



Designing a Language-Specific Course in Raciolinguistics

FELLOWS FORUM: INSTRUCTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

BERKELEY LANGUAGE CENTER

APRIL 29, 2022

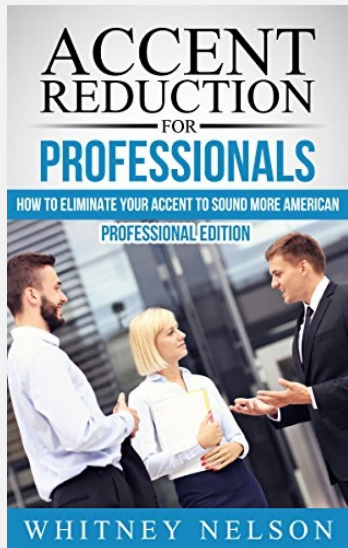
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CANDIDATE

ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

DEPARTMENT OF SPANISH AND
PORTUGUESE

I acknowledge with respect the Ohlone people on whose native lands I researched this presentation. I pay my land tax [here](#).

“We do not, cannot under our laws, ask a person to change the color of [their] skin, [their] religion, [their] gender, [their] sexual identity, but we regularly demand of people that they suppress or deny the most effective way they have of situating themselves socially in the world.”
– Lippi-Green, 2012, p. 66





accentism

erasure

monoglossia



Why are Ingraham
and diGenova talking
about
Congresswoman
Alexandria Ocasio-
Cortez (AOC; Democrat, New
York)?

To whom do they
compare AOC? Why?

Why might you think
diGenova imitates
AOC and not

what is raciolinguistics? (rose & flores, 2015;
alim et al. 2016)

Raciolinguistics theorizes how language and race are co-naturalized, providing researchers with a critical framework to analyze how systemic discrimination is manifested in how we perceive people and their language use.

raciolinguistic ideologies manifested



White youth → cool; funny; internet/meme talk

Black youth → linguistically deficient; uneducated; nonstandard



White youth → funny; clever; pop culture reference

Latinx youth → linguistically deficient; uneducated; lack of English *and* Spanish fluency

A raciolinguistic perspective provides an intersectional framework to understand how systemic power relations create different orders of indexicality.



rationale

Why a course on raciolinguistics?

Why now?

positionality

- ❖ Pronouns: she or they
- ❖ First-generation Italian-American; heritage speaker of Italian and Genoese
- ❖ Former high school Spanish teacher of both L2 and heritage learners
- ❖ US-trained sociolinguist

SPAN 179 Intro to Raciolinguistics: Theory into Practice

- ❖ Summer 2022 online course taught via Zoom
- ❖ Activities piloted in an online Sonoma State seminar entitled “SPAN 400: (De)Colonizing Spanish — Past, Present, & Future” (Spring 2022)

span 179 intro to raciolinguistics: theory into practice

Course goals:

- Be able to identify, explore, and discuss how the **[neo]colonial underpinnings of [Spanish] language ideologies** in the United States and beyond **pave the way for raciolinguistic ideologies**.
- Critically examine how **notions of “correct” language must be examined intersectionally** (i.e. in analysis with race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and use a **social constructivist approach to unsettle concepts of “standard”, “academic”, and “(in)appropriate”**.
- Recognize **subtle instances of language discrimination** and synthesize them with **forms of blatant discrimination to reimagine oppressive linguistic systems**.
- Develop an **intellectually compelling and humanly compassionate respect for those whose language expression is different or unfamiliar** from your own (adopted and adapted from Dr. Robert Train).

course overview: building a raciolinguistic analysis



linguistic & coloniality

- ❖ *Lines of invisibility* (de Sousa Santos, 2007)
- ❖ *Linguistic othering & erasure* (Vitar, 1996)

raciolinguistic theory

- ❖ *Language subordination* (Lippi-Green, 2012)
- ❖ *Raciolinguistic theory* (Flores & Rosa, 2015)

raciolinguistics & systems

Intersections with education (Padilla & Vana, 2022), *politics* (Licata, forthcoming), *labor market* (Subtirelu, 2017), *disability* (Cioè-Peña, 2021) ...

(de)colonial approaches

- ❖ *Translanguaging* (Vogel & García, 2017)
- ❖ *Limits of named languages* (García, 2019)
- ❖ *Language as social justice* (Bucholtz et al., 2018)



sample activities: exploring course themes

- ❖ Reading and Ignite Questions
- ❖ Engagement with real-life artifacts (surveys, news clips, syllabuses, websites)
- ❖ Linguistic autobiography



sample activities: exploring course themes

- ❖ Reading and Ignite Questions
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- ❖ **Linguistic autobiography**

sample activity: engagement with real-life artifacts

Students learn about *colorism* and the erasure of afrolatinx people and groups in broad notions of *latinidad*. Related activity (inspired by Dr. Uju Anya):

1. Students examine a digital textbook for Spanish language learning to better understand how indigenous and Afrolatinx populations are being represented. Students search for the following terms, providing a count and explaining the context in which they are used:

indígena(s) 111

negro/a 27

afro (as a prefix) 3

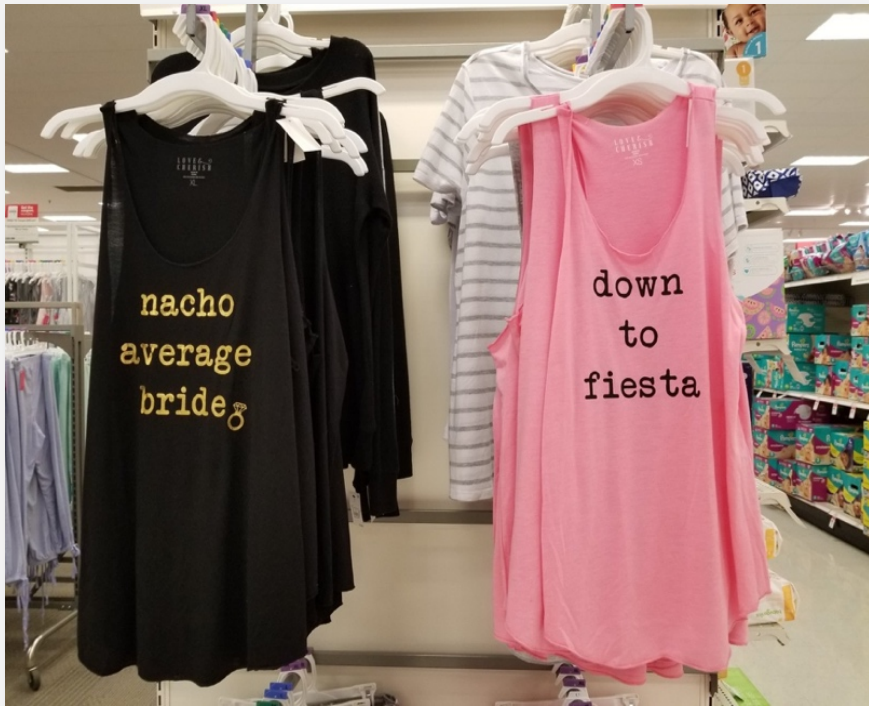
14 ica

2. Students also examine the photographs and images of one chapter of the book, making note of who is represented.
3. This activity concludes with guidelines for creating a more inclusive textbook that represents the diversity of the Spanish languaging world.



sample activity: analyzing mock spanish

Students examine given instances of mock Spanish and how it is used “safely” within white public space. ***Student analyses:***



“In the photo, mock Spanish is used by... creating a combination of Spanish and English and creating false impressions. It is never seen that a Spanish Speaker would consider themselves a *nacho average bride*... The White community uses it, the sayings are negative and affect the context of Spanish speakers.”

“They could’ve used the word “party” but instead used “fiesta” because it can mean that they are willing to get crazier like hispanics. It is benefiting white people and it is creating a safe space for them because they feel like they are being inclusive when they are really just feeding into offensive stereotypes.”



sample activity: analyzing mock spanish



student analysis:

“Mock Spanish has been used by White speakers which creates an orderly disorder because they can use Spanish and use it for humor and be ‘likable and ‘fun’ but a Spanish Speaker who actually knows the language isn’t allowed to use it because they are inferior, and the White community is considered superior and the norm.”

sample activity: linguistic autobiography

In the beginning of the semester, students create an audio-visual presentation in [Flipgrid](#) that takes viewers through a narrated slideshow of their personal sociolinguistic history. This includes:

1. Languages used and in the surrounding environment from child- to adulthood; languages in school
2. An anecdote regarding linguistic salience (a moment where someone took notice of the way the student used language)
3. A sketch of a dinner conversation wherein different languages and registers are being used.

student sketch



student analysis

After learning about translanguaging, students reassess their conversation sketches:

- “I would say that why at home **we often change languages** depends on what we are talking about, sometimes it causes conflict because **it makes it somewhat difficult for me to be able to express myself as I would like because there are words that are difficult to translate...**
- There are **terms that cannot be translated directly** and have the same meaning. Sometimes **it's difficult to pronounce words** because when I'm reading sometimes it seems similar to a term in Spanish so **I want to pronounce it that way but it's pronounced in a different way...**
- Especially before I had more conflict with the pronunciation in the emphasis in “rr” sometimes because in Spanish it is pronounced but in English it is not, so **it is difficult to**

sample activities: concrete application of course themes and theories

- ❖ Demonstration of Critical Analytical Skills (DCAS)
- ❖ Group Presentation: Raciolinguistic Ideologies in Action
- ❖ Final Project: Podcast on select theme/topic situated in raciolinguistics and/or language decolonization

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sample activities: demonstration of critical analytical skills

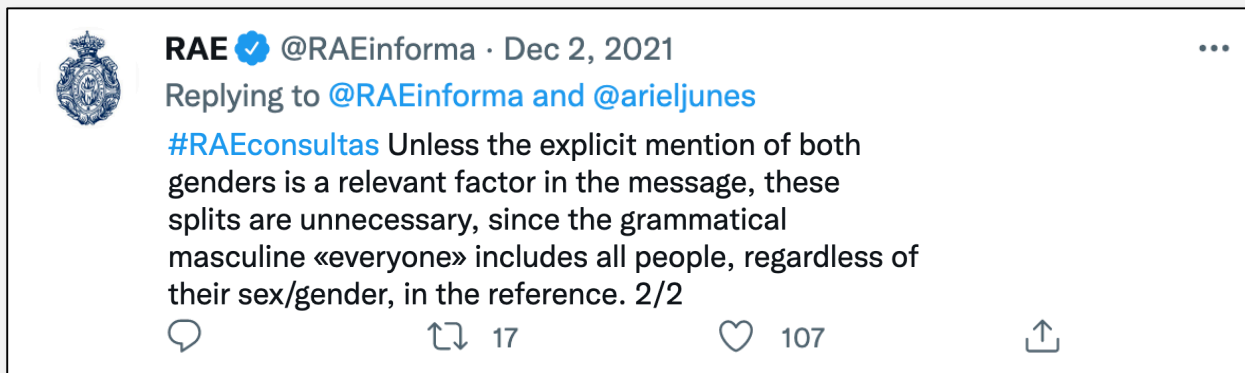
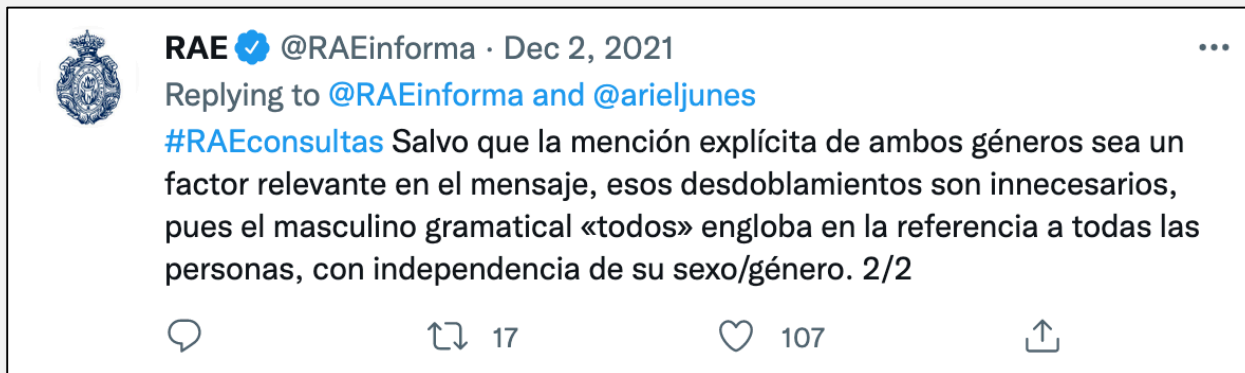
- ❖ **DCAS #1:** Challenging the Real Academia Española's statements on inclusive language
- ❖ **DCAS #2:** Applying the Language Subordination Model (Lippi-Green 2012) to Proposition 227
- ❖ **DCAS #3:** How can you apply a raciolinguistic framework in a future field/job position?



sample activities: demonstration of critical analytical skills

- ❖ **DCAS #1: Challenging the Real Academia Española's statements on inclusive language**
- ❖ **DCAS #2: Applying the Language Subordination Model (Lippi-Green 2012) to Proposition 227**
- ❖ **DCAS #3: How can you apply a raciolinguistic framework in a future field/job position?**

dcas #1: challenging the real academia española's (rae) statements on inclusive language



Students do the following:

1. Define linguisticism and offer examples
2. Identify the presuppositions that RAE assumes to make these claims seem “natural”.
3. Identify linguisticism present using relevant scholarly literature to support.
4. Write a response tweet to one of the RAE tweets.

student tweets



@RAEinforma no es necesario seguir resistiendose, esta forma de dirigirse a la gente ya se esta usando. #staywoke #boomer

@RAEinforma it isn't necessary to continue resisting, this form of referencing others is already being used #staywoke #boomer



“...PuEs eL mAsCuLiNo GrAmMaTicAl <<ToDoS>> EnGIObA eN IA rEfErEnCiA a tODaS IAs pErSoNaA...”

Well the grammatical masculine <<everyone>> includes everyone in the referent... (mixed upper and lower case denotes sarcasm)

dcas #2: : applying the language subordination (lsm) model to proposition 227

- **Definition:** Begin by defining language subordination. Give 3 examples that demonstrate language subordination in different real-life situations.
- **Summary:** Present the basic content of Prop 227. Summarize what is being said and what its goals are.
- **Analysis:** Highlight the tactics of the LSM displayed in the text of Prop 227.

dcas #2: applying the lsm to proposition 227

Tactics for Language Subordination

Language is mystified. **red**

You can never hope to comprehend the difficulties and complexities of your mother tongue without expert guidance.

Authority is claimed. **orange**

We are the experts. Talk like me/us. We know what we are doing because we have studied language, because we write well.

Misinformation is generated. **yellow**

That usage you are so attached to is inaccurate. The variant I prefer is superior on historical, aesthetic, or logical grounds.

Targeted languages are trivialized. **green**

Look how cute, how homey, how funny.

Conformers are held up as positive examples. **blue**

See what you can accomplish if you only try, how far you can get if you see the light.

Non-conformers are vilified or marginalized. **purple**

See how willfully stupid, arrogant, unknowing, uninformed and/or deviant these speakers are.

Explicit promises are made. **pink**

Employers will take you seriously; doors will open.

Threats are made. **grey**

No one important will take you seriously; doors will close.



English Language in Public Schools.
Initiative Statute.

Proposition 227 - Full Text of the Proposed Law

PROPOSED LAW

SECTION 1. Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 300) is added to Part 1 of the Education Code, to read: Chapter 3. **English Language Education for Immigrant Children**

Article 1. Findings and Declarations

300. The **People of California find and declare** as follows:

(a) Whereas, **The English language is the national public language of the United States of America and of the State of California, is spoken by the vast majority of California residents, and is also the leading world language for science, technology, and international business, thereby being the language of economic opportunity; and**

(b) **Whereas, Immigrant parents are eager to have their children acquire a good knowledge of English,** thereby allowing them to fully participate in the American Dream of economic and social advancement; **and**

(c) Whereas, **The government and the public schools of California have a moral obligation and a constitutional duty to provide all of California's children, regardless of their ethnicity or national origins, with the skills necessary to become productive members of our society, and of these skills, literacy in the English language is among the most important; and**

(d) Whereas, **The public schools of California currently do a poor job of educating immigrant children, wasting financial resources on costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children; and**

(e) Whereas, **Young immigrant children can easily acquire full fluency in a new language, such as English, if they are heavily exposed to that language in the classroom at an early age.**

(f) **Therefore, It is resolved that: all children in California public schools shall be taught English as rapidly and effectively as possible.**



dcas #2: applying the lsm to proposition 227

- **Conclusion:** What are the motivations of the bill drafters of Prop 227? What is at stake if the goals are met?
- **Rebuttal:** Think about William Labov's Senate statement in defense of Black English and using it in schools. Write an 6-8 sentence paragraph that makes a case for using Spanish in schools as a **multilingual right**.

student rebuttals

“If Spanish is embraced and accepted, **students can learn better since they learn more rapidly if they are allowed to use and learn their home language**. In the United States, we have the right to speak any language, people are allowed to use any language and English isn't the national language therefore, **Spanish shouldn't be restricted**. The Spanish language needs to be embraced to help students whose first language was Spanish it will give appreciation to the Spanish language, and its history, there needs to be equal opportunity. **The language barriers need to be brought down.**”

I think being able to have Spanish in the classroom as a multilingual right can bring great benefits to children's education, especially those who struggle with english already. **Many children learn their native language at home, that could either not be english or others forms that wouldn't fall into the “standardized english” form, this can already put them behind if other languages are not as welcomed in the classroom.** Also, while some legislatures try to move forward with only the use of English, there are **many communities that serve underrepresented communities that would not be able to succeed in majority english speaking academic settings.**

sample activity: raciolinguistic ideologies in action

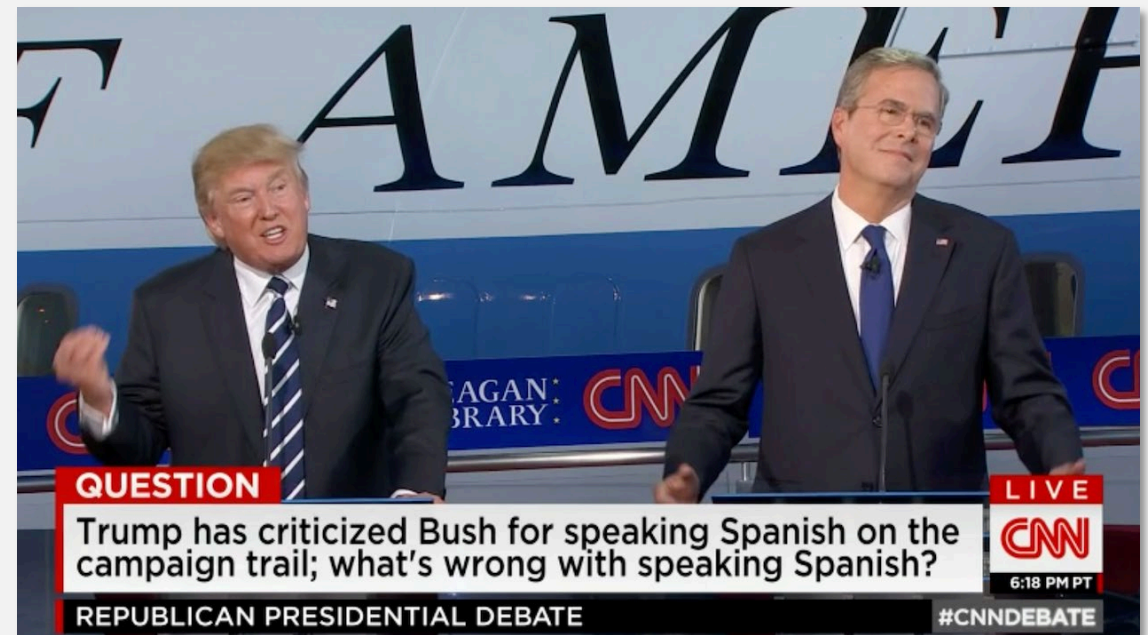
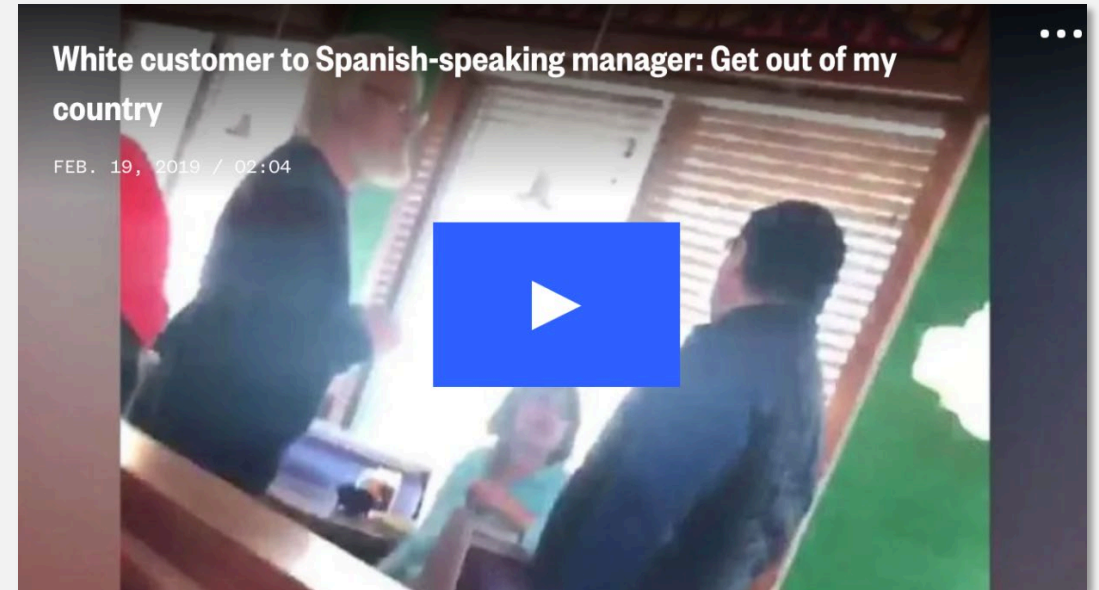
Students present an artifact from “the wild” and discuss the raciolinguistic ideologies at play.

- ❖ Students engage closely with the terminology used in Flores & Rosa (2015), Hill (1998), and de Sousa Santos (1997): *white gazing subject*, *purism*, *appropriateness*, *lines of invisibility*, *white public space*
- ❖ Students offers suggestions on how to curtail such language ideologies.

student artifacts



Ellen "teaches English" to Sofia





speaker series (funded by dept. span + port)

Six (6) guest speakers will join us in our summer course:

- ❖ *Indigenous languages and the community*: **Henry Sales**, OUSD/Consultant/Language Instructor
- ❖ *Gender*: **Ben Papadopoulos** (PhD student, UC Berkeley)
- ❖ *Disability*: **Dr. María Cioè-Peña**, Education (Montclair State University)
- ❖ *Speech Therapy*: **Warda Farah**, (BSc, PGCert, HCPC, MRCSLT) Speech and Language Therapist and Founder of Language Waves
- ❖ *Teacher preparation*: **Clara Vaz Bauler**, Associate Professor (Adelphi University)
- ❖ *Translation*: **Dr. Elena Mary Costello Tzintzún**

conclusions: benefits of learning about raciolinguistics

- ❖ Raciolinguistic and decolonial theories allow students to examine the everyday, naturalized occurrences of [language] discrimination that are often minimized in comparison with other forms.
- ❖ Facilitates reflexivity as teachers and researchers in language, linguistics, and beyond.
- ❖ Raciolinguistics is relevant everywhere → ***How can this course be modified to fit your classroom context and cultural setting?***

reflections

What does inclusive teaching look like? What does decolonizing the classroom look like?

- ❖Multimodality
- ❖Gender inclusivity manifested in writing and speaking
- ❖Dynamic multilingualism over “language proficiency”

Realization: the effects of standard language ideologies/fixed categories are very hard to unsettle.



gratitude

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contact and resources

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[Course materials and syllabus](#)