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**“OUR ROOTS”: LATINX PARENTS’ LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES
CONCERNING BILINGUALISM**

by

AKANNE TORRES BELTRAN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Anthropology
in the College of Sciences
and in the Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
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Abstract

Language is a fundamental component of one's identity, as well as a means of surviving in a globalizing world. This study draws upon sixteen narratives of first-generation Mexican and Puerto Rican parents in Central Florida to answer the research question: *What are the language ideologies of Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrant parents towards the English Language acquisition and Spanish Language retention of their children?* The information was gathered through semi-structured interviews and it aimed to learn how and if they value English and Spanish bilingualism and whether it was desired for their children. On the one hand, they are aware of the necessity of being fluent in English to properly navigate themselves in the United States and to secure better opportunities for education and careers. However, Spanish retention is just as important as a means to remember ones *raíces*, or roots, which was a statement that was voiced throughout the respondents. Demographic information, language use in different contexts, access to resources, and whether they faced any forms of language discrimination are all factors that were also analyzed to determine a more holistic account of the parents' language ideologies. My results reflect how Latinx family's experiences in the United States have shaped their language ideologies and the language use outcomes of future generations.

El lenguaje es un componente fundamental de nuestra identidad, y también un medio para sobrevivir en un mundo globalizado. Este estudio se basa en dieciséis narrativas de padres mexicanos y puertorriqueños de primera generación en Florida Central para responder a la pregunta de investigación: ¿Cuáles son las ideologías del idioma de los padres inmigrantes mexicanos y puertorriqueños hacia la adquisición de inglés y la retención de español de sus

hijos? La información fue conseguida a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, y el objetivo es para aprender cómo y si valoran el bilingüe (inglés y español), y si deseaban esta habilidad para sus hijos. Por un lado, los padres son conscientes de la necesidad de ser fluentes en inglés para navegar adecuadamente por los Estados Unidos y para asegurar mejores oportunidades para su educación y carreras. Sin embargo, la retención de español es importante como un medio para recordar los raíces de su cultura; que fue una declaración que se expresó en todo los encuestados. La información demográfica, el uso del lenguaje en diferentes contextos, el acceso a los recursos y si se enfrentaron a alguna forma de discriminación del lenguaje son factores que también se analizaron para determinar un relato más holístico de las ideologías del idioma de los padres. Mis resultados reflejan cómo las experiencias de las familias Latinx en los Estados Unidos han dado forma a sus ideologías de lenguaje y al uso del lenguaje para las futuras generaciones.

Keywords: Cultural anthropology, Bilingualism, Language use, Spanish, English, Latinx, Culture, Language Ideologies

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Linguistic anthropology encompasses the relationships between language, thought, and culture within a society. At the center of this system are the people who give life to this dynamic. People embody each aspect; the language that they speak, the culture they thrive in, and the thoughts that they form with their experiences. These thoughts that the people have and voice about language and culture, whether it be about their own or others, create “language ideologies” that reflect their beliefs, opinions, and values. Professor Judith Irvine (1989) defines language ideologies as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests.” Her definition emphasizes how cultural ideas reproduce certain attitudes towards a language and how those ideas can change over time. Bonnie Urciuoli (1991) shifts from cultural to social as she argues that it is the perceived equality or inequality of social relationships that distinguishes the language boundaries which affect language use. These various studies reflect some of the main discourses revolving around linguistic ideologies and language use.

Narrowing my focus, my research question asks: *What are the language ideologies of Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrant parents towards the English acquisition and Spanish retention of their children?* In my paper, I argue that Latinx families in the United States are not able to maintain their desired level of cultural autonomy in public spaces because of linguistic discrimination or a lack of facilities that acknowledge their native tongue. Instead, parents tend to internalize efforts of Spanish retention for their progeny but are unable to match the speed at which their children are assimilating to the U.S. culture and English language. Research on bilingualism has been inclined to focus on how bilingualism is learned, maintained, and its trends

throughout generations. Few studies have shifted the perspective to the parents' language ideologies and whether they prioritize the ability and use of one language over the other when interacting with their children. Since the household is the main environment where the native language is spoken and taught for Latinx families living in the United States, I aimed to learn more about how the parents' mindset towards both Spanish and English is reflected in their children's language abilities. This perspective of the narrative is crucial because the parent's language ideologies will eventually determine their child/children's bilingualism, which largely depends and develops through the reinforced use of the native tongue in the home and familiar setting.

This research project investigated how parents perceive their children's bilingual abilities that shift as they assimilate within U.S. culture. My research design consisted of interviewing sixteen parents, from both Mexican and Puerto Rican communities, about their language ideologies. The study required participants to be first-generation immigrants, meaning they were born or raised in another country and have since relocated and currently reside in a new country. This is an ambiguous definition and was applied to Puerto Rican families' diaspora, despite being a U.S. territory because of the significance of cultural, linguistic, and geographic differences from the island to the mainland. The participants also had to have entered the United States less than twenty years ago and have a child or children under the age of 15. These conditions were required to try to ensure their children were still in the ongoing phases of the language learning process. According to the critical period hypothesis, any language acquisition after the age of puberty will be slower and less successful (Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978), therefore the children's age limit was set to determine the success of bilingualism learned in the

household. Requiring their entry into the United States under twenty years ago was an effort to study the same generation of immigrants, as different years bring different waves of purpose and ambition. Data was collected through audio-recorded semi-structured interviews that addressed different language topics. I gathered demographic information as important variables for shaping their language ideologies. Through their narratives, I gained an in-depth understanding of how important it was for the parents in both populations that their children retain their native tongue of Spanish.

The implications of this research are important because it is not fully known if today's political and social climate frightens Latinx communities, especially undocumented immigrants, from speaking their native language or instead, motivates them to use it more. I argue that the immigration-related executive orders from President Donald Trump this year have elevated fear and cultural repression among this subpopulation. Specifically, in regard to the order entitled "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States," which, according to the Center for Migration Studies, "permit state and local law enforcement to act as immigration agents and to apprehend and detain immigrants," and "authorizes an increase of 10,000 additional ICE agents," (2019), as some of the more important aspects of this order that pertain to my investigation. While larger cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, serve as sanctuaries that do not cooperate with federal immigration authorities, Florida does not have a single sanctuary city. As of June 2019, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed the sanctuary-city ban which requires the cooperation of local officials with federal authorities, as failure to comply will be met with consequences, such as potential removal of office and possible litigation for the local officials by the state attorney general (Campo-Flores 2019). The Center for Immigration Studies lists

Alachua county, near the city of Gainesville, as the only sanctuary jurisdiction throughout the entire state of Florida (Griffith and Vaughan 2019). The enforcement of such policies can create tension and fear of deportation among the Latinx communities who are a vulnerable population in this state.

My research was inspired by a feminist ethnographic ideology that aims to focus more on marginalized groups by “engaging in research that is socially and politically relevant to those we study,” (Davis and Craven 2011). I believe that language is a critical part of one’s identity and the strong opinions that were gathered reflect just how important it is for ethnic minorities to keep their raices, or roots. I hope this research will bring more awareness to how parent ideologies can affect Spanish retention in bilingual children who are raised in an English-speaking environment.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Bilingualism in the United States

To most effectively communicate all the research that has studied Spanish-English bilingualism in the United States, I have organized the information according to the following themes:

- 1) Bilingual trends in the United States: English acquisition and Spanish retention.
- 2) External agencies and other factors that influence language preference and usage.
- 3) English hegemony
- 4) Linguistic discrimination
- 5) Latinx language ideologies towards the English language.

Bilingual Trends in the United States: English Acquisition and Spanish Retention

There are many factors to consider when studying the trend of bilingualism in the United States. The two main perspectives involve the acquisition of English through assimilation and the retention of one's native tongue. In Ahearn's book (2017), chapter *Multilingualism and Globalization*, she reveals that bi/multilingualism is increasing in the U.S., especially of those who speak the combination of Spanish and English. However, Ahearn also observes that with each passing generation within these migrant families, the mother tongue is slowly forgotten and replaced by the more dominant English that surrounds them. Accordingly, Rumbaut's (et al. 2006) research suggests that even within areas that have a high Hispanic immigrant community, Spanish will rapidly die out, usually by the third generation. He further implies that if Spanish retention does not persist in the larger communities he studied, then it will not persist in the

smaller communities that exist across the U.S. Both Ahearn and Rumbaut agree that language assimilation is the main pattern of adaptation that occurs with children of contemporary migrants that live in the U.S.

One of the resulting unique linguistic expressions of Latinx descendants in the U.S. is known as “Spanglish,” which is defined and viewed in many different ways. Spanglish includes varieties of Spanish and English use and is also often used to refer to the code-switching between the two languages in a single linguistic exchange (Sánchez-Muñoz 2013). This mixing of languages has been seen as impure or demonstrating a lack of efficiency in either language, as well as detrimental to the learning capabilities of bi/multilingual students (Ahearn 2017). However, Ahearn argues that such creations can constitute a new language, called “fused lect,” which can be found at the end of the continuum of language shifts created by Auer (1999) that begins with code-switching. Fused lects are the “development of a single code (AB) from two previously separate codes,” (Ahearn 2017) and its development and recognition of being its own language depend on the prevailing language ideologies in the given society.

Concerning linguistic use, Rumbaut et al. (2006) state that although some Mexican immigrant descendants can speak Spanish fluently, they prefer to use English in most settings. This language bias can be explained through the linguistic concept known as diglossia. The original definition of the diglossia formulated by Ferguson (1959) was in reference to a situation where two varieties of a single language were used in different social contexts. A revised version of diglossia has been expanded to include “situations of two or more distinct languages in which both a dominant and subordinate are apparent,” (Candler 2006). Furthering the discussion, Montrul (2013) distinguishes the difference between diglossia, where there is a permanent social

understanding of the separation of language varieties, and bilingualism, which has a more unstable linguistic situation in which the functions of the two languages can vary. Montrul uses Paraguay, a country where over half of the population are bilingual in Spanish and Guaraní, as an example that demonstrates both concepts. Despite both being official languages of Paraguay, Spanish is considered to be the “high” variety and is widely used by the government, educational system, public institutions, and the media (Montrul 2013). Whereas, Guaraní is seen as the “low” variety and is preferred only in familial contexts. Although the United States is multilinguistic and lacks official languages, a similar relationship to Spanish and Guaraní can be seen between English and Spanish, respectively. When the preference of English usage among the Latinx bilingual population transfers from the public context over to the more private home setting, then the death of the mother tongue is most likely to occur within the following generations.

On the other hand, Tran (2010) argues that English acquisition and Spanish retention can occur simultaneously. In his study, the English and Spanish proficiency among second-generation Latinx groups both increased over the years, instead of having an inverse effect on one another. He emphasizes that “the process of English acquisition does not proceed at the cost of Spanish abandonment.” Tran also finds that the use of Spanish at home and in school has no effect on English acquisition but does promote Spanish retention. Alba et al. (2002) also explore the rate of English monolingualism among immigrant descendants. They state that the rate of becoming a monolingual English speaker is slower among Spanish speakers than other immigrant groups and examines critical factors, such as intermarriage, that determine the language in the communal context. Rumbaut et al., and Tran’s studies concluded that among all the Spanish-speaking groups, Mexican Americans tend to maintain a higher retention of Spanish

due to being more likely to continue to speak Spanish at home while living in the U.S. However, Alba et al.'s research ultimately suggests that even though the U.S. lacks an unofficial language and is a multilinguistic country, due to assimilation, English will overwhelmingly remain the dominant language into the future.

External Agencies and Other Factors That Influence Language Preference and Usage

In the studies surrounding bilingualism, there are an abundance factors that influence language acquisition and language retention. However, the most important aspect is the preference of the use of one language system over another; this can be developed through the process of assimilation into the U.S. Carliner (2000) reflects in his studies that education, age of entry, years since entry into the U.S., and one's country of origin play large roles in immigrants' English language skills. Carliner also looks at how all the aforementioned factors interact with the sex of the descendant; finding that women are more likely to be fluent in English than men. Martínez (2010) ties in the importance of communication in Spanglish, which he refers to as Spanish to English code-switching, within bilingual communication as it reinforces one's social identity and demonstrates the possibility of an easier transition from one language preference to the other.

Moreover, Linton (2004) also examines the contextual and personal level factors that influence the decision to maintain Spanish and whether it should be taught to their children. She affirms that bilingualism is most likely to be retained if the family resides within a Spanish-speaking community that will facilitate the usage of the native tongue outside of the home. Baquedano-López (2004) offers a modern example in which the language ideology of a religious institute favors the use of English-only instruction over the traditional use of Spanish. Religion is

usually one of the main cultural pillars within Latinx cultures and thus, this decision can be a big influence over how the overall community forms their language ideologies. McConnel and Leclere (2002) tested to see whether the variation of migration streams and destinations can influence the English fluency of Mexican immigrants. He found that the English skills of migrants differed significantly between those residing in the Southwest and Midwest regions; providing insight as to how the environment can affect the use of a language and its fluency.

Furthering the discussion, Monzó and Rueda (2009) demonstrate that the discrimination and prejudice that Spanish-speaking parents experience can be reflected onto their children who are aware of the social differences and the pressure to conform to the United States culture through the English language. They also specifically mention that the children of immigrants recognized from a young age that, despite the context, English was the preferred language to use in public spaces, while Spanish was viewed in a second-class status and only spoken in private familial contexts or for translation purposes. Langenkamp (2005) shows evidence of how structural constraints in the school system and the broader legislative policies undermine a commitment to bilingualism for Latinx students. Similar to Monzó and Rueda, Langenkamp also states how the treatment of the Spanish language and culture as subordinate, or less important, influences and enables the current English hegemony in the U.S.

English Hegemony

Living in the United States proves to be a big obstacle to Spanish retention as it can be ostracized in public and confined to private use only. Davis and Moore (2014) bring together several experiences of first-generation Mexican migrants that shows how the prevalence of ethnocentrism in the U.S. attempts to exclude the use of the Spanish language. Dowling et al.

(2012) addresses how some politicians believe that the U.S. and its citizens will experience a demise in their “cultural identity” due to the increasing use of the Spanish language that invaded public space as immigrant populations grew. Wiley (2014) focuses on how English hegemony began and describes the impacts of language policies on different ethnolinguistic groups throughout the U.S. Dowling also discusses the growing “English-Only” movement and its corresponding legislative policies that reinforce such beliefs which have been around since the 1980s.

As this “English-only” trend gains more visibility in public spaces through vocal discontent, socio-cultural barriers may develop a rift in society. Laura Ahearn (2017) comments that language differences create social inequality and exclusion especially when it comes to the inability of speaking English. She states that being able to speak English is perceived as critical to fully belonging in the U.S. This ideology gained more traction in the 1980s when English-only advocates began pushing for legislation that would result in such “language unity” (Greenspan 1994). In 1988, Florida voters overwhelmingly showed their stance on this matter by approving this controversial “Official English” amendment which declared it its official state language, and, according to Greenspan, was ultimately driven by anti-Hispanic sentiment. Florida currently stands among the 32 states with statutes or amendments that declare English as their official language. This blatant rejection of any foreign language is not a brand-new concept and they suggest that it will most likely persist into the future.

Linguistic Discrimination

Although the United States does not acknowledge an official language at the federal level, an overwhelming majority speak English, while Spanish comes in second place due to the

migration influx from Latinx countries (Burton 2018). Linguistic discrimination that involves Spanish ultimately roots from anti-Latinx, and more specifically anti-Mexican, sentiment that has been etched throughout the history of the interactions between these countries and the U.S. According to an article by historian Kelly Lytle Hernandez, undocumented Latinx immigrants largely made up the low-wage labor force of the U.S. in the 1970s, which led to “many Americans [growing] anxious about the social, cultural, linguistic, and demographic changes that immigration created as [they] emerged...” and led to a push of immigration control (2009). This ideology can still be seen today regarding the English-Only initiatives which usually carry racist and xenophobic undertones as they discourage and even punish the use of other languages.

Taking a historical perspective, one could also argue that the many territorial disputes and wars between the United States and Mexico, as well as the long history of invasion and colonialization of Puerto Rico, have played a major role in the continued discrimination of Spanish usage. Haviland (2003) gives us two U.S. court cases that demonstrate the important consequences of language ideologies. The second case presented by Haviland specifically shows the negative outcome that results from speaking Spanish in public in the U.S., which influences how immigrants perceive their own language and can consequently have them switch to the less “threatening” English.

Latinx Language Ideologies Towards the English Language

Despite the negativity surrounding their native language, Spanish-speaking Latinx people do not share a strong distaste for English. Dowling et al. (2012) and Rumbaut et al. (2006) discuss the stereotype that claims that Mexican-Americans are less willing or motivated to assimilate to the U.S. culture and learn the English language. Specifically, Dowling’s research

counters this claim by expressing the high value that Mexican immigrants or Mexican-Americans have towards learning and becoming fluent in English due to the advantages in the job market and education opportunities. Dowling's survey results showed a highly skewed pattern: over 95% of respondents stated that English proficiency is "very important." They also add that the citizenship status of Mexican immigrants plays a role in their opinion on whether or not English is important.

Monzó and Rueda (2009) explain how Latinx immigrant children prefer to identify themselves as being fluent in English because they are aware of the social status it carries and the discrimination it prevents within the U.S. Additionally, they state that having proficiency in English, rather than Spanish, deems them as more intelligent. Jiménez (2008) did an extensive study that focuses on the different language ideologies that isolate Mexican immigrants and their following generations. His research reveals that Spanish-speaking, versus other aspects of the Mexican culture, is placed at higher importance when it comes to "proving" one's ethnic authenticity, reflecting that a loss of the native language and adaptation of the English language could mean a loss of one's culture and identity.

Migration History

There is a complex history concerning the migration of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans to the United States. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. has seized and controlled the territories of both of these populations in the past respectively. The main motivation for Mexican and Puerto Rican migration to the United States has always been for better job opportunities that were not as available or attainable back home. This driving force far exceeds any potential dangers

associated with the migration journey or the possible discrimination and language barriers they will face as they adjust to their lives in the U.S.

From Mexico to the U.S.

The root of Mexican migration began during the late 1800s when the industrial agriculture boom occurred in the United States and gave Mexico's rural and jobless labor force access to employment north of the U.S.-Mexico border (Hernandez 2009). According to Hernandez, immigration restrictions at the time exhausted sources of immigrant workers, especially those of Asian origins, which led to the dependence of Mexican labor migration and the growth of its population in the U.S. (2009). However, when the Great Depression began in the 1900s, the migration wave slowed down and the "campaigns to send Mexican immigrants back to Mexico erupted," (Hernandez 2009) and have not died down to this day. Despite such resistance, Mexican labor migration continuously occurred whenever the United States needs increasing the labor force to meet their production goals, such as the Bracero Program that was established to do just that in the 1940s.

Mexico's migration history to the U.S. can truly be seen as a system of labor exploitation that ended up encouraging illegal immigration which could not be managed or controlled. For Mexicans, their migration is "a strategy for economic survival," (Hernandez 2009) against poverty as global recessions caused an economic decline in Mexico that lingered in the late 1900s. The U.S. relied on cheap labor from undocumented workers, and the Mexican families depended on the wages earned from north of the border. Even though the workers were usually overworked and underpaid, they took advantage of the limited options they had available for them. This is occurring alongside the deportation movement which fueled by the common, but

mythical, concern that immigrants are stealing jobs away from U.S. citizens. Since beginning his presidency in 2016, Donald Trump has been strongly against immigration and constantly uses them as scapegoats for situations concerning the economy and national security. While campaigning in 2015, he fueled false stereotypes by declaring that “They’re taking out jobs, they’re taking our manufacturing jobs, they’re taking our money, they’re killing us.” (Boak 2019).

There have been plenty of recent efforts to stop the waves of illegal immigration. In his book “The Land of Open Graves” anthropologist Jason De León compiles his ethnographic research that was conducted along the U.S.-Mexico border near Arizona regarding the violence and deaths that happen systematically. He coins the system as the “Prevention Through Deterrence,” or PTD, system which takes advantage of hostile terrain, like the Sonora Desert, to impede immigrants from crossing into the United States (2015). However, as the system implies, it has merely deterred or slowed down immigration which does not look likely to come to a halt any time soon. Difficult living conditions back in Mexico and Latin America continue to drive their residents north for a better life despite the resistance and harsh conditions they will have to experience.

From Puerto Rico to the Mainland

The United States invaded Puerto Rico and seized control over the former Spanish colony during the aftermath of the Spanish-American War in 1898. It was not until 1917 that Puerto Ricans gained full citizenship as part of becoming U.S. territory. And since 1953, the island was officially a postcolonial state. However, Jorge Duany states that the relationship with the United States did not improve as the Puerto Rican residents did “not enjoy all the constitutional rights

and privileges of US citizenship,” (2009). Duany also mentions that Puerto Ricans “have been dubbed ‘colonial immigrants’ because they are US citizens who can travel freely between the Island and the mainland but are not fully covered by the American constitution,” (2009). The diasporic migration of Puerto Ricans towards bigger cities, like New York City and Orlando, Florida also began in an effort to seek better employment.

In addition to the exodus from Puerto Rico that occurs during periods of economic stagnation, Hurricane Maria, which devastated Puerto Rico and the surrounding islands in September 2017, also played a critical role in the mass migration of recent years. The disaster left the island in ruins and, with minimal support from the U.S. mainland, Puerto Rico experienced damage to their transportation and communication infrastructure as well as the collapse of their electrical system in the following months, which dropped employment prospects (Meléndez and Hinojosa 2017). This further pushed the island into a downward economic spiral and decreased employment prospects that ultimately forced thousands to migrate to the U.S. in search of employment.

Migrations to Central Florida

Last year, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the population of Orlando city, one of the largest cities in central Florida and the focus of my study area, alone to be around 286,000, of which nearly 30% identified as Hispanic or Latino (2018). Their definition of Hispanics or Latinos refers to “Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race,” (U.S. Department of Commerce 2018). Therefore, it makes it difficult to determine the estimates of the Mexican and Puerto Rican populations since they are

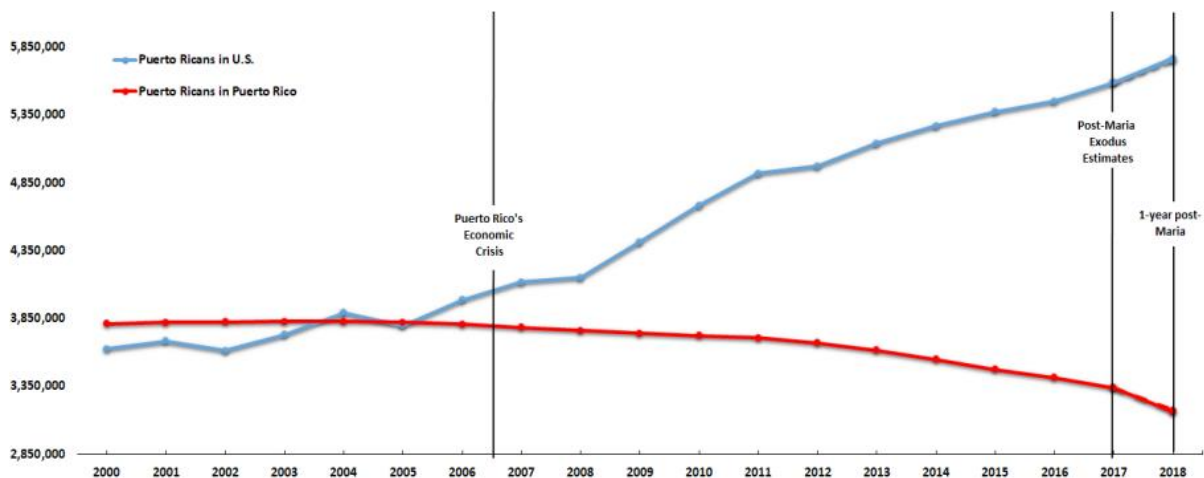
lumped together under this umbrella term. However, the rise of the Puerto Rican migration influx over the last several years to the Florida peninsula cannot be taken lightly.

According to Fernando Rivera, the Director of the Puerto Rico Research Hub of the University of Central Florida, “one out of every five Latinos in Florida is Puerto Rican,” (Puerto Rico Report 2019). A major stream of migration followed the disastrous event of Hurricane Maria and brought many of its affected residents to move to the U.S. mainland, with Florida being one of their prime destinations, especially the larger Orlando area (Wang and Rayer). Similarly, Juan Sabines, the Consul of Mexico in Orlando, states that there are around 200,000 people of Mexican descent who live in the Central Florida area, and 66,000 of them live in Orlando, Kissimmee, and Sanford (Ortiz 2017). In the same interview, Sabines also mentions the growth of the overall Latinx population that has occurred since 2000. He states that the pulling force that attracted the Mexican migration was the availability of jobs in construction, agriculture, and hospitality service industries (Ortiz 2017).

Figure 1. The Top 10 Destination States for Migrants from Puerto Rico to the United States, 2005-2016¹

Rank	State	Total Inflow	Share (in %)
1	Florida	242,134	29.0
2	New York	79,985	9.6
3	Pennsylvania	68,727	8.2
4	Texas	58,723	7.0
5	Massachusetts	50,231	6.0
6	New Jersey	44,360	5.3
7	Connecticut	29,809	3.6
8	Ohio	23,639	2.8
9	Georgia	22,438	2.7
10	California	20,555	2.5

Figure 2. Puerto Rican Population in Puerto Rico and the United States²



¹ (Wang and Rayer 2018)

² (Hinojosa and Meléndez 2018; based on various years of the American Community Survey data.)

Chapter 3: Methodology

Study Population

This study explored the language ideologies of Mexican and Puerto Rican parents in Central Florida. I interviewed a total of sixteen parents; nine of whom were Mexican and seven were Puerto Rican, in the summer of 2019. Before the interview, an overview and explanation of the research project, which was in either Spanish or English, was read out loud and a copy was given to each participant. Any questions or concerns were discussed and answered until the verbal consent of understanding was reached. The interviews usually began with the participants answering the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix), followed by the discussion of the topics listed on the Interview Guide (see Appendix). The recorded interviews were then partially transcribed and combined with my field notes. I was careful in translating most of the Spanish answers into English, but I did keep various quotes verbatim that I felt were more impactful in their native voice.

Participants were recruited through personal contacts and snowball sampling. To ensure the privacy of the parents no identifiable information was collected, and they were asked to create pseudonyms for themselves, which will be used throughout my paper. My Mexican participants used names such as “Juan,” “Paola,” “Jasmine,” “Brenda,” “Julieta,” “Lupita,” “Marta,” “Dalia,” and “Verónica.” My Puerto Rican population consisted of “Isabelle,” “Pedro,” “Maria,” “Jessica,” “Nicole,” “Limarys,” and “Bella.” The majority of the participants that I had access to were female, whereas I only managed to interview one male parent for each population. This ultimately leads to a gendered bias in my analysis as I did not have as much access to more male respondents.

The ages of my participants ranged from 20 to 49 years old. I created the tables below for each population from the data I collected with the Demographic Questionnaires. The categories I covered were age, gender, country of origin, the highest level of education, marital status, number of children living in their house under the age of 15, employment status, total household income, English comprehension comfort level, and English-speaking comfort level. The latter two categories were answered on a 4-point scale: 4- Very well/Fluent, 3- Okay, 2- A little bit, and 1-Not at all. A deeper discussion will be made concerning the demographic results and how they impacted or influenced interview answers.

These two populations were chosen for several reasons: first, Puerto Ricans and Mexicans have been at the center of language and anti-immigrant discourse in the U.S. Even though Puerto Ricans are U.S. Citizens, they can still receive discrimination because of their use of Spanish or Latinx physical appearance. This is exemplified in the case of Palmira Rios, a Puerto Rican professor who was detained by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and, even though she provided her U.S. citizenship documentation, she was threatened to be deported back to the Dominican Republic because of the dark complexion that gave her the appearance of a Dominican immigrant (Jordan 2007).

Second, Florida is set to surpass New York as the home to the largest population of Puerto Ricans outside of the island as the influx of immigrants continues on an upward trend (as shown above in *Figure 1*). According to research based on data by the American Community Survey, Wang and Rayer (2018) state that “the Puerto Rican population living in Florida has grown rapidly since 2000, increasing by about 365,000 (76%) from 2000 to 2010, and by another 200,000 (24%) from 2010 to 2016.” However, the exodus following Hurricane Maria “represents

one of the most significant historical movements of Puerto Ricans to the U.S. in terms of both volume and duration,” (Hinojosa and Meléndez 2018), and is represented in *Figure 2* above. The 2018 emigration estimates from the Center of Puerto Rican Studies reveal an influx of almost 160,000 Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland, almost double the out-migration flow from the prior year (Hinojosa and Meléndez 2018). The previous estimates from these researchers and the Bureau of Business and Economic Research estimates both indicate that Florida will be the most affected by the increasing influx and will eventually turn it into the state with the largest Puerto-Rican population living on the mainland, where they will predominantly settle in the Central Florida area (Wang and Raver 2018; Meléndez and Hinojosa 2017).

Third, Mexicans comprise a large number of Spanish speakers in Central Florida and are also frequently suspected of being undocumented. The Mexican community can be noticed around the Central Florida area due to the proximity of the Mexican consulate, who resides in Orlando, Florida and can serve the large population that has concentrated there due to the availability of opportunities (Ortiz 2017). As a bilingual member of the Latinx community, I had easier access to informants from both communities, and my family’s personal contacts supported me a lot. I also relied on Dr. Reyes-Foster’s contacts within the Puerto-Rican community to help gather additional informants from that population.

Interview Design

My research methods were derived from past feminist ethnographic perspectives. As Ghosh (2012) states, feminist research creates a space that is grounded contextually in “experience, participants, definitions, meanings and subjectivity,” to “understand the interaction between structure and agency.” Therefore, my research methodology ultimately took an in-depth

qualitative approach. The main source of my data was gathered through semi-structured interviews that allowed for a focused conversation process. This semi-structured approach of gathering ethnographic narratives was chosen to increase the likelihood that all of the topics covered in the interview guide were similarly covered in each interview, not necessarily in order (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002). The topics on the Interview Guide were chosen to help me gather information on Mexican and Puerto Rican parent's opinions about various linguistic usages in different contexts. Although I only managed to conduct sixteen interviews in total, responses began to repeat themselves and reveal a pattern, therefore, thematic saturation was considered to have been reached for both populations.

Participants in this research were first-generation Mexican or Puerto Rican parents of children under the age of 15. This was to ensure that the parents who participated had already gone through their children's early language acquisition phases and to limit responses to immigrants who arrived in the U.S. in the last 20 years. Once parents agreed to participate in my study, we met at a mutually agreed upon location, which was usually their homes, but a few came over to my house, or we met at nearby locations. Interviews usually occurred in the evening, or whenever the participants were available, and lasted from 20 to 60 minutes and were audio-recorded. To ensure that the participants were comfortable, the interviews were respondent-focused: all of the Mexican parents chose to speak in Spanish, while half of the Puerto Rican parents preferred using English or the mix of Spanglish. After the interviews, I would ask them if they knew any other parents that would be willing to participate and recruited as many informants as I could.

Reflexivity Statement

As a child of first-generation Mexican parents who trekked into a predominantly English environment without knowing the language themselves, I have witnessed the shift of the language use of my own family. The first language I learned was Spanish, which was mainly conversational and perceived as informal because of the educational constraints that my parents faced. As my parents began working in the U.S., they also began to pick up the informal English language and usually only phrases pertaining to their respective work at the time. Therefore, my home is in a fluctuating state of speaking informal Spanish and the learned English. I conducted this research to see if such trends were holding true with other Latinx families and to get a better understanding of how they perceive this matter as it affects the larger Spanish speaking community.

My ethnicity and bilingual Spanish and English skills gave me access to the populations in my study. However, I did notice that many participants, particularly from the Mexican population, were hesitant to be interviewed despite the acknowledgment of not disclosing any identifiable information. It was also more common for potential Mexican participants to back out from an initial agreement or completely refuse involvement in my study. I understand there could be various reasons as to why this could have happened, especially because I am a stranger and/or outsider of their community requesting to record an interview with them upon the first meeting. Due to the temporality of my project, which lasted one summer, and only meeting with my respondents a single time, I was unable to create a trust that would de-establish the researcher and participant barrier that stalled conversations. I also believe that at least some hesitation rooted in the current political climate created by the Trump administration which flamed anti-

immigration ideology and deportation levels, and thus a sense of suspicion to strangers. In anticipation of this fear, I decided to not ask any questions concerning citizenship or immigration status.

Chapter 4: Results & Analysis

I will first discuss the results of the demographic questions that are organized into Table 1 and Table 2 below. The interview results are represented through the reoccurring themes that were prominent among the responses of participants, therefore the use of in-vivo quotes often reflect common ideologies. The patterns that I noted through thematic saturation were surrounding the topics of pragmatics or contexts of language use, experiences of linguistic discrimination, cultural identity, and the access to and importance of their native homelands.

Demographic Differences

My analysis included a semi-structured interview process with questions that addressed the parents' preferences for bilingualism among themselves and their children. During the analysis, external factors were considered that may affect the research, specifically the demographic information that was collected during the interviews. Following the Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix), I asked the participants various questions that they had the option to not answer or discuss. There was a wide range of answers, but the differences were more apparent between the Mexican and Puerto Rican populations rather than within. Table 1 and Table 2 below display the participants' answers under their pseudonyms.

The clearest distinction between the two Latinx populations was regarding their level of education. Almost all of the Puerto Rican parents I interviewed had at least some level of college education, while a majority of the Mexican parents did not obtain or complete any secondary education or return to complete an equivalent degree like the GED (General Education Diploma). This difference can be contributed to the accessibility of proper higher-level education

institutions back in their home countries. Another factor is the possible language barrier from obtaining said education while they are here in the U.S. The next major difference that goes hand-in-hand with education, is the level of English fluency and comprehension. Almost all of my Puerto Rican parents were confident in their bilingual skills and ranked themselves as a level 4 on a scale of 4 for both the English comprehension and speaking categories. Whereas, the Mexican parents were more hesitant with their responses and tended to rank themselves lower for each category. However, it is important to note that the participants were not tested or evaluated on their English proficiency and the responses are purely based on their self-perception. This contrast can be correlated to their levels of education which facilitates the learning of English especially within college-level courses, as well as the early access to English education that is more accessible on the island.

Despite the majority of parents from both populations being employed in either full-time or part-time positions, their household incomes varied greatly. The Mexican parents generated incomes ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 a year. The Puerto Rican families in my study tended to be more affluent with total household incomes ranging from \$20,000 to more than \$70,000 annually, which was the max bracket range option available. This discrepancy can also be related to the higher levels of education and level of English proficiency between the respondents. However, I contend that citizenship status significantly affects these characteristics. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens—granting them more political and civil rights, such as job security and eligibility for higher-paying jobs than some of the Mexican respondents who vary in their citizenship status level. A report from the Migration Policy Institute states that naturalized

citizens do better financially as they earn between 46 and 67 percent more than noncitizens (Sumption & Flamm 2012).

The demographics played an interesting role in this study. Although the socio-economic statuses of families varied between Mexican and Puerto Rican populations, interview responses were similar and consistent enough when it came to language ideologies in order to reach thematic saturation and expose common thought patterns. This reflects that the participants were part of the same generational wave of immigrants that came to the U.S. during the late 90s and 2000s.

Table 1. Mexican Population Demographics.

	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Highest Level of Education	Marital Status	Children
Juan	30-39	Male	Mexico	HS Diploma or Equivalent (GED)	Married	4
Paola	30-39	Female	Mexico	Middle/Secondary School	Married	4
Jasmine	20-29	Female	Mexico	Middle/Secondary School	Married	2
Brenda	30-39	Female	Mexico	Middle/Secondary School	Married	2
Julieta	30-39	Female	Mexico	Middle/Secondary School	Married	2
Lupita	30-39	Female	Mexico	HS Diploma, or Equivalent (GED)	Married	2
Marta	40-49	Female	Mexico	Middle/Secondary School	Married	3
Dalia	40-49	Female	Mexico	Middle/Secondary School	Married	1
Veronica	30-39	Female	Mexico	HS Diploma, or Equivalent (GED)	Married	2

	Employment Status	Household Income	English Comprehension	English Speaking
Juan	Self-employed	\$36,000-\$50,000	3- Okay	3- Okay
Paola	Employed Full-time	\$20,000-\$35,000	2- A little bit	1- Not at all
Jasmine	Employed Full-Time	Preferred not to answer	3- Okay	3- Okay
Brenda	Employed Full-time	\$36,000-\$50,000	3- Okay	1- Not at all
Julieta	Employed Full-Time	\$10,000-\$20,000	2- A little bit	2- A little bit
Lupita	Unemployed	\$20,000-\$35,000	3- Okay	2- A little bit
Marta	Employed Full-time	\$20,000-\$35,000	1- Not at all	1- Not at all
Dalia	Employed Part-time	\$20,000-\$35,000	2- A little bit	1- Not at all
Veronica	Employed Full-time	\$20,000-\$35,000	1- Not at all	1- Not at all

Table 2. Puerto Rican Population Demographics.

	Age	Gender	Country of Origin	Highest Level of Education	Marital Status	Children
Isabelle	30-39	Female	Puerto Rico	Bachelor's Degree	Married	2
Pedro	20-29	Male	Puerto Rico	Trade/Technical Training	Married	1
Maria	30-39	Female	Puerto Rico	Bachelor's Degree	Married	3
Jessica	30-39	Female	Puerto Rico	Bachelor's Degree	Married	2
Nicole	20-29	Female	Puerto Rico	Master's Degree	Married	2
Limarys	40-49	Female	U.S.	Bachelor's Degree	Single	1
Bella	30-39	Female	Puerto Rico	Bachelor's Degree	Married	2

	Employment Status	Household Income	English Comprehension	English Speaking
Isabelle	Employed Full-time	\$70,000+	4- Very Well	4-Fluent
Pedro	Employed Full-time	\$20,000-\$35,000	3- Okay	3- Okay
Maria	Employed Full-time	\$36,000-\$50,000	4- Very Well	4-Fluent
Jessica	Employed Full-time	\$51,000-\$70,000	4- Very Well	4-Fluent
Nicole	Employed Full-time	\$36,000-\$50,000	4- Very Well	4-Fluent
Limarys	Employed Full-time	\$20,000-\$35,000	4- Very Well	4-Fluent
Bella	Employed Full-time	\$70,000+	4- Very Well	4-Fluent

Interview Results

Pragmatics of Language Use

As in every aspect of anthropological studies; context matters. It was important to the study that I inquire about the language use and language choice of the family members for all different environments such as the home, family gatherings, social events, work, and religious and educational settings. The latter settings are external institutions that can influence ideologies, as previously mentioned in the literature review. All of the Mexican participants stated that Spanish is the primary language spoken at home, in part because it is the sole language that the parents can use to communicate. In contrast, some of the Puerto Rican participants revealed a heavier use of English at home, despite efforts to maintain a Spanish-Only environment. Children rely on their parents to learn conversational and vernacular Spanish skills through repetition and error-corrections. A majority of parents from both populations stated that even in the familial setting, their children are more comfortable speaking in English amongst themselves and with relatives and friends in their generation.

When children begin to express a priority of English use inside the home setting, it can be perceived as offensive by the parents. Julieta, who is the mother of two children, felt as though their preference of English meant that they do not wish to talk to her or her family; *“hacen a un lado el español y no hablan tanto conmigo porque no nos entendemos más de nada [they put Spanish aside and do not talk as much with me because we do not understand each other more than anything].”* Despite the parents’ effort to promote Spanish use at home, due to the constant English use that children are exposed to in school and other outside social realms, the children end up with a preference towards the English language. I do not believe the children understand

the cultural importance of their parent's native language or their own identity and instead realize the necessity of being fluent in English.

Most Latinx populations have different dialects of Spanish, which was made noticeable through phrases, pronunciations, vocabulary, and their accents. Among my participants, the use of informal Spanish was heavy, or as Pedro emphasized, it was “Español del campo [rural Spanish].” These manners of speech also become important regarding linguistic discrimination that can be attached to the perception of accents and where the individuals are from. He recalls a certain experience where he was attempting to help a group of white U.S. citizens anchor their ship to the dockside, to which they seemed grateful for until they heard him talk English with a heavy accent. Once Pedro was revealed as a non-native English-speaker like them, their attitude changed and they proceeded to make fun of him and his way of speaking; “quiso dejarme entender que si yo no sabía inglés, que hacia aquí [they wanted me to let me know that if I didn't know English, why was I even here (in America) for].”

The experiences discussed reveal the linguistic concept of diglossia in action. The bilingual children of the participants were aware of the contextual use of each language; Spanish is for family and at home, and English is for everyone and everywhere else. The manner in which the participants of both populations spoke of their language use reflected that within the U.S., the English hegemony is noticeably the dominant language, whereas their native Spanish is pushed into the subordinate role and, as discussed above, secluded into private use. This shift in language preference is something that is learned and noticed through prevailing language ideologies in the United States.

Discrimination

Linguistic discrimination can take many forms and is often rooted in larger racial sentiment. I asked my participants to share what they have experienced when speaking their native tongue in a public space. The experiences differed between the two populations as the Puerto Rican parents expressed more vivid forms of linguistic discrimination than their Mexican counterparts. I note that this discrepancy is rooted in the different ideas of what discrimination is and how it is perceived. Pedro states that every time he speaks his native tongue outside in public, he notices the people around him becoming bothered by it as their faces turn sour; he says that such discomfort and microaggressions are always noticeable. Besides his aforementioned experience, Pedro also shared a time where he was harassed with the same “Why don’t you speak English?” regime recently, but it was from a stranger whom he identified as being Latinx, “probably Puerto Rican or Columbian”. The latter interaction bothered him more because it was from a fellow member of the Spanish-speaking community. This form of internalized discrimination amongst Latinx populations in regard to language use and preference was surprising to me, as the 12 out of 16 of respondents replied that there is no such social hierarchy in their communities regarding language use or preference. The other four claimed that bilinguals were more prestigious because of their access to opportunities, but they did not express any negative stereotypes or discrimination toward English or Spanish monolinguals.

There was also a surprising amount of good reactions from the parents concerning the public use of their native tongue. One of the most common experiences was about witnessing young Latinx children use their bilingual skills to help older people who only spoke Spanish navigate around institutions that did not offer an aide to overcome such language barriers. Paola,

a mother of four young children states that bilingual people are more prestigious than their monolingual counterparts as they can use their abilities to extend a helping hand and bridge together two communities; “*se les hace más fácil trabajar y así mismo ayudar a su misma gente... yo quisiera que mis hijos así fueran [It is easier for them to work and to also help their own people... I wish for my children to be like that.]*” This sentiment reveals the lack of support and helplessness that the parents might have gone through when they first immigrated to the United States as they sympathize with others who lack English communication skills.

Despite any possibility of linguistic discrimination, most of my participants still wanted their children to become bilingual and placed both of these languages at equal value. The other two parents claimed that they still want their children to learn Spanish because their cultural pride is greater than the discrimination they have faced. Nonetheless, they still fear and worry that their children might be met with similar bigotry. Nearly half of the parents also claimed that although they want their children to retain Spanish, they are not going to force them to learn it, as they want the effort to come naturally. This refers to the parent’s pullback on enforcing a Spanish-only home context if their progeny demonstrates a lack of effort in retaining their own Spanish abilities. The parents take this uninterest personally, while it may reflect the children’s lack of access to further progress or retain Spanish within the educational system.

Identity

Cultural pride was important to almost every family in establishing a connection to the value and importance of retaining their Spanish tongue. Juan states that “*la mejor manera de sentirse orgulloso es practicando el idioma [The best way to feel pride in your culture is by practicing the language.]*” Many of the participants’ children were born in the United States but

despite this, their first language is or will be Spanish. This notion was emphasized by most parents' efforts to maintain a "Spanish-only" home environment to preserve their native tongue that is not constantly reinforced in the public domain. When asked why it was a problem for children of Latinx immigrants to forget Spanish, Jasmine answered, "*Porque somos mexicanos y es algo ilógico que se pierda eso... que no sepan hablar Español. [Because we are Mexican and it is illogical for that be forgotten... for them not to know how to talk in Spanish].*" In a way, her ideology extends to the concept that even if you are Mexican-American, you are Mexican before you are a U.S. citizen; those are your roots and you must not forget where you came from. This also resonated with the Puerto Rican respondents, as Pedro stated that "*la importancia del lenguaje es saber de dónde tu vienes [the importance of a language is to know where you come from.]*" This further demonstrates the sense of nationality that is tied to language, as Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. display their roots through Spanish use.

Identity and language proved to be a controversial topic for my participants. Half of the participants, like Jasmine's statement above, believed that if you are Mexican or Puerto Rican, you should know how to speak Spanish. The other half believed that cultural identity transcends language use and referenced several celebrities, such as Jennifer Lopez, who identify as Puerto Rican but are unable to fluently speak Spanish.

As previously mentioned, Mexican families tend to rely more on Spanish use to communicate, especially between parents or the larger extended family and children. The lack of English skills from the older generations makes Spanish communication more valuable and useful within their community outside of Mexico. The Puerto Rican participants were, for the most part, bilingual and very fluent in both Spanish and English communication and

comprehension. The only difference between the two populations was the accessibility of factors to help them achieve a greater sense of cultural pride. For example, Puerto Ricans have the privilege to travel back to their homeland with fewer consequences than undocumented Mexicans do; a notion was acknowledged by several of my Puerto Rican participants.

Homeland

The Puerto Rican participants in my study were less likely than the Mexican participants to interact and live in a surrounding Spanish-speaking community. From my own experiences and the information, I gathered through the interviews, I noticed that Mexican families tend to congregate in certain neighborhoods and become close-knit to other families in the area. Whereas the communities I visited for the Puerto Rican participants, only consisted of a few Latinx families. While the lack of access to Spanish-speaking neighbors can further cut off the facilitation of the use of the native tongue outside of the familial setting, my Puerto Rican respondents can overcome this possible obstacle with their ability to regularly visit their homeland, which is not always an option for the Mexican population. This could also explain why Mexican families tend to create such large communities, as an effort to make up for what they no longer have easy access to; recreating the neighborhood they left behind.

Due to the requirements for participation in the study, most parents came to the U.S. less than twenty years ago. To no surprise, most Mexican participants migrated for job prospects, while few sought better education opportunities or marriage. Puerto Rican participants had a greater variety of answers; as some came for employment, medical treatment, to live closer to relatives, or simply because the climate and atmosphere in Florida are similar to their homeland, while also providing better opportunities. Despite choosing to migrate to the United States, I

argue that maintaining a good connection to one's homeland as an extension of cultural pride is critical for children as a way to use and respect their native tongues. Isabelle explained that she tries to visit the island of Puerto Rico yearly not only to visit family but to also allow her children to flourish in a Spanish-speaking environment. Isabelle also sheds light on how the perception of learning the English language as a requirement has been forced upon Puerto Ricans and other immigrant populations: "you are made aware that the more languages you speak, the better it is for you and your opportunities." The economy, as well as the political and social situations revolving around their home countries, do not allow residents to thrive and force them to make the difficult decision to leave everything behind and adapt to life in a new country.

While my Puerto Rican respondents enthusiastically mentioned their homeland and recalled their numerous visits to the island, this could not be said for their Mexican counterparts. Although both populations proudly spoke of their culture and traditions, most Mexican parents did not bring up Mexico or any future trips to visit the country north of our border; Lupita was the only parent to do so. However, she herself was excluded from the trip. She said that her husband was planning to take their two sons to visit their hometown and family members in the near future. Her husband will be the only one going because he is the only one who has "papeles [papers]," which is the common way to refer to those who have a visa or resident card and are able to legally travel back and forth to Mexico. Due to Puerto Rico being a part of the United States, the island residents are allowed to travel more freely to and from their homeland. As immigrants, the Mexican respondents possibly did not have the legal or official status of a U.S. resident or citizen to enable them to do the same. This hurdle prevented the children from accessing their parent's homeland and having a deeper connection to their heritage.

Concluding Analysis

The Latinx parents in my study demonstrated that they do desire their children to retain the Spanish language alongside their growing English gains. They want their children to use these bilingual abilities as a way to help other Spanish-speaking individuals who are having difficulty maneuvering through the external structures and institutions that follow the English hegemonistic trends that are prevalent throughout the United States. The structure versus agency debate can be applied to my study which has reflected that the social and political structures that my Mexican and Puerto Rican participants experience while living in the U.S. weakens their efforts of retaining their Native Spanish language through their progeny. I argue that they do have agency, or the capacity to act freely, but are restricted by the surrounding structures. This is why context is important, even more so when language use is involved. The pragmatics of language use demonstrate the concept of diglossia, where language preference in different social contexts reflects the power and/or prestige hierarchy of languages in the U.S.

Despite being two different Latinx populations, the language ideologies of both the Puerto Rican and Mexican parents were more similar than I had originally assumed. Their language ideology towards Spanish focused on a strong feeling of cultural pride and nationality. English language ideologies were more practical and centered on its' necessity for economic advancement. These language ideologies were also surprisingly positive, and the participants claimed that they viewed both languages as being of equal value and importance to them. The families in this study are assimilating to the U.S. culture, but wish to do so without the cost of their cultural identity and native language.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The research project I conducted provided insight into the language ideologies of Mexican and Puerto Rican parents who are residing in the Central Florida area with their families. I decided to focus on the parent's values because they are the main facilitators in establishing a connection from their native culture, including language and traditions, to their progeny. Depending on the home environment, Latinx children can have an advantage in becoming bilingual; fluent in both English and Spanish. The parents I interviewed equally valued both languages and encourage the use of Spanish in the household as an effort to level the playing field against the assimilation to U.S. culture that their children experience in the public realm. All of the parents showed concern over the possible loss of their native tongue in their future generations, with the focus revolving around lack of family communication which can lead to difficulty in passing traditions and family history, as well as limiting possible visits to their native homelands of Mexico or Puerto Rico.

Through sixteen qualitative interviews, I demonstrate that the external factors and institutions that the Latinx families face are in fact a burden to their cultural autonomy, as it forces assimilation to U.S. culture and represses bi-culturalism. This is significant because studies often state that language use at the home is critical for Spanish retention. This widely accepted stance tends to deflate larger external influences that have shown to impact internal ideologies. The parents carry a heavy burden in having to enculture their children with their native roots while simultaneously being engulfed by the U.S. culture and English language. This is a hurdle met by the large population of immigrants that the United States seduces with the American Dream and freedom that unknowingly comes with a large price. In order to fully

benefit from the institutions needed to succeed in the U.S., immigrants and their families need to adapt and adjust themselves, whether it be through clothing, mannerism, or language use. Thus, their cultural heritage, specifically language use, is quietly confided to the private and familial realm, where it will eventually die off.

This study has several limitations. As this study was conducted around the Central Florida area only, it does not address any regional variations in language use. There was also a probable selection bias when it came to the participants that I had greater access to interviewing. The Puerto Rican parents tended to be more affluent than the Mexican counterparts in this study. However, this trend should not be seen as a reflection of the larger demographics of both these populations. Also, as a woman, I mainly had access to speaking and interviewing other women or the mothers of the families. Out of the sixteen interviewees, only two of them were male, therefore Latinx fathers' experiences were not as heavily recorded in this study as the mothers were.

Due to the limited timeframe and scope of the study, I was not able to include participant observation as part of the methodology. I believe that the incorporation of participant observation would have been an important aspect of the research project to develop a more holistic understanding of language as an embedded social practice that is “as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method,” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2002). I would have observed which language is used and how it is spoken depending on the context of the interactions. The contrast of these methods would have permitted the view of private and explicit personal opinions, while also observing the social interplay of language as it is applied in a more natural setting.

My research showed that Spanish retention is critical to migrant families in Central Florida – but can this be extended outside of Florida? Future work could analyze Spanish retention in communities that house large populations of Latinxs, i.e. New York City, El Paso, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Future studies should also consider the relationship of influence among internal and external ideologies of different immigrant populations. An opportunity to conduct follow-up research on the families that participated in this study would help reveal the actual language trend of the children and whether the efforts, or lack thereof, to retain Spanish abilities would make a difference in their future bilingual fluency.

While the U.S. claim they have no obligation to accommodate other languages that are not English, I believe they have a responsibility to maintain and retain the cultural diversity that it was built upon. This would involve the ability of government facilities and educational institutions to have broader language accessibility and a sense of cultural relativism when it comes to such language expression. Immigrants should be able to proudly speak their native language while navigating their daily lives in the U.S. without the worry of a language barrier slowing them down. Although there are plenty of Spanish language accommodations, most of them involve technological assistance, rather than human interaction. This brings a further issue for the immigrant generations who are not as accustomed to using such devices due to a lack of access in their home countries. The educational systems in the U.S. should also offer foreign language courses earlier in a student's academic lifetime and focus around conversational use rather than academic use since vernacular Spanish is more commonly used.

As voiced through the narratives of those recorded in this study, immigrants who come to the United States carry a purpose that stems from necessity more often than enjoyment. While

they create new lives for themselves and their families, they make sure to always remember their roots. Even though they may be met with opposition or the process of constant assimilation, the parents all made an effort to pass on their culture and language to their progeny. Language is central to one's identity, especially when living in the U.S. while your roots are planted in a different country's soil.

Appendix

Interview Guide

- Background story
- Preferred language use in different settings:
 - At home and family gatherings, social events, school, and religious events
 - Language use in overall community interactions and events
- Child/children's language abilities
 - Does one language hold a higher value than the other?
- Some studies reflect that over generations the native tongue is forgotten, is this seen as a concern? Why or why not?
 - Feelings towards the prioritization of English
 - Importance of Spanish retention
- Language as being central or separate to one's culture and traditions
- Pros and cons of demonstrating Spanish and English fluency in public
 - How these factors affect what language is reinforced to children
- Personal experiences that affect language preference, and thus, how you teach your children
- Prevalent stereotypes in your community about speaking or learning either language that might affect the language use of your child
 - Social hierarchy or prestige with specific language use(s)

Demographic Questionnaire

1) What is your age?

- a. 15-19 years old
- b. 20-29 years old
- c. 30-39 years old
- d. 40-49 years old
- e. 50-59 years old
- f. 60+

2) What is your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other (please specify)
_____.
- d. Prefer not to answer.

3) Please specify your country of origin.

_____.

4) What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- a. No schooling completed
- b. Middle/ secondary school
- c. Some high school, no diploma
- d. High school graduate, diploma or equivalent (GED)
- e. Some college credit, no degree
- f. Trade/Technical/Vocational training
- g. Associate degree
- h. Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)
- i. Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, Med)
- j. Professional degree
- k. Doctoral degree (e.g. PhD, EdD)

5) What is your marital status?

- a. Single (never married)
- b. Married or domestic partnership
- c. Widowed
- d. Divorced
- e. Separated

6) What is your current employment status?

- a. Employed full-time
- b. Employed part-time

- c. Self-employed
- d. Unemployed, looking for work
- e. Unemployed, not looking for work
- f. A student
- g. Military
- h. Retired
- i. Unable to work

7) What is your household income?

- a. Below \$10,000
- b. \$10,000-\$20,000
- c. \$20,000-\$35,000
- d. \$36,000-\$50,000
- e. \$51,000-\$70,000
- f. \$70,000+

8) How many children are living in your house under the age of 15 years of age?

_____.

9) How comfortable are you in understanding English?

- a. Well
- b. Okay
- c. A little bit
- d. Not at all.

10) How comfortable are you speaking English?

- a. Well or fluently
- b. Okay
- c. Barely
- d. Not at all

11) Do you speak an indigenous language? If so, please specify.

- a. Yes, _____.
- b. No.

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