

***The Spanish Language in the United States: Rootedness, Racialization, and Resistance.*** José A. Cobas, Bonnie Urciuoli, Joe R. Feagin, and Daniel J. Delgado (Ed.) (2022). Routledge, New York, 162 pages, ISBN:9781 0321 90563

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi39.24609>

Spanish is the second most populous language in the United States, which makes the United States the third largest Spanish speaking country in the world. However, throughout the history of the southwestern United States, language, as a major factor in cultural rights and the representation of bilingual state governments, is a controversial issue. These issues often cause social and cultural “conflicts” between English speakers and Spanish speakers. In a “white supremacy” racial society like the United States, although there are a large number of Spanish speakers, the racial discrimination against Spanish speakers is inevitable. Based on the sociological points, the use of Spanish is not only influenced by the current social factors in the United States, but also hindered by the rule of racism and colonialism in the United States for a long time.

This book provides semiotic-linguistic perspectives on the experience of Mexican American and Puerto Rican Spanish speakers. It consists of four sections, with a total of 9 chapters. Section 1, Language, Race, and Power, covers a background introduction of the whole book and chapter 1. In the introduction part, the relationship between language, racialization, and power is elaborated in detail. Through an in-depth interview with the Spanish middle class in the United States, Chapter 1 explicitly explains the status differences between languages under the influence of political and economic factors, and this mandatory difference makes Spanish always subordinate to English.

Section 2, Rootedness, consists of two chapters, which outlines the root question that includes the historical, sociological, and language realities of Spanish in the U.S. Chapter 2 addresses the colonial, indigenous and immigrant spaces occupied by Spanish. Chapter 3 presents quantitative evidence for structural inequalities affecting Spanish speakers.

Although American national language ideology has been whitewashed by American political and cultural intentions in different periods, its racist characteristics have always been inherited. Section 3, Racialization, covers four chapters that focus on the problem of racialization, in which those realities of rootedness are ignored, reconstructed, or vociferously denied. Chapter 4 examines the racialized imagining of Spanish from the perspective



of U.S. whiteness and what that says about white beliefs about race and language. Chapter 5 contrasts “linguistic terrorism” long experienced by students from immigrant Mexican backgrounds with a “friendlier terrorism” which details a peculiarly neoliberal form of higher education denial of racialized realities at the university of Texas. Chapter 6 mentions that due to language accent correlating with darker skin tones, level of higher education, marital status, and place of birth, people have received unfair treatment. Chapter 7 takes an ethnographic turn shifting the critical gaze from English to Spanish, which deploys a critical sociolinguistic approach that illustrates Spanish’s own European colonial legacy, showing uses of Puerto Rican Spanish discourse that can bring into being and naturalize the social category of blackness.

Section 4, Resistance, includes two chapters, documents strategies of resistance to the racialization of Spanish. Chapter 8 trace the policies and legislation through which American colonial administrators from 1898 sought to instantiate English in Puerto Rican institutional life as a mechanism of control and sign of loyalty. Chapter 9 provides the author’s personal experience of racialization in Texas Public school. His account demonstrates the possibility of political pushback, as well as its cost in social labor and sheer knowledge.

Based on the sociological, linguistic, anthropological, and semiotic viewpoints, this book incorporates with related articles, as a combined illustration of the racial unequal situations encountered by Spanish and Spanish-speaking people in the public places of white society. It has certain significance for in-depth understanding of the historical characteristics and practical use of Spanish in the United States, and opens up a new perspective for understanding American racism from Spanish.

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