Disrupting Monolingual Ideologies

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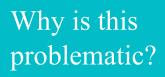
What are monolingual ideologies?

○ The notion that communication is only efficient and successful when using a single common language with shared norms that are stipulated by the native speakers of such language (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 1).
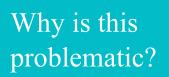
The Origin of the Monolingual Perspective

- ○ Dates back to Western Europe around the late eighteenth century

- ○ **Johannes Gottfried Herder** determined that communities needed to feel proud of their own vernacular, therefore, he defined the essence of a community through its language.

- ○ "Language embodied the innermost spirit, thought, and values of the community" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 20).

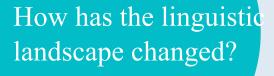- ○ one language/ one community/ one identity

Why is this problematic?

○ Monolingual ideologies "are characterized not simply by the promotion of a single language, but rather by an investment in the value associated with particular standardized varieties of a given language" (Rosa, 2016, p. 165).

○ Variations from the standard are considered deficiencies.

Why is this problematic?

○ Deficit perspective

○ Fosters the idea that "we are supposed to be incompetent or inauthentic in the languages of other communities" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 22).

How has the linguistic landscape changed?

- Super-diversity

  - Term being used to describe "the layered, meshed, and overlapping relationship between communities in many urban spaces" (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 26).

  - the accessibility to travel

  - technology

- Bilinguals are no longer viewed as two monolinguals in one body.

Traditional bilingualism:
Two autonomous linguistic systems

| L1 F1,F1,F1,F1 | L2 F2,F2,F2,F2 |

Linguistic interdependence:
Jim Cummins

| L1 F1,F1,F1,F1 | L2 F2,F2,F2,F2 |
Common Underlying Proficiency

Dynamic bilingualism:
Translanguaging

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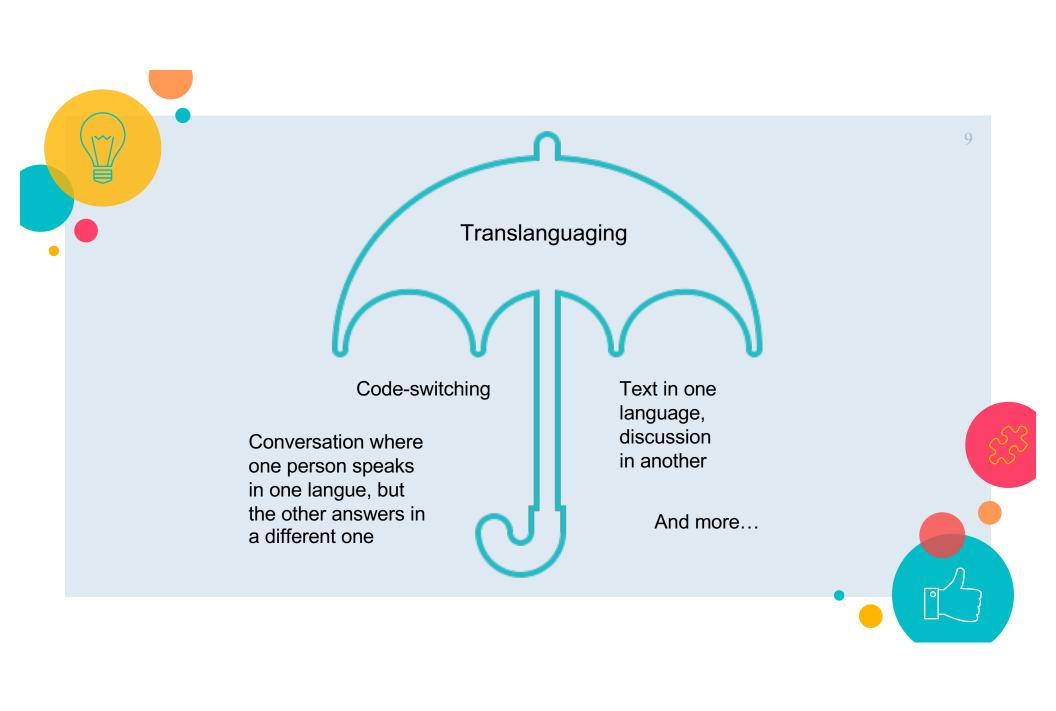
García & Li (2014) Figure 1.1

Translanguaging

- "The process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages" (Garcia & Li, 2014, p. 20).

- "Assumes that bilinguals have one complex linguistic repertoire from which they select features that are socioculturally appropriate" (Gorter and Cenoz, 2015, p. 56).

Translanguaging

Code-switching

Conversation where one person speaks in one langue, but the other answers in a different one

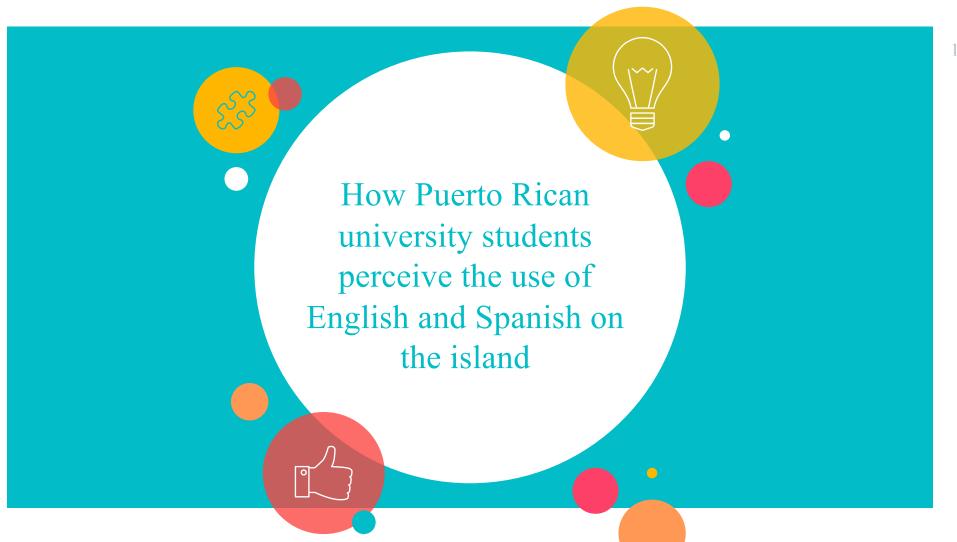Text in one language, discussion in another

And more…

PUERTO RICO

- Spanish-speaking Caribbean island
- Currently under a commonwealth with the United States
- English is a mandatory subject in all schools starting from kindergarten
- Most Puerto Ricans do not consider themselves fluent English speakers
- The presence of English on the island has had an impact on the entire population
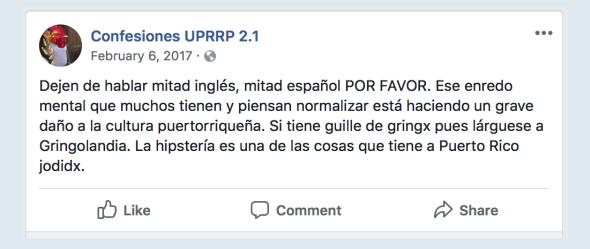
University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus (UPRRP)

○ Located at the heart of the metropolitan area in the capital of[12] the island, San Juan, P. R.

○ The majority of its students come from neighboring municipalities

○ Also has a significant number of students that come from other more distant parts of the island

○ A total population of over sixteen thousand students as of the academic year 2016 – 2017 (according to the university's Office of Strategic and Budgetary Planning)

How Puerto Rican university students perceive the use of English and Spanish on the island

Confesiones UPRRP 2.1
February 6, 2017 · 🌐

Dejen de hablar mitad inglés, mitad español POR FAVOR. Ese enredo mental que muchos tienen y piensan normalizar está haciendo un grave daño a la cultura puertorriqueña. Si tiene guille de gringx pues lárguese a Gringolandia. La hipstería es una de las cosas que tiene a Puerto Rico jodidx.

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↪ Share

"PLEASE stop speaking half in English, and half in Spanish. This mental mess in which many people think and want to normalize is causing severe damage on Puerto Rican culture. If you think you are a *gringo*, move to *Gringolandia*. These *hipsterías* are what are screwing up Puerto Rico." (my translation)

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○ Monolingual Ideology

  ◦ PLEASE → begging people who translanguage to stop

  ◦ code-switching as a mental mess → bilinguals do not know how to choose between one language or the other

  ◦ normalizing these practices → labels individuals as linguistic others

  ◦ damaging Puerto Rican culture → as if through code-switching they were rejecting part of their identity.

○ They engage in the same practices they criticizing

  ◦ appropriating the English noun "hipster' by adding the Spanish suffix "-ería"

  ◦ "hipstería" has not been accepted by The Royal Spanish Academy (Real Academia Española)

Highlighted portion of the Facebook post:

"ps. sorry for the Spanglish, I don't write in Spanish very well" (my translation)

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Monolingual Ideology:

○ The author identifies herself as a poor user of Spanish, despite having written the majority of the post in such language.

○ She felt the need to apologize for her linguistic choices.

○ If bilinguals cannot produce a "legitimate" variety of either language, they are considered languageless.

　　○ People are taking on a deficit perspective where knowing two languages puts you below any monolingual speaker.

　　○ "Perceptions of particular non-standardized practices can racialize populations by framing them as incapable of producing any legitimate language" (Rosa, 2016 p.163).

The main ideas of her post are expressed clearly, therefore, meaning was successfully conveyed.
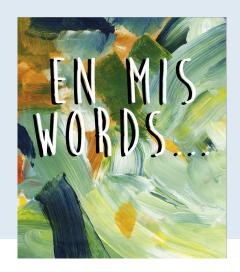
Introducción

Los textos que leerán a continuación son producto del taller de escritura creativa coordinado por los doctores Elidio La Torre, Loretta Collins e Yvonne Dennis Rosario, todos escritores de renombre en y fuera de Puerto Rico. Esto como parte de un esfuerzo entre las Facultades de Humanidades y Estudios Generales para promover el devenir cultural en *Spanglish* entre los estudiantes de nuestro Recinto de Río Piedras. Dicha colección por jóvenes puertorriqueños tiene la particularidad de estar localizado en el espectro lingüístico de aquellos que dominan tanto la lengua materna como el inglés. *En*

EN MIS WORDS....

Highlighted portion of the introduction:

"This has been a result of the joint effort of the Humanities and General Studies faculties in order to promote the uprising of Spanglish within our Río Piedras campus." (my translation).

- Bilingual literary magazine published on September 2017
- The main goal of this literary magazine is to promote the use of Spanglish in Puerto Rico.
  - promoting bilingualism as the norm
- Written format → makes an even more powerful statement since it shows that it truly was their intention to translanguage.
- The structure of magazine also adopts translanguaging practices.
  - introduction written in Spanish but prologue in English
- These students come from urban and rural municipalities, therefore, Spanglish is happening all over the island.

Takeaway

○ We should avoid these damaging views of bilingualism and instead be promoting language ideologies where we can all stand on equal grounds.

○ When we see monolingualism as the norm, it becomes increasingly hard to accept our authentic ways of languaging, thus replicating colonial ideas that build artificial boundaries of where we can or cannot use specific language practices.

○ The power to change these perspectives is in our hands.

Any questions?

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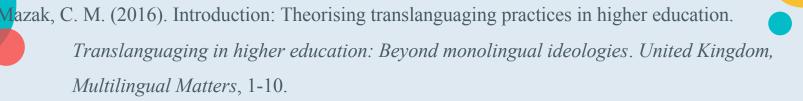
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