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ABSTRACT

It is proposed that a process of "chiquitafication" has diminished the complexity of the languages and cultures of over 22 million Latinos living in the United States, and that this process has repercussions for their linguistic security, language maintenance, and ultimately, their hopes for a good life. Focus is on three aspects of this process that feed into "Hispanophobia" and discriminatory policies: the construction of a homogeneous "Hispanic community" that refuses to learn English, the belittling of non-Castilian varieties of Spanish, and labeling of second-generation bilinguals as semi- or a-linguals. Linguistic analyses should address the language ideology that shapes language behavior and its evaluation; specifically, discussions of individual or community language loss, shift, or attrition among ethnolinguistic minorities in the United States must analyze linguistic data in relation to the ideology they reflect, that "real" Americans are monolingual English speakers. Recommended is an anthropolitical linguistics that amends both the objectives and methods of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. Contains 49 references. (MSE)

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The "Chiquitafication" of U.S. Latinos and Their Languages, OR  
Why We Need an Anthropological Linguistics

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## 0. Introduction

When I was growing up in the fifties, the most significant Latina presence on television in the U.S. was a dancing banana named *Chiquita*. Decked out in a Carmen Miranda fruit-turban and conga skirt, she wiggled her hips while she sang, "I'm *Chiquita Banana* and I'm here to say, bananas are delightful in every way..." There were other "chiquitas" too, the ones in off-the-shoulder blouses who were "bar girls" in western movies. *Chiquita* 'little girl' is the diminutive of the Spanish noun *chica* 'girl' (*chico* 'boy'), and of the adjective meaning 'small'. World War II created a need for allies and markets south of the border, which resulted in the Good Neighbor policy. The U.S. was swamped with images that portrayed small people from small—i.e., poor, backwards, lazy—countries, terribly in need of help from their northern Big Brother. Mexicans in huge *sombreros* dozing *siestas* under trees was a favorite pose. Hollywood participated by catapulting Carmen Miranda to fame as a sexy chatterbox, and *Chiquita Banana* was only one of many spin-offs. This propaganda coincided with the largest wave of Puerto Rican immigration the country has ever experienced (more than 50,000 a year in the post WWII decade), and with the movement of returning Mexican-American GIs and their families beyond their traditional border areas. I had no idea how the Latin bomb-shell cliché was shaping the expectations that the world outside of my *barrio* had of my sister and me, daughters of a Mexican father and Puerto Rican mother, but we certainly thought that the number one box-office attraction in the country was having a wonderful life. Only recently I learned that Ms. Miranda, who had been a very respected singer in her homeland, Brazil, was ostracized for caricaturizing their music and culture; she died alone and in virtual exile in the US.

This paper discusses contemporary aspects of the process of "chiquitification," which diminishes the complexity of the languages and cultures of the more than 22 million Latinos who reside in the U.S., and the repercussions of that process for their linguistic security, language maintenance, and ultimately—their hopes for a good life. I focus on three aspects which feed into rampant Hispanophobia and discriminatory policies: the construction of a homogeneous "Hispanic community" that refuses to learn English, the belittling of non-Castilian varieties of Spanish, and the labeling of second-generation bilinguals as semi- or a-linguals. My main point is that linguistic analyses should address the language ideology that shapes language behavior and its evaluation. As Woolard and Schieffelin (1994:55) point out, a focus on language ideology

"reminds analysts that cultural frames have social histories and it signals a commitment to address the relevance of power relations to the nature of cultural forms and ask how essential meanings about language are socially produced as effective and powerful." I argue that discussions of individual or community language loss, shift, or attrition among ethnolinguistic minorities in the U.S. must analyze linguistic data in relation to the "real Americans are monolingual English speakers" ideology they reflect. Romaine maintains that "no convincing sociolinguistic theories exist" because we have "ignored the forest for the trees" by maintaining "an arbitrary and artificial division" between the "form and use of language on a small scale and large scale socio-political issues" (Romaine 1994:viii). In an attempt to bridge the division alluded to by Romaine, I end this paper with a call for an anthropological linguistics that amends both the objectives and methods of sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology.

### 1. The "Hispanic community"

Repeated references to "the Hispanic community" in government documents and the media create the impression of a monolithic group that can be dealt with as a unit. But Latinos in the U.S. come from more than a dozen countries with different socio-economic, cultural, and political histories, they speak different dialects of Spanish and to different degrees, and they are divided on a wide range of issues. As the figures in Table 1 indicate, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans constitute 75% of the total (64% and 11% respectively in 1991), although Central and South Americans are among the fastest growing immigrations.

<b>Table 1: US Latinos, 1990 Census</b>		<b>22.35 Million</b>
Mexicans =	13.3 M	64%
Puerto Ricans =	2.6 M	11%
Cubans =	1.05 M	5%
Dominicans =	.5M	
Central Americans =	1.3 M	Central & South Americans = 13%
Salvadorans =	.5 M	
Guatemalans =	.27 M	
South Americans =	1 M	
Colombians =	.38 M	
Ecuadorians =	.2 M	
Peruvians =	.175 M	
Spaniards =	.5 M	
Spanish/Spanish Americans, Hispanic, etc. =	.5 M	Other Latino = 7%

Debates about whether or not Hispanic or Latino is the appropriate rubric leave most Latinos cold. Ordinarily, they reject all pan-ethnic labels in favor of one that proclaims their national-origin, e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban (Institute for Puerto Rican Policy 1993). Activists prefer Latino as a general rubric and challenge the federal government's adoption of Hispanic, but both terms have a long and respected history.<sup>1</sup> Employing either one in ways that obscure significant differences among and within the many Hispanic/Latino communities in the nation can have significant policy implications. The first national survey of the political attitudes and behaviors of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans in the U.S. (de la Garza et al 1992) found that a large majority (80% or more of citizens and non-citizens in each group) disavowed the view that Latino cultures were very similar, and they disagreed on affirmative action, abortion, and capital punishment.<sup>2</sup> Scholars insist on the importance of distinguishing the racial, class, gender, educational, and occupational backgrounds of different Latino communities; the time, size, destination and objectives of their immigrations; the economic structure of the areas where they are located, and the history of the political relationship of their homeland with the U.S., at the very least (Bean and Tienda 1987; Rodríguez 1989). Because at least 20% of the population of 9 of the largest 15 cities are Latinos—and 26% of all U.S. school children—policy makers must be able to differentiate between the experiences and needs of New Mexicans whose roots in the U.S. are over 300 years old and those of recent border-crossing Mexicans, and between middle class Cubans in Florida and poor Puerto Ricans in New York, among many others.

## 2. The "chiquitafication" of varieties of U.S. Spanish

One of the most visible signs of Latino diversity is the variety of Spanish dialects that Latinos speak, which constitute group boundary markers. Latinos may not be able to identify the national origin of every Spanish speaker they encounter, but they identify who is or is not a compatriot by their phonology and lexicon. Generalities about "Spanish-speakers" belie a multiplicity of dialects in each of the five major dialect zones of Latin American Spanish proposed by Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1975).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Latino" reflects the Spanish use of *Latinoamérica* 'Latin America' and *latinoamericano* 'Latin American'; its original root was the name of the language from which Spanish and other Romance or Romans' languages derived. "Hispanic" is the translation of *hispano*, employed in reference to all Spanish speakers. It is descended from the Roman name for the Iberian peninsula, *Hispania*, which was originally a Phoenician word that meant 'land of rabbits' (Woehr 1992).

<sup>2</sup> The methods and some of the findings of that survey have been questioned (Pratt and Aguilar 1994), but not the need to distinguish Latino communities.

<sup>3</sup> The five regions are the Caribbean (Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and coastal Colombia and Venezuela), Mexico (including the southwest of the US and Central America) the Andes (Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, the Colombian highlands and the north of Argentina and Chile), Río Plata (Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay), and Chile. Modern scholars criticize the regions as too broad (Moreno de Alba 1988).

The U.S. American public knows little about the varieties of Spanish that exist; I have been asked to "speak Mexican" and to "speak Puerto Rican," as if they were separate languages.<sup>4</sup> Even Spanish teachers have propagated the myth that the only "real" Spanish is spoken in Spain, by Castilians. The rest of the Spanish-speaking world, close to 400 millions, is dismissed as speakers of "dialects," a label used like an epithet. The dismissal of the rich linguistic heritage of their nations, which occurs in Latin America itself via the demeaning of class dialects and Indian languages, promotes greater linguistic insecurity among poor immigrants. In the U.S., the message that is communicated in daily encounters, comedians' jokes, and Spanish classes is that the Spanish of immigrants is inferior, making it all the more necessary and prudent that they stop speaking it in favor of English. Moreover, the proliferation of what Jane Hill calls "junk Spanish" (1993) gives the impression that Spanish is merely English that ends in o's or a's (e.g., "no problemo"), so it should be very easy to give it up in place of English.

Puerto Ricans, whose island has been under U.S. control since 1898, have been subjected to the notion of the superiority of English and the inferiority of Puerto Rican Spanish in their homeland ever since the first U.S. American administrators arrived. An early report by the colonial Commissioner of Education rationalized the English-only policy that was imposed on the schools and courts by appealing to notions of linguistic purity:<sup>5</sup>

A majority of the people do not speak pure Spanish. Their language is a patois almost unintelligible to the natives of Barcelona and Madrid. It possesses no literature and little value as an intellectual medium. There is a bare possibility that it will be nearly as easy to educate these people out of their patois into English as it will be to educate them into the elegant tongue of Castile. (Brumbaugh 1901 Report to the Governor, cited in Osuna 1949:324).

The Commissioner did not speak Spanish, read Puerto Rican literature, or know that the principal language in Barcelona was Catalán. He was ignorant also of the fact that there is less contrast among the various dialects of Spanish in the world than among the dialects of English, because they are subject to greater leveling forces:

- a. Spanish has normative organizations, e.g., the *Academia Real de la Lengua* 'The Royal Academy of the Language' in Spain and its affiliates in every Latin American nation, which English lacks.

<sup>4</sup> "U.S. American" is used to avoid limiting the term "American" to those in the United States, ignoring Latin Americans and Canadians.

<sup>5</sup> Despite consistent opposition from the people, the English-only policy continued, with minor alterations, for fifty years, until—in order to defuse the burgeoning movement for independence—the United States allowed Puerto Ricans to elect their own governor. Since then, Spanish is the medium of instruction, but English is a required subject in every grade.

- b. The former Spanish-speaking colonies have been separated from the imperial power for a shorter period of time than most English speaking colonies, e.g., Puerto Rico's break with Spain occurred less than 100 years ago.
- c. The physical proximity of the Spanish speaking countries is greater, and English is spoken by more people over a vaster geographical area.<sup>6</sup>

In the U.S., varieties of Mexican and Caribbean Spanish are spoken by 82% of the Latino population. Several of their principal phonological features, as well as of Central American and Colombian Spanish, are listed in Table 2.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The unity of Latin American Spanish, particularly among its educated classes, is greater than that of the dialects of Spain, which have diverged over the centuries (Zamora Vicente 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Morpho-syntactic differences are much less noticed and commented upon. For an overview of each Latin American country's distinguishing phonology, and bibliographical references re: sub-regional dialects, see Canfield (1981). Lipski (1986) summarizes the principal varieties of US Spanish.

**Table 2: Principal Features of Spanish Pronunciation in the Americas\***

FEATURE	Caribbean	Mexico	Central Amer.	Colombia
syl/word-final /s/	aspirated/ lost	general. retained	retained: Guat, CR weak: Hon, El Sal., Nic	retained
word-final /n/	velar	alveolar	velar	>m in Cauca- Valle
syl final /l/ & /r/	frequently interchanged	rarely interchanged	rarely interchanged	not interchanged
phrase-final /r/	often <u>l</u>	sometimes assibilated like <u>ʃ</u>	assibilated in Guat, CR	assibilated: Eastern Cordillera
trilled /rr/	preaspirated PR = /x/, /j/	trill	trill: Nic, El Sal, Hon, fricative: Guat, CR	assibilated: Eastern Cordillera
group /tr/	as <u>tr</u>	rarely <u>ch</u>	frequently <u>ch</u> : CR, Guat	assibilated: Eastern Cordillera
/y/ bet. vowels	rarely lost	frequently lost	frequently lost	affricate: Antioquia
/d/ bet. vowels	frequently lost	rarely lost	rarely lost	rarely lost
unstressed vowels	rarely lost	frequently lost	sometimes lost	lost: Nariño

The most commented upon distinctions in Latin American Spanish are captured in Rosenblat's light-hearted contrast of *tierras altas* 'highlands' and *tierras bajas* 'lowlands':

Yo las distingo, de manera caricaturesca, por el régimen alimenticio: las tierras altas se comen las vocales, las tierras bajas se comen las consonantes. (Rosenblat 1970:39)

'I distinguish them, in caricature-like form, by their diet: the highlands eat [drop] their vowels, the lowlands eat their consonants'.

Specifically, the Caribbean habit of aspirating (1a) or deleting syllable-final /s/ (1b) contrasts with its retention in Mexico, Central America, and highland

\* Adapted from Lipski 1986.



## Colombia:

1. *Las costas de las islas son preciosas.*  
'the coasts of the islands are beautiful'.
  - a. /lah cohtah de lah ihlah son presyosah/
  - b. /la cota de la ila son presyosa/

On the other hand, the Caribbean retains unstressed vowels that the other regions contract, as in (1c), where the apostrophe stands for a mere trace of the vowel:

- c. /l's c'st's de l's isl's son pr'syos's/

The phonology of Caribbean Spanish and that of other coastal areas is a direct descendant of the one brought to Caribbean ports from southern Spain in the late fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, and it remains similar to what is spoken in Andalusia today, with some indigenous and African features. The interior highlands did not receive continuous immigration from Andalusia or Africa, and its principal centers of power—built upon the cities of the Indians they conquered—were more influenced by northern Spanish dialects and Indian languages (Canfield 1981). Caribbean Spanish has been labeled "radical" because of its final segment deletion, in contrast to the "conservative" dialects of Bogota, Mexico City, Lima and other highland centers (Guitart 1982). Prestige is attached to the preservation of features that recall those of the elite of the empire from the Castilian court, just as some North American anglophiles admire the R.P. (Received Pronunciation) British dialect of English.

Second generation Spanish-speakers tend to maintain their elders' phonological patterns, along with their prejudices about "good" or "bad" Spanish. Because attitudes towards a language are projected onto its speakers, not only are language maintenance or loss implicated, but also the acceptance or rejection of entire groups. In New York City, for example, the Spanish of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans is stigmatized, ostensibly because of its radical phonology. But since Cuban Spanish does not suffer the same sweeping condemnation despite its linguistic similarities, it is clear that social factors interact with and may supersede linguistic ones: Cubans tend to be of fairer complexions and financially much better off than Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, who are the darkest and poorest Latinos in the city. Even when speakers of whiter and higher socio-economic groups have a radical phonology, they may evaluate their dialect positively and express negative attitudes towards Puerto Ricans and Dominicans. This is obvious in the remarks of a 21 year old Cuban female (15 years in the U.S.) who did not hesitate to admit her prejudice against Dominican Spanish: "*Yo siempre pensaba que hablaban feo,*" 'I always thought they spoke ugly', and against Puerto Rican Spanish: "*Yo odio como hablan los puertorriquenos,*" 'I hate how Puerto Ricans talk'. Her own Spanish was replete with radical and/or non-standard features, e.g., syllable-final alteration of /r/ and /l/, loss of syllable-final /s/, redundant pronouns, and code switching, but she was very proud of it and of

## Cuban Spanish in general:

*Yo no creo que debemos cambial [cambiar] la manera que yo hablo el español, a mi me gusta como yo [redundant] hablo el español, porque yo [redundant] creo que los Cubanos tienen el español mas bonito de—of all—of a lot of the ethnic, you know of Spanish people, 'cause nosotros[-s] no cantamos, nosotros[-s] [redundant] no-no- [Cuban interviewer: Pero espérate que los de Santiago cantan que se acabó]. A mi me gustan mucho las frases como nosotros hablamos [non-standard]. I think we are very happy people.*

I don't think that we should change the way I talk Spanish, I like the way I talk Spanish because I think that Cubans have the prettiest Spanish of 'we don't sing [refers to broad pitch range], we don't, we don't—'

[Cuban interviewer: 'But wait a minute, because the people from Santiago sing to beat the band'.]

'I like the sentences how we talk a lot'.

This young Cuban's affirmation of dialect pride is in sharp contrast to negative Dominican evaluations of their own dialect, e.g., in one study 80% of the Dominicans interviewed (n=50) believed that Dominican Spanish should not be taught in schools, 35% of them because it is "*incorrecto*" 'incorrect' or "*malo*" 'bad' (Zentella 1990a). Since the majority of Dominicans also said they would not consider it a compliment if they were told they spoke Spanish like Dominicans, it seems likely that their linguistic insecurity, which was greater than that of Colombians, Cubans, and even Puerto Ricans, will accelerate their language shift to English. First-generation Latinos who speak a heavily Spanish-influenced English are difficult to distinguish in terms of national origin. By shifting to English, they avoid being identified with a stigmatized code, and inadvertently participate in the construction of an emerging pan-Latino identity by becoming identifiable only as "Hispanics" or "Latinos."

### 3. The "chiquitafication" of second generation bilinguals

The children of Latino immigrants are accused of corrupting Spanish and English. Pejorative references to "Spanglish" (or "Tex-Mex" in the southwest) conjure up images of a linguistic mish-mash, a deficient code that is blamed on parents and blamed for the students' academic failure. The views of a teacher of Puerto Rican students in Massachusetts, which recall those of Puerto Rico's first education commissioner (above), are held by educators across the country:

These poor kids come to school speaking a hodge podge. They are all mixed up and don't know any language well. As a result, they can't even think clearly. That's why they don't learn. It's our job to

teach them language—to make up for their deficiency. And, since their parents don't really know any language either, why should we waste time on Spanish? It is "good" English which has to be the focus. (Walsh 1991:107)

Code switchers are characterized as lazy, sloppy, and cognitively confused (Acosta-Belén 1975), and debates about semi-lingualism and a-lingualism are revived (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas 1984). Even renowned linguists like Weinreich maintained that "the ideal bilingual switches from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in the speech situation but not in an unchanged speech situation and certainly not within a single sentence" (1968:73). In fact, there are multiple ways of "doing being bilingual" (Auer 1984:7), ways that cannot be captured by talking about Spanish and English as if they were monolithic codes in bilingual communities, or as if a bilingual were two monolinguals joined at the tongue. Ethnolinguistic research reveals that where there is intense and prolonged contact among distinct networks and generations, as there was in the New York Puerto Rican community I studied, it is precisely the ability to switch languages in the same sentence and situation that identifies the most effective bilinguals (Zentella forthcoming). As for its grammar and functions, the rule governed nature and discourse strategies of Spanish-English alternation have been investigated in depth (see collections by Durán 1981; Amastae and Elías-Olivares 1982; Klee and Ramos García 1991). Lack of knowledge about the socio-cultural context of code switching, the syntactic constraints it honors, and the discourse strategies it accomplishes makes it impossible for parents and educators to appreciate the bilingual skills of code switchers and to build upon them for the expansion of students' verbal repertoires. The net effect of "Spanglish" bashing is the promotion of language shift: Latinos who end up convinced that their Spanish is bad or *mata'o* ('killed') rush to adopt English and eventually do kill off their Spanish. To make matters worse, the repercussions for the successful development of their English can be severe (Cummins 1981).

#### 4. Hispanophobia and English-only

The construction of a seemingly homogenized Hispanic/Latino community encourages wholesale demonizing of the type reflected in a memo written by John Tanton when he was Chair of U.S. English, the group that has been lobbying to make English the official language of the United States since 1981. Tanton portrayed Hispanic Catholicism as a national threat to the separation of church and state, and declared that a Latin American tradition of bribery imperiled U.S. democracy. His most outrageous insult was a vulgar reference to "the Hispanic birthrate," charging that "perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught with their pants down" (Detroit Free Press 1989:6a). After Tanton's views were leaked to the press, two board members disavowed them, but U.S. English has continued to depict Latinos as a menace to

the U.S. American way of life, in order to garner support for English-only.

A popular argument in favor of the legislation asserts that Latinos do not know English, and do not want to learn it. Latino officials are impugned by propaganda that decries "the presence of a vocal Hispanic leadership which gives lip service to the need of Hispanics to learn English" (US English, nd). "The Hispanic community" is described as one that "prefers not to speak English" (ibid), a description that is completely at odds with the facts. Despite the continued influx of monolingual immigrants, Veltman (1983) found that Hispanics are undergoing language loss similar to, and even exceeding that of other groups in U.S. history. Language shift is most advanced among the U.S. born, who constituted the majority (64%) of the U.S. Latino population in 1990; immigrants shift to English within 15 years:

70% of immigrants appear to abandon the exclusive use of Spanish within a 10-year period, and 75% of Hispanic immigrants are speaking English on a regular basis by the time they have been in the U.S. for 15 years. It appears that most of the shift to English occurs during the first 15 years of residence. (National Council of la Raza 1991:4)

The 1980 census found that one third of Hispanic children in the southwest and one fifth in New York were English speaking monolinguals. Language shift took place in the East Harlem community that I first visited in 1979: by 1993 only 6% of the children were fluent bilinguals—the remainder were English dominant or English monolinguals (Zentella forthcoming). Nationwide in 1990, only 8% of all Spanish speakers—in fact only 5% of the entire U.S. population—did not know English. The English language is in no danger of being supplanted by Spanish or any other language.

## 5. The "magical bond of a common language"

Why does language become the focal point for national discontent? Anderson's work on "imagined communities" explains that the initial formation of national identities was rooted in language. Historical reconstruction challenged the originality and superiority of sacred languages, and the invention of printing elevated the humble vernaculars, enabling people to "come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves" (Anderson 1983:74). More recently, as Hobsbawm has noted, a focus on language or identity has become the easy alternative to explaining complicated political or civil rights issues. Most important, in his opinion, linguistic and ethnic chauvinism are embraced as antidotes to modern anomie. Hobsbawm (1991:556) quotes a Czech historian:

Where old social relations have become unstable, amid the rise of general insecurity, belonging to a common language and culture may

become the only certainty in society, the only value beyond ambiguity and doubt.

In the U.S., not only is the old Herderian notion of one language-one nation thriving, but, as Silverstein (1987) has explained, the "commoditization" of language has transformed English—specifically the standard dialect of English—into a "trope of personal value or worth," the emblem that represents and bestows equality:

Valorized as an instrument of maximally clear denotational communication, and indexically associated with those to whom its use has made accessible highly-valued characteristics, Standard English becomes a gradiently possessible commodity, access to which should be the "natural," "rational" choice of every consumer equal-under-the law (God's and country's), and lack of which can be seen in this symbolic paradigm as a deficit, much like...an affliction of poor background hindering one's ability to blend into the corporate background (in the Cultural, etiquette-like variant). (Silverstein 1987:12)

In this view, U.S. Americans who do not speak Standard English are deficient, and the poor who speak other languages are even more so. Consequently, in keeping with the increasingly popular recourse to legal solutions, non English speakers do not deserve equal protection of the law, and concerned English speakers are entitled to intervene legally.<sup>8</sup>

First proposed as an amendment to the constitution in 1981, the latest version of the "Official English" law, HR 1005 (Feb. 1995), is easier to pass because it merely amends the "Administrative Code," and it has the most restrictive clauses to date. Among other things, it outlaws bilingual ballots, bilingual education, and the federal Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs. The legislation is likely to pass because national polls show increasing support for English-only laws along with decreasing support for bilingual education (Time 1995), and because congresspersons who were financially supported by U.S. English were elected in 1994.<sup>9</sup>

English-only supporters have succeeded in making the attempt to declare English the official language of the United States seem like a noble, patriotic cause, a mere oversight longing to be corrected, and legislation that all grateful U.S. Americans should support with their votes and dollars. The ideology that English ensures equality is naturalized via metaphors of unity and opportunity

<sup>8</sup> All English-only bills outlaw bilingual ballots along with other services, and many of them, e.g., the one passed in California and the one proposed in New York State, provide individual citizens the right to sue if the law's provisions are violated.

<sup>9</sup> Passage of HR 1005 only requires a majority of Congress. It circumvents the difficulties of amending the Constitution because it amends the "Administrative Code" of the US.

and all the cherished values of U.S. democracy, e.g., Senator Hayakawa proposed the first English Language Amendment with the plea that "the magical bond of a common language can gradually overcome differences of religion and race" (Hayakawa, nd:1). In contrast, the establishment of a national language academy was rejected in 1780 as "out of keeping with the spirit of liberty in the U.S." (Heath 1981:6). Why, after more than 220 years with English as the de facto common language, does U.S. English insist that an English-only law "is necessary to preserve the basic internal unity required for political stability and national cohesion" (US English Fact Sheet 1987:1)? In response, nativists point to demographers' projections that "by the year 2020 there will be approximately 47 million Latinos in the U.S., accounting for 14.7% of the population and surpassing African Americans as the largest minority group" (Enchautegui 1995:5). Undoubtedly, many saw a distressing sign of cultural changes to come when, in 1994, *salsa* (the condiment, not the music) outsold ketchup. The "chiquitafication" and demonization of US Latino cultures and languages are fearful reactions to being engulfed by Latino hordes—a way of cutting the enemy down to size. Disarmingly simple but deceptive pieces of legislation appear to offer the frightened the chance to defend themselves, and to join with others who share the same fears. In California, the passage of the state's English-only law in 1986 paved the way for Proposition 187 in 1994, which denied medical and educational services to undocumented immigrants, "illegal aliens." By fanning the flames of Hispanophobia, U.S. English generates more than 5 million dollars annually from direct mail appeals (Crawford 1992). Few U.S. Americans understand that the language policy issue is a smokescreen for an anti-immigrant agenda which is fundamentally anti-Latino, with alarming pro-eugenics elements (Crawford 1988; Zentella 1988, 1990b).

## 6. Towards an anthropolitical linguistics (AL)

Because individual as well as community language patterns and practices are determined in fundamental ways by policies that facilitate or restrict access to particular networks, settings, and experiences, I became convinced of the need for an anthropolitical linguistics. Methodologically, anthropolitical linguistic analyses profit from joining the qualitative ethnographic methods of linguistic anthropology with the quantitative methods of sociolinguistics. One of its principal objectives is to understand and facilitate stigmatized groups' attempts to construct positive selves within an economic and political context that relegates its members to static and disparaged ethnic, racial, and class identities, and that identifies them with static and disparaged linguistic codes. This is not a new call by any means (cf Hymes 1969). Gal has analyzed "the political economy of code-choice": how bilinguals use language(s) to "construct and display multiple identities, to understand their historic position, and to respond to relations of domination between groups" (Gal 1988:247). Monolinguals also are subject to a language ideology—imposed via metaphors of linguistic hegemony and outright legislation—that values some dialects or linguistic choices above others. A

primary goal of anthropological linguistics is the repudiation of crippling notions like "dialectal inferiority," "verbally deprived," "pure/real Xish," "true bilingual," "alingualism," which become naturalized and exert symbolic domination over sectors of the population, facilitating their subjugation. To encourage liberation instead of subjugation, anthropological linguists must participate in communities' challenges of the policies and institutions that circumscribe the linguistic and cultural capital of their members.

Four recent examples of legal restrictions on language presently being challenged follow:

- 1 the 9th District Court of Appeals, which covers seven western states, upheld a California employer's sanctions against speaking Spanish on the job although no safety issues were involved, in violation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's guidelines (Epstein 1994);
- 2 the city of Allentown, Pa., 27% of which is Puerto Rican, passed English-only legislation on September 7, 1994 after anti-Puerto Rican sentiment fueled local elections;
- 3 a judge in Texas charged that a mother who was raising her five year old in Spanish was "abusing" the child (Verhovek 1995);
- 4 in Jersey City, Rite Aid Pharmacy "indefinitely suspended" Carmen Negrón, a clerk, for speaking Spanish to a customer.

The Anglo who denounced Ms. Negrón wrote:

Isn't this an American store? You are taking an American job and you are working for an American company, so you should speak English. (Cook's letter to Rite Aid management 1994).

Ironically, Ms. Negrón had been hired in part because she could communicate with the Latino customers who represented over a quarter of the city's population. Nevertheless, the New Jersey Labor Department upheld Rite-Aid's denial of her unemployment benefits.

Regulations and reproaches that demand allegiance to English at the expense of Spanish in order to be considered a good American and a decent person end up condemning Latino communities for attempting to hold onto Spanish as they learn English, frustrating one of their most fervent collective desires (de la Garza et al 1992). Urciuouli's work proves that Spanish—and any indexes of Spanish in a speaker's English—"assigns working class speakers to a race/class location in which people are assumed to be ignorant, disordered, and all the other stereotypes associated with the working class, thus robbing them of symbolic capital" (Urciuouli forthcoming). An anthropological linguistics

repudiates the view that the place assigned to a group of speakers by a discriminatory language ideology is something that the group can and must control, or be punished for.

At the heart of anthropolitical linguistics is the view that subjects—or informants—are not objects, but individuals with a great deal to say about the ways in which language ideologies play liberating and/or oppressive roles in their lives. If we listen to WHAT speakers tell us, not just to the phonemes, morphemes, syntactic constituents and discourse markers, we learn about the forces that control speakers' lives and shape their linguistic repertoires, and we find evidence of their acceptance of and resistance to the dominant ideology. When Barbara, a working class New York Puerto Rican who made it to college insists on English for her toddler, saying, "I gotta let some of it go. If I start hanging on to my culture—speaking Spanish— it's gonna hold me back," she provides the best argument for pursuing anthropolitical linguistics. More specifically, a linguistic analysis that limits itself to the phonology or tense-mood-aspect system of Paca's Spanish when she talks about her desire to leave Lotto's millions to her sons misses the point:

ACZ: *Qué tú harías si te ganaras un millón de dólares?*

'What would you do if you won a million dollars?'

P: *Yo \*poneré chavos en el banco pa' los hijo(-s) mí(-s), y se lo dejara a ellos to', pero yo \*ponería—sacara los chavos pa'l colegio.*

'I would put the dough in the bank for my children, and I would leave it all to them, but I would put—take out the dough for college.'

Paca's hesitations, non-standard choices and unique forms must be analyzed in the context of the language ideology responsible for English-only laws in Puerto Rico, Hispanophobia in the U.S., and the brutal and "benign neglect" policies that forced her parents to leave Puerto Rico and then dismantled their NYC *barrio*. Paca's dense and multiplex networks were torn apart, and she dropped out of high school at 16 to take care of her first baby, fulfilling a dream she had confided to me when she was 15: "I want somebody to love and to love me." Like Barbara, she rarely spoke Spanish to her toddlers and was more concerned about the color of their skin and the size of their lips than about their bilingualism, because she feared the racism that her children would encounter. In a city where homicide is the number one cause of death among Puerto Rican males, mothers worry less about whether their children grow up bilingual than about whether they grow up, period.

## 7. Conclusion

Silverstein (1987) worries that language is too important to be left to linguists, but many Latinos are seeing through the English-only smokescreen which trumpets equality while it plays on fears of difference, and they are not leaving it to linguists. To take just one example, Carmen Negrón's outrage at being fired for speaking Spanish defies the commoditization that grants English



speakers with money the power to define as "un-American" clerks who try to help customers by talking to them in the language that they understand best:

When I lost my job for using my language to help someone, a woman did not like it, so because she spend money she could say to me I'm not an American because I speak Spanish? That's like allowing people like her call (sic) you, hey Nigger or speak, just because they spend money and they don't like your color, race, or your origin (personal communication).

Is the logic, justice, and power of Ms. Negrón's repudiation obviated by some non-standard spellings and grammar? She and many others who are fighting against the "chiquitafication" of their languages and cultures at great personal sacrifice deserve the support of anthropological linguists. Together we must insist that the fundamental problems of economic and social inequality be addressed instead of obscuring them by wrapping them up in the language flag.

To be an effective ally, anthropological linguistics must confront the language purists on the right and the critics on the left who decry or deny—respectively—all linguistic and cultural change; both keep us from addressing the underlying issues. I am not proposing an anthropological linguistics as a form of linguistic alms for oppressed language minorities, but as a contribution to a more profound appreciation of the factors that shape every community's competence and individual speakers' phonology, morpho-syntax and pragmatics, and to a sociolinguistic theory that does not lose sight of the forest for the trees. Few linguistic studies place individuals in the day to day networks and experiences that shape their language, or address the political and social conditions that determine their linguistic and cultural capital, and the repercussions for their lives. By incorporating the word political in its name, anthropological linguistics openly declares its intention to discuss the language and politics connection and to make it clear that, whether we choose to discuss it or not, there is no language without politics.

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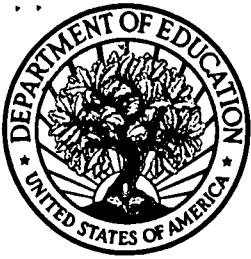
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