04 The instant reaction is "I wish I would have..."

05 and you can kind of see in their eyes just kind of that it's always going to be a source of disconnection for them.

06 Meaning that language is the key that's going to open all the doors, the books, the experiences

07 The regret is, yeah I may know where it is on a map, yeah I eat the food yeah I may know the music or dance the dance or have experienced whatever

08 but, when you hear the song do you know what they are saying?

09 Could you sing the song? When you go to order the food,

10 can you do it in Spanish?

Mr. M constructs his identity as authentically and legitimately Latino due to his linguistic skills. Initially, in this section, Mr. M positions himself by stating how non-Spanish speaking Venezuelans respond to him (Ln 01). He distinguishes himself as a speaker of Spanish, correcting their positioning (Ln 03). He describes others as feeling a sense of disconnection with their identity since they do not speak Spanish (Ln 05). Finally, Mr. M states directly that he feels language is the "key" to true connection with the community (Ln 06), with the caveat that there is knowledge one can have without language (Ln 07). Nevertheless, he says that this knowledge is inevitably truncated if the speaker lacks linguistic abilities (Ln 08-10). In this instance, he is speaking as a person who is an authentic Venezuelan and a more confident Spanish speaker than his peers. He asserts his legitimacy as an authentic Venezuelan because he possesses productive capabilities, whereas many of his peers do not.

The object of Mr. M's stance is a non-Spanish speaking Venezuelan. He suggests he has a stronger connection to the community because of his Spanish. He asserts that language is the key to accessing one's ethnicity. Without it something is missing or even lost. In this way he suggests that ethnicity is incomplete without linguistic competence and that English monolingualism is a barrier to a legitimate Latino identity. Mr. M's belief demonstrates that he agrees with the ethnicity gatekeeping language ideology.

Both teachers view linguistic competence as a means of building ethnic authenticity. Through their stances, they claim their legitimacy as speakers, and they also alternately afford and deny others claim to an authentic Latino identity. Mrs. G views language and ethnicity as intrinsically connected to one another and language as a gatekeeper to ethnicity. She has a rather radical opinion about this ideology, stating that language without heritage can be sufficient

to claim an ethnicity. Mr. M, on the other hand, sees ethnicity as a means of creating authenticity but does not suggest that language without culture is sufficient. Both of these teachers are legitimized and validated through the ethnicity gatekeeping language ideology, but they react to validation differently. While Mrs. G responds with criticism, Mr. M expresses pity.

5.4. Analysis of the Dialect Hierarchy

According to the dialect hierarchy ideology, which places Caribbean and U.S. varieties at the bottom of the hierarchy, both of these teachers speak a low-prestige dialect. One of which is also a naturalist bilingualism. Both teachers report negative experiences with this language ideology. Mrs. G tells stories of her Mexican students making fun of her Puerto Rican accent.

Mrs. G takes a stance, demonstrating her position toward dialect hierarchy in a narrative about the use of Spanish in the classroom. After a few comments regarding her feelings about speaking Spanish differently than the majority of her students, she states:

Mrs. G

*01 pero ustedes se burlan de nosotros porque nosotros no pronunciamos
la "r"*

02 y yo digo ustedes no pronuncian, ustedes hablan igual que nosotros

03 yo les decía aquí nadie tiene derecho de burlarse de nadie como habla

04 aquí no hay perfección de lenguaje

05 aquí unos hablamos un poquito más

06 porque pronunciamos las palabras más completas

07 y pronunciamos los sonidos más correctos

*08 pero en cuestión de cómo llamamos las cosas no hay perfección de
lenguaje.*

Mrs. G is speaking both as a speaker of Puerto Rican Spanish and as a teacher with authority in her classroom. At first, she positions herself as a speaker of Puerto Rican Spanish in order to debunk the previous evaluative stances taken by her students that her pronunciation of "r" is incorrect (Ln 01). She then positions herself in relation to her students, claiming that their previous stances are false because they also aspirate the "s" (Ln 02). She goes on to defend her dialect and states her opinion that teasing according to language is unfounded. In this manner, she presents herself as a teacher who has the authority to enforce a no teasing policy (Ln 03). Later, she asserts herself more strongly as an authority on language as the Spanish teacher, arguing that linguistic perfection does not exist (Ln 04).

A significant shift takes place in Mrs. G's positioning between lines (Ln 01-04) and lines (Ln 05-07). In the second section, she retracts her previously strong stance toward linguistic relativism and admits some people say words more completely (without aspiration) (Ln 07). However, at the end of her statement, she returns to her stance of authority over her students by claiming that, at least, there is no hierarchy in terms of lexical items (Ln 08).

The object of these stances is the students' perception of what constitutes more prestigious Spanish varieties, as well as Mrs. G's own perception. Her stance is articulated in response to her experiences of teasing from students for speaking Puerto Rican Spanish. More broadly, it reflects her awareness of a larger ideology that denigrates her Spanish. When the students tease her about her Spanish, they reinforce the established hierarchy between Mexican and Puerto

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

Rican Spanish varieties.

At the same time, the entire segment highlights Mrs. G's internal struggle and profound ambivalence about the concept of dialect hierarchy. It is clear that she is aware of the overarching criticism of her means of pronunciation as less correct than Mexican pronunciation. She is not able, however, to fully combat this hierarchy that places her as less "correct". While she appears to be arguing with her students, she may be equally contending with her own internalization of an ideology that disrespects her dialect. This observation is supported by her description of the challenges from her students that she has faced many times. Even though she attempts to subvert this language ideology at the beginning, Mrs. G later replicates a nuanced version of this ideology, in which lexical variation is acceptable, while phonetic variation is not (Schreffler, 2007).

This passage suggests that Mrs. G dislikes being at the bottom of the hierarchy, and acknowledges that hierarchy is unjust. However, when given authority in the classroom, she only asserts opposition to this hierarchy in terms of lexical items and accepts aspiration as "incorrect" placing her dialect as inferior to others.

Mr. M also takes an ambiguous and distant stance toward this language ideology and his identity as a speaker of a U.S. dialect. He comments on his feelings about speaking Spanish in the U.S. in the following way:

Mr. M

01 So, it's good practicing here [in the U.S.].

02 But the funny thing is that, speaking here, you end up with a jumble of dialects.

03 So, a Venezuelan would think I was Mexican

04 would think I was Puerto Rican

05 would think I was... all because I've picked up the Spanish here.

Mr. M constructs his identity as not completely part of the Venezuelan speaking community and distances himself from his U.S. Latino identity. Directly afterwards, he shares how at home he feels in this school and that he likes staying connected to his Latino side very much. In this section Mr. M is speaking as an individual with a U.S. dialect, as he distances himself from a U.S. Latino identity. He does this, suggesting that speaking in the U.S. is just "practicing", even though he has spent all but a few years of his life in the U.S. (Ln 01). Mr. M distances himself from the U.S. dialect again when he uses the general "you" about people who have a U.S. dialect (Ln 02). He does eventually use the first person pronoun "I" while continuing to distance himself from this identity by stating that speakers from Venezuela or Puerto Rico "would" hypothetically misidentify him (Ln 04-05). Finally, he suggests indirectly that he is not Venezuelan, when he states "a Venezuelan" instead of "another Venezuelan" (Ln 03).

The objects of these stances are speakers of all the other Spanish dialects except his own. Mr. M names a few speakers of other dialects: specifically, a Mexican and a Venezuelan (Ln 03-04). Initially, he chooses to denigrate the U.S. dialect by stating that it is "good to practice" (Ln 01). His choice of the verb "to practice," instead of "to use", "learn" or "teach" suggests that the U.S. dialect carries a negative connotation for him. He is just practicing in order to actually speak Spanish in Venezuela, and his statement implies that U.S. Spanish isn't legitimate Spanish. He later calls the U.S. dialect a "jumble," instead of a valid use of language. It follows that his identity as a Spanish speaker is jumbled. No one else can identify him. Mr. M is not asserting a great deal

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

of agency in these statements about who he is or what power he might have over his linguistic identity: he only explains how it feels to be unidentifiable. His feeling of being made invisible when compared to other dialects is a sign that his dialect is framed as inauthentic or inferior. In addition, it points to his acceptance of this negative ideology.

This stance of denigrating U.S. dialects and denying its value suggests that Mr. M aligns himself with the dialect hierarchy language ideology in reference to his own dialect. Mr. M does not want to claim an identity as a speaker of U.S. Spanish, even though he feels at home with the Latino community. He accepts this hierarchy to such an extent that he would deny his own linguistic reality to avoid being placed at the bottom.

Similarly, as a portion of the dialectic hierarchy ideology Mr. M demonstrates the monolingual norm when he expresses his hesitation toward his native speaker status, although Spanish is the language he heard and used with this mother since birth. While it is his mother tongue, he does not view himself as a native speaker since native speakers are compared to the idealized linguistic productions of monolinguals. He describes his Spanish as follows:

Mr. M

01 so that's why my Spanish is funny. To a non-Spanish speaker I sound fluent, but to a native Speaker

Interviewer

02 they can hear it.

Mr. M

03 yeah they know I'm not a native speaker

04 so, I'm kind of in this limbo

05 Of, uh. I'm not good enough to be considered a native speaker.

Interviewer

06 OK, have you taken tests? Or is that just your sentiment?

Mr. M

07 that's my sentiment. I've tested in terms of my grammar and my understanding and all those things. You know, that's fine.

08 but, when I speak, you know, my academic language

09 is not as developed as my social language

10 so, um, you know, when I have conversations with a native speaker when it comes to the employ of a more academic and more complex vocabulary I will stumble

11 and just little itsy bitsy things here and there that will pop up

12 so it's kind of frustrating being in the middle there and I always felt like to really get out of that,

13 because I think a lot of that is living here and not having a chance to practice it as much but...

14 when I go back to Venezuela for an extended period of time, that's when everything will start falling back into place

In this section Mr. M constructs his identity as a person who speaks Spanish but is not a native speaker – despite his language acquisition as a simultaneous bilingual, his lifelong experience with the language, and his success on standardized tests. The object of this stance is an idealized Spanish speaker, whom he first terms as a native speaker (Ln 1), later as someone who

speaks academic Spanish (Ln 10), and eventually as a monolingual Venezuelan (Ln 14). Instead of measuring his capability according to standardized tests or the functionality of his bilingualism, he believes that he cannot be a native speaker because he didn't acquire Spanish in school and lacks the same production as a monolingual.

This section of the interview indicates that Mr. M has internalized the monolingual norm ideology. He uses it to understand language acquisition outside of formal education as non-native, and views himself as a deficient speaker of Spanish. He assimilates to the monolingual norm when he returns to Venezuela, escaping the low prestige of his bilingual upbringing. A language acquisition myth, as described by Ortega (1999), dictates that native-like attainment is only achieved through living abroad, even for those connected to Spanish speaking communities at home. Mr. M concurs with the monolingual norm to such an extent that he conforms to it as much as possible and judges himself negatively when he cannot conform.

Although both Mrs. G and Mr. M perform (or have performed) the empowerment of low-prestige dialects as mediums of instruction in the classroom, their interviews suggest that they don't feel empowered. Instead, to an extent, both of them internalize linguistic hierarchy. While Mrs. G struggles against hierarchy, she also accepts it. By contrast, the linguistic hierarchy ideology devastates Mr. M and situates his dialect at such a low status as to be rendered invisible or fake. He denies himself native speaker status despite speaking only Spanish with his mother since birth and insults his own dialect. While both teachers are damaged by this language ideology, they also accept and internalize it. Their acceptance of the dialect hierarchy ideology could be considered a variant of Skutnabb-Kangas' (2000) term *linguicism*, or the hatred of a certain means of speaking which can be unconscious or passive. While Skutnabb-Kangas speaks of *linguicism* in relation to others' speech, in this case it is *internalized linguicism*, practiced towards oneself.

6. Discussion and Implications

Spanish speakers in the U.S. must contend with negative ideologies or forms of *linguicism* toward how they speak. Each time a lesson is planned, a book is written, a teacher is hired, or a program is designed there is an opportunity to transform these language ideologies. The performance of a particular dialect and identity in the classroom sends a powerful message to students. However, teachers may still struggle to validate and accept their own identities and dialects, both interpersonally and within broader societal structures. In sum, being a member of a denigrated group doesn't preclude these teachers from holding and propagating negative ideologies for both themselves and their students. Both accepting and disseminating these ideologies takes place even when they cause damage to both parties.

A double standard is evident, at the administrative level, when a school honors the cultural heritage of their students, yet positions aspects of their current cultures and languages as undesirable. Programs may uphold the dialect hierarchy and ethnicity gatekeeping ideologies and therefore only promote a particular kind of language as a resource (Ruiz, 1988). Often, it is not the language that many of their students speak. Such programs may cause English-dominant Latino students and speakers of U.S. dialects to feel as Mr. M feels: illegitimate and invisible. As the demographics in the United States shift, more English-dominant and speakers of low-prestige varieties will populate dual-immersion and heritage classrooms. As a result, more and more students may feel rejected by the very place that hopes to honor them.

Although both Mrs. G and Mr. M enact empowerment in the classroom, they may un-

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

consciously teach damaging language ideologies to their students. They use the ethnicity gate-keeping ideology and the dialect hierarchy ideology to judge themselves and others negatively. Many of their students are excluded and ostracized because of these two ideologies. According to Norton and Toohey (2011), if students cannot imagine a future version of themselves that can be integrated with the target language community, this lack of a positive vision may have devastating consequences for their investment in learning. Given the overwhelmingly negative societal ideologies concerning bilingual programs, contact varieties of Spanish and Spanish in general, supporting students' abilities to envision themselves as successful bilingual individuals is a vital concern (Hill, 2000; Valdés et al. 2003; Zentella, 2002).

It is entirely possible that programs seek to hire speakers of low-prestige dialects in order to honor their students' diversity of dialects and the lack of linguistic diversity among instructors (Howard, Sugarman & Christian, 2003; Valdés, et. al. 2003). However, researching these language ideologies through the stances of the two teachers discussed here reveals that giving low-prestige dialects representation may not be sufficient. When examining the ideologies articulated by these teachers, we discover that they still propagate negative language ideologies. This is not to place blame on individuals who have been stigmatized by harmful language ideologies, nor does it view their statements as shameful. In fact, the purpose of this article is to promote a discussion and future where this shame and hurt is unearthed and transformed. The findings of this article elaborate on the research which asserts that there is a pressing need to value dialect diversity because we must concern ourselves with student and teacher well-being (Carreira, 2004; Leeman, 2012).

Although individuals are creators of language ideologies, they cannot be responsible for an ideology or expected to change it by themselves, especially when that ideology is painful to them. Just as ideologies are dynamic systems, support for this shift in perspective must be a conscious and most importantly a collective effort. Representation of low-prestige dialects in education is desperately needed, yet insufficient. Investigating these language ideologies through the perspective of speakers of low-prestige dialects reveals that in order to create programs, curricula, and implementation that value students and leaders in education, we must begin by affording legitimacy for ourselves and for one another.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Cynthia Ducar for her valuable suggestions on this article. I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful and detailed comments. All shortcomings are, of course, entirely my own.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this article to my late professor and mentor Richard Ruiz for his encouragement of this piece and his unwavering commitment to legitimizing self-empowerment and leadership of low-prestige dialect speakers.

Works Cited

- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/la frontera: The new mestiza*. San Francisco, California; Aunt Lute Books.
- Barker, V., Giles, H., Noels, K., Duck, J., Hecht, M. L., & Clement, R. (2001). The English only movement: A communication analysis of changing perceptions of language vitality. *Journal of Communication*, 51(1), 3-37.
- Beaudrie, S. & Ducar, C. (2005). Beginning level university heritage programs: Creating a space for all heritage language learners. *Heritage Language Journal*, 3(1), 1-26.
- Bills, G. D. (2005). Las comunidades lingüísticas y el mantenimiento del español en Estados Unidos. *Contactos y contextos lingüísticos*, 55-83.
- Bucholtz, M. (2009). From stance to style: Gender, interaction, and indexicality in Mexican immigrant youth slang. In A. Jaffe (Ed.), *Stance: sociolinguistic perspectives* (pp. 146-171) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Cameron, D. (1995) *Verbal Hygiene*. New York: Routledge
- Carreira, M. (2004). Seeking explanatory adequacy: A dual approach to understanding the term "heritage language learner" *Heritage Language Journal*, 2(1), 1-25.
- Charmaz, K. (2001). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context & method* (pp. 675-694). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Coryell, J. E., Clark, M. C., & Pomerantz, A. (2010). Cultural fantasy narratives and heritage language learning: A case study of adult heritage learners of Spanish. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(3), 453-469.
- Davies, A. (2003). *The native speaker: Myth and reality* (Vol. 38). Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters
- Du Bois, J. (2007). The stance triangle. In R. Englebretson (Ed.), *Stance taking in discourse* (139-182) Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ducar, C.M. (2007). The sound of silence: Spanish heritage textbooks' treatment of language Variation. In M. Lacorte & L. Leeman (Eds.), *Español en estado unidos y otros contextos de contacto* (pp. 347-368), Madrid, Spain: Iberoamericana.
- Espinosa-Aguilar, A. (2001). Analyzing the rhetoric of the English only movement. *Language Ideologies: Critical Perspectives on the Official English Movement, Volume II: History, Theory, and Policy*, 2, 268.
- Espinosa, A. M. (1923). Where is the best Spanish spoken? *Hispania*, 6. Retrieved from: <http://www.aatsp.org/?page=hispania>
- Fitzsimmons-Doolan, S., Palmer, D., & Henderson, K. (2015). Educator language ideologies and a top-down dual language program. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 1-18.
- Freeman, R. (2000). Contextual challenges to dual language education: A case study of a developing middle school program. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 31. Retrieved from: <http://www.aaanet.org/sections/cae/publications/anthropology-education-quarterly/>
- Garcia, C., & Bass, L. E. (2007). American identity and attitudes toward English language policy initiatives. *J. Soc. & Soc. Welfare*, 34, 63.
- García, O. (2009). *Bilingual education in the 21st century*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Gee, J. (2008). *Social linguistics and literacy: Ideologies in discourses* (3rd Ed.). New York, New York: Routledge.

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

- Hill, J. H. (2000). The racializing function of language panics. In R. D. Gonzalez & I. Melis (Eds.), *Language Ideologies: Critical Perspectives on the Official English Movement, Volume II: History, Theory, and Policy* (pp. 245-268) New York, New York: Routledge.
- Howard E.R., Sugarman J., & Christian D. (2003). Trends in two-way immersion education: a review of the research. Center of Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from: <http://www.cal.org/>
- Jackson, J. (2001). *Thoughts behind the work: Teachers thinking and the implementation of a complex curricular innovation* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: University of Harvard ProQuest UMI Dissertation Publishing. (99999036).
- Johnson, E. (2010). Proposition 203: A critical metaphor analysis. *Bilingual Research Journal: The Journal of the National Association for Bilingual Education*, 29 (1), 69-84;
- Jaffe, A. (Ed.). (2009). *Stance: Sociolinguistic perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kramsch, C. (1997). The privilege of the nonnative speaker. *PMLA*, 112. Retrieved from: <http://www.mla.org/pmla>
- Leeman, J. (2012). Investigating language ideologies in Spanish as a heritage language. In S.M. Beaudrie & M. Fairclough (Eds.), *Spanish as a heritage language in the United States: The state of the field* (pp. 43-60) Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Leeman, J. (2007). The value of Spanish: Shifting ideologies in United States language teaching. *ADFL*, 38. Retrieved from: <http://www.adfl.org/bulletin/>
- Leeman, J., & Martinez, G. (2007). From identity to commodity: Ideologies of Spanish in heritage language textbooks. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.isls.co/index-3.html>
- Martínez, G. A. (2006). *Mexican Americans and language: Dicho al hecho*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- NCES (National Center for Education Statistics). (2012). Digest of Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest>.
- Norton B. & Toohey K. (2011). Identity, language learning and social change. *Language Teaching*, 44, 412-446, doi: 10.1017/S0261444811000309.
- Ortega, L. (1999). Language and equality: Ideological and structural constraints in foreign language education in the US. In T. Huebner & K.A. Davis (Eds.), *Sociopolitical perspectives on language policy and planning in the USA* (pp. 243-266). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Potowski, K. (2007). *Language and identity in a dual immersion school*. Clevelon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Ruíz, R. (1988). Orientations in language planning. In S.L. McKay & S. C. Wong (Eds.), *Language diversity: Problem or resource?* (pp. 3-25) Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle
- Schreffler, S. B. (2007). Hispanic heritage language speakers in the United States: Linguistic exclusion in education. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 4. Retrieved from: <http://www.isls.co/index-3.html>
- Schmidt, R. (2002). Racialization and language policy: The case of the U.S.A. *Multilingua*, 21. Retrieved from: <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/mult>
- Shenk, P. (2007). "I'm Mexican, remember?": Constructing ethnic identities via authenticating discourse. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 11. Retrieved from: <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-institutes/icdc/publications/journal-of-sociolinguistics>
- Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic genocide in education--or worldwide diversity and human rights?*. New York, NY: Routledge.

HISPANIC STUDIES

r e v i e w

- Train, R. (2007). "Real Spanish:" Historical perspectives on the ideological construction of a (foreign) language. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 4 (2-3), 207-235. doi: 10.1080/15427580701389672.
- Urcioui, B. (2008). Whose Spanish? The tension between linguistic correctness and cultural identity. In M. Niño-Murcia & J. Rothman (Eds.), *Bilingualism and identity: Spanish at the crossroads with other languages* (pp. 257-277). Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Valdés, G. (1997). The teaching of Spanish to bilingual Spanish-speaking students: Outstanding issues and unanswered questions. In C. Colombi & F. X. Alcaron (Eds.), *La enseñanza del español a hispanohablantes: Praxis y teoría* (pp. 8-44). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Valdés, G., González, S. V., García, D. L., & Márquez, P. (2003). Language ideology: The case of Spanish in departments of foreign languages. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 34(1), 3-26. doi: 10.1525/aeq.2003.34.1.3.
- Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) Toward a Definition of Heritage Language: Sociopolitical and Pedagogical Considerations. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 2(3), 211-230. doi: 10.1207/S15327701JLIE0203_4
- Villa, D. J. (2002). The sanitizing of U.S. Spanish in academia. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(2), 222-230.
- Wiley, T. (2000). Continuity and change in the language ideologies in the United States. In Ricento, T. (Ed.). *Ideology, and language policies: Focus on English* (pp. 67-85) Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Wiley, T. G. & Lukes, M. (1996). English-only and standard English ideologies in the U.S. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30 (3), 511-535.
- Woolard, K. & Schieffelin, B. (1994). Language ideology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23, 55-82. Retrieved from: <http://www.annualreviews.org/journal/anthro>
- Zentella, A. C. (1997). The Hispanophobia of the official English movement in the US. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 127(1), 71-86. doi: 10.1515/ijsl.1997.127.71
- Zentella (2002). *Latin@ Languages and Identities*. In M. Suarez Orozco & M. Paez (Eds.), *Latinos: Remaking America*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press