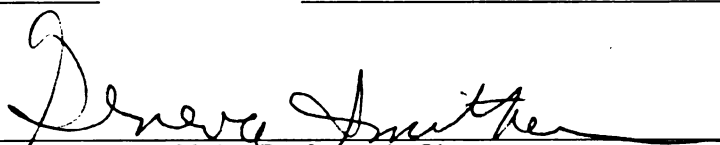This is to certify that the
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PRACTICES IN A RURAL PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY

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NEGOTIATING EL DIFÍCIL: ENGLISH LITERACY PRACTICES IN A RURAL
PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY

By

Catherine M. Mazak

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

NEGOTIATING EL DIFÍCIL: ENGLISH LITERACY PRACTICES IN A RURAL PUERTO RICAN COMMUNITY

By

Catherine M. Mazak

This ethnographic case study explored the English literacy practices of a rural, Spanish-speaking, Puerto Rican community. Data collection took place in a K-9 school library which, with the help of a Title V grant, became a community center where students, parents, teachers, and other community members interacted. Data included ethnographic field notes from four months of participant observation, analytic memos, audio recordings of talk around text, textual artifacts, and interviews with ten focal participants. Focal participants included junior high students, teachers, lunch ladies, parents, and professionals. The study explored the questions: How do people negotiate English literacy practices (i.e. ways of using English text)? What is the nature of English literacy practices? What channels of communication (oral/written, Spanish/English) are used to accomplish one's communicative goals? What are the factors that matter (class, gender, cross migration, schooling) in determining a person's particular "linguistic toolkit"? What are the consequences (in terms of identity) of decisions about English use? What qualifies one to be a language broker? Who seeks out language brokers and why?

Analysis of literacy events using Hymes' ethnography of communication revealed that participants with a range of English language proficiencies used English text. The biggest differences in how participants used English text were discovered when comparing participation across age groups. Older people participated in English literacy practices in domains such as bureaucracy, health, and finances. Young people participated in

practices in the domains of entertainment and personal communication. Writing among adults was limited to filling out forms, while young people wrote poems, songs, and letters. These differences were explained by considering how the literacy practices of adults and young people were connected to the institutions with which they interacted.

Though English has earned the nickname *"el difícil"* (the difficult one) in Puerto Rico, the data showed that participants were able to accomplish their communicative goals with the substantial amount of English knowledge they had. This became clear through the study of *language brokering events*, when people (clients) approached others (brokers) for help negotiating English text. Previous notions of brokering characterized brokers as bridges between two people with mutually exclusive sets of knowledge/language skills. On the contrary, in this study, those who sought help from English language brokers often had quite advanced English skills, and the broker may have had limited Spanish skills. Thus, brokering was not a transaction, but a mutual building/sharing of knowledge.

This study informs current thinking on English as an international and colonial language and offers suggestions for English teaching that builds on locally relevant and meaningful practices.

Para Tary: Siempre estarás en nuestros corozones.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN PUERTO RICO

Jacinto[1] is sitting in the old wooden rocker. The thin rungs of the rocker tip back on the tile floor as his weight shifts. He flips through his new book, *Raising Sheep*, a *día de los tres reyes* gift from his older brother and me. Jacinto's new born sheep are dying mysteriously, and he is scanning the book for possible causes. His baseball cap is on backwards, covering a mop of tightly curled hair, which is pulled, as always, into a ponytail. He wears stained olive work pants and a worn T-shirt with a logo on the front. I am sitting across from him on the tired, L-shaped blue sectional, reading. Guillermo, my soon-to-be husband, Jacinto's brother, is in the dining room just out of sight but not out of earshot. It is cool and humid in Ramona, Puerto Rico in December. The double doors that open from the living room onto the wrap-around veranda expose the resting place for muddy shoes just outside, a bunch of yellow plantains, and, in the distance, the green mountains that roll under low grey storm clouds.

Jacinto approaches me with the book in hand, pointing to the word, "sheer."

"Qué significa *sheer*, Cati?" He calls me by the Spanish pronunciation of my name.

"Umm..significa *afeitar*," I say, supplying the Spanish word for *shave*. "Pero, solamente es para animales." (*But it's only for animals.*) I feel proud that I can come up with an answer at all, being that my farming vocabulary in Spanish is not very well-developed.

"Ajá."

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[1] Names of people and places are pseudonyms.

Jacinto seems satisfied to me, so what happens next is surprising. He walks over to his brother in the dining room—where I can still hear him—and asks the same question. Guillermo provides a more satisfying answer, though it is not really a different one. He explains the concept of *sheering* in nuanced Spanish, drawing on his repertoire of Spanish and English farming vocabulary (he is finishing his PhD in Animal Science). Jacinto returns to the rocking chair and continues to peruse the book.

This language brokering event happened during a pilot study for this work. It was clear to me at the time that I had been tested as a language broker and failed, and I wondered why. Even more interesting, though, was that Jacinto, a self-proclaimed non-English speaker, who talked to me often about his struggles through the fourteen years of mandatory English he took from first grade through college, was reading voluntarily, and with great interest, a book in English. And this was not the only instance when I saw text in English in this small, mountainous community in rural Puerto Rico. It seemed to be everywhere: on businesses, in advertisements, on appliances, labeling food items, and yes, on the bookshelves in the home where I was staying. But the people with whom I was interacting on a daily basis told me that they did not speak English, and, in fact, I knew from talking to people that the language had quite a reputation. Nicknamed "el dificil" (the difficult one), a symbol of Americanization, a necessity on the road to a better job—the multi-faceted, complex beliefs about English in Puerto Rico seem contradictory at times. Yet, for this reason, they are all the more interesting.

To understand second language literacy practices in a Puerto Rican community, I asked the following question: How do people negotiate English literacy practices (i.e. ways of using English text)? To answer this question, I will explore the following sub-

questions: What is the nature of English literacy practices? What channels of communication (oral/written, varieties of Spanish and English) are used to accomplish one's communicative goals? What are the factors that matter (age, class, gender, cross migration, schooling) in determining a person's particular "linguistic toolkit"? What qualifies one to be a language broker? Who seeks out language brokers and why? What are the consequences (in terms of identity) of decisions about English use?

To understand this project's investigation of English literacy practices in Puerto Rico, you must situate the study in the history of education in Puerto Rico and in the intellectual history of second language pedagogy.

Situating Puerto Rico Globally and Historically

Puerto Rico is the eastern-most island of the Greater Antilles. Colonized by the Spanish in 1508, the island was used to generate cash crops such as coffee and sugar cane. Both indigenous and African slave labor was used in the colonial period in Puerto Rico. The result of this history is a mix of language influences in Puerto Rican Spanish. Though no Taíno Arawark speaking communities nor West African language speaking communities survived, the Spanish of Puerto Rico is both Africanized and indigenized, including many African and Taíno vocabulary items, and syntactical and phonetic features that have resulted from the cultural and linguistic mixing that characterizes many Caribbean languages.

The history of English in Puerto Rico does not begin with the U.S. invasion in 1898. Contact between Puerto Ricans and English-speaking North Americans goes back at least to the 17th century, when North American "contrabanders" had unofficial dealings with Puerto Ricans (Pousada, 1999). In 1797 official trade relations between the

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U.S. and Puerto Rico were established, as Spain was pre-occupied with war (Pousada, 1999).

Puerto Rico's more troubled relationship with English began in 1898 when the U.S. invaded the island during the Spanish-American(-Cuban-Fillipino-Puerto Rican) war. Early in the history of Puerto Rico's forced relationship with the U.S., language policy, particularly educational language policy, became a central issue for political and cultural elites and the general population. When the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico, there was already a well-established group of political leaders who had been working for greater autonomy from Spain. Just one year after a measure of autonomy had been granted, the U.S. invaded. The U.S. government did not believe in the ability of Puerto Ricans to govern themselves. Island leaders were replaced with imported presidential appointees, hardly any of whom spoke Spanish (de Gutierrez, 1987).

To make Puerto Ricans governable in the eyes of the U.S., they had to be Americanized. In 1899, Victor S. Clark, appointed president of the Puerto Rican Board of Education, made this strategy very clear in a report to his superior:

> If the schools are made American, and teachers and pupils are inspired with the American spirit, and people of both races can be made to cooperate harmoniously in building up the schools, the island will become in its sympathies, views, and attitude toward life and toward government essentially American. The great mass of Puerto Ricans are as yet passive and plastic... Their ideals are in our hands to create and mold (Davis, 1899, p. 646, qtd. in Morris, 1995, p. 26).

It was clear to this military government that "the easiest path to the eventual Americanization and anglification of the population was thought to lie through the children of Puerto Rico" (Scheweers & Hudders, 2000, p. 64). Not surprisingly, one of

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the first acts of the U.S. military government to these ends was to declare English the official language of education in Puerto Rico in 1900.

Elite island leaders, who had lost considerable power under U.S. rule, began to consider their options for again achieving autonomy and self-rule for Puerto Rico. Two leaders were particularly vocal during this time: Luis Muñoz Rivera and José de Diego. Muñoz Rivera in particular was a master statesman and what today we would call a "media mogul," publishing both an English-language newspaper in New York and a Spanish-language newspaper in San Juan. Between 1898 and 1900, striving to maintain the power that he had established for himself before the U.S. invasion, he played to an American audience by stressing Puerto Rican loyalty and values in his correspondence with U.S. federal officials and in his New York-based newspaper (de Gutierrez, 1987). He truly thought that when the U.S. military occupation was over, Puerto Rico would be granted self-rule by means of statehood and so he fought for this result.

Clearly Muñoz Rivera misread the situation, and he realized it when the U.S. passed the Foraker Act in 1900, which established a colonial island government. Because the governor, under this act, was appointed by the U.S. president and the upper house of the two-house legislature was appointed by the governor, the government of Puerto Rico became essentially English-speaking, though the population was Spanish-speaking. Muñoz Rivera, seeing that Puerto Rico was not being put on the road to self-rule, changed his rhetorical strategy (de Gutierrez, 1987). If the Americans were going to argue that Puerto Ricans were not capable of self-rule, then Muñoz Rivera would argue back that a government that did not speak the language of the people was inept. On March 14, 1903 he published an article in his English-language newspaper in New York, *The Puerto Rican Herald,* called "The Yoke of Language" that claimed that Puerto Ricans

would never speak a language other than Spanish, that they could not be represented by non-speakers of Spanish, and thus that the people had no voice (which was distinctly un-American). Muñoz Rivera and José de Diego began appealing directly to the American people for Puerto Rican autonomy using this language argument. At the same time, they wrote for a Puerto Rican audience about the importance of Spanish to their identity.

This does not mean that Muñoz Rivera and de Diego created the connection between Spanish language and Puerto Rican identity, but rather that they played it up in order to meet their political goals (gaining self-rule and maintaining local power and authority on the island). The resistance to English in Puerto Rico grew for a number of reasons: the language policies of the U.S. (Zentella, 1999), grassroots movements against these policies, and the rhetoric of the Puerto Rican elite (de Gutiérrez, 1987).

Language Policy in Puerto Rico

There was much turnover in the U.S.-appointed island government, not only among the governors themselves, but also among the commissioners of education (who were appointed by the governor). Although the official languages in Puerto Rico have remained both Spanish and English since 1898 (with the exception of a brief two year period between April 5, 1991 and January 1993), the language policy in education changed frequently. Below is a brief summary:

Table 1: Summary of English Educational Policy in Puerto Rico

Education Commissioner	Year	Policy
Eaton-Clark	1898-1900	English was medium of instruction in all grades. No Spanish instruction.
Brumbaugh	1900-1903	Spanish was medium of instruction in elementary grades; English was a subject. English was medium of instruction in high school; Spanish was a subject.
Faulkner-Dexter	1903-1917	English was medium of instruction in all grades. Spanish was a subject.
Miller-Huyke	1917-1934	In grades 1-4 Spanish was medium of instruction and English was a subject. Grade 5 was transitional: half the core subjects were taught in English and half in Spanish. Grades 6-12 used English as the medium of instruction and Spanish was a subject.
Padin	1934-1937	Reverts to Brumbaugh policy.
Gallardo	1937-1945	In grades 1-2 Spanish was medium of instruction and English was a subject. Grade 3-8 Spanish and English were used as the medium of instruction in different subjects, with progressive increase in time allotted to English as a subject. In high school, English was the medium of instruction and Spanish was a subject. In 1942 this reverted to the Brumbaugh policy.
Villaronga	1949-present	Spanish is medium of instruction in all grades, with English taught as a subject.

(de Gutiérrez, 1987)

The policies surrounding the language of instruction in the schools changed as Puerto Rican government and status changed.

It is important to note here that what actually happened in classrooms was likely very different from what the policies mandated. Many teachers only taught in English when they were being supervised (Scheweers & Hudders, 2000). High schools were taught in English from 1898 to the late 1940s, mainly because those students who went to high school were from upper class families who wanted English as the medium of instruction.

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The current educational language policy in Puerto Rico is that children begin learning English taught as a special subject in schools in the first grade. English remains a special subject for most private and public school children, though English-medium private schools do exist. That is, most Puerto Rican school children learn English for about one hour a day, and English instruction is relegated to the English classroom (much as high school students in the United States have traditionally studied German). Though there are English medium and bilingual private schools, these are only available to families of relatively high socio-economic status. In the University of Puerto Rico system, many classes (particularly in the sciences) use English textbooks, though the medium of instruction is mostly Spanish. This educational language policy exists within the context of the island policy of Spanish and English as co-official languages.

These language policies do not mean that all aspects of life in Puerto Rico are conducted bilingually, of course. Instead, it means that, supposedly, things can be conducted in either Spanish or English. For example, sometimes on the nightly news, people interviewed in English will be dubbed over in Spanish, sometimes the English will be used with no translation. At the high school and university levels, texts are often in English, while talk around text is conducted in Spanish. However, most public life is conducted in Spanish. For example, the legislature debates in Spanish, the governor addresses the people in Spanish, and church is usually held in Spanish. The implications of co-official language policy for normal life seems to be more that English can be used, though Spanish is preferred.

Second Language Literacy: An Argument for Embedding Disembedded Skills

Studying English language use in the Puerto Rican context has much to teach us about the nature of language learning. Such time, expense, and energy has been devoted

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to English language education in Puerto Rico, yet not all Puerto Ricans leave school with the same English knowledge. If we continue to look only at schools and classrooms to explain this phenomenon, as has been the trend in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) research, we will fall short of a complete understanding. For this reason, I argue for a movement towards looking at "other" language knowledge as embedded within a particular cultural context, rather than seeing this knowledge as a set of disembedded skills.

Traditional views of second language learning focus on "the four skills," referring to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In the field of TESOL (teaching English to speakers of other languages) *skill* refers to the mode of language performance, which is often broken down into *productive skills* (speaking and writing) and *receptive skills* (listening and reading) (Brown, 1994). Though there has been a trend towards "integration" of the four skills, this generally means the uncomplicated acknowledgment that one can not teach one skill without using the others as well. The complexity of language is simplified in this view, which sees language as something that can be divided into four equal parts that somehow make up a whole. This four-skills model of language is reflected in curricula which divide courses by skill (usually lumping speaking/listening and reading/writing together) and standardized tests which divide test sections by skill (such as the TOEFL).

The field of TESOL is built on the study of second language acquisition, and the history of SLA research is seen in the way language is conceptualized in the field of TESOL. Contrastive analysis, popular in the 1940s through the 1960s, was based on a behaviorist model of language acquisition that saw all learner errors as transfer from the learner's L1 (Hakuta & Cancino, 2001). Though Chomsky effectively debunked the

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behaviorist model of language acquisition, drill in grammar structures and vocabulary items survives in the second language classroom, and can also be seen in the popular Berlitz method (a.k.a. audio-lingual method or "drill and kill"). In the 1960s, influenced by Chomsky's theory of transformational grammar, research in second language acquisition focused on error analysis. This line of research saw the learner as actively hypothesizing about the L2, and attempted to describe types of errors and learner "interlanguage" (the systematic, regular language patterns of learners on their way to acquisition of the L2). This can be seen in the field of TESOL in the form of error analysis logs, popular in the writing classroom, where students log all of their written errors, analyze them, and attempt to correct them. Another shift in SLA research occurred when researchers began to hypothesize that there might be a difference in what the learner can do (competence) and what the learner does do (performance). Researchers engaged in performance analysis tried to divine an order of acquisition of structures (with lots of attention to grammatical morphemes and negation) (Hakuta & Cancino, 2001). The TESOL field responded with textbooks and teaching methods which attempted to follow this order of acquisition.

Conspicuously absent from this line of work was the role of the social and cultural. The lines of inquiry described above focused on individual learners in order to divine language universals. Errors were treated outside of social context and were compared to an ideal, homogenized, standard of the "target" language (the L2). With Chomsky's emphasis on language universals, the unit of linguistic analysis was the sentence uttered by a disembodied speaker at no particular time in no particular place. Reacting to this decontextualized study of language, Dell Hymes (1974) drew on the field of anthropology to develop the ethnography of communication. This work re-embedded the speaker into

a context, and developed a way to study language that considered this context as a major aspect influencing language use. While Chomsky was interested in linguistic competence, Hymes and other sociolinguistic researchers were interested in communicative competence (the ability of a speaker to understand and follow the communicative norms of a situation which are based on the speakers' relationship to each other, the physical place, etc.).

This social turn sparked researchers to extend the notion of ethnography of communication into ethnographies of reading and writing. Shirley Brice Heath's (1983) work on what she called *literacy practices* changed the field of literacy studies. *Literacy practices* meant not only reading and writing but all the *talk around texts* and *regularized cultural uses of print*. Heath connected her study of literacy practices in the Piedmont Carolinas to schools, emphasizing the difference between the kinds of literacy practices that the school valued and the literacy practices of the African American community. Thus, by the 1980s, there was an emphasis on literacy practices and a merging of research in the fields of anthropology, sociolinguistics, linguistics, and education.

While many researchers have looked at literacy practices in different communities (c.f. Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Brandt, 2001; Farr, 2001; Purcell-Gates, 1995), fewer have explored second language literacy practices (c.f. Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Reder & Wikeland, 1993; Street, 2001). As research into community literacy practices has changed the way educators think about literacy instruction in school, so must research into community second language literacy practices change the way educators teach second language literacy. The decontextualized notion of reading and writing as skills ignores social and cultural practices of second language literacy that students bring with them to the classroom. It assumes that second language learners are blank

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slates—or worse, that their first languages inhibit their learning—and that if they were just given the right tools (i.e. grammar rules and memorized vocabulary items), they could become readers and writers of decontextualized chunks of their L2. Instead, just as many first language researchers have embraced a sociocultural perspective on language learning, so must second language researchers.

CHAPTER 1: THEORIZING LANGUAGE IN PUERTO RICO

Heteroglossia, Caribbean Style: A Bakhtinian View of Language in Puerto Rico

Viewing second language learning as sociocultural practice requires a different theory of language than the traditional four-skills approach relies on. Traditionally, research on bilingualism has taken the "balanced bilingual," meaning essentially a person who has two languages in one body, as the ideal, and attempted to explain various types of bilingualism by the linguistic competence of individuals in each of their two languages. In his study of a Puerto Rican community in New Jersey, Fishman (1971) casts doubt on whether such a bilingual truly exists. He criticizes linguists whose "traditional model of bilingualism...views the natural state of affairs as 'one group, one language,' and therefore think of bilingualism as reflecting inter-group (between group) interaction rather than intra-group (within-group) functional-structural relationships" (p. 561). Zentella (1997b), working with Puerto Ricans in New York City, later revealed how bilingual (and multi-dialectical) code switching, thought by some to reveal a lack of competence in one language or the other, actually shows advanced communicative competence in two languages.

Puerto Ricans as a group, both on the island and off, reveal how languages and dialects in contact influence each other and become intertwined. The colonial relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico has led to many English borrows into Puerto Rican Spanish (i.e., "parkear" for "to park" your car instead of "estacionar"). Changes to both Puerto Rican Spanish and Puerto Rican English also happened as a result of return migration, or *vaivén*, the movement of Puerto Ricans from island to mainland and back in search of work. Zentella (1997) shows that the English of Puerto Ricans in New York includes features of African American Vernacular English,

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Hispanicized English, and standard English in various contexts. When Puerto Ricans

return to the island from migration, their multiple varieties of English and Spanish

influence Puerto Rican island varieties of English and Spanish.

Recalling the language history of Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican variety of

Spanish is influenced by the Taíno's Arawak language, West African languages, and

English (because of early trade, military aggression, colonialism, and return migration).

The Puerto Rican variety of English is influenced by Spanish, "Standard English"

through the colonial relationship with the U.S., and AAVE (African American

Vernacular English) through return migration. In other words, Puerto Rican English as

spoken by Puerto Ricans both on the island and in the diaspora has great variety to it,

and that variety is not just second-language "interlanguage" variety. As for languages

other than English and Spanish on the island, there is a significant population of Haitian

refugees as well as immigrants from many other language groups.

With such language variety, a study of language practices in a Puerto Rican

community must work from a theory of language that can account for interactions

between first and second (and third!) languages and language varieties. Bakhtin's (1981)

heteroglossic view of language in society is a rich theory of language that offers a way to

discuss language and literacy practices in Puerto Rico. Bakhtin's world is teaming with

language diversity. This diversity of language reflects social diversity, and is inextricably

linked to ideology. Thus every utterance is *heteroglot*, that is, it is embedded in a context

that is defined by the place, time, and social and historical conditions in which it is

uttered; this context gives it a meaning impossible to recreate exactly at any other place

and time. This condition of heteroglossia is present in every living language. Centripedal

forces spin language around an imaginary, united "standard," while the reality of

heteroglossia (the diversity of living languages) fragments this unity. Further, all utterances are *dialogic*, or in dialogue with other utterances. People enter the world of language as if entering a web of voices in dialogue with each other, each voice with a history of interactions with other voices. Thus, for Bakhtin, context is all-important.

For Bakhtin, words are infused with the ideologies of their speakers. They drip with other's intentions. Thus, as one uses new words (or new words in other languages) these words taste strange in the mouth until they are appropriated and made one's own. Language learning is not memorization of words and structures, but rather the gradual appropriation of words and discourses as people actively work to control and make their own the words of others. All words have history, but in Bakhtin's world, every speaker actively can appropriate a word and change its historical path for his or her own purposes.

Bakhtin further gives insight into multilingualism and multidialectism when he discusses *hybridization*. Hybridization, for Bakhtin, means "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter…between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 358). These historical or organic hybrids are combining "not only two languages but also two socio-linguistic…world views that are mixed with each other…such sociolinguistic hybrids have been at the same time profoundly productive historically; they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new 'internal forms' for perceiving the world in words" (p. 360). For Bakhtin, then, hybridization is a profoundly positive linguistic phenomenon. It opens up new world views by combining linguistic forms, and it is a major force in the development of languages throughout history.

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Life in the Borderlands: Language and Colonialism

Bakhtin's description of hybridization dovetails nicely with perhaps the most influential voice in Chicano/Latino studies: Gloria Anzaldúa. Anzaldúa (1987) writes of the same phenomenon of hybridization when she discusses growing up in the linguistic borderlands where Spanish and English rub against one another. "But Chicano Spanish is a border tongue which developed naturally. Change, *evolución, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por intención o adopción* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un modo de vivir.* Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language" (p. 77). On this theme of language creation, she writes, "for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves—a language that has terms that are neither *español ni inglés,* but both. We speak a patois, a forked tongue, a variation of two languages" (p.77).

Anzaldúa gives insight into the linguistic world of people living under two colonial systems—first, that of Spain, and later that of the U.S. Under both systems, the language of the colonized is degraded, insulted, seen as a marker of lower intelligence and social worth. This is what Anzaldúa calls "linguistic terrorism." "Chicanas who grew up speaking Chicano Spanish have internalized the belief that we speak poor Spanish. It is illegitimate, a bastard language. And because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other...In childhood we are told that our language is wrong. Repeated attacks on our native tongue diminish our sense of self. The attacks continue throughout our lives" (p. 80). This connection between language and identity runs deep. "So if you want to really

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hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (p. 81). For Chicanos/as and Puerto Ricans, this linguistic terrorism occurs in both Spanish and English. These attacks strike at the very core of the self—the identity.

Linguistic terrorism is a tool of colonialism. The role of language in colonialism is essential to understanding the linguistic landscape of Puerto Rico. Pennycook (1994) explains that though colonial language policies are often thought of as *imposing* the language of the colonizer, they were as much about *withholding* that language as forcing its use. Writing about Africa, Mazrui (1998) warns against seeing colonial language policy as "monolithic," as imposing a European language in order to "control the world view of the colonized" (55). This view "obscures policy differences that ranged from the French goal of linguistic-cultural assimilation to the exclusivist German approach that denied the colonial subject any access to the language of the colonial master"(55). In fact, in many places, such as Kenya and Sri Lanka, colonial language policy was actually a combination of enforcing the colonial language and withholding it. While the elite of the colonized nation were taught the language of the colonizer in order to hold low-level administrative positions, the colonial language was withheld from the masses, who were instead subject to educational drives that attempted to produce good, diligent workers. Addressing English as a colonial language specifically, Pennycook (1994) explains:

> This observation goes beyond a redressing of an understanding of colonial
> education and language policies because it suggests, first, that promotion of
> education in local languages was as much part of colonialism as was the
> promotion of English and, second, that the denial of access to English may have
> been as important for colonialism as the insistence on English. This, in turn,

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raises the question as to whether, in looking at the relationships between language

and inequality, there is not a danger of focusing on 'linguistic imperialism' and

expansionism, rather than trying to understand the implications of both insistence

on and denial of a language within larger structures of inequality. My point here

is not, of course, to suggest that the world has freely 'chosen English' but rather

that, given the broader inequitable relationships in the world, people have little

choice but to demand access to English (74).

This shows the tension between the denial of access to colonial languages and the

imposition of them.

Thus, though colonial languages may be forced upon a population, this hegemony

is never complete. Imposed colonial languages do not simply reproduce existing power

relationships. Canagarajah (1999) argues, "The assumptions made by proponents of this

[reproduction-oriented] position are that subjects are passive, and lack agency to manage

linguistic and ideological conflicts to their best advantages; languages are seen as

monolithic, abstract structures that come with a homogeneous set of ideologies, and

function to spread and sustain the interest of dominant groups" (p. 2). Similarly, Mazrui

(1998) argues against the Whorfian idea that colonial languages take over the minds of

people indiscriminately. He calls this "linguistic determinism" and argues that

neonationalists in Africa, who call for the eradication of European languages, "make a

fetish out of language, endowing it with the power of colonization or liberation in a

manner that is ahistorical, static, and undialectical" (p. 55).

Pennycook (1994) takes up the term "writing back" to describe this phenomenon

of hybridization/re-colonization in literature in English from the periphery. "When we

start to investigate the uses of English in colonial and postcolonial societies," he says, "it

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becomes important to acknowledge its importance not only as the language of imperialism but also as one of the key languages of resistance" (p. 262). He states that English is used to create new meanings, "opposing the centre's claim to control over the meanings and forms of language." Thus, "writing back" rejects the categories of the colonizer and creates meaning within the local context, for the purposes of the local people. Canagarajah (1999) writes of this type of resistance, "the intention is not to reject English, but to reconstitute it in more inclusive, ethical, and democratic terms" (p. 2). Mazrui (1998) agrees, saying, "In the hands of the oppressed a language of the oppressor can be transmuted to carry new meanings and serve as a weapon of struggle for liberation" (p. 62). Anzaldúa's "forked tongue" is not an image of the blindly colonized or controlled, but that of agents active in the creation of languages that reflect their identity, their border experience.

Bakhtin's philosophy of language helps us to understand the possibilities of a language when it is appropriated and used for one's own purposes. Bakhtin (1981) asserts that language is never neutral, but rather that "each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life" (p. 293). But for Bakhtin, words can change. Though words exist "in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property...forcing [language] to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process" (p. 294). Yet in Bakhtin's heteroglossic world, it can be done, and, in fact, it must be done as a word is "half someone else's" until one "populates" it with one's own intention (p. 293). Thus

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English, if appropriated and populated with local meaning, can indeed lose the "taste" of hegemony.

And thus, Bakhtin shows how language is intertwined with power. Foucault (Gordon, 1980) defines power as an action upon action, i.e., it is the action of one group/person on the actions of another group/person. Power structures the range of possible actions of others. If we see language use—the utterance itself—as a type of action, then language is by definition both subject to and a tool of power relations. Bakhtin explains how movements toward national or "standard" languages attempt to constrain the heteroglossia of living languages. In other words, the imposition of a national language, one that would be considered the official, "correct," publicly acceptable version attempts to constrain the range of possibly acceptable language forms and thus can be seen in Foucault's sense as a relation of power. But as Foucault asserts, this definition of power as action upon action assumes the freedom of those being acted upon. As he states, "there is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight" (p. 225). That freedom, that "means of escape," is agency. For Bakhtin, this agency, this creative potential is always present. It is the reality of living language—that language has the potential to be recreated in every utterance. Even though language is populated with the intentions of others, it can, and must, and always will be appropriated and thus remade. The diversity of living language teams, like a current of voices, fracturing unity. Thus, Anzaldúa's forked tongue is an exercise of her agency, a creation of language that defies imposed standards. Play with the language of the colonizer, such as the creation of world "Englishes," is an act of resistance because it undermines the attempt at constraining the language actions of others. Power

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relationships are played out through language, agency is exercised by means of language, and resistance is enacted in and with language itself.

<center>Expected Contributions: Demythologizing *el Difícil*</center>

English in Puerto Rico, therefore, is part of this teaming current of living language. People defy categorization into the boxes of "native speaker" and "non-native speaker" or "bilingual" or "monolingual" as they play with English, take up its use, reject it, reinvent it. If we understand this about language and language learning, then the study of English language use in Puerto Rico becomes deeply embedded in a context that calls us to acknowledge all forms of participation in language practices. The up-close look at what real people are doing with language is what it's all about.

The focus of this study is literacy practices in a rural Puerto Rican community. Much thought has been given to raising issues about the nature of second (colonial) language literacy and how it might be understood as a cultural practice. Though study of literacy practices is now fairly common (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984), literacy practices have never been explored in Puerto Rico (Ramírez-González & Torres-González, 1996). Ethnographic researchers are just beginning to examine the second language literacy practices of communities in developing nations where speakers of local languages must navigate text in an international (often imposed) language (Street, 2001). The context of Puerto Rico is important because of the politically charged nature of English that has resulted from U.S. colonization. Puerto Rico serves as an excellent case for examining colonial language issues, particularly how vernacular speakers navigate the colonial language. As English becomes a global language, Puerto Rico offers a look at how speakers of other languages throughout the world manage the role of English in the economy and in popular culture.

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While officials in Puerto Rico lament the lack of Spanish/English bilingualism on the island, U.S. institutions (including many universities) assume bilingualism. Research needs to paint a clear picture of language use on the island for Puerto Rican language education to be effective. English is called *"el difícil"* in part because of the resistance to English that resulted from the Americanization campaign of the early 1900s (de Gutiérrez, 1987; Torres-González, 2002). I contend that there are indeed community uses of English that, if identified, can be used as a basis for English language learning and a demythologizing of *"el difícil."*

This better understanding of English use would lead to a refined conceptualization of "bilingualism" and more appropriate expectations within the educational system for bilinguals in the Puerto Rican context (Hornberger, 2003). By documenting people's participation in English literacy practices, I hope to show the variety of language skills they possess, and to open up the possibility for a rethinking of bilingualism that is more nuanced than the commonly held perception that bilinguals are "two monolinguals in one body" (Valdes, 1993, p. 7). If we normalize multilingualism (and multi-dialectism), rather than monolingualism, a more true-to-life definition of bilingualism emerges. Hornberger (2003) asserts that "bilinguals switch languages according to specific functions and uses, whereas monolinguals switch styles in the same contexts....The argument here is that monolingualism and bilingualism are more alike than different. The functions and uses to which different varieties and styles are put in a monolingual individual or society are the same ones to which different languages are put in a bilingual individual or society" (p. 115). From this perspective, reading ability in another language where there is a particular contextual use for it would certainly qualify as "bilingualism." Based on this socio-cultural perspective, a refined definition of

bilingualism might be: *the ability of an individual to use different languages for appropriate functions and purposes.*

Implications

This work has implications for educational language policy. From a sociocultural perspective on language learning, language use is always situated within a context and has a specific purpose (Miller & Goodnow, 1995; Street, 1993). Any new communicative practice—whether it is learning a language, learning to read, communicating in academic contexts, or learning a new genre of writing—builds on existing practices. This project rests on the assertion that until we know the communicative practices of a given community, teachers, curriculum developers, and policy makers cannot effectively utilize those practices for what they are: a person's admission ticket from one discourse community into another. Understanding these communicative practices is key to developing good language curricula and effective teacher education, as teachers could build on these practices to enhance student language learning.

Overview of Chapters

In the following chapters, I expand and explain these border crossings, and describe and analyze the English literacy practices of this particular Puerto Rican community. Chapter two explains the methods used in the study's design, data collection, and analysis. After a full account of the different language varieties and texts used in the community, chapter three goes on to explain this community's complex relationship between identity and English, and their values towards the language. Chapter four presents the English literacy practices of the community. What follows is a discussion of the types of participation and how this participation varies depending on a

person's linguistic toolkit. I rely on Bakhtin to help explain the complex web of language that is revealed in these multi-lingual, multi-dialectical literacy practices.

Chapter five explores and develops language brokering as a type of border crossing. Heavily influenced by Anzaldúa's conception of language in the borderlands, I develop a new view of language brokering as border crossing. I situate the language brokering events that I observed in the context of the community's literacy practices, analyzing not only the events themselves but the institutional space that made these events possible. What develops is a theory of language use in the borderlands where people *que hablan los dos* build on each other's knowledge to meet their communicative goals.

In chapter six, the conclusion, I use the findings of this study to inform colonial language theory and make recommendations for language policy and teaching in the colonial language context. I will show that despite English's mythical characterization as *el difícil*, the people in this particular Puerto Rican community wielded English as a tool that was most definitely under their control. They took for granted their ability to negotiate English text. In short, biliteracy was normal for this community, it went by without comment. It is, like many other aspects of colonial reality, an everyday part of navigating overlapping cultures and ideologies. I will argue that it is the job of schools to tap into this taken-for-granted language ability and use it as a base for language teaching.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

Communities of Contrast

Landing in San Juan, the plane flies low over a sandy ribbon of coastline. To the right are rolling green mountains, to the left the open expanse of the Atlantic. As the landing gear drops, shopping centers and beachside communities fill the water's edge. These give way to a crowded grouping of small wooden and concrete houses with zinc roofs, clustered tightly together. As you are just about to land, open space again, this time dotted with the high-rise hotels of Hyatt, Marriot and Hilton.

The drive from the San Juan airport up to Ramona is similarly filled with contrasts. San Juan is all city—high-rise banks, highways, traffic jams—and, like many other cities around the world, it is spreading. As the municipalities which now make up "the metro area" grow more and more dense with sprawl, the drive through their narrow streets lined with K-marts and McDonald's becomes more and more difficult. Crossing the Río la Plata and driving up, up, up into the cool mountains to Ramona is truly a relief.

But Ramona is not immune to sprawl. With the dramatic shift from an agricultural economy to an industrial economy in the 1940s (see Colón Reyes, 2005), and now with an increasing movement to a service-based economy, many Puerto Ricans from rural municipalities drive one or two hours to work on the coast. Increasingly, though it is more than an hour away from the metro area, Ramona is becoming a suburb of San Juan. Housing developments are being built on former tobacco or plantain farms, and small local pharmacies now compete with Walgreen's. Walmart has bought the local grocery store, Amigo, and food from KFC (referred to as "Kentucky") to Pizza Hut is available, cheap and fast.

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This development does not mean, however, that there is a lot of work for this rural community. Finding a full-time job is extremely difficult, even with a college degree. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the unemployment rate for Puerto Rico as a whole was 19.2%; for Ramona it was 22.2%. Fifty-nine percent of the families in Ramona live below the federal poverty line with a per capita income of $4,972, while on the island as a whole the number is 44.6% with a per capita income of $8,185 (Colón Reyes, 2005). Of the 6,329 households in Ramona (as reported in the 2000 census), 2,949 have a household income of less than $10,000 a year. Sixty percent of the population receives food stamps (*cupones*) or other forms of federal public assistance (Colón Reyes, 2005). Many of the people in the barrio, Doña Francisca, where I lived during the study, were out of work, and some, including our next-door neighbor, had turned to dealing drugs. In Doña Francisca, working families live alongside out-of-work families. Freshly painted concrete houses stand next to small, wooden houses and abandoned, dilapidated concrete homes, like the one two doors down, which was the site of a (thankfully unsuccessful) drive-by shooting in my first month in Doña Francisca.

Getting Connected: My Role in the Community

Barrio Doña Francisca is the home of my husband, Guillermo. His family lives on an 80-acre farm that was his grandfather's. Along the edge of the farm, the twelve children of this grandfather (Guillermo's aunts and uncles) built houses. Guillermo's family, including his two brothers and two sisters, live in one of these homes, and during the course of the study, I lived next door with Guillermo's aunt, whom I called Titi (the affectionate form of "Aunt"). As Guillermo's wife, I was accepted as part of the family. This meant that the family helped me adjust to life in the community. For example, Guillermo's youngest sister accompanied me when I needed to get a cell phone, and his

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father went with me as I shopped for a car. The different family members referred to me by my relationship to them, even before I was married to Guillermo. I was introduced to strangers as "mi cuñada" (my sister-in-law), "mi sobrina political" (my niece-in-law), as well as "la novia de Guillermo" (the fiancé/girlfriend of Guillermo). In return, I was expected to visit the house next door at least once a day, to visit extended family members, and to run errands like going to pick up the mail from the post office (which was in the center of town, a twenty-minute drive away).

Cultural Sponsors and Social Class

With the family vouching for me, I was able to gain access to the wider community. After explaining my study to Guillermo's brother, Jacinto, he decided that the person for me to meet was "la mamá de Paco," María. He knew that she spoke English, that she often did translations for people, and that she was the librarian in the barrio's K-9 school. On my fourth day in the barrio, my brother-in-law took me to María's house and introduced me, explaining that I was doing a study in Puerto Rico. As he waited outside, talking to her son, I told María the purpose of my study. At first she seemed skeptical and not sure quite what I wanted with her, her body language visibly tense. But, just like any over-worked public school teacher would, she relaxed into a smile when I said that I would like to work with her as a volunteer. She said that she always needed help, and that I should write a letter to the principal explaining what I wanted to do and asking for permission to be at the school.

When I got home that night, I talked to my husband's aunt, who suggested that she go with me to school the next day when I went to deliver the letter to the principal. She said she knew him, and that she would introduce me. In the morning, as we walked up the driveway of the school to the principal's office, it became obvious to me that Titi

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was both well-known and well-respected at the school, as everyone from kids to security guards to teachers greeted her. She introduced me to the principal, I explained my intentions and delivered the letter, and he gave his permission. I headed to the library to find María and start my first day of volunteering.

My husband's family was careful to look out for me, acting as my cultural sponsors or advocates as I tried to gain access to the research site. I relied on them to know how to work the system, a system where personal relationships were far more important then, say, a university degree. I needed both my husband's brother and aunt to advocate for me, to tell community members that I was OK, that I could be trusted and respected, and was well-intentioned.

My connection to that family automatically positioned me in the eyes of the school and the community. My husband's grandfather ran an 80-acre farm in the community before his death. He employed many people from the barrio, and was well-known as being a hard-working, fair, and generous *Don*. The family was not opulently rich by any stretch, but they were better off than most people in the very poor community. Many members of the family, which consisted of twelve children (my husband's father being the second youngest), became teachers and community leaders, active in the church, the farmer's cooperative, and the city council . Thus, being attached to this family meant gaining respect, but also positioned me solidly as a member of a certain social class.

Researcher Identity

Though I was "sponsored" into the community, this sponsorship itself positioned me as a member of an upper-class family. On top of that, this sponsorship, of course, did nothing to erase my existing positionality as a white, female, overly-educated gringa. In

relation to many participants' families, and generally by the standards of the community, I was old to not have children. José, one participant's, mother and I were the same age—30—and José was in eighth grade. Many families (like my husband's) lived in compounds, or clusters of houses on the same property, alongside aunts and uncles and cousins and grandparents—very different from the nuclear family home that I grew up in. My white, middle class American family in its composition alone (a strikingly small number of people: 5 first cousins, a younger sister, a step brother, no nieces or nephews) was very different from most people's. My pursuit of my doctoral degree also made me mysterious to the community in general, since most women, especially young, pretty ones, didn't do that. I had too many degrees, and was an English teacher of all things, while many community members had barely graduated from high school, already loaded with the responsibilities of family at a young age. These interweaving factors—my age, education level, cultural difference—combined to make me quite different from the kinds of adult women that most community members knew.

<div align="center">Nuestra Escuelita (Our Little School)</div>

The school was hidden from view on the street, a sharp uphill turn just after some homes that were built right on the road's edge. The first thing I saw was a large, high aluminum roof that covered blacktop basketball courts, surrounded by a chain link fence. Past this area there were mountains in the distance. The school itself sat high on the top of a hill, with a lovely view of the valley below. It was a compound of about ten buildings of different sizes, painted yellow (a traditional color of schools in Puerto Rico). As the school had grown over the years, more and more buildings had been added. Some were long, narrow, concrete buildings that held five or six classrooms, some were free-standing

wooden structures that held only one classroom. All of these classrooms opened directly to the outside.

When the bell rang and classes switched, there were kids everywhere—playing basketball, climbing trees, sitting on the steps of buildings or on benches in the shade, chasing each other around the campus. They wore uniforms in different combinations, the boys in black jeans and polo shirts, the girls in blue plaid pants or skirts with vests. At the small snack shop run by the town's local cooperative, two women sold candy, hot bread and pressed ham and cheese sandwiches, soda, coffee, and small slushies. At least twenty kids of different sizes huddled around the service window, the first-graders sitting up on the concrete service counter, screaming their order at the two ladies inside. It was a competition to see who could get served the fastest, and by the time you are a ninth-grader, the lady has your order ready when you arrive.

But students were not the only folks that were part of this school. Parents (usually mothers) sat on benches in the shade, sometimes accompanied by younger, non-school-aged children, chatting with each other or fussing with their children's uniforms. A janitor in a Philadelphia Phillies baseball cap leaned against a broom as he talked with the principal and the uniformed security guard. Lunch ladies in smocks and hairnets, often singing and always joking, busily cooked a meal of typical Puerto Rican food: rice, beans and meat. High-school students showed up to assist their former teachers when they had a day off, or they accompanied a parent who was a teacher and spent the day hanging out at the school.

The Library: The Heart of the School

If the outdoor areas of the school seemed alive with the flow of students, teachers, parents, and workers, the library was the life-center of activity, as the librarian, María,

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said, "the heart of the school." When I entered the library for the first time, which was about as big as two classrooms, I was struck by the sheer number of people and the number of different things they were doing. On any given afternoon, a parent might have been researching a student's class project, eighth graders might have been looking at the Britney Spears website, fifth graders might have been decorating the library door, and teachers might have been working at the computer on lesson plans.

A small group of kids from seventh, eighth, and ninth grade regularly hung out in the library whenever they had free time, and many students in this group were also members of the "Club de asistentes bibliotecarias" (the Library Assistants Club). This club helped the librarian keep the library neat, arranging chairs and putting things in order, helped other kids do research using the electronic encyclopedia, and generally just hung out. All junior high kids had at least one hour a day free, and if a teacher was absent, they had more (there was no system of substitutes). This meant that, including the lunch hour, kids could be hanging out in the library for as many as two to three hours everyday. The library served as a social center where kids not only socialized with each other but also with the many different teachers, parents, and staff who trafficked in and out of the library.

The library was not just the "heart" of the social world of these kids, but it was also a social center for the adults that were part of the school community. Besides coming to use the computers to do work, teachers also came to socialize. For example, when one of the female teachers came to the library to show Mari (the other assistant, who is well known for her crafting abilities) her recent crocheting projects, Mari and I both decided we wanted to learn. In the library during our lunch hour, we started an informal crocheting class (María called us "the spiders of the library"). Other teachers, like Lico,

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the physical education teacher, would come just to sit and enjoy the only air-conditioned spot in the school (besides the office). When Mani, the lunch lady, became a grandmother, she came and announced it to all of us in the library, handing out sweets for the occasion. Parents often came in to use the phone, to search for their children, or to find the newspaper, and they would stay and chat for a while. Thus the library was a social center for students, teachers, parents, and staff.

The library was also the common meeting place of the school, for both teachers and students. The principal held his meetings there, and so did the teacher's union. Ninth graders met in the library for a high school orientation program, and fourth graders met to hear about D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education). During the agricultural fair at the school, Head Start students visited the library to do a craft project led by one of the librarian's assistants (Mari), and a representative from the local rabbit farming cooperative did a presentation for students of many grades on raising rabbits, complete with actual rabbits.

The librarian herself was also central to many activities in the school. She not only ran the library, but also occasionally taught classes in how to do research on the computer. In addition, she often got recruited to help with other teacher's projects, such as the Agriculture Fair, a three-day event which drew visitors from twenty schools across the island. Well known for her ability to write (and get) grants, she helped the agriculture teacher prepare a federal Title I grant. She was also often asked to proofread (or write) letters for people. During tax time, a teacher even came in for help filling out his tax forms. Truly, the woman did everything. As María often remarked, in the library we do everything, from books to farming!

As María's assistant, I quickly became part of the many activities associated with the library. Though I began as a volunteer, within two weeks María asked me to work officially as her assistant (paid as part of the Title V grant—more on that below). That job grew to include teaching English to the junior-high kids after school and in the community program on Saturday mornings. But perhaps more importantly, I was a regular fixture in the library. The kids of the library club would spend their free hour with me, talking about video games, popular music, or other students. I heard about the difficulties in their families and in their budding love lives. Everyday I was greeted with a kiss on the cheek from these students, the traditional greeting for one's female teachers. Teachers came to the library to find me to ask for help with some task in English or to type something for them, the janitor would stop by specifically to tease me, and the ladies from the lunch room would come in just to say hello.

School as Community Center

As mentioned above, María's work spilled over into other aspects of the school not traditionally associated with being a librarian. She was proud of the fact that she had expanded the library into two rooms and had added many computers with federal grant money. But just as her work from the library seemed to touch many aspects of school life, María actively sought to expand the role of the library even further, turning it into a community center. Within two weeks of my arrival at the school, María was awarded a federal Title V grant called "Biblioteca Informática Integral." This grant provided funding for an after school tutoring program offering help in Spanish, Math/Science, and English, for additional computers, and for keeping the library open for extended hours for community use. In addition, it funded courses for the community on Wednesday and

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Saturday mornings. Through this grant, María transformed the library as the heart of the school into the library as the heart of the community.

The community education classes included a Wednesday morning beginning-level computer class. For this class, parents and other community members (many of whom had heard about the class through someone at the school) came to the library. Mari, the other library assistant, also participated in this class. It was not unusual to see kids sitting at their parents' sides, helping the parent to use the mouse or navigate the computer interface. The other community classes took place on Saturday mornings, with four offerings: Computers (more advanced), Crafts, Floral Arranging, and Conversational English. The Crafts class was for younger kids, and the Floral arranging class, though open to all, had only adult women students. But the Computer and Conversational English classes had students of many different ages: junior high kids, adults, retirees. I taught the Conversational English class (originally the job had been slated for someone else, but because they couldn't find a computer teacher, the English teacher moved to teach computers and I stepped in). Thus, these community classes brought even more people into the school. On Saturdays in particular, the school, with the library at the heart of it, looked and functioned like a community center.

English Teaching at the School

Like most schools in Puerto Rico, all students at the school (kindergarten through ninth graders) studied English as a special subject for about one hour each day. The rest of their classes were taught in Spanish with Spanish textbooks. Having made the decision to only study English literacy practices outside of the classroom, I did not systematically observe any English classes. However, because I was located in the library, I did observe some of the elementary English classes taught by Rita, who did not have her own

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classroom and so often held her classes in the back of the library (where she had her desk). Rita spent a lot of time on phonics instruction using worksheets. For example, grouping pictures of objects that started with the same sound ("pin" and "pig"). Children also had oral routines in English that began each class (like a song that started, "This is English! La, la, la!"). Students were well trained at repeating after Rita, particularly as she showed them pictures (for example, "This is a mother," showing a picture of a woman with a child). Rita also occasionally showed cartoon movies in English with the English subtitles on, and sometimes even showed Hollywood movies for kids dubbed over in Spanish.

As for what was going on in other English classrooms, I cannot comment on that directly. However, students often asked me for help with their English assignments, and I could observe many students working on English homework in the library. Students did a range of activities, including fill-in-the-blank worksheets, writing out dialogues to be performed in class, English journals (which often started with a formula for students to fill in, like "Today I feel…"), and short essays (like "What I Will Do This Summer," and "My Best Friend"). The strategy of most students for writing in English was to first write out what they wanted to say in Spanish and then do a word-by-word translation. Students often worked with a dictionary in the library to accomplish writing tasks.

<div align="center">Phase One Data Collection</div>

I was part of the life of this vibrant library where I spent, at a minimum, five hours every weekday and three hours on Saturday. During the first phase of the study, which lasted from the last week of January to the beginning of April, I collected several forms of data with the goal of observing all occurrences and uses of English text in the environment. I carried a small notebook with me everywhere I went in order to write "jottings" of my observations. In this book I also wrote down new words and phrases in

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Spanish in order to facilitate my language learning. Because María introduced me to people as a person who was trying to improve her Spanish, the adults got used to my little book and mostly assumed that I was writing down new words. The kids, however, asked me often what I was doing as I wrote jottings, and I told them that I was writing down all of the English that I saw and heard. I explained that I was a student and that I had to write a "tésis" or "proyecto," and that I wanted to know how people used English in their everyday lives.

In addition to writing jottings of English text and talk around text, I was also observing and noting attitudes toward English. For these observations, I had in mind the question: What does English mean to people? I paid particular attention to how English might affect one's identity, and whether people identified themselves as bilingual or not, English speaker or not. When I heard someone express an opinion about English, I would note that interaction, but also any demographic information about that person, including age, gender, and return migrant status.

Every night I would turn these jottings into full ethnographic fieldnotes. In addition to fieldnotes, I collected artifacts of texts written and read in English, and when possible, I recorded and transcribed the talk around texts and conversations that dealt with attitudes toward English. When I could not record talk around text, I would write jottings either during observation or immediately after. For each instance, I noted:

- The language and language variety used in text and talk around text (i.e., Puerto Rican English, Puerto Rican Spanish, etc.)
- The participants (Who? What age? Gender? Socioeconomic status? What relationship did they have to each other and to me? Were they return migrants?)
- The setting (Where did the event take place? Under what circumstances?)

With those whom I observed participating in literacy practices in English, I conducted informal interviews in order to understand their family and home background. These interviews were mostly conducted in Spanish, with the exception of a few participants who initiated talk with me in English. I asked the following questions:

- Did/do your parents speak English?

- Do you have family in the United States?

- Do you have internet at home?

- Do you watch TV in English?

- Do you play video games at home?

These questions helped me identify participants who were return migrants or who had return migrant family members. The questions about the internet, cable, and video games surfaced as important during my initial observations of literacy practices, as I quickly discovered that surfing the internet in English, navigating the computer interface in English, and playing video games with text in English were common literacy practices that took place among the young people in the library. In addition, the popularity of certain cartoon characters evidenced itself in the student's internet activities. For example, the Cartoon Network homepage was a popular internet spot. This led me to ask whether people were watching cable television in English.

Identifying Focal Participants

Through these phase one observations and informal interviews, I began to identify focal participants for more structured interviews. I was looking for people whom I had observed participating in English literacy events, particularly in brokering activities, and/or whom I had observed expressing their attitudes toward English. In addition, guiding my selection of focal participants was my one of my research questions: What are

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the factors that matter (age, class, gender, cross migration, schooling) in determining a person's particular "linguistic toolkit"? To that end, I sought to include people from different age groups, from a variety of social classes, males and females, return migrants and people who have not lived in the U.S., and people with various levels of schooling.

What follows is a brief description of each focal participant, including a physical description, age, occupation, and how they reported their English abilities:

María. The woman who made the library the heart of the school, some parents even thought that María acted more like the principal than the principal himself because of her involvement in building programs and bringing in grant money. Described by other teachers as "prieta," María was short, dark, and shapely. Quiet and composed while talking about serious matters, she loved to joke and tease with her friends and had a contagious laugh. She had won the *cariño* of the students to the extent that one female student called her *Titi* (the affectionate form of Aunt). Respected as much as she was liked, María was trusted by the community for help with everything from writing letters to filling out tax forms. She described her English as "Made in Puerto Rico," proud that she had successfully learned English on the island.

Señora Torres. Señora Torres taught second grade. She often entered the library with a smile, even though she was coming to use the computers, with which she had an adversarial relationship. She always wore what was considered the teacher's "uniform": a pants suit in blue or green. Though she was uneasy about her English, she often greeting me with "Hello" or "How are you?" Though she asked about the Saturday class, she never participated.

Lico. Lico was one of the school's gym teachers, and he dressed like one: in jeans or track pants and a T-shirt, and always with his characteristic baseball cap that said

"Puerto Rico" and was brightly colored with the blue, white, and red of the flag. He had big, friendly eyes and a full grey and white beard. Lico often came to the library to take a break and rest in the air conditioning. A return migrant, he often addressed me in his Brooklyn-accented English, though this often met with exclamations of surprise from his fellow teachers.

José. In eighth grade, José often lied about his 13 years, saying that he was really 14. Thin with high cheekbones and spiky black hair (which he bleached with blond streaks near the end of the school year), José at first seemed quiet and reserved. But after he warmed up to you, there was no keeping him quiet. He loved to sing, had a lovely voice, and was an ardent fan of popular music in both English and Spanish. He had an ear for language, prided himself in his pronunciation, and worked hard to listen and improve, always asking "How is it? Did I get it right?" Despite this, he would not call himself an English speaker, just an English learner doing better than the rest of the class.

Nori. Nori grew up in a nearby town and worked as an accountant in San Juan. She drove up to Ramona on the weekends to visit her boyfriend (my future brother-in-law) and to take the Saturday English class. She was a slight, light-skinned, long-limbed woman who looked much younger than her 24 years, and who seemed to weigh about as much as her stocky 7-year-old son.

Mani. Always with a smile, Mani wore the "uniform" of the *comedor*, jeans or capri pants and a nurse's smock. Mani was full of life, singing as she cleaned the floors or stirred the huge kettle of rice. She always greeted me, sometimes in English. Mani was born in the Bronx where she wore a baseball cap and took on a boy's nickname so that the boys on the block would allow her to play with them. Because she moved back and forth so much, she said that she never learned English.

Eugenio. Eugenio had a bright, round face and the composure of a ninth grader who was prone to being president of things. Responsible, respectful, and likeable, he was certainly the teacher's favorite among the graduating class. He was proud to say that he spoke English, and often told me about his visits to Florida to see his cousins.

Dalia. Pretty with a mane of long brown curls, Dalia was a girl desperate to blossom into a young woman. As a sixth grader, she was working hard to affect the attitude of teen age indifference, but was a bit too excitable still. A self-professed English hater, she was struggling in her English class.

Mari. A dedicated and hard-working teacher's assistant, Mari was a perfectionist in every way, from her clothing to her lesson plans. Always dressed neatly with adorable matching sandals, Mari took pride in her thoroughness and creativity. She loved designing craft projects for the children and took pride as her tutees in the after school program progressed in reading. Though she studied English during her university study in elementary education, she certainly did not claim to speak it.

Pedro. Pedro was a large eighth grader who took pride in his growing belly, which he would show to other just to see them cringe. A strong-willed teen with a tendency toward aggression with his peers, he was always sweet and respectful to María, Mari and I, even when we had to tell him to turn down the volume on his video games. Pedro spoke English, which he reports to have learned from watching a lot of cable, especially the Cartoon Network. This perhaps accounted for his often wacky sayings, which he would say just to get a reaction. "Why don't you buy me a monkey?" was a reoccurring favorite.

Data Analysis

After several weeks of participant observation, I began to identify English literacy

practices (i.e., patterns or regularized cultural uses of text in English). With these

practices in mind, I analyzed and coded the data for all occurrences of English literacy

practices. I called each one of these occurrences a "literacy event," after Heath (1983).

She defines a literacy event as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the

nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes. ... A literacy event can

then be viewed as any action sequence, involving one or more persons, in which the

production and/or comprehension of print plays a role" (p. 93). What is important is not

just the text itself, but how the text is used, discussed, and interpreted by people in a

particular context. A literacy practice, then, is a series of literacy events, or regularized

cultural uses of text, such as filling out a form or navigating a web page. Using Hymes'

(1994) framework for the analysis of communicative events, I analyzed each literacy

event examining:

- Purpose (goals and outcomes)

- Setting (time and space)

- Scene (cultural definition of an occasion)

- Participants (age, sex, ethnicity, class)

- Message (form, content)

- Genre

- Mood (or "key," the tone, manner, spirit in which an act is done)

- Norms of interpretation (belief system of the community about the communicative
  act)

- Channels (oral, written, etc.)

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- Norms of interaction (rules governing the communicative act)

In order to better characterize and create relationships between individual literacy events, I also coded for types of documents involved in the event (i.e., a medical referral letter, a pop star's web page, a letter from the student financial aid office) and for attitudes or values about English expressed during the literacy event. In another pass through the data, I coded for the people involved in the event, helping me to analyze the patterns in the data by age, gender, and other salient factors. These various passes over the data helped me group literacy events by document type and participants for analysis. In my analysis I was not only interested in types of events, or types of documents, but also in the relationship between the literacy event and the participants' varying linguistic toolkits. In other words, of interest to me was how participation in events varied based on an individual's background, and particularly how participants leveraged their English language knowledge in order to participate in the English literacy event. To characterize participants' English knowledge, I relied on thick description of their observed language abilities. I approached these descriptions with an open mind and an eye to avoiding snap either/or judgments like native speaker/non-native speaker, keeping in mind that one of the purposes of the study was to explore the nature if bilingualism.

In addition to this, I sought to understand what participation in English literacy events meant to the people. To this end, I coded the data for values toward English language use in order to see how member's meanings were revealed in their everyday actions. Again, I was interested in how the different backgrounds of people might be related to their attitudes toward English. For example, how did return migrants' attitudes toward English differ from the attitudes of those who had never migrated? How did attitudes differ by age, gender, class, socio-economic status, etc? This analysis helped me

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understand the beliefs about English that participants brought to literacy events and thus deepened my understanding of their participation in these events. Combining these different ways of analyzing literacy events, I tried to gain an understanding of the English literacy practices of the community.

<center>Language Brokering and Border Crossings</center>

Language brokering was one type of English literacy practice that was particularly important to me. In previous studies, I had noted that sometimes people in the community used language brokers in order to access a text in English. Language brokers, I thought, were the people who had the most knowledge of a particular language in a given situation, and were thus used by others as a way to accomplish communicative goals. As I collected data, I kept a careful eye out for these types of language brokering events, usually characterized by someone approaching someone else with an English text.

But as I began analyzing the data, I found that language brokering was much more complicated than I had previously thought. The relationship between language broker and client (the person seeking help) was not one-way or hierarchical, but rather recursive. This is different from previous notions of brokering. Vázquez, Pease-Álvarez, and Shannon, in *Pushing Boundaries* (1994), paint a picture of brokers as bridges between two people with mutually exclusive sets of knowledge/language skills. I was not seeing a similar dichotomy. Those who sought help from English language brokers often had a lot of English skills, and the broker may have limited Spanish skills (like me). Thus, I saw brokering not as a transaction, but as a mutual building/sharing of knowledge that is recursive.

With this in mind, I read through the data again, with an expanded sense of what brokering meant. When I did this, events that I had not originally categorized as

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brokering events surfaced as indeed part of this phenomenon. This led me to ask, in what circumstances do brokering events occur? Between whom? What different and complementary sets of knowledge do participants leverage in brokering events? What conditions make brokering possible? During this analysis, I began to conceptualize brokering as a kind of border crossing, or border event. Language brokering events were occurring in circumstances where traditional borders were being crossed, like that between community and school, adult (as expert) and child (as novice), teacher and student. This analysis led me once again back to the data, this time looking for border crossings and how these were related to what literacy practices are possible in a given situation and who gets to participate in English literacy practices. For example, one question that surfaced in this analysis was: How does the crossing of the border between community and school, made possible by Carmen's Title V grant, open up opportunities for participation in different types of English literacy practices? How does this breaking down of the school/community dichotomy facilitate brokering?

CHAPTER 3: LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN RAMONA

Yo quiero que mi borinquen sea libre y soberana

Porque la estrella de mi bandera no acabe en la Americana

Porque hablamos español y antillana es nuestra tierra

Porque somos borincanos, isleños de pura sepa

Porque somos diferentes, que todo el mundo lo sepa

Porque somos diferentes, que todo el mundo lo sepa

—Andrés Jiménez, "La Estrella Sola"

I want my Boriquen to be free and sovereign

Because the star of my flag doesn't fit into the American one

Because we speak Spanish and our land is antillian

Because we are Borincanos, islanders of pure blood

Because we are different, let everyone know it

Because we are different, let everyone know it

Although Andrés Jiménez, the singer quoted above, is famed as part of the Puerto Rican independence movement, his claim that "somos diferentes, que todo el mundo lo sepa" (we are different, let everyone know it) is a sentiment felt by Puerto Ricans of various political ideologies. The fact that Jiménez asserts that language is an integral part of that difference should come as no surprise. Though pro-statehooders wave the American flag at their rallies, they also advocate a "jibaro" state, or a state of the U.S. that would preserve its identity as Puerto Rican, which includes protections for Spanish. The history of Puerto Rican identity and its connection to language has been well-documented by other authors (see de Gutiérrez, 1987; Duany, 2002), so in this chapter I

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want to talk about identity and language in this very particular, local setting of Ramona. I begin by describing language varieties in Ramona, and then move on to the community's values and attitudes in relation to English. Both of these topics are infused with issues of identity and the complex push-pull of English. Finally, I return to language and identity explicitly by looking closely at how three participants constructed their identities as English speakers.

Spanish in Ramona

Residents of Ramona speak a variety of Spanish that is different from what Zentella (1997a) calls "Standard Puerto Rican Spanish." Ramona is *el campo*, so the variety of Spanish spoken there is different from the one spoken in San Juan or in other coastal areas. This variety of Spanish is often mocked as *jibaro* (roughly translated "hillbilly"). It is marked most distinctively by variations in consonant pronunciation, as summarized in the chart below.

Table 2: Dialect Features of Ramona Spanish

Linguistic Variable	Grapheme Representation	Pronunciation in the Spanish of wider communication (SWC)	Pronunciation in Ramona Spanish (RS)
Syllable initial and medial /˜r/ pronounced /x/	rojo (red) carro (car)	/˜roho/ /ka˜ro/	/xojo/ /kaxo/
Syllable final /˜r/ → /l/	ayer (yesterday)	/ajer/	/ajel/
/ado/ → /ao/ /ada/ → /a/	cansado (tired) cansada (tired)	/kansado/ /kansada/	/kansao/ /kansa/
para → pa'	para (for)	/para/	/pa/
Dropping of final /s/	haces (you do)	/ases/	/ase/

The grammar of the Spanish of Ramona does not vary greatly from that of Standard Puerto Rican Spanish. It includes the variation in question formation described by Zentella. In questions beginning with interrogatives, the subject is placed before the verb instead of after it, as follows:

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Table 3: Subject Placement in Questions in Ramona Spanish

Dialect	Interrogative	Literal Translation	Gloss
SWC	¿Que haces tu?	What do[+2nd person singular] you?	What are you doing?
RS	¿Que tu hace'?	What you do[+2nd person singular]?	What are you doing?

Beyond this syntactic variation, there is little marked difference between the syntax of Standard Puerto Rican Spanish (as defined by Zentella) and the Spanish of Ramona.

Appropriations and Borrows

Appropriations and borrows from English are characteristic of the community's Spanish. By appropriations, I mean lexical items taken from English and "Spanishified," or altered to fit into Spanish phonological and/or morphological patterns. For example, as a general rule students at the school addressed their teachers with the English titles "Mrs." and "Mr." (although for adults who were not teachers they used the Spanish system of titles). However, these titles were appropriated into Ramona's particular variety of Spanish:

Table 4: Spanish Appropriations from English

Orthography	English pronunciation	Ramona Spanish appropriation
Mrs.	/mIsIz/	/misi/
Mr.	/mIstr/	/mistel/

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You will notice from the chart that not only are the /I/ vowels "Spanishified" to /i/, but also Ramona's particular dialect rules of dropping the final /s/ and changing final /r/ to /l/ apply.

Some appropriations can be traced to the orthography of the English word. For example, one day María and I were working with one of María's former students to fix a network connection. We were talking about a research project that he had to do and he mentioned that he would try searching on /hugle/. María looked at him strangely and asked, "Es 'google', no?" (*It's google, isn't it?*). The student shrugged and repeated again his appropriated version of "google": /hugle/, which was formed by reading the English word and applying Spanish phonological rules.

Borrows, on the other hand, are English lexical items taken wholesale and used as language chunks without needing to conform to the rules of Spanish. Many words associated with technology fell into this category, for example, "refresh" (referring to the process of re-loading a web page). Technology was in fact a rich site for both appropriation and borrowing. An incident during a librarian's training workshop given by the department of education reveals part of the process of how lexical items get taken up and used in Spanish:

> The leader of the session was giving an "introduction to technology" presentation that she sometimes used in the schools. The presentation explained the parts of the computer and the parts of a web page, among other things. The presenter kept codeswitching to "refresh" in relation to reloading a website. María raised her hand and pointed out the codeswitch, asking if there was a Spanish word for "refresh." The presenter paused to think and a slightly smart-alecky man in the back offered "refrescar," and everyone laughed. [He had simply taken the word

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and added the typical Spanish verb ending "-ar," changing the "sh" to /k/]

María commented that some of these code switches, especially for technology, are now accepted by the royal academy of Spanish. Later, when the presentation showed the names for parts of the computer, one slide passed where she had written "periferales" (*peripherals*, like a video camera, extra disk drive, modem, etc.). María asked if that was the word, or whether it was "periféricos," the Spanish word with the same meaning. Everyone started arguing over which one was correct. The same man behind me asked me what the word was in English and I said "peripherals." He said, "¡Aaa, por eso!" (*aa—it's for this!*). Again, everyone laughed.

People in this community were very good at playing with morphology and pronunciation to make an English word sound Spanish or a Spanish word sound English, showing their linguistic adeptness in both languages. This type of language play in order to guess unknown words was often met with laughter. But all lightheartedness aside, this language play reveals how words from English are altered to fit into Spanish.

Appropriations and borrows from English can be used because there is no word in Spanish to express the same, which is why we see so many occurrences related to technology. However, English appropriations and borrows also can supplant or live alongside Spanish words that mean the same thing (periferales/periféricos), resulting in English-root/Spanish pairs such as *estrés* and *tensión*, both of which mean stress, but the first of which is an English appropriation.

From Novice to Expert: Variations in the English Language of Participants

I also found that the English of my participants varied greatly, from novice to expert. I am being very careful here to avoid traditional linguistic categories such as

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"native-speaker" and "non-native-speaker," following the work of non-center scholars who study world Englishes (Canagarajah, 2005). These categories tend to compartmentalize people too neatly, and ignore degrees of difference that reflect the true range of language abilities in this setting. Terms like "bilingual," with its variety of definitions, does not accurately capture important information about language difference, as, it can be argued, anyone who "speaks two" should qualify. In addition, that term's colloquial use privileges a rare and unrealistic standard of "accent-less" English. Instead, I am choosing the terms "novice" and "expert" as end points on a continuum of language proficiency. These terms, I hope, allow for language development over time and do not confine non-native speakers to a label that will always be understood as "less than" native speakers.

For example, I considered both Lico and María to be "experts." Lico spoke English that you could hear on a street corner in the Bronx. He would call himself bilingual. María, in contrast, spoke English fluently, with an accent influenced by Spanish. She would also call herself bilingual, but with English "made in Puerto Rico." Though their Englishes sound different, they are both experts. Both deserve to be called such for their wealth of English knowledge. They were both relied on as experts by the community. José, on the other hand, spoke a variety of English typical of his peers learning English at school. He strived to mimic native-like pronunciation and his grammar and vocabulary were typical of a novice English language user. (Many adults who were also probably novices, such as Sra. Torres, never spoke to me in English, so I cannot comment with confidence what their spoken variety of English sounded like.) The term "novice" implies that they can "do English," they just are not quite experts yet. It

recognizes their already-existing knowledge but also captures the sense that they are on

the road to even greater language learning.

Everyday English Texts

Against this backdrop of spoken language variety existed an equally rich variety of

texts in English in the environment. By "in the environment" I mean English text that

appeared as part of everyday life in public spaces, work and home. These texts were a

normal part of life in this community in that all participants were exposed to these

English texts in some form everyday. The chart below outlines these everyday English

texts:

Table 5: Everyday English Texts in Ramona

Text type	Example
Business signage	Pizza Hut; Zaya's Cash and Carry; Jorge's Towing
Product labels and instructions	Export Soda Crackers; Whipped Butter; instructions for opening school milk packet
Technology/machine interfaces	Microwave control panel ("time," "cook," "defrost"); Windows 2000
Brand names on apparel	Old Navy; Hello Kitty

Occasionally, these everyday English texts were commented on, giving insight into

members' meanings of these texts. The following excerpt took place at the same

technology training class mentioned above. The class was full of code switches into

English as the leader explained various ways to search the internet. During the class,

María leaned over to me and commented that some words are hard to think of in Spanish

because they always appear in English. The example that she gave was "play" on a CD player or in a multimedia interface on the computer. María remarked that since "play" is always the word they use, she could not even tell me what the translation in Spanish would be. Although this may seem like a small, insignificant use of English text (some might argue that this text is not even read), it is significant because it shows how English words enter into the environment through text and are taken up by the community and used as part of everyday life.

Even the young participants occasionally noticed and commented on ambient text in English, as in this except when the other librarian's assistant (Mari) and I took two students (including eighth-grader José) to the local shopping center for a fast-food lunch.

As we were walking back to the car, Mari pointed out that they were adding a "Sally Beauty Supply" to the shopping center. José said, "Mira, aquí todo esta en inglés." (Look, everything here is in English.) I said, "Si, y ¿por qué?" (Yea, and why?) His first answer was, "Porque son PNP." (Because they're PNP [Partido Nuevo Progresista, the pro-statehood party]). I wanted him to explain more so I asked, "Pero, ¿por qué inglés aqui? ¿Por qué?" (But, why English here? Why?) José shrugged and said, "No sé, yo no sé." (I don't know, I don't know.)

This excerpt reveals several important aspects about how ambient text in English is understood. José, a 13-year-old eighth grader, immediately associated English with the pro-statehood party. He politicized this public use of English. José did not think of the companies represented in the shopping center as necessarily being from the U.S. just because they used English. Rather, he saw the use of English in his community as Puerto Ricans showing their political leanings. This relationship between signage in English and politics was expressed by other participants as well, though not everyone associated it with

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the PNP. When I asked the history teacher why so many local businesses had English names, he said that it was because of colonialism. Other adult participants said that it was because English was the language of business, and in particular the language of money. These multiple interpretations of everyday English text reveal that although the text might be a normal part of life, it is not un-analyzed by these politically-savvy participants, even the youngest of whom have an opinion.

Attitudes Toward English

Throughout the course of the study, participants revealed complex and differing attitudes about the English language. These attitudes were related to the participant's age, occupation, and family language background. Depending on these factors, participants had different expectations of themselves and others in regard to English proficiency. They had different ideas about who should speak English and in what context, and they had different feelings towards the language itself. Through the attitudes that participants expressed, they also revealed how English was connected to their multiple and shifting identities. That is, English was not just connected to participants' ethnic Puerto Rican identities, but also to professional identities, including one's identity as an "educated person."

The adults in this community generally had high expectations for themselves as to what they felt their English language proficiency level *should* be. Adult participants commented over and over again that they were not satisfied with their English abilities, that they thought they should speak English better then they actually did. One day in the library as I was prepping to teach the Saturday conversational English class, Sra. Torres asked me about the level of the class. I answered her:

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"Pues, ve y si no te gusta, no te tienes que quedar." (Well, come, and if you don't like it, you don't have to stay.) Sra. Torres' eyes widened with a look of indignation. "Si me tengo que quedar!...Me siento bien limitada. ¿Y sabes por qué? Porque yo me siento mal, porque los niños pueden preguntarme algo [sobre inglés] y yo no sé. Y soy maestra; debo saber." (Of course I have to stay! I feel really limited. And you know why? Because I feel bad because the kids will ask me something [about English] and I don't know. And I'm a teacher; I should know.)

Sra. Torres imposed on herself a certain standard of English expertise based on the fact that she was a teacher. She did not want to come to the Saturday class because she did not want to reveal her level of English to students who were also taking the class. As an educational professional, she had the expectation for herself of a certain level of English expertise (expressed here in the use of the strong wording "tengo que"/*I have to stay in the class*). She shows here how she is almost embarrassed by not being able to answer student questions about English. This self-imposed standard of English expertise is directly related to her perception of herself as a teaching professional (*I'm a teacher; I should know.*) and implicitly to her identity as an educated person. Here, then, English expertise corresponds not with her ethnic identity (Puerto Rican or not), but with her professional identity as "teacher."

Sra. Torres imposed this expectation on herself, but other participants, both adults and kids, imposed an expectation of English language expertise on others. Adults imposing this standard often had a fairly high level of proficiency themselves (they would call themselves bilingual), while interestingly kids who imposed these standards usually had a low level of English proficiency (they would not call themselves bilingual). When a

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memo announcing the mandatory attendance of English teachers at a reading workshop was circulated, Rita, the elementary English teacher, and María pointed out to me the errors in subject/verb agreement that the memo contained, remarking, "Y ese es el supervisor de inglés!" (*And this is the English supervisor!*) The expectation of these teachers was that written text in English be free of grammatical errors, especially if it came from an authoritative source like the district supervisor of English. There is an expectation of English expertise based on one's professional identity as "English supervisor."

Kids also had a sense of what was an acceptable level of English proficiency and imposed these standards on others. For these young adults, though, it was sometimes their self-perceived lack of English expertise that tended to cause them to judge other's use of English. This was poignantly captured in this interaction between Pedro, Migdaly, and me. Pedro was an expert English user who was unusual because he had taken great pains to teach himself English using video games, cable TV, and a notebook to write down words that he did not understand, which he later asked his mom about. Migdaly, on the other hand, was a novice English user who, unlike Pedro, never used English with me. This excerpt took place during the eighth graders' free period in the library:

> Pedro was entertaining himself by making up wacky English sentences like "I like to eat with my dog" and "Dog food tastes good." I just kept nodding skeptically as he told me these sentences in English. Migdaly could clearly see the look of confusion on my face at some of Pedro's sentences, which I admit I did not entirely understand. She snapped at him, "¡Si quieres hablar inglés, búscate un gringo!" (If you want to speak English, go find yourself a gringo!) Pedro ignored her. She continued, "¡Búscate un papel, escríbelo, y dilo!" (Go find some paper,

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write it, and then say it!) Pedro finally turned to her and snapped back, "¡No soy tú que no habla inglés!" (I'm not you who doesn't speak English!)

Implicit here in Migdaly's suggestion to *"Go look for some paper!"* is that one should not speak English unless one is confident that one is speaking correctly. Her advice to write it down first is a commonly used strategy of beginning language learners. Pedro's jab back, *"I'm not you who doesn't speak English!"* reaffirms his value of spoken English and his fearlessness in trying the language (which was always apparent to me). Here, Pedro explicitly identifies as English speaker, at the same time constructing Migdaly's identity as non-English-speaker.

Not only are Migdaly's standards of spoken English proficiency high (she cannot tolerate Pedro's English experiments), she also reveals her attitude about English use in the Spanish-speaking environment of the library, which for her is explicitly connected to ethnic identity. Constructing me as Puerto Rican, she advises Pedro to *"Go look for a gringo"* if he wants to speak English, because, in her eyes, a (perhaps mono-lingual English speaking) gringo would be an acceptable conversational partner in English in that context, but I (as a Spanish speaker) clearly was not. Migdaly's comment implicitly states, "We are Puerto Ricans and we speak Spanish unless we have to speak with a monolingual English speaker." Thus, Pedro annoys Migdaly precisely because he is breaking two unspoken rules: (1) don't speak English if you can't do it well, and (2) don't speak English with other Puerto Ricans. Here the connection between language and identity is different for different participants. For Pedro, speaking English was no threat to his Puerto Rican identity, and thus he can speak it in public and in what is usually a Spanish-only setting (the school library). For Migdaly, Pedro was betraying his ethnic identity as Puerto Rican by speaking English, and deserved to be reprimanded for it.

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This attitude about who should speak English and in what context was also held among adults in the school. I had seen Lico, the physical education teacher who grew up in the Bronx, many times at school before he ever spoke English with me. He revealed himself as an English speaker one day quite unexpectedly, surprising not only me but his colleagues as well:

Lico came into the library, as usual wearing his brightly-colored baseball cap embroidered with the Puerto Rican flag. It was the afternoon of the Agricultural Fair, and Rita was showing María, Mari, the kindergarten teacher, and me the green and yellow cockatiel she had just bought for her granddaughter. We all chatted in Spanish. I had a half-empty bottle of water on my desk, and an empty one as well. Lico said to me, in English straight from the Bronx, "You drink a lot of water? Save these bottles for me, OK?" The kindergarten teacher and Rita gasped in Spanish, "Vaya, mira quien habla inglés!" (*Well, look who speaks English!*), nodding their heads with eyes wide, teasing him.

Lico was breaking the rule about public use of spoken English, much like Pedro in the preceding excerpt. To walk into a situation where everyone was speaking Spanish and interrupt a conversation with an English request publicly displayed Lico's English proficiency, and these teachers thought he was showing off. But because Lico was a return migrant, he felt equally comfortable in both languages, and later told me that he often spoke English with his friends. English was part of his identity as return migrant, and he felt no conflict speaking English with English speakers, even in a Spanish-speaking environment. However, as is shown in these excerpts, different participants have different rules for public use of spoken English. In fact, the incident above was not the first time that Lico had been called out on his public use of English. He also told me that some

guys in a bar tried to pick a fight when they thought that Lico and his friend were talking in English about them. Thus, the consequences for the public display of a multilingual Puerto Rican identity are sometimes much more serious than the teasing jeers of your colleagues. This is particularly hard for return migrants who are bilingual. Lico told me that he liked speaking English, and he wished that Puerto Ricans would get over their "complex" about "el difícil."

Not all participants, however, would say that they liked English. In fact, one's personal feelings toward the language tended to vary by one's family background. Lico, who lived and worked in the U.S. for various periods of time, and who was very comfortable speaking English, liked the language. Many of the participants who had never lived in the States or who had had a traumatic immersion experience tended to not like the language. One young participant, Dalia, a sixth grader, expressed her opinion about English to me in an impromptu discussion after a church reception for a newly ordained priest:

> I saw Dalia sitting on the raised platform in the reception room, waiting for her dad to finish with the clean up, and I went to ask her how the pruebas [the Puerto Rican standardized tests] went. She said that she liked the math and thought it was easy, but said she did badly on the English. "Yo odio el inglés," she said. (I hate English.) She then went on to tell me about her cousin who is "gringo," "nació gringo." (He was born gringo.) She explained that her aunt, this cousin's mother, has had four children by different husbands and that one of the husbands was gringo. She also told me about her other cousin who lives in the U.S., and grew up and went to school there. "El habla inglés," she said. (He speaks English.) "Pero, el habla español?" I asked. (But does he speak Spanish?) She

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said "si" with a nod. This discussion of her cousins apparently gave her pause, and she refined her previous statement, saying, "Quiero a gente que habla inglés, pero odio el inglés." (I love people who speak English, but I hate English.) She went on to say, "Pues, no es que odio el inglés, yo uso algunas palabras a veces—pero solemente algunas palabras." (Well, I don't hate English, I use a few words now and then—but only a few words.)

Dalia's feelings about English are wrapped up in her current situation in life as a sixth grader who has to take mandatory English classes and mandatory tests in English, which she does not like. At other times, Dalia told me about how she was failing English, which may have had something to do with her current dislike for the language. However, Dalia's feelings towards English have a life outside of school, because English is the language of some of her cousins. English is not just a subject in school, it is intertwined with social relationships and identity. This complex relationship with English is not lost on this sixth grader, who, as she talks with me, a *gringa* English speaker, re-evaluates her initial hatred toward the language. She does this perhaps as she realizes just how many people in her family speak English, or perhaps when she realizes that she may offend me by saying she hates English. Clearly something social makes her backtrack and correct herself, making clear that she doesn't hate English *speakers*. In fact, she has been known to use a few words now and then—but just a few. Dalia is carefully walking a line, expressing her affinity for English speakers but being clear that she herself does not fall into that category. She carefully constructs her linguistic identity as not an English speaker, not a *gringa*, just a user of words.

The above excerpts illustrate the complex link between language and identities in the community. Zentella (1997a) asserts that "the identity of monolingual English

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speakers is not an issue of debate among NYPRs [New York Puerto Ricans] as much as it is in Puerto Rico. Island and east coast communities would not agree if asked to decide whether someone...who did not speak and understand Spanish was a Puerto Rican. Nearly a century of struggle to preserve the Spanish language in Puerto Rico provokes many island Puerto Ricans—particularly political activists and academics—to argue that they are not" (p. 53). Jorge Duany's more recent study of Puerto Rican identity confirms Zentella's sense that it is the politicians and academics (ironically most of whom are bilingual) who assert that native-like Spanish is an essential part of Puerto Rican identity (Duany, 2002). The view from the ground in Ramona, however, reveals that non-native Spanish speakers and even monolingual English speakers could indeed be considered Puerto Rican, precisely because participants had cousins, aunts, and uncles who fit into those categories.

During the eighth graders' free hour after lunch, I was walking to the soda machine with José. We ran into Pedro and Jocelyn hanging out near the machine. I said something with a grammatical error. Jocelyn turned to José and said, "Mi primo es así, habla mal." (My cousin is like that; he talks badly.) Misunderstanding, I think that Jocelyn is commenting on Pedro's use of bad words. "Sí, siempre esta usando palabaras malas." (Yes, he is always using bad words.) Jocelyn said, "Nó, nó las palabras, habla mal." (No, not the words, he talks badly.) Finally understanding, I admitted, "Si, soy así. Hablo mal." (Yes, I'm like that. I talk badly.) José comments, "Pero los Puertoriqueños hablan mal. No sabemos español." (But Puerto Ricans talk badly. We don't know Spanish.) Appalled, I quickly correct him, "Nó, nó es verdad. Cada país tiene su manera de hablar." (No, that's not true. Every country has its way of talking.) José gives me

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a look as if he doesn't believe me. We are distracted by Pedro violently shaking a closed soda can, and the conversation shifts.

Jocelyn had talked to me on various occasions about her cousins who lived in the U.S. and had recently returned to live in Puerto Rico. Unlike Dalia, she never called them "gringos;" they were always Puerto Ricans, although English was their first language and they "talked badly" in Spanish. For Jocelyn, I was just like one of her cousins. My limited Spanish alone did not reveal my *gringa* identity because the relationship between language and identity for Jocelyn was not Spanish=Puerto Rican, English=gringo. José also accepts my "bad Spanish" as just another part of the "bad Spanish" of all Puerto Ricans, revealing his beliefs (unfortunately taught in school and though the media) that the features of his dialect of Spanish are "wrong" in comparison with other dialects of Spanish throughout the world. Through this move (José's assertion that all Puerto Ricans talk badly), he includes me and my novice Spanish within the circle of what is "Puerto Rican."

How people perceived me as Puerto Rican or not also gives insight into the relationship between language and identity. When I first came to the school, María introduced me as someone who came to the school to improve her Spanish. Having introduced me as such to the janitor, he asked me where I was from. I replied, "Nueva Jersey." He then asked, "Pero, ¿eres puertorriqueña, no?" (*But, you're Puerto Rican, right?*) I said no. This interaction was typical. It shows how it is not unusual for a Puerto Rican coming from New Jersey to need to work on his or her Spanish (as Jocelyn's cousins did). As my Spanish improved, I was often told that I was "Puertorriqueña ya!", as the lunch ladies remarked after hearing me recount the story of how I met my husband and how I learned Spanish. This implies (albeit jokingly) that Puerto Rican identity may be

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permeable. In other words, with good enough Spanish, even a gringa could, potentially, become Puerto Rican. Thus, though my bad Spanish did not stop people from assuming that I was Puerto Rican, once they knew I was gringa, my good Spanish led people to remark that I was "casi puertorriqueña, ya" (almost Puerto Rican already).

<div align="center">Constructing an English Speaker Identity</div>

At the same time that I was constructing my own identity (and being constructed by others) as a Spanish speaker, as Puerto Rican, as gringa, I was observing how participants constructed their own identity as English speakers (or not) through language. The next section explores this identity construction in three focal participants. I look at how these participants carefully used language to position themselves as English speakers, and how this linguistic identity interacted with their ethnic identity as Puerto Ricans.

José: Constructing an English Language Identity

As I mentioned above, José was proud of his emerging identity as English speaker. He manifested this pride by comparing his English proficiency to that of others, including his teachers. Particularly, José valued American English pronunciation and strove to mimic the way that I sounded speaking English. He would often ask me to repeat and slow down, then practice what I said, asking for my feedback on his pronunciation. In addition, José would put down the English of those around him, particularly in regards to pronunciation. For example, as Pedro chattered away with me in English, telling me about his favorite video game or Cartoon Network show, José would interrupt to pull me aside and comment on Pedro's pronunciation. He would comment on Pedro's flap "r" (as in "friend") and then show me that he could pronounce the same word with the English "r." José would also tell me specific examples of how his teacher mispronounced English words (/buk/ for "book"). He was eager to one-up those around him, and

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though he could not yet do that syntactically or lexically, he could do it phonetically, and so stressed this aspect of his English ability and insulted the pronunciation of other people.

José's concern with comparing himself to other English speakers also showed itself in his participation in the Saturday community English class. Though he would put down the English of others to me privately, he clearly was shy about revealing his proficiency in the Saturday class, which placed him in an environment of students with many different English levels, many of whom were experts or nearly so. In these situations, José would close off and often refuse to answer questions or even try classroom activities. Though he would try speaking English with me one-on-one, he was reluctant to go public with his newly forming identity as English speaker.

Lico: Fitting in Again, Defending Return Migrant Identity

Judging a book by its cover, and accepting a traditional nationalist rejection of English, one would never imagine that Lico was an English speaker. His baseball cap, which was a standard part of his daily "uniform" as gym teacher, proudly bore the Puerto Rican flag embroidered across the front, seemingly wrapping his head in patriotism. But for Lico, there was absolutely no conflict between this outward display of Puerto Rican nationalism and his identity as English speaker. Lico was a classic example of the return migrant, who negotiated two overlapping but different cultures (the U.S. and Puerto Rico). Proud to be Puerto Rican, he also longed to go back to the States, but could not move his family there because his wife was afraid of how she and the kids would adapt to the English environment. He wanted his children to speak English, and told me about a time when he helped his daughter with an English project:

"She had to tell a story in English, but she told me, Papi, I don't speak English! I sat down with her and the tape recorder. I would say a sentence, then she would repeat it after me, then she would repeat it onto the tape. When we finished and played the tape, she was surprised. Papi, is that me speaking English?"

Lico's ability and desire to move deftly between two linguistic systems was part of his identity, and he wanted that for his children as well.

María: English, Made in Puerto Rico

On my first day in María's library, I noticed the many colorful banners hung around the room. The text on those banners offered motivational sayings, some in Spanish and some in English. When I commented on the English, María simply turned to me and said, "Somos bilingües" (We are bilingual.). For María, this meant a kind of taken-for-granted notion that Puerto Ricans can manage both languages. She often pointed to language policy (Spanish and English are co-official languages) as an explanation for why this was true. Unlike Lico, who had lived in the U.S., María had never had an immersion experience. Her English, as she said with pride, was "Hecho in Puerto Rico" (Made in Puerto Rico). Speaking English was not a threat to María's identity as Puerto Rican for different reasons than for Lico. For María, negotiating English was just part of life in Puerto Rico. Particularly with her interest in and skill for technology, María dealt with English text as part of her everyday life. She was taught in school or taught herself to understand and use English, and she expected the same from everyone else. "We are bilingual," as a people.

As I was preparing text to put on my wedding favors, María's identity as bilingual became particularly clear. I was asking for her advice on how to write the Spanish onto a bilingual card that read: "¡Salud! Cathy and Guillermo, July 2, 2005. Cheers!" I was

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asking her if it made sense, when she appeared annoyed. "Somos bilingües. No tienes que escribirlo en español." (We are bilingual. You don't have to write it in Spanish.) I thought I was being open-minded by including both languages, but María took it as an insult to the Puerto Rican guests, who clearly could understand a text in English as simple as the one I had written. María took offense because she was proud of the ability of Puerto Ricans to negotiate "los dos," unlike monolingual Americans.

Conclusion

When talking about language and identity, most researchers have focused on connections between language and ethnic identity. This is likely because until recently, linguistic knowledge has been produced in "center" communities (i.e. the U.S., Great Britian) with a taken-for-granted model of one group=one language. Work with Puerto Ricans in New York (Fishman, 1971; Zentella, 1997a) and with other groups throughout the world (Canagarajah (1999; 2005) in Shri Lanka, Bhatt (2005) in India, to name a very few) shows that multiple languages and language varieties are closely linked to the multiple identities of people living their everyday lives. Indeed, most work with Puerto Ricans on the island explores connections between language and one kind of identity: ethnic. My data show that language is not only related to ethnic identity, but also professional identity and the meaning of "being educated."

When I did look closely at the relationship between language and ethnic identity, I found that the relationship was tenuous. Language was related to identity differently for different people. For example, María, Lico, and Pedro accepted English as part of their Puerto Rican identity. Migdaly and Dalia, however, saw English as the domain of "gringos," and wanted no part of it in their identity toolkit. Jocelyn and José found varying levels of Spanish and English proficiency to be acceptable for Puerto Ricans, with

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no threat to Puerto Rican identity. The relationship between language and ethnic identity, then, is complex. Participants judged this relationship based on a myriad of factors, including family relationships, which included relationships with English-dominant relatives, and previous experience with English teaching in school (Dalia didn't like English because she didn't like English *class*). Which factors were driving participants' beliefs about language and identity during the observed events is difficult to pick apart. Was it the context, the other people in the context, their previous experiences with English, or something different altogether? The relationship between language and identity is tenuous and varied, and, like identity, we can't reliably pin it down. Though politicians and academics may play up the importance of Spanish to Puerto Rican identity, participants in Ramona never took language to be the only factor in determining one's ethnic identity. They operated in a multilingual Puerto Rico far more complex than that posited by those who would seek to gain from making a strict Spanish/Puerto Rican identity connection.

This multilingual world included English text as part of everyday life. This is a major difference between life in Ramona and life in monolingual English communities in the U.S., but I suspect that it is not very different from life in many former American and British colonies in Africa, Asia, and throughout the world. The dominance of English-speaking countries in the production of goods and services in the globalized economy means that English text enters into everyday life quite easily. The entrance of non-English text into home, work, and public domains is not nearly as prevalent in "center" communities, despite the great influx of foreign-language speakers into the metropolis in our post-colonial age. In the U.S., for example, non-English signage is relegated to "ethnic" communities or the occasional restaurant or shop. English speakers in suburbia

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rarely if ever encounter text in a language other than English that is not translated. But everyday—*everyday*—the people in Ramona wake up and turn their coffee pot "on." They microwave their lunch on "high." They go to work and school where they "start" their computer and "print" documents. The influx of English text into this Spanish-language environment is one-way. Though Spanish is clearly growing in the U.S., it will be a very long time before we can say that every English speaker in the U.S. encounters Spanish text everyday. But that is exactly what I am saying about life in Ramona: everyone in Ramona interacts with English text everyday.

The linguistic consequences of these interactions are also seen in the data presented here. Words that enter the environment as text ("play," "google") are taken up and used by the community. Some of these words replace or stand-in for Spanish words ("play"), while others become "Spanishified" ("google"). English words are re-made into Spanish words ("periferales," "refrescar"). It should not be surprising that words enter from the metropolis and are completely re-made by the periphery (populated with their own intentions, to use Bakhtin (1981)). But again, the direction of this appropriation is one way, from English into Spanish. The entrance of English text into the environment does not go by without participants noticing it. In fact, this "seeping in" of English is being carefully watched by community members, who show their linguistic savvy in their interpretations of this entrance of English (that English users are pro-statehood, that English enters because of colonialism, that English is the language of money). Participants of all ages carefully monitored and developed opinions about these linguistic changes, not taking them for granted or being lulled by the purported power of English.

This chapter was meant to give a sense of the vibrant and multilingual linguistic life of Ramona. We have seen the types of English text that participants interact with

everyday, their feelings about these texts, their varying attitudes towards English, and how English is differently connected to different identities for different people. Against this backdrop, the next chapter explores more focused use of English text as it outlines the various literacy practices observed in this community.

CHAPTER 4: ENGLISH LITERACY PRACTICES IN A SPANISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

Titi and I were sitting in the living room. It was unusually cool for January, made colder by the metal Miami blinds that never really shut out the damp night breeze. We were watching a jazz concert on Puerto Rico's public television station, TuTV, when a red bar appeared on the top of the screen with scrolling text in white. *The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood warning for Ceiba, PR, and Fajardo, PR, beginning at 7:15 PM and ending at 10:15 PM.* A warning in English. I glanced at Titi to see if she noticed the announcement, which scrolled across the screen several times over a period of about thirty seconds, then disappeared. She did not comment on the floods nor on the English in the announcement. Ten minutes passed by and the same red bar appeared with the same warning for another town. That time, though, the sound of the jazz program was interrupted with a staticy verbal announcement read by a man speaking in official-sounding Puerto Rican "announcer" Spanish. As the English text scrolled by, he said, "El servicio nacional de meterología ha emitido un aviso de inundaciones repentinas para los siguientes pueblos en efecto hasta las 7:15 PM: Ceiba, PR and Fajardo, PR." The same voice then repeated the announcement in Spanish-influenced English. The text of the announcement never appeared in Spanish. Titi sat quietly, a small woman dwarfed by her big blue recliner. This multilingual, multidialectical announcement didn't make her flinch.

If you are a monolingual English speaker living in the U.S., imagine a flood warning from The National Weather Service scrolling across the top of your television screen in Spanish. Would this seem unusual to you? How many outraged calls would

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come in to the National Weather Service? What would the English Only movement say? As I observed English literacy practices in rural Ramona, Puerto Rico, I kept trying to "flip the script," imagining what would happen if the same English text appeared in Spanish in the mostly monolingual English neighborhoods where I had always lived in the U.S. Quickly I realized that what was linguistically "normal" in multilingual, multidialectical Ramona was totally different than the "one community, one language" model assumed by many sociolinguists and educational language policy makers (see Fishman, 1971). In the previous chapter, I explained how participants lived in an environment saturated by English text, that they saw (and probably touched) English text every day in their homes on appliances and product labels, and in public spaces on signs. But just because English text was present does not mean that it was read. In this chapter, I focus on English literacy practices, or regularized use of English text in the community. I show the range of English literacy practices in the community and different members' differing participation in those practices. I describe English texts large and small, and talk around text in Spanish, English, and mixtures of the two. I will paint a picture, based on the data, of a community where certain English texts are considered normal, and are used without comment, and where other English texts are managed with or without the help of more English proficient community members. I will show how almost all community members participated in English literacy practices—regardless of their English expertise level—but that this participation was different for different people. Exploring the reasons behind these differences, I hope to contribute to current thinking on colonial languages.

What is Normal? English Literacy Practices in a Heteroglossic World

The opening vignette to this chapter is an example of English text in the environment that is not "noticed." In other words, the presence of a flood warning in

English was unusual and interesting only to me, an outsider specifically tuned in to language issues. One of the goals of this ethnographic case study was to describe "what is normal" when it comes to the use of English text in this Spanish-speaking community. Hegemony, in the Gramscian (Hoare, 1978) sense, is the imposition of one group's "normal" as normal for everyone. Researchers of colonial language are now beginning to present different "normals" in order to counter the hegemony of "one group, one language" (Canagarajah, 2005). As I observed community members interact with and talk about English text, I noticed that participants expected certain texts to be in English, although the talk around the text was in Spanish, as in this excerpt about the day a group of teachers from the high school gave a presentation in the library to the ninth graders.

> The presentation was about the different curricular tracks available to the students, and the requirements for graduation (how many years of history, math, etc.). Mari, the other librarian's assistant, and I were sitting where we could hear the presentation but also chat with each other in low voices. Talking about the accounting track, a young female teacher said, "Los libros son en inglés—pero las clases son en español, por supuesto!" (The books are in English. But the classes are in Spanish, of course!) Mari commented, "Es cierto. Todos los libros para contabilidad son en inglés" (That's true. All the books for accounting are in English.)

The teacher's comment that, "The textbooks are in English—you talk in Spanish, of course!" seemed to capture the attitude of participants about text in English at school: That it was something normal, even natural to read in one language and talk about the reading in another. This use of text in English was so regularized in Ramona that it was second nature, to this teacher at least, indicated by her use of "of course." Any

participant who had gone to college (like Mari), knew that in the university it was a regular practice of professors to assign text in English and talk about it in Spanish. Particularly in certain fields, such as accounting, reading English text was expected as part of work in that field. Thus, it was expected to read a textbook in English and talk around the text in Spanish.

In interaction with technology, English text was expected as well. Specifically, participants were adept at navigating the Windows PC interface in English, which involved clicking English text in menus (such as "start," "all programs"), and making choices among selections in English ("print" or "cancel"). Though some of these choices are obvious without reading (the text "start" on the main menu labels a large green button that graphically indicates where to begin), reading is required for navigation, especially of warning messages that often present text and then ask the user to click "OK" or "cancel" in response to that text. It was made clear to me just how normal this use of English text was when the agriculture teacher sat down to use a computer whose language preference had been set to Spanish.

The teachers and I were gathered around Rita, the elementary school English teacher's, computer in the back of the library, where the agriculture teacher and another young dark-haired female teacher were looking up job announcements on the internet. Apparently all the non-permanent staff had to re-apply for their jobs every year and that is what they were doing. Rita's computer was the only one in the library with the Windows interface in Spanish. The agriculture teacher was trying to print the web page he had found, and he faced the choice "aceptar" or "cancelar" (accept or cancel the print job). He couldn't figure out what to do, it seemed, because he paused for a long time. María, who had been looking over his shoulder and helping him along the way,

commented with a laugh that he couldn't figure out what to do because it wasn't in English. The agriculture teacher didn't comment. María told him to press "aceptar." He did so and continued with his work.

When a text that was expected to be in English appeared in Spanish, it confused this teacher. This shows just how taken-for-granted the use of text in English was. In fact, I heard María and her colleagues at a librarian's technology training workshop complain about computer interfaces set in Spanish and also Spanish language keyboards (which include a key for "ñ" among other characters). They said that they were so accustomed to using the English version that the Spanish version actually made navigation of the technology more difficult, despite the fact that Spanish was their first language.

These two excerpts about types of texts that are expected to be in English partially reveal what was "normal" with regards to English for this community. In certain domains of social life, such as in education, English text was quite common. And certain media of communication, such as the computer, were expected to be in English. Next I will turn to examples of English literacy practices, focusing on contrasts in participation.

Differing Participation in Differing English Literacy Practices

In my four months of data collection, I saw English literacy practices that ranged from small, incidental uses of English text (a 7th grader picked up a washcloth at a yard sale that was embroidered with the English word "Sunday;" as she inspected it, her friend said, "domingo"), to lengthy, academic reading and writing (a teacher studying for her master's read and summarized articles in English). In my analysis of English literacy events, I was looking for the factors that might influence participants' differing "linguistic toolkits," and thus their different uses of English text, factors such as gender, age, return

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migration, and military service. I expected to find that people who were English experts would use English text more, but actually I found that even English novices participated in many different kinds of English literacy practices, especially if these novices were also young people. In fact, I found that community members' participation in English literacy practices varied most by two factors: age and English expertise.

Variation by English Expertise

As described in the previous chapter, participants had varying amounts of English language expertise, from novice to expert. This English expertise affected more *how* people participated in English literacy practices than *whether they did or not* or *what kinds of texts* they used. In other words, community members with varying levels of expertise participated in English literacy practices, but *the participation looked different depending on English expertise*. Also, participants of varying amounts of English expertise used (or attempted to use) *the same types of texts*, but had different strategies for doing so.

The following excerpts illustrate these findings by looking at how different people participated in a particular English literacy practice: filling out online forms written in English. Filling out English forms of all kinds was a very common practice in the community. Many of these forms (particularly paper forms) were filled out to communicate with bureaucratic institutions such as the Federal Student Loan Program and the IRS. The online forms discussed below, however, were filled out for interpersonal communication (setting up email or singles ad accounts) and for work (getting free library supplies).

José, the eighth grade novice English user, was a huge fan of popular music. Though his most fervent obsessions changed about every four to six weeks, they included Britney Spears, Jocelyn López, and Gwen Stephani. For the first two months that I was

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at the school, the internet was up and running (in March it went down and never came back up) and kids often enjoyed their free time surfing the internet. I had watched José struggle to fill out the yahoo.com form to get an email account in the very early days of data collection (before I knew his name).

He asked María and me for help with almost every line of the form. We had to fill out the form quite a few times in order to successfully get the account. When he finally got the account and logged in, he attempted to write a fan email to Jocelyn López. The email was in Spanish. As he filled out the email (which is a form in itself), he asked me in Spanish what to write on the "subject" line, and later what button to press to send it. On another day, I observed José on the computer trying to surf the internet. The following excerpt shows a fairly typical interaction on the internet for José.

> José was trying to open his Yahoo account, but he couldn't. He either can't remember the password or is typing something wrong, so he can never log in. He gave up, and started looking for J-lo sites. He couldn't find anything, so he tried typing in the address, "grami.com." Unsure of himself, he asked me, "¿Cómo escribe?" (How do you spell it?) I wrote for him on a piece of paper, "grammys.com." He loaded the page and then asked me where to click to "ver todo" (See everything). I told him to click on "gallery" so that he could see some photos (though I think what he really wanted to see was the program itself, which wasn't there that I could tell.) He clicked around for a while, nothing really grabbing his attention. Then he clicked on "Latin academy," then on "en español." Text came up explaining the Latin academy.

José had difficulty navigating internet forms in English and his frustration was clear when he gave up saying, "Ah, I don't like it!" When a form called for him to supply text in

order to move forward towards his goal of sending an email or viewing a webpage, his lack of English expertise trips him up. Some of these bumps along the road to his communicative goal were not only English problems. His trouble navigating web forms also seemed to be related to his unfamiliarity with the genre (he visually did not know where to click to send, he did not quite understand the purpose of the "subject" line). However, some problems were specifically English related, such as misspelling key words like "grammy." Regardless of the origin of the problem, José employed strategies for reaching his communicative goals. Whenever he got to a place where he could not go forward without help, he turned to me (or María) for assistance. José's novice English did not completely prevent him from participating in English literacy practices that were important to him. However, he participated differently than others who were English experts because he needed the help of others. He did get frustrated, but this frustration did not keep him from repeatedly trying to navigate the web in English, which he got much better at as time went on.

Eugenio was a leader in the ninth grade class and president of the library club. Though still learning, Eugenio was well on his way to being an expert English user. We would have short conversations in English, and he enjoyed telling me about his family's plans for a trip to Disneyworld in English. Unlike José, Eugenio rarely asked for my help when using the internet. Not only was he good at the English language part of internet use, he also seemed comfortable with the different types of texts on the internet and the methods for navigating those texts. I never saw him get frustrated or flustered while using the computer. And he used the computer a lot in his free time. One day I came upon him in the library and he told me, in English, that he was signing up for a new email address with the name "crazy_kid." He said that he had put the settings of his email

account in English too, and when I asked him why, he said "to practice my English." I asked him what he wanted the email address for, and he said for "everything."

Later that week, as I was working on the computer, I noticed Eugenio filling out an online form in English on the computer next to mine.

> This time he was filling out a profile at americansingles.com. He was on the computer to my right, and I was doing some work at the computer at the left, but with an eye on what he is doing. He would read out loud to me in English the different parts of the form, then fill it in, which involved selecting toggle buttons to check off different options, such as "seeing movies" from a list of favorite pastimes. A few times he asked me for help, but most of the time he was just reading to me, and then thinking out loud the answers to the questions. When he had to write, he would write in Spanish. I asked him why he didn't write in English and he kind of gave me a look as if to say, "Come on, are you kidding?" Eugenio is 15 years old, in 9th grade, and though I kept telling him that he was too young for the website, the librarian knew what he was doing and didn't stop him. His code name on the website was "crazy_kid."

In contrast to José, Eugenio navigated web forms smoothly. He saw internet use as a language learning experience. However, as he negotiated the form for the singles website, he chose to read the English and respond in Spanish. As he read to me the parts of the form, he was doing so more to share with me than to ask me for help. Unlike José, he did not need my coaching to navigate the (rather complex) web form. The help I gave him was incidental. Thus, Eugenio's participation in the practice of filling out online forms was distinct from José's. However, both young men participated in this practice.

The final English form literacy event shows the practice in a very different context. This event took place in the same librarian's technology training workshop mentioned in the last chapter. The workshop leader was showing participants a website where they could fill out a form and receive resource cards that gave guidelines for finding certain information on the web (about health, education, etc.). All the librarians wanted to receive the free cards and were filling out the online form.

> A young librarian, who was sitting to my right, called the workshop leader over while looking at the blank on the screen labeled "# of items." She asked the workshop leader, "¿Qué pongo aquí?" (What do I put here?) The workshop leader responded, "El número de tarjetas." (The number of cards.) The librarian nodded, saying, "Ah! El número de tarjetas." (Oh! The number of cards.) Then the librarian asked about the blanks labeled, "How do you plan to use these materials?" and "Comments." The workshop leader translated exactly: "¿Cómo va a usar los materials y algún commentario." (How are you going to use these materials and some comments.)

Like José, this teacher knew how to use available resources to accomplish her communicative goal. She easily negotiated the first part of the English form (her name, address, etc.), but when she was unsure she asked and got immediate help. Like José, her English proficiency level did not prevent her from participating in the practice.

Variation by Age

In the above excerpts, it should be noted that young people were filling out forms in order to facilitate interpersonal communication, such as sending email to a friend or to a fan website, or subscribing to an online personals service. The adults, however, were filling out English forms at work in order to get materials to use at work. This is one

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example of the major differences in the English literacy practices of young people and adults in this community. Young people used English text for interpersonal communication such as flirting, sustaining friendships, gossiping, getting attention, and general social bonding. They also used English text for entertainment, including playing video games and reading pop star websites. Adults, on the other hand, used English text to interact with bureaucracy, such as the IRS, or to take care of their health, such as reading medical referral letters. They also used it for work and school. Though some adults did use English text as part of entertainment, such as reading instructions for a craft project, using English text for entertainment among adults was rare. In this section, I will analyze in detail the social use of English text among young participants in order to understand this clear difference in the English literacy practices of young people and adults.

Young people's literacy practices. Young novice and expert English users alike used English for purposes very different from those of their adult counterparts. Particularly, these young people used *writing* in English for informal interpersonal communication, entertainment, and personal expression. This was very different from adults, who produced little English text outside of school or interacting with bureaucracy. As will be shown in the excerpts below, these uses of English text by young people had something intrinsically young about them. In other words, they were literacy practices characteristic of youth culture. The interesting thing, then, was that these practices were occurring in English, the *second* language of all the young participants.

We have seen José participate in many literacy practices described here. Though he was a novice English user, he was not a novice at flirting, a skill which he was practicing earlier than his other eighth-grade friends. Ana was a sweet, freckle-faced

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seventh-grader that had caught the attention of many of the eighth-grade boys. José was

sitting at one of the computers in the far corner of the library during his free hour and I

was by his side observing him. He had opened WordPad and was typing in English: I

love Jocelyn López. Ana walked up and stood behind him, looking over his shoulder at

the screen.

> José typed (in English): Ana is not... I gave him a warning look, because his
>
> favorite word is "bitch" and I am afraid that that is what is coming next. He
>
> paused, then said, "'sperate, 'sperate" (Wait, wait), looking at me, and giving me a
>
> "calm down" gesture with his hand. José continued writing: ...beautiful, because
>
> she is a beautiful woman. I exclaimed, "How nice!" José, starting to write again,
>
> announces, "Cambiando el tema." (Changing the topic.) I laughed. José wrote:
>
> Cathy is not my nothing. José turned to me and said, "¿Así?" (Like that?) I said,
>
> "Yes, but what does it mean? ¿Qué significa? Es como una poema." (What does
>
> it mean? Its like a poem. José laughed, then wrote: Cathy is very, very, very,
>
> very, very told. Again, he turned to me and said, "¿Así? ¿Cómo se escribe?"
>
> (Like that? How do you write it?) Confused, I asked him, "¿Significa alta?"
>
> (Does it mean tall?) He replied, "Sí" (Yea.) I told him "No" and he erased the
>
> "old." I spelled slowly in English, "a-l-l."

José used English text, typed on the screen, to flirtatiously communicate with both Ana

and me. By means of the typed text, he was provoking Ana and me to react. As he

typed, he flirted with breaking rules, both my language rules for him (I had warned him

several times about his over-use of the word "bitch") and social rules (threatening to insult

Ana and me). This was clearly deliberate, as José sought to calm me down both verbally

("'sperate, 'sperate"/Wait, wait) and non-verbally (with a hand gesture) as he saw me

react to his potential rule breaking. His writing English text became a performance for an audience, and José fulfilled his playful role as writer quite deliberately, announcing "cambiando el tema" (changing the topic) before he set himself to write again. Here, English text was mediating a social interaction. Why José chose to use English text for this purpose was not exactly clear. The fact that he was composing on the computer may have prompted English use, since English was the language of the computer. But English here also added to the suspense that José was trying to create in his flirty interaction. The fact that Ana had to decode was part of the teasing, and José's use of English may have been motivated by him trying to impress me. Regardless, this interaction showed the use of English text for purely social purposes.

Indeed, the English literacy practices of young participants were very social in nature. Interactions of young people huddled together around the computer were quite common, and because so many computer-mediated activities involved English text (web surfing, video games, etc.), English literacy practices developed around the computer. Pedro, an expert English user, and his friends loved to play video games. Pedro would often come into the library and tell me at length, in both Spanish and English, about video game levels, monsters, and even cartoons he watched on the Cartoon Network based on video games. At one point during the study he got the fever for the Sims, a game played by creating different characters and setting them up to live in a neighborhood where players guide them through their everyday activities and watch what happens. Pedro had decided to install the game on one of the computers at school and create characters based on me, his other teachers, and his friends.

Pedro was installing the Sims on one of the new computers. During the installation there was a Sims trivia game to play to pass the time, and Pedro and

his friend were playing it. One question was, "What is the biggest thing that you can rob from a house?" and of the three choices the answer was "couch." Another question asked "What character featured the voice talents of (a woman's name)?" The answers were "policeman," "mother," and "chef." Pedro's friend said "Mother!" and then asked me to confirm if the name was a woman's name. I said yes. The two boys read the questions out loud in English as they appeared on the screen, called out answers in English, and Pablo was in charge of the mouse so he was selecting the answers.

This English text led to group play, as friends interacted around the English trivia game together, reading out loud and calling out answers in English. Though they still asked for help (to confirm the gender of the actress's name), these participants navigated the English game quite smoothly by themselves. Though often English text on video game interfaces was quickly bypassed during play, this was a good example of English text as a critical part of the game. For these Spanish-dominant but English-expert young people, playing in English was fun.

Video games not only spawned both group and solitary play, they also, for some participants, led to more creative activity. For Lani, a quiet, smart ninth grader, video games inspired her to create her own game and aspire to be a video game developer.

Lani started our conversation in English by asking me if I was from New Jersey. I said yes, and she said that video game companies like Nintendo and others were there. I said that I didn't know but that I imagined so. She then told me that she wanted to design video games, and that she had some drawings to show me. She got up and went to her backpack and brought back a notebook. She showed me pencil drawings of about 4 different characters, 2 boys and 2 girls, in ripped punk-

like clothes. The game was called "Shadow Sword." She also showed me that she had designed a sword and the lettering of the title, and also was working on a symbol which seemed like a knot or something (she said she was still working on it). She continued flipping through the notebook. She showed me songs that she had written in English. Both of them were about sadness or unrequited love. She also showed me two poems in Spanish, about similar themes. I commented on how sad they were, and she said that it is difficult when you are in love with your best friend. She then told me that she even told him, and that he turned red and said that he just wanted to be friends. I reassured her that yes, this was difficult! Lani continued to tell me about things that she writes. She said that she is working on a novel at home. I asked her in what language and she said in Spanish, because it is easier.

Lani was an extremely creative person who drew on all of her linguistic resources in her creative endeavors. The daughter of an ex-military man, both of Lani's parents spoke both English and Spanish, and even though they spoke Spanish at home, they also taught her English. Lani wrote songs in English, as she told me, because she wanted to be a rock star, and it was easier to be a star if your songs were in English. Lani's astute assessment of popular culture led her to the conclusion that writing in English was important to reaching a wider audience, and thus getting more famous. English was also critical to video game use, as she named her videogame "Shadow Sword" in English. Although she had aspirations to publish, there was also something very private about her notebook filled with songs, drawings, and poems in two languages. She showed it to me with great care, and spoke of the emotions that led her to write. For Lani, English was part of her private life. But even in these private, creative endeavors in her notebook, Lani is true to

which languages (in her judgment) should be used for what: English for pop culture (video games and songs), Spanish for literature (poems and novels).

Adult literacy practices outside of work and school. While young people's English literacy practices involved social bonding and creative endeavors, the English literacy practices of adults were much less, well, fun. This was not a result of their English expertise as much as it was a result of their age and the responsibilities of adulthood. That is, as seen in the section above about forms, adult novice and expert English users alike participated in English literacy practices. However, the types of practices they participated in were very different from young people's because of the different responsibilities they had as adults. Below I detail two examples of adult literacy practices: reading medical referral letters and reading an instruction manual. Both were typical English literacy practices for adults in Ramona.

Mani was one of the lunch ladies at the school. She always wore capri-length pants with sneakers, a nurse's scrub top and a great big smile. I was constantly in awe of how she remained cheerful in the face of much adversity, including serious medical problems and prematurely becoming a grandmother. Mani was born in Brooklyn and grew up there until she was about 8 years old and her family returned to Puerto Rico. She told me that she did not speak English. However, I did see her read a lot of English text, including the medical referral letter that she had in her hand one day when she came to the library looking for a highlighter.

I asked her, "¿Cómo estas?" (How are you?) and she replied with a rocking hand motion and a protruding lower lip, indicating not too good. I said, "Regular?" (Just OK?) And she said yes. She had a letter in her hand. She explained in Spanish that she had to get some tests done. Referring to the letter, which was in

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English, she pointed to the phrases "thyroid scan" and "biopsy" and explained in Spanish (except for code switches on the two phrases) that she went to the doctor and had to have some tests, but there was some question as to whether it would be covered by her insurance or not. She came to find a highlighter (which she took from the carrel on my desk) to highlight these two phrases. When she was finished, she said goodbye and left.

A major difference between the health care system in Puerto Rico and in the U.S. is that in Puerto Rico patients shuffle paper work between doctors and labs personally. Patients take written referral letters and doctor's recommendations for lab tests to a laboratory and they receive the written results and must bring them to their doctors. Most of this paper work was in English, as Mani's letter was the day she came to look for a highlighter. When she appeared in the library that day, it was clear that Mani had read the letter. Though her doctor had also likely explained the contents of the letter to her in Spanish, the fact that she came to highlight certain parts of the text means that she also had read it herself. This English literacy event was part of a larger interaction with the health system bureaucracy, as Mani negotiated with her health plan to see if the tests were covered. English literacy was crucial to this interaction.

Like Mani, Nori negotiated English text as part of her normal adult responsibilities. While working with her boyfriend to repair her Toyota on a Saturday afternoon, she asked if she could look at my car manual (also a Toyota) because she had left hers at home. We leaned on my car in the driveway as she flipped through the manual, which was written in English.

Nori asked me, "¿Cómo se dice coolent [en inglés]?" (How do you say "coolent" in English?") I responded, "'Coolent' o 'antifreeze.'" Nori looked in the table of

contents and found "maintenance and care." She read the page number out loud in Spanish and flipped to that page. She paged through the section, but it didn't say how to change the fluid. She looked in the table of contents for "coolent," found a page number, and read it out loud in Spanish. Then she checked in the "a" section for "anti-freeze." It's not there. She looked back to "coolent," read the page number out loud in Spanish again, then flipped to that section. Again, what she needed doesn't appear. "Este [trabajo] es pa' mecánicos." (This [work] is for mechanics.)

Nori was an expert user of English. Although she never lived in the U.S., she had visited relatives in Pennsylvania several times and had traveled around the country with them. She had a bachelor's in accounting and had learned English very well in school. She also participated in the community English class at the school, traveling from San Juan to do so. Because of her training as an accountant, Nori used English text a lot at work. It was clear from this English literacy event that not only could she read English text, but she could navigate the car manual quite well, using both the table of contents and index to look for key words. Although she asked me how to say "coolent," which is actually a borrow from English, she was really just asking for confirmation of what she already knew, and probably would have met the same results if I had been standing there or not. Nori swiftly and deftly navigated the English car manual.

As I observed the English literacy practices of adults in Ramona, it was striking how decidedly un-fun they were. Many times reading English meant that something was wrong (a health problem, a broken-down car) or unpleasant (paying federal taxes, repaying a student loan). In contrast, reading and writing English for young people outside of class was part of social activity and youth culture. As I summarize the English

literacy practices of the community below, it is clear that English expertise was not the most important factor in participation in English literacy practices, but rather the age of participants.

A Summary of English Literacy Practices in Ramona

To summarize the English literacy practices observed in the community, below is a list of English texts used by participants and the social domains of their literacy activity while using the text. The table also indicates whether the domain included reading or writing activities. The final column indicates whether adults or young people (children and teens) participated in the literacy events of each domain.

Table 6: English Literacy Practices by Social Domain

Domain	English Text	Reading/ writing	Adults/ Young people
Clubs/organizations	Catalogue for school fundraiser, order form	Reading, writing	Both
Shopping	Catalogue for school fundraiser	Reading	Both
Entertainment	Pokemon card game, websites related to music (britneyspears.com), cars (ford.com), cartoons (thesimpsons.com), gaming (playstation.com), sports (body building), English movie subtitles, craft instructions	Reading	Both
Tool Maintenance	Toyota manual, DVD instruction screen	Reading	Adults
Interpersonal Communication	Greeting cards, email interface, online singles website form, "Don't touch" sign, messages written on the computer, "Friends forever" sign	Writing	Young people
Cooking/eating	Instructions on food products	Reading	Adults
Work	Instructions on router box; internet forms to get teaching materials; computer interface to fill out paperwork and create teaching materials; announcement of English teacher training workshop	Reading, writing	Adults
School	English diary; letter from university announcing overdue book; high school accounting textbooks; "Inglés, see you later!" on the board after English class, article review for MA program, Children's books such as "The Castle Ghost"	Reading, writing	Both
Bureaucracy/ Finances	IRS Tax Booklet, Federal Direct Loans letter	Reading, writing	Adults
Information	National Weather Service Announcements; newspaper photos with English text	Reading	Both
Health	Referral letter for thyroid scan, letter reporting results of thyroid scan	Reading	Adults
Creative writing	Songs and poetry, original video game concepts	Writing	Young people

English Literacy Practices and Age

Not only do people in Ramona live surrounded by English text (as we saw in the last chapter), they also regularly read and wrote English text. This was true across English language proficiency levels. However, an important difference in the English language literacy practices of the community is revealed by looking at the age of the participants in those practices. In the events observed that did not occur in the domain of school, writing in English among adults was restricted to filling out forms, while young people wrote many different types of English texts. Adult English writing was also limited to work (filling out forms to get free library materials) and specifically *financial* bureaucracy (IRS tax form, Federal Direct Loans application). This financial bureaucracy is conspicuously *federal*. The kinds of English writing tasks required of adult citizens of Ramona were often a result of Puerto Rico's political status as a colony.

In fact, both the reading and writing English literacy practices of adults in the community were patterned by a colonial system that is revealed when examining what texts occur in what languages. Because all goods that come into Puerto Rico must be imported from the U.S., participants read manuals and instructions in English (for example, the Toyota manual). Their interactions with all forms of bureaucracy, but particularly financial and medical bureaucracy, required reading and writing English text. Even important information such as storm warnings occurred in English (though not exclusively). Adult participants also used English text at school and at work. In short, the possibilities for English literacy practices for adults increased in those social domains that one would expect in a colonial system, those domains related to public life, where the colonial language and the local language rub up against each other. Very few English literacy practices were observed among adults in domains related to private life.

This was a major difference between the English literacy practices of adults and young people. For young participants, who did not yet have the responsibilities of public life outside of school, English literacy practices flourished in domains related to private life such as entertainment and interpersonal communication. But this finding is not unrelated to global language politics. In fact, just as adults are consuming the products exported by the metropolis, so young people are consuming the cultural products of the center, including videogames, pop music, and cartoons. As in other countries around the world, in Puerto Rico young people often look to North America to see what's cool (Phillipson, 2001). And this is not by accident; what is available to young people in terms of commodities of popular culture in Puerto Rico is North American and Puerto Rican, not global. North American pop culture is sold in stores, advertised on TV, shown in movie theatres, and piped into homes through cable. The language of these cultural imports is English.

The exciting and interesting thing, then, is the kinds of literacy practices that develop around these English imports. The English literacy practices of young people often occurred in groups, huddled around a computer. Young people also had networks of communication that involved English literacy practices. For example, if one participant went to Britney Spears' website, found a photo, and printed it in the morning, students would enter the library throughout the day to look for and print the same photo. This meant that the English literacy practice of one student could multiply throughout a day or week, with students helping each other to re-create the practice that resulted in the desired photo. Thus, the English literacy practices of young people were most often inherently social. This social interaction around English text most often occurred in Spanish, though it sometimes occurred in English with English expert participants, such

as Pedro. Thus, the kinds of social activities spawned by the English literacy practice were multilingual.

English Literacy Practices and Institutions

But why would this difference in literacy practices by age be so pronounced? One explanation surfaces when thinking about these literacy practices in terms of the institutions that they are associated with. Adult English literacy practices, particularly in writing, were often associated with government. This institution is the responsibility of adults; it is part of adult life to deal with government institutions. The institution that dominates the life of children, however, is school. This study did not include observation of classroom literacy practices, but participants did comment on them. The general opinion of kids was that English class was decidedly not fun, much like dealing with government institutions in English was not fun for adults. Thus, English use was patterned differently by age because it is wound up in institutions, and the institutions with which people interacted were different according to age.

Conclusion

Contrary to what might be expected, novice English language expertise did not prevent participation in English literacy practices in Ramona. It led to different types of participation. In addition, participation in different practices was a result of difference in life stage, and the interactions with institutions demanded of that stage, not language expertise. Whether participants would call themselves bilingual or not, they participated in English literacy practices.

I hope I have shown how English literacy practices were wound up in global capitalism, in terms of their relationship to commodities of popular culture, and in institutions, in terms of interacting with the federal government and schools. Both these

larger forces are entwined with colonialism. Take, for example, the excerpt where the

agriculture teacher is uncertain how to navigate the computer interface in English, which

illustrated how certain texts were expected to be in English. Computers are distributed

through the forces of global capitalism; they are developed, marketed, and sold by

American companies. In Puerto Rico, people have become accustomed to using the

interface in English, just as people in countries throughout the world, but colonies and

former colonies, are taught subjects such as science and math in English or other colonial

languages. The anticipated language of certain texts, then, is related to systems of

colonialism and colonial language policies.

If computers and the internet were so consistently used in English, then did use of

technology develop English proficiency? This study did not measure proficiency or

language development over time, but it can be said that technology provided authentic

materials, domains of real, communicative use of English. We know that using a

language for real communicative purposes, rather than strictly classroom-based uses,

promotes language development. But as pointed out in the previous section, this influx of

commodities of popular culture, facilitated by the internet, is not without its consequences

in terms of cultural imperialism. Good language teaching, then, would take advantage of

the community's uses of English text on the internet and the opportunities for language

development that it represents, but would focus on making students not just consumers of

media, and thus consumers of canned cultural commodities, but creators of popular

culture in its true sense—culture for and by the people.

In the next chapter, I will analyze a specific type of participation that I call

language brokering. As one might expect after reading this chapter, I found that

participants in language brokering interactions around English text knew much more

English than participants in other language brokering studies.

CHAPTER 5: LANGUAGE BROKERING AS BORDER CROSSING

Mari, my co-librarian's assistant, and I were in Walgreen's. Commenting that it was hard to find, she picked up a kit to make plaster handprints to use in her Sunday school teaching. She had been walking around with it, shopping for a while, and then came up to me with the package, pointing to some text that was written across the bottom in English. The package was a typical one. It had a white cardboard backing and a plastic bubble around the product, which was a round tin with children's handprints in different colors on the lid. Pointing to the text in the lower left hand corner of the package, she said: "Lee esto." (Read this.)

"¿Esto? ¿Qué dice aquí?" I asked. (This? What it says here?)

"Sí. Qué incluye el paquete." (Yes. What the packet includes.)
The text read in English: "Packet includes: decorative tin, plaster mix for handprints, tool for writing in plaster, label." I hedged, because truthfully I didn't have the vocabulary to answer her.

"De verdad, no se como decirte. Umm...'tin' es esa cosa." (Truly, I don't know how to tell you. Umm... 'tin' is this thing.) I tapped the tin with my fingernails. "Y también tiene la mexcla para hacer el 'plaster.'" (And it also has a mix in order to make the 'plaster.') I didn't know the Spanish word for 'plaster,' so I tried to supply a definition. "La cosa que va a mexclar con agua para hacer el 'handprint.'" (The thing that you are going to mix with water to make the 'handprint.') "Y tiene un instrumento para escribir en el 'plaster.' Para que puede escribir el nombre del nene. Y un 'label'—no sé." (And it has an instrument for writing in the 'plaster.' So that you can write the name of the kid. And a 'label'—I don't know.") I was quite frustrated with the amount of code mixing I

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had done in the process of trying to explain the list: tin, plaster, handprint, and label. 'Label' is actually borrowed from English into Spanish, so maybe that one was legal. But Mari didn't seem phased by my struggle.

"Un label. OK.," she said with a nod. (A label. OK.)

When Mari said, "Read this," she initiated a particular type of literacy practice called language brokering. Language brokering is when people (the clients) seek out particular community members (language brokers) to negotiate a text in English for them. In the excerpt above, Mari came to me knowing that the list at the bottom of the package was a list of package contents. As revealed by my code mixing and nervous hedging, my performance as language broker was questionable. I clearly lacked the vocabulary to translate the simple list for her. However, Mari seemed satisfied in the end, her head nod and "OK" indicating that her communicative goals have been met. This type of brokering interaction is very different from previous notions of language brokering where a bilingual, bicultural broker shuttles between two monolingual, monocultural clients. This chapter explores the knowledge that both broker and client bring to language brokering interactions and how this knowledge is negotiated in the process of meeting the client's communicative goals.

<center>Brokering in the Borderlands</center>

Puerto Ricans live in Anzaldúa's metaphorical borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). "The Borderlands," she writes, "are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks in intimacy" (preface). I like to think of borderlands as places where cultures (and the languages and customs that go with them) rub up against each other. This friction creates challenges for people navigating the borderlands, but it

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also leads to creative cultural production. People who negotiate border spaces therefore are not lesser than those who happily live their lives in the dominant culture; they do not have a cultural deficit. They have *more* cultural resources to draw on: theirs, the "other's," and a new set of tools that springs from the friction of having to know both.

In this chapter I will explore what it meant for participants in Ramona to "know both." As I observed life from my corner of the library, I came to realize that there was something about the particular place where I was that created a space for language brokering. I began thinking about how the Title V grant that María, the librarian, had gotten created a physical space where participants could use each other's resources to negotiate borderlands friction together. In this way, María was the queen broker. Because of her expertise and vision of what a learning space should look like, she created the opportunity for all kinds of borders to be crossed with the help of other community members, among them borders between culture, class, and age. These opportunities, as I will show, gave rise to language brokering events.

Previous Visions and Refined Definitions of Brokering

There is a limited but growing body of research on language brokering. Most of this research focuses on how bilingual children of immigrant families help their monolingual or novice-English-speaking parents negotiate life in English in the United States. For example, Vázquez, Pease-Álvarez, and Shannon (1994) describe how older children of Mexican-immigrant households are called upon to act as language brokers for their families. In one incident, Leti accompanies her mother on a doctor's visit, and although the doctor speaks a bit of Spanish and the mother has some receptive understanding of English, they depend on Leti to use her skills in both languages to facilitate the examination. The authors found that through the process of language

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brokering, the child developed her skills in both languages and her specialized skill as broker, carefully selecting what to interpret and how. Similarly, Valdés (2003) argues that young interpreters in immigrant families should be considered gifted as they develop a highly valuable and complex set of language tools in two languages. Tse (1995) found through survey research that over 90% of Latino students she studied acted as language brokers for their families at one time or another, and that most continue to do so. Her work, like that of Buriel et. al. (1998), connects language brokering to academic performance.

Definitions of language brokering in these works vary. Vázquez, Pease-Álvarez, and Shannon freely interchange the term "brokering" with "translation" and "interpretation," though their description of the practice shows that brokering is more complex than direct translation, as they show that Leti herself is negotiating her position and power as the broker. Tse defines brokers as "intermediaries between linguistically and culturally different parties" (p. 180). In all cases there is consistent focus on the brokers (always children) and their skills, invoking an image of the child shuttling between two worlds: the home culture (Spanish) and the outside world (English).

These definitions of brokering imply that there are three participants in a brokering interaction: the broker (the bilingual immigrant child), a member of the broker's family or community (such as a parent), and a representative of the outside world (such as a doctor or social worker). The immigrant families are clearly using brokering to survive on other people's turf; their circumstances as immigrants give rise to the need for brokering. However, in the case of Puerto Rico, representatives of the "outside world," i.e. the U.S., were rarely embodied; they almost always came into Ramona in the form of written text. In the brokering interactions that I saw, there were only two participants (or

groups of participants): brokers (people sought out to help with the text), and clients (community members seeking help). Both of these people (or groups) work at the task of uncovering the meaning of the English text.

In this way, the kind of interactions that I saw most resembled those studied by Orellana *et al.* (2003), though in a different context. This group of researchers also noticed that language brokering, which they call "para-phrasing," often took place around an English text. Also a study of immigrant children and their families, they position their ethnography within the field of family literacy. They found that in language brokering interactions expertise and authority were distributed among participants. Both parent and child pooled this expertise as they negotiated the English texts under question. Thus, unlike descriptions of language brokers as shuttling between two clients with mutually exclusive (or nearly so) sets of language skills, Orellana *et al.* characterize language brokers as co-constructing meaning with clients around English text.

As I will show below, I also found that knowledge in language brokering events was distributed and pooled. However, there were differences in both the setting and the participants. In this study, Puerto Ricans were negotiating English on their own turf, and thus their needs and uses for brokering were different from those of immigrant families in the U.S. Also, the participants in these events were distinctly different from any mentioned in the current research on language brokering. In Ramona, children did not necessarily know more English than their parents, as is typical in immigrant families. During the course of my study I rarely saw children brokering for adults. This was likely because I was almost always surrounded by well-educated adults, many of whom were teachers and had thus taken at least sixteen years of English course work, while children

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were still in the throws of their English education. As I will describe below, the linguistic criteria for being a language broker were very different than in previous research, where language brokers were bilingual children. In fact, I was often approached as broker though my Spanish expertise at the time was questionable.

Negotiating the Borderlands Together

In previous research, brokering was used by immigrant families as they negotiated life in a new, English-speaking country. Though they may have lived in ethnic enclaves, English was the language of school, the doctor's office, and other interactions necessary for daily life. In Ramona, in contrast, participants, whose L1 was Spanish, lived in a Spanish-speaking world. Their interactions with English most often were with written English text. As shown in the previous chapter, these texts occurred in various domains of social life, but always participants were interacting with these texts on their own "turf." When we zoom in on a particular type of English literacy practice—language brokering—it is of interest to look carefully at the setting in which the interactions took place because the context of Ramona was so very different from the contexts of previous studies.

The setting of this study, María's library-turned-community-center, played a key role in creating a safe space for border crossing. As explained earlier, it was not your typical school library. María had a different vision for how learning occurred. For her, learning was loud; it involved talking, playing and laughing. María rarely "shushed" students as they huddled together around tables of homework or around computers. Learning was physical, involving singing, dancing, and moving around. María's library was the center for special projects, including dance warm-up before the talent show. She encouraged me to use karaoke, a favorite pastime of the kids, in my after-school English

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lessons (and she had a karaoke machine in the library). Learning also took place across age groups; it was not limited to children. In the Wednesday morning community computer class, funded by the Title V grant, teaching assistants, parents, and grandparents participated, often assisted by older students who happened to be around, and sometimes by their own children. Finally, learning exploited all available resources. When I volunteered to help in the library, María saw an opportunity. When she discovered that I knew about computers and that I had experience teaching English, I was assigned to teach the Saturday English class, conduct the after school English workshop for junior high, and substitute for her as the teacher of the Wednesday morning computer class.

It was María's vision for what she wanted the library to be that drove her to write the Title V grant. When the grant was awarded, it helped her to enact her vision. She created an environment optimal for safe border crossing by bringing together people with different amounts of language expertise in both English and Spanish, different ages, and different classes. As these people crossed paths in the physical space of the library, opportunities arose for them to share knowledge. Thus, María created a safe space that facilitated language brokering.

Language Brokers

Two previous studies that I conducted in Ramona led me to my interest in language brokering. In one study (Mazak, 2006), I found that the two participants, farmers who were also agronomists and involved with community farming groups, brokered for each other and for other farmers in the community. They were selected by the community as brokers not only for their knowledge of English, but also for their knowledge of farming. In another, unpublished, study of the life history of a retired

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teacher in the community, I found that brokering had been a normal part of his everyday life. He not only reported brokering for other Puerto Ricans during his boot camp training in the U.S. Army, but also for his colleagues at the school where he taught, including the principal.

Because both of these previous studies relied on interview data, I was anxious in this ethnographic case study to observe brokering practices for myself in order to analyze talk around text and really see how the community negotiated texts together. However, because my research methodology involved participant observation (emphasis on *participant*), I found it very difficult to observe brokering practices without being asked to be the broker myself. Thus, the excerpts below all involve me as a participant in some way, either as broker or co-broker.

But other community members did act as brokers. Recalling that I was first introduced to María, the librarian, because my brother-in-law had identified her as a community language broker, María was often mentioned in interviews as someone who would have been asked to broker if I was not there. Sra. Torres, specifically, mentioned María as well as Rita (the elementary English teacher who often held class in the library) and other English teachers as people to whom she would go to for help with English texts. María as well as Eugenio (the ninth-grade president of the Library Assistant's club) participated as co-brokers in the events recounted in this chapter. Lico, the gym teacher, also reported acting as broker in his interview with me, particularly helping his daughter with school projects. During the technology training workshop for librarians, the workshop leader acted as broker as she helped participants fill out forms (see previous chapter). Many of these brokers (María, Eugenio, Lico, and me) were regular fixtures in the library.

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One limitation of the data presented here, then, is that it does not include observations of brokering practices where I did not participate. Thus, one might argue, language brokering is not a community literacy practice, but rather the community's reaction to me. However, interview data do not support this claim. The following description of language brokering, even with me as broker, demonstrates the participants' knowledge of English and values about finding and using resources when negotiating English text. I do not believe that observing brokering events from some artificial "objective" position would negate the results presented here. However, more research is needed to further explore and fully describe the practice of language brokering in Ramona.

Types of Brokering

As I observed and participated in language brokering around English texts outside of the classroom, I found that not all brokering interactions looked the same. In fact, brokering practices could be placed on a continuum from most reciprocal and negotiated, where both broker and client worked together, pooling their knowledge of both languages, to least reciprocal and negotiated, where a broker was called on simply as an expert or authority in English, with little negotiation or mutual contribution to textual meaning-making. The following chart lists brokering practices from most to least negotiated, giving a brief description of each:

Table 7: Types of Language Brokering

Name	Description
Double-check	Clients approached brokers in order to double-check the meaning of a text that they had already read. Client and broker worked together, pooling language and other resources, to decode text.
Help	Clients were trying to read the text themselves, but sought help from a broker to do so. Though both client and broker were leveraging resources and expertise, this was not negotiated in talk-around-text.
Translate	Clients approached brokers to provide a simple translation of the text. Brokers were approached as if to serve client. Broker was seen as expert and the meaning of text was not negotiated.
Report	Broker was sought by client to read a text and summarize relevant information orally. Client did no ask for word-for-word translation, but rather relied on the broker to pull out key information and explain it.
Spell	Client asked broker to spell something in English.
Pronounce	In the process of reading a text out loud, the client asked a broker to pronounce the English words for him/her.

Below I describe each language brokering practice in detail, paying particular attention to how participants share resources as they negotiate English texts.

Double-check

The most common type of brokering event observed was the double-check. In double-check events, clients approached brokers with an English text and both broker

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and client worked together to negotiate its meaning. During the course of the interaction, it became clear that the client had already read and extracted meaning from the text. Sometimes the client approached with a specific question about the text, as in the first excerpt below. Other times clients just asked brokers to read, but in the end or through their supporting comments they revealed that they had already read the text and were confirming their understanding, as was the case in the second excerpt. The meaning of the text was negotiated between the client, who already more or less knew the contents of the text, and the broker, who was reading the text for the first time. Though the client may have thought that the broker knew more of both languages, this was not always the case. However, through their supporting comments during the event, clients were able to deftly meet their communicative goals as they used brokers to confirm or disconfirm their suspicions about textual meaning.

After the faculty meeting, Señora Torres stopped by my desk in the library and said hello. I asked if she planned to come to the community English class on Saturday, as she had mentioned before.

"¿Y tú vienes mañana?" I asked. (And you will come tomorrow?)

"Voy a tratar," she replied. "Mira, Caty." (I'm going to try. Look, Cathy.) She pulled out a letter from her bag and showed it to me. It was a form explaining that her daughter's Pell grant had been approved.

"Huh. Mira. ¿Es tu hija?" (Huh. Look. She's your daughter?)

"Sí. Es la beca de mi hija." (Yes. It's my daughter's grant.")

"Sí, sí, sí, sí." (Yes, yes, yes.)

She began to explain the document to me. "Está aprovada," she said, pointing to the box in the upper right hand corner. (It's approved.)

"Uh-ha."

"Pero, tiene que decir si hay algo equivocado," she went on. (You have to say if there is something wrong.)

"Ok. Voy a lear—leer," I told her (Ok. I'm going to read it.), and began reading out loud in English. The document showed a short flow-chart graphic explaining the process of applying for and receiving the grant. "Dear bla, ba, ba, ba... Here is where you are. Now you should check the—oh, OK." I turned to Sra. Torres, "Ahora, tienes que, tienes que chekear si hay una problema." (Now you have to, you have to check if there is a problem.)

"Un error?" (An error?) She half asked, half corrected me.

"Sí, si hay un error, tienes que ..a..." (Yea, if there's an error. You have to..a...)

She finished my sentence for me. "Mandar esto a ellos," she said, referring to the attached pages. (To send this to them.)

"Pero si no hay error, no hay problema. No tienes que hacer nada." (But if there is no error, there is no problem. You don't have to do anything.) I assured her, reading on, "Porque dice" (because it says), reading from the letter in English, "'Now you should check your chart. If it is correct, you do not need to do anything at this time.'"

"OK."

Sra. Torres then pointed to the social security number of her daughter. It appeared as a series of x's, except for the last four digits. She asked if it was a mistake.

"A veces se hacen esso para la seguridad," I said. (Sometimes they do that

for security.) She was not immediately convinced. We took the letter to María,

the librarian, and asked her. She agreed that the x's were probably not a mistake.

Satisfied, Sra. Torres checked one last thing. "Pero aqui dice que debes guardarlo

para referencia." (But here it says that you should keep it for your reference.) She

pointed to the text.

"Sí, Sí. That you should keep a copy for your reference."

She nodded and returned momentarily to her concern over the x-ed out

social security number. "Entoces esso, que es por la seguridad." (Then that's it,

that it's for security.)

"Sí, sí," I said.

The text that Sra. Torres showed me was very confusing. It was mostly in chart

form, and used a flow chart to explain what the recipient of the letter had to do next.

The graphic was not helpful, as it made the letter difficult to scan. Even so, Sra. Torres

had read the letter quite well on her own, as is evident in her comments. When asked

about this event in an interview, she said, "El vocabulario no era tan dificil, este, yo ya

tenía la idea más o menos de lo que decía [la carta] y las palabras que usaba" (The

vocabulary was not so difficult, and, I already had the idea more or less of what it [the

letter] said and the words used). She did not directly ask me to help her. Rather, she

presented me with the text to read and let me begin to decode it on my own. The

meaning of conventions that have more to do with cultural expectations, such as an x-ed

out social security number to protect privacy, are what confused her. She understood

well that she is supposed to review the document, but wanted to double-check her

understanding of the steps that she was instructed to take. She clearly had an excellent

handle on the text as she navigated me through it, pointing at relevant sentences, saying, "Here it says..."

Though I was approached as broker, I surely had trouble because of my developing Spanish. Readers of Spanish will note my errors of gender and of -er/-ar endings, as I misspoke and sometimes even corrected myself. As Sra. Torres and I worked out the meaning of the text together, she helped me with my Spanish, feeding me "error" instead of "problem," finishing my sentences. Together we used other brokering resources available to us, such as María's help, when I second-guessed myself about the social security number. In the end, despite my Spanish deficiencies, Sra. Torres accomplished her communicative goals using available resources (including her own expertise, mine, and María's).

In the following excerpt we see another participant, Mani the lunch lady, double-checking her understanding of an English text. Again, although I may have been a less-than-ideal language broker, Mani supported me as I tried to help her.

In the afternoon I went to the lunch room to use the bathroom, a wad of toilet paper in my hand. As I was waiting for the bathroom, Mani came up to me and told me in Spanish that she had a letter that she wanted me to translate for her, that it was in the car and that she would be right back with it. She indeed came right back, and handed me a letter, again on letterhead from a doctor's office, like the one she had brought to the library before. At the top of the letter was identifying information, including her name and date of birth, written in the following format:

Name: Manieda Rodríguez

DOB: 9/17/1965

This was followed by two short paragraphs, and written in very difficult medical terminology. The letter explained the results of a thyroid scan. I read the letter through silently to myself. Mani was standing patiently by my side, waiting for my translation. I told her, "No soy médico!" (I'm not a doctor!) She said, "no te preocupes." (Don't worry.) I tried to tell her that there are two types of thyroid problems, an over-active (hyper) thyroid and an under-active (hypo) thyroid. "Hay dos tipos de problemas de la tiroide. Uno es que funciona demasiado, y el otro es que no funciona suficiente." At first I thought the letter was saying that her thyroid was over-active, but then it also reported that some nodes were hypo, so I was confused. I tried to talk it through in Spanish, trying to express the main idea, but I was not sure of the main idea myself! "Hay 'nodes'—," I said, code-switching the word "nodes" that I didn't know in Spanish. Mani supplied "nodas." "Parece que hay algun nodulos que funciona demasiado y otras que no functiona bien." (It seems like there are some nodes that function too much and others that are not functioning well.) Unsure of myself, again I tried to defer. "Quisas puedes preguntar a María, porque de verdad yo no sé." (Maybe you can ask María, the librarian, because really, I don't know.) But Mani would not accept my deference and encouraged me to keep going. At the end of my blabbering, Mani said, "Eso es más o menos lo que yo entendí," (That was more or less what I understood) and seemed satisfied. She thanked me, and said that she had to have more tests, including a biopsy.

As seen in the previous chapter, medical letters were a common English text in the community. Mani had come into the library before with the referral letter to have these tests done, which was also in English, but she did not ask for any help reading that letter.

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With this letter, however, there was more at stake. Mani's ending comment, "That was more or less what I understood," indicated that she had already read the text and understood much of it. Her purpose in giving me the text to read was to double-check what she had already understood.

Again, I struggled through this brokering interaction because of a lack of medical vocabulary. Indeed, the letter was very difficult for me to read in English, as I tried to work out the hypo- and hyper- prefixes and the difficult medical language. However, Mani helped me through my interpretation by supplying the unknown vocabulary word "nodulos" for "nodes." She also supported me with verbal encouragement, and would absolutely not let me defer to another broker. This indicates that I was doing a satisfactory job by her standards. Between Mani's and my readings of the text, Mani was satisfied that she understood the letter.

The participants in the events highlighted here pooled knowledge in order to accomplish communicative goals. In the event with Sra. Torres, we both knew something about the application for federal aid, about reading and reviewing information on a form, and about the English needed to read the form and the Spanish needed to interpret it. We pooled this distributed knowledge along with that of María to clarify the x-ed out social security number. Through this combination of resources, we negotiated the meaning of this English text on participant's own turf, and on their own terms.

Help

In the following two excerpts, a broker helped a client complete a written task in English: filling out an online form. In both cases the brokers were familiar with the task at hand and the language requirements of the task. This in contrast to the medical letter event, for example, which stretched the limits of the broker's language abilities, at the

same time developing those abilities. In helping events, the client was looking for a little bit of support from a broker who was expert both at English and at the task at hand.

One day two girls were trying to sign up for Yahoo accounts on two of the computers in the library. The form that they were filling out was all in English and it presented the girls with quite a problem; both needed help filling in almost every field. María was helping them, but she had stepped aside to do something else for a minute and one of the girls asked me what to put in the box labeled "zip code." I told her, in Spanish, 00982. She typed in some other numbers, apparently thinking that I was wrong. Then, when María returned, the girl asked her the same question, and María told her the same, but translating "zip code" into Spanish, "codigo postal." With fake exasperation I said, "Pues! No me creen!" (Well! They don't believe me!)

The girls started out using a trusted broker: María, the librarian. Not only was she an expert in both English and Spanish, but also she was the technology expert, certainly an excellent resource to have by your side when filling out an online form. As she was also very busy, the girls turned to me for help with "zip code." Though I provided the correct answer, I was somehow less trustworthy. Perhaps it was my accent, perhaps it was the fact that I did not translate "zip code," I just provided the answer. Regardless, these girls found it necessary to confirm what they had asked me with María.

This interaction sheds light on the criteria for who gets to be a language broker. Clearly here I was not a trusted choice. So why was I trusted in other cases, even when I did not trust myself, such as brokering the medical letter and the plaster tin package? I think it had to do with negotiating meaning. In this event, the girls were struggling with every line of the form, indicating that they needed a lot of help understanding English,

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unlike Mani who had already read and extracted meaning from the medical letter. Thus, Mani was in a better position to negotiate the meaning of the text along with me. My lack of Spanish vocabulary was less of a concern for her. She was looking for the "jist" of it; the girls were looking for translation. I also may have been snubbed as broker here because there was another, more capable broker nearby: María. Although in both the medical letter event and the plaster tin event I tried to defer, there was no other broker available in the immediate area.

Translate

Translating events required the broker to do a service for the client. In these events the client appeared unlikely to have attempted the translation, except perhaps to determine that he or she could not do it. The client's purpose was to quickly accomplish the communicative goal. In this case, the client relied completely on the language abilities of the broker and trusted that the broker would translate faithfully. Negotiation of meaning was not attempted, as in the following event where a student literally drops off a letter for translation.

> I was sitting at the computer doing some work for María. The bell had rung and the kids were between classes. Keyla came in and asked me nicely to "Hasme un favor" (do me a favor.) She had a piece of paper folded in half. At first I didn't understand, and I asked if she wanted me to type it for her. She answered no, she wanted me to translate it. I asked her if it was a school assignment and said that I did not do assignments for students. She said no, and I said OK and took the letter. She said she couldn't stay, but that she would come back for the translation tomorrow. After she left I read the letter, and it was a fan letter to Keith Ledger, the actor from *A Knight's Tale.*

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Keyla was a huge movie fan and loved to follow her favorite actors, including Keith Ledger, from movie to movie, keeping up-to-date on their careers. The pull of these actors was so great for her that she decided to write a fan letter. Knowing that Keith Ledger spoke English, she sought me out to translate her fan letter. She described my work as broker as doing her "a favor," realizing that I certainly was not obligated to help her but that I likely would. Perhaps because I was not a teacher I was a good candidate as broker here. It was several days before I saw Keyla again and delivered my translation to her. Later in the year I asked her if she ever sent that letter, and she told me that no, she never had, with a shrug of the shoulders indicating that she had never gotten around to it.

Report

Reporting brokering events involved even less interaction between client, broker, and text. In translation events, the client knew the meaning of the text in Spanish and wanted it translated into English. In reporting events, clients had an English text that they knew contained information that they needed. However, they were not interested in having a word-for-word translation. Instead, relying on the broker to pull out the relevant points and report them was sufficient to accomplish the client's communicative goals, as in the following interaction between me and my mother-in-law.

> In the evening I went to use the computer at Doña Margarita's house. As I was leaving she showed me a letter from the Direct Loans federal loan program that had arrived for my fiancé. She hadn't opened it, and told me, "Ábrela, y mira si tiene que pagar." (Open it, and see if he has to pay.) I did. The letter was in English. I read it to myself quickly and pointed to the date in the letter, explaining that he didn't have to pay until 2009. She seemed relieved. I asked

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about another letter that was on the table and she said it was her other son's and

that indeed he had to pay. I replied, "Que pena!" (What a shame!)

This event shows that Doña Margarita had significant knowledge of the text that she was

asking about. She knew from the return address on the envelope that the letter contained

information about her son's student loans. She indicated that she has received letters of

this type before, and that they often required payment, when she said, "Open it and see if

he has to pay." Indeed, there was another similar letter for her other son on the table

which she knew required payment. The type of text here gave rise to this reporting event.

The text was familiar to the client; it was known to contain information and possibly to

demand action. This knowledge of the text's purpose means that the client does not need

a word-by-word translation, just a quick report on the relevant points. I was chosen as

broker here as much because of my English abilities as because of my position as wife,

which in my mother-in-law's eyes allowed/required me to open my husband's mail,

particularly mail in regard to finances.

Spell

Spelling brokering events occurred regularly, especially when clients were trying

to search the internet or a computer graphics database and precise English spelling was

required to meet their communicative goals. I often served as broker in this capacity, as

did María. In these events, clients sought help in the course of doing their own work. For

example, brokers were not asked for help with their internet search or with reading the

pages it produced, but rather simply with the spelling of an English word. Sometimes,

though, this seemingly small brokering event had large consequences, as in the following

when José's simple request for spelling "Britney Spears" turned into a day of visits to her

web page by many junior high students.

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José's main interest was music, and he was looking for the Britney Spears webpage. So he asked me, "¿Cómo se escribe Britney Spears?" (How do you spell Britney Spears?) I answered him by writing it down on a piece of paper. He quickly found her website and the section where you could listen to music. Later in the day he went to a computer on the far side of the room and printed every photo of her that he could find, in black and white. Before going to class he showed me all of them proudly. It seems that when one person finds a new website, word spreads rapidly, and so Roberto, another eighth grader, was also looking at the Britney page that day and wanting to print photos. Also a girl whom I had never seen before came into the library and asked José to print photos for her.

Asking for spelling help is simple and expected in a school context. What was unexpected was that this small act of brokering would lead to extended interaction by multiple people with English text that they might not have known about otherwise. It was José's interest in music and his use of available brokering resources that unlocked these literacy practices. After this initial spelling question, his success at navigating the English page to Britney's photo gallery, and then navigating the computer interface to print the photos, showed that he could manage the internet quite well on his own (this event occurred later in the study, after much improvement by José, both in English and internet navigation). José's social networks took over from there. As he showed the printed photos around, he was called on to teach others about the website, brokering for them.

Pronounce

Pronunciation events occurred when a client asked for verification of English pronunciation from a broker in the process of reading, usually reading out loud. Like

spelling events, these were simple, non-negotiated brokering events that happened in a split second. Nevertheless, they were interesting because, as in the excerpt below, the client often had a good idea of how to pronounce the word or phrase, but deferred to a broker because he or she was available.

> At the librarian's technology workshop, the workshop leader was showing us some resource cards put out by the University of Florida that listed websites that could be used as resources for different topics, like science, math, and English for parents and children. She asked me to read the return address on the envelope where the cards had come from. I was confused at first, but then caught on that she wanted it in my English pronunciation and read out loud to the group "University of Florida." The workshop leader seemed kind of self conscious about her English pronunciation, apparently because I was there, because she commented that her English wasn't too good (which of course, it was). She made me read all the titles of the cards in English. I refused the first one and another teacher read it instead. The rest she convinced me to read.

> Part of my reluctance to participate in this event was that I knew the leader was a good English speaker (I had heard her pronouncing various English words throughout the workshop). I felt that she was uncomfortable because I was in the audience, presumably judging her English. Of course, I was judging it—judging it to be very good! I also did not want to call attention to myself. Regardless of my reluctance, she convinced me to do as she asked.

Focal Event: A Four-way Brokering Interaction

We have seen the different types of language brokering events and the various ways in which the meanings of texts are negotiated between broker and client. Now we

will look up close at a particular language brokering event that occurred in the library at the end of the school year. Dalia, a sixth grader who had been struggling with English all year, came to me for help creating her English portfolio. I often assisted students with assignments in English, mostly prompting them as they tried to translate their Spanish writing into English (no matter how many times I told them to try writing in English first). Eugenio, a ninth grader, was in the library at the same time, and I was getting ready to interview him for this study. As I tried to help Dalia and interview Eugenio at the same time, Eugenio and María began helping me help Dalia, in a four-way brokering event.

Dalia approached me and asked for help with an English assignment. I was sitting at my desk at the entrance to the library. She had with her a bunch of English assignments. She explained that she had to write "un nombre, una introducción, y un final" (a name, an introduction, and a conclusion) for the project. I recognized this as a portfolio, but was unsure of what exactly the teacher wanted. Dalia was also unsure, and had no guidelines from the teacher. I decided to consult the librarian (here called Sra. Pérez).

> CATHY: Vamos a preguntarle a Pérez sobre la introducción y el final. (We're
>
> going to ask Perez about the introduction and conclusion.) [walking to the
>
> librarian, who is standing by the door talking to Eugenio]
>
> CATHY: [sing-songy] Señora Perez. Ella tiene que hacer un
>
> portofolio—portfolio—para inglés. (Sra. Perez. She has to do a
>
> portfolio—portfolio—for English.)
>
> DALIA: Tengo que poner un nombre, una introducción en inglés y un final. (I
>
> have to write a title, an introduction, and a conclusion.)

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CATHY: Y estabamos preguntando que tipos de cosas ella tiene que escribir para

la introducción y el final. Ves? Esas son las asignaciones. [inaudible] Pero, ¿que

tipos de cosas necesita escribir en la introducción? (And we were wondering what

types of things she has to write for the introduction and conclusion. You see?

These are the assignments. But what types of things does she need to write in the

introduction?)

EUGENIO: Lo que va a interpretar en el trabajo. (What she is going to present

in the work.)

CATHY: Oh. Y en el final? (And in the conclusion?)

EUGENIO: El final es que aprendiste. (The conclusion is what you learned.)

MARÍA: Que aprendió. La presentacion es "en este trabajo voy a presentar los

sigientes ejercicios." (What she learned. The presentation [of the work] is "in this

portfolio I am going to present the following exercises.")

[inaudible]

CATHY: Y en la conclusión? (And in the conclusion?)

MARÍA: Y en la conclusión, "Através del trabajo pude apender mucho

vocabulario, diferentes cosas..." (And in the conclusion, "Through this work I

was able to learn a lot of vocabulary, different things...")

CATHY (to Dalia): OK, vamos a escribirlo en español. *Tu* vas a escribirlo en

español, y voy a ayudarte a transducirlo. (OK, we're going to write it in Spanish.)

[We walk to the desk and sit down]

Though Dalia asked me here to serve as a language broker and help her with her

assignment, I was uncertain about what her teacher expected of the portfolio that she had

to create. For this reason I consulted María, the librarian, for help. But Eugenio, a

seasoned veteran of the school and of many years of English class, chimed in to help us as well, sharing his knowledge and displaying his expertise in portfolios as a genre. Next, Eugenio and I sat at my desk and began the interview. Dalia was writing out the introduction in Spanish, also at my desk. After about five minutes she interrupted the interview by handing me her finished product. What follows is a transcription of the recorded talk-around-text. Dalia's Spanish text read: "En ese trabajo yo aprendí que el inglés no es hablar raro pero también es aprender. En ese trabajo voy a presentar un serie de trabajos especiales que se hecho todo esta semana." (In this work I learned that English is not just strange talking but also learning. In this work I am going to present a series of assignments that I have done this week.)

> CATHY: Hay, mira! (to Eugenio) Vamos a hacer esto juntos. Necesito to ayuda.
> (Oh, look! We're going to do this together. I need your help)
> EUGENIO: OK.
> CATHY: OK.
> EUGENIO: (translating from the Spanish text out loud into English. C is writing it down.) "In this work I learned that the English," um...
> CATHY: (reading out loud the Spanish text) "no es"
> EUGENIO: "hablar raro"
> CATHY: OK, "hablar raro pero también es aprender." OK. (speaking while writing) "Innnn…"
> EUGENIO (translating while C writes): "In this work I learned that the English…"
> CATHY: Now, in English we usually don't use "the."
> EUGENIO: (quickly correcting himself) "that English," "that English"

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CATHY: Uh-huh, (continuing to read from the text) "no es."

EUGENIO: (translating) "is no," "is not"

CATHY: "only"

EUGENIO: "speak"

CATHY: "speaking"

EUGENIO: ¿"raro"? Se me pierde esta. (That one lost me.)

CATHY: "raro" is strange.

EUGENIO: "strange"

CATHY: "not only strange speaking, it is also..."

EUGENIO: "...learn"

CATHY: "learning." Y esto (pointing to the text). (And this?)

EUGENIO: OK. "In this work..." [inaudible] "In this work I goes present..."

"In this work go, I goes..." No...

CATHY: Or, "I will present."

EUGENIO: "I will present"

CATHY: Or, "I'm going to present"

EUGENIO: "I going to present"

CATHY: (talking slowly while writing) "In this work I am going to..."

EUGENIO: "...present"

CATHY: "present." "A series"?

EUGENIO: "a port"—no—"a jobs"

CATHY: Humm

EUGENIO: "jobs," porque...

CATHY: Si, "a special"

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EUGENIO: "special jobs"

CATHY: Let's say "work," I think.

EUGENIO: "work" is a verb

CATHY: Pero también es a noun. Very good! Es correcto, pero también puede

ser... (But also it is a noun. Very good! It's correct, but also it can be...)

EUGENIO: No uso, "job" no uso como para trabajo, y "work" no es un verbo (I

don't use "job," I don't use "job" like for work? And "work" isn't a verb?)

CATHY: Pero "job" aquí. Pero no usemos ese palabra "job" para trabajo de la

escuela. Let's say assignments. (But "job" here. But we don't use this word "job"

for school work.)

EUGENIO: Ah, OK!

CATHY: Porque eso es más una palabra para la escuela. (Because this is more a

word for school.)

EUGENIO: "Assignments que, that, que se hecho, that I make."

MARÍA: (Overhearing and chiming in to help) ¿Qué palabara esta dando

problemas?

CATHY: No-- Estamos-- Ella dice, "En ese trabajo voy a presentar una serie de

trabajos especiales." Y en ves de decir "special work" or "special job," yo creo que

es mejor decir "special assignments" que "special work" porque "trabajo" es una

palaba más para—(No—we are—She says, "In this project I am going to present

a series of special work." And instead of saying "special work" or "special job," I

think that it's better to say "special assignments" than "special work" because

"work" is a word more for--)

MARÍA: Para empleo (For employment)

CATHY: Empleo, sí. (Emplyment, yes.) (moving on with the translation)

"Durante todo ese semana."

EUGENIO: "During this week."

CATHY: Pero es más de una semana. (But this is more than one week.)

EUGENIO: "During this semester or during all of the year." "Of this year."

CATHY: Pero ella dice "semana." (But she says "week.")

EUGENIO: (to Dalia) Semana? Pero tu lo hisiste esta semana? (Week? But you did it this week?)

DALIA: Pasada. (Last.)

CATHY: Semana pasada. Esta bien. (Last week. OK.)

EUGENIO: "During this week."

CATHY: Muy bien. Gracias, Eugenio. (Very good. Thanks, Eugenio.)

In this interaction around the text of Dalia's English portfolio, Eugenio, María Perez, Dalia and I shared our knowledge of language and of textual genres to compose an introduction. Once Dalia and I had consulted María and Eugenio to figure out what was expected in a portfolio's introduction, Dalia wrote her version of the text in Spanish. It was then up to Eugenio and me, with support from María, to negotiate a translation of the text. Eugenio and I acted as co-language brokers, talking through the textual interpretation in order to help Dalia meet her communicative goals. Even María chimed in, as she overheard us negotiating a translation of "trabajo" (work/job/assignment). Not only did Eugenio reveal his great knowledge of English, he even used metalanguage to work out the translation of "trabajo," questioning my use of "work," which he recognized as a verb. As we worked, we both contributed to the translation and relied on each other's knowledge to move the text forward.

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This event typifies the border crossing that took place in María's library. Particularly, boundaries that usually separated students by grade and students from adults were crossed in the textual negotiation. Dalia, a sixth grader and the author of the text, had the great benefit of watching three people—one of whom was an older student, none of whom was her teacher—talk through a translation of her text. In the process, I learned something about how to use the word "trabajo" in Spanish. Eugenio learned something about translating it, which was supported by María's comments. A classroom assignment, whose audience is usually the English teacher, became an authentic language learning activity for everyone. The assignment also gave Eugenio a chance to flex his English muscles and use what he knew about both English and portfolios. There were really no other opportunities within the institution of the school for the four of us to cross paths in a way that would lead to such a rich language exchange.

Shared Knowledge in the Borderlands

It is clear from the data that language brokering in Ramona was not a one-way transaction between a bilingual broker and a monolingual client. Instead, what was striking is just how participants shared linguistic resources in language brokering interactions. The excerpts show broker and client building on each other's Spanish and English knowledge as they negotiate the text. Orellana *et al.* (2003) argue that language brokering develops both the Spanish and English of brokers, who in her study were bilingual immigrant children. Brokers developed their native language as they learned new words for things that they never had to talk about before (a jury summons, in Orellana's study, for example). They developed their second language, English, as they brokered between languages. I found the same to be true, but brokers were not usually children. As see earlier, the broker was almost always me, an English speaker and

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Spanish language learner. Clients successfully scaffolded my Spanish as I attempted to help them. It didn't hurt, of course, that much of the time they had already read and understood the text.

My Role as Broker

Brokering interactions have the potential to alter power relationships, such as that between parent and child, as the child discovers that her knowledge of both languages gives her power to manipulate a situation with interlocutors who normally she would not be able to control (Vasquez et al., 1994). Brokering's potential to level or at least alter playing fields was apparent as well in the brokering interactions described here, but not always in expected ways. My role as an gringa English teacher may have given me some authority, made me approachable as a broker, but my faltering Spanish cut me down to size, as clients often had to prod me or act as cheerleader to get me to complete the brokering task. In addition, many clients approached me with a leg up: they already read and understood the text; they just wanted to double-check their understanding. In these highly negotiated brokering situations, some of the prestige of the broker is undermined because clients also possess linguistic knowledge in both languages. What brokering may look like in other situations and with other people acting as brokers has yet to be explored. For example, what would brokering look like if the broker was truly an expert in both Spanish and English? What does brokering look like with Puerto Rican brokers? What would brokering look like between people with less or more education? All of these questions call for further research.

Who Gets to Be a Broker?

In all the excerpts included here, I was approached as a language broker, sometimes in combination with María, the librarian. María and I were known to have

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the linguistic knowledge in Spanish and English to help in the brokering task. However, this knowledge was not required to be "perfect," as clearly demonstrated by my own personal floundering in my Spanish translations. Perhaps it was sufficient for participants that my English was great and my Spanish good enough, because their Spanish was great and their English good enough. Together, then, we were the perfect combination for meaning negotiation. But what about other brokers' linguistic knowledge? Being an English expert was important, but not required. In fact, what seemed to be important was that clients judged the broker to have more English expertise than they judged themselves to have, not that brokers were "perfect" English speakers. Thus, the technology workshop leader could broker for participants, while I could broker for the workshop leader. Or Eugenio could broker for Dalia, though his English was certainly still developing.

But clearly linguistic knowledge was not all that mattered when clients sought out brokers. In the excerpt above where the two girls were filling out the internet form and asked what "zip code" meant, María was seen as a more trustworthy broker, perhaps because of my foreigner status in the community (why should I know the local zip code, anyway, being a gringa and all?). Eugenio's knowledge of the English portfolio as a genre was key to his being able to help Dalia and myself, as we co-brokered Dalia's portfolio writing. Brokers were not just chosen based on judgments of linguistic knowledge, but also on subject-matter knowledge, as well. In addition, who acted as broker was somewhat fluid; as the need for different types of subject knowledge shifted, brokers turned to others for help, becoming clients themselves.

Types of Knowledge Shared

Linguistic knowledge was not the only type of knowledge being shared in brokering interactions, however. In order to make meaning from the English texts, participants had to know about text type. They knew about form letters, Federal Student Loan Program letters, medical test result letters, labels, fan letters, and a host of other text types. They could predict the contents based on the text type. For example, my mother-in-law knew that a letter from the Federal Student Aid Program probably meant that you had to pay. Sra. Torres knew that the complicated form with the flow chart was asking her to confirm information about her daughter's grant.

In addition, brokers and clients had to know about a wide range of topics in order to meet their communicative goals. Mani and I had to know about thyroid problems. Because my mother had had such problems, I at least could bring to the interaction the knowledge that there were two types: over- and under-active thyroid. Mani knew specialized vocabulary related to thyroids such as "nodes." Other interactions required knowledge of finances, crafts, and pop music. I relied on Eugenio and María to know what English teachers at the school expected of an English portfolio.

The Setting that Makes Brokering Possible

Of course, all of this brokering could not have occurred if it wasn't for María and the space that she created for border crossing. Without her and her very special library, Eugenio , Dalia, and I would never have a place or a reason to cross paths. Mari and I wouldn't have been shopping at Walgreen's for gifts for her on teacher's day, and Mani and I would have never met. In that way, María was the real language broker.

But crossing borders is neither easy nor painless. For Anzaldúa (1987), the borderlands are both violent and creative. They developed from a bloody clashing of

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cultures. But from this clash, from the smoldering ashes rises something new, complex, something full of possibility. The tension of the borderlands is relieved by the space that María has created where borders can be crossed safely, with the help and support of others. Imagine Eugenio (a ninth grader) helping Dalia (a six grader) on the playground in front of his peers. He would be laughed at an ridiculed. Imagine Mani coming to my middle class home, or me going to her lower class one, the discomfort of help asked for in situations where class differences are so apparent. But in María's library, not only were borders crossed because of precisely who was in the space (me, a gringa, for example), but also because the space made a safe, through brokering, to cross borders that may have been too risky to cross in other contexts.

All of this knowledge was freely shared between participants, often across borders such as age and class. As Eugenio helped me help Dalia, we crossed normally strict boundaries between age groups. When Mani approached me for help, she crossed a class border between the women who worked in the lunch room, all of whom would be considered working class, and the teachers, who were middle class. Everyone who asked me to be a broker crossed a cultural border (as I did as well) by turning to a gringa for expertise.

Finding and Using Resources

The data reveal the cultural values surrounding brokering in this community. One of these is: share your resources. If you know something, you are expected to share it with others when they ask for help (c.f. González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Another is: know who can help you. Participants asked for help when they needed it, but also knew who to ask in order to meet their communicative needs.

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Conclusion: Implications for Other Border Spaces

These brokering events imply that, if given the opportunity, people of varying

language proficiencies will work together to make meaning out of text. In the process,

both the native language and the second language of participants will develop. If, as

educators and language policy makers, we want to promote this type of language

development, what needs to be done? I propose that we need to create physical spaces in

schools where people of different ages, cultures, classes, and language backgrounds cross

paths. This is especially important in an environment where the second language of

participants is rarely spoken in the community, such as in Ramona. Because in Ramona

English is a colonial language, it is not quite so "foreign" as it might be in other places in

the world (though few places are beyond the reach of English as it is connected to

globalization). This is one of the reasons why creating spaces where different people cross

paths is so important. As seen in this work, people of many different language

backgrounds, with different "linguistic toolkits," live and work together in Ramona.

However, without a reason to cross paths and a safe place to do so, these different

linguistic resources may never be shared.

In *Learning and Not Learning English*, Guadalupe Valdés (2001) poignantly showed

how English as a second language learners became trapped in the ESL classroom, denied

exactly the type of interaction with native speakers that would promote their English

development. Similarly, in Puerto Rico, English is often confined to the English

classroom. María's library created a space for English knowledge exchange to take place

outside the English classroom. In the library, students worked on English homework

together. They asked me for help, but perhaps even more importantly they helped each

other, often across age groups. Students interacted with English for real communicative

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purposes, such as using the internet, in an environment that included people who could scaffold their English language development. These people were not just teachers, but also other students and even occasionally community members.

To create such an environment, one where the friction of border crossing could safely occur, we would have to adopt María's conception of what learning is. Learning is loud and talkative, it happens around technological resources like the computer and the internet, and it occurs throughout life. We would then need to create programs, like María's Title V grant program, that reflect this conception of learning. We would have to open schools to community members, encourage kids to gather in the same physical space as those community classes, be tolerant of loud exchanges of ideas, and provide the tools that encourage authentic use of English, such as computers. We would need to see language brokering as part of language learning and do everything that we can to create comfortable spaces where it can occur. Finally, we would have to develop the values of sharing resources and knowing how and whom to ask for help.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Salimos de aquí	We came from here
de la orilla del camino...	From the side of the road
Salimos de aquí	We came from here
de un paraiso perdido...	From a paradise lost
Salimos de aquí	We came from here
de la perla privilegiada	From the privileged pearl
de la sombra asociada	From the associated shadow
de la envidia caribeña	From the Caribbean envy
y de la estupidez isleña	And from the island stupidity
de sentirse en menosprecio	Of feeling that you're worthless
por ser de aquí...	Because you're from here

Y así salimos descalzos	And like that we came out barefoot
y asi aprendimos sin querer	And like that we learned without wanting to
a comernos las "s" cuando hablamos	To eat the "s" when we talk
y eso es to' lo que hay que saber	And that's all that there is to know
Somos los que cantan con la lengua amarrada	We are the ones who sing with a bound tongue
Somos los que alternan Coca-Cola con Maví	We are the ones who alternate Coca-cola with Maví
Somos de la tribu que se pierde en su país	We are from the tribe that gets lost in its own country

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...vivir pa' sobre vivir   ...live to survive

...vivir pa' sobre vivir   ...live to survive

—Fiel a la vega, "Salimos de aquí"

"Salimos de aquí" (We came from here) is a sad and honest look at life in Puerto Rico, "the shining star of the Caribbean," as the sweet-voiced woman in the television commercial sang when I was a kid. Puerto Rico is not a "third world country," not exactly. It is, as Fiel a la vega sings, with some irony, a "privileged pearl." The gap between rich and poor is not as wide as it is in other Latin American countries. The result of this supposed privilege, they say, is that Puerto Rico is a shadow without a body. Puerto Rico's "associated shadow" is the dark side to the political relationship with the United States that both supplies it with a safety net against abject poverty (through government assistance, or department of education grants) and exploits and dehumanizes its citizenry. This dehumanization has included dropping depleted uranium on Vieques for "practice," testing early versions of the birth control pill on poor Puerto Rican woman without their consent, and drafting generations of Puerto Ricans into the U.S. military to fight for a country that they could not even vote in (Fernández, 1996; "La Operación," 1985; "The Battle of Vieques," 1986). And these are just the abuses of the government. The abuses of U.S. corporations include forced sterilization of both male and female workers, a multitude of environmental wrongs including dumping boiling water into the ocean, building on wetlands, and polluting rivers. It is no wonder that Fiel a la vega's refrain sings "live to survive."

"Salimos de aquí" explores the complications and contradictions of life in Puerto Rico. They learn to "eat the 's'" at the end of words, a feature of the Puerto Rican dialect of Spanish. They sing with their tongues tied. They alternate two sides of their personalities: drinking Coke and drinking Maví, a Puerto Rican home brew made from the bark of the Maví tree. For this, according to the song, they are lost in their own country, belonging and not belonging to an island that is so physically beautiful that it sticks to the heart, but has somehow gotten out of their hands. Somehow they have contracted an "island stupidity" that makes you believe you are worth less because you are from this amazing, complicated place.

I had read lots of research about colonial languages when I embarked on this project. But participants themselves can capture major theoretical concepts much better than dusty academics, and often in a simple, off-hand comment. When my brother-in-law, the one who asked me about shaving sheep, said to me one day: "Tenemos que saber los dos" (We have to know both), a light bulb went off in my head. He said it while we were discussing the strange mix of using both kilometers and miles in Puerto Rico (kilometers mark the distances on the road, but the speed limit is posted in miles per hour), but he meant it in the deeper sense. His comment captured so simply everyday life in a colonial system. *We have to know both.* Two systems of measuring. Two systems of naming places. Two systems of bureaucracy. Two languages.

Somehow, though, the advantage of "knowing two" gets ignored by both institutions and participants themselves. Since when is knowing two less than knowing one? In a colonial system. It is a contradiction, but it is true. When people move from the colony to the metropolis, the metropolis rejects their knowledge of two systems. Their knowledge is called a deficiency. Their negotiation of two languages, two cultures is

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somehow holding them back. Knowing two is less than knowing one. Even on the island

this is true. How many times did participants tell me that in Puerto Rico people don't

know Spanish *or* English? Small children of bilingual parents are sent home, told their

child is not developing in either language, that the child has a deficiency. *Yes*, I think, *it is*

the ironic deficiency of knowing both.

I hope that this work has exposed this contradiction, and shown how knowing two

is just a requirement of everyday life in Puerto Rico. The necessity of using English text

was taken for granted by participants, but not un-examined. They did it because they

had to do it, because that's life. Some people even did it because they wanted to. *No fue*

una gran cosa. To an outsider, though, it was a big deal. Watching the everyday English

literacy practices in this community was revelatory. I saw how educational and

community spaces could promote the sharing and development of linguistic knowledge

across borders. I saw how different people with different levels of English expertise

participated in English literacy practices. I saw careful negotiation of language and

identity by people who did not buy in to the political rhetoric about what the relationship

between the two should be. In the process, I learned about colonial languages and the

nature of bilingualism in the borderlands. In this chapter, I take a step back and look at

how Ramona informs current theory on colonial languages and bilingualism. I finish by

exploring the implications of these findings for educational language policy.

<div align="center">Informing Colonial Language Theory</div>

When theorizing colonial languages, we often talk about a push-pull, or in

Bakhtinian terms (1981), centripetal and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces are those

that pull language in around a standard, in this case, the colonial language, English.

Centrifugal forces push against that standard, they de-harmonize it, they fracture it into a

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million unique little pieces. When speaking of colonial languages, these pieces would include non-metropolis varieties of the colonial language, but also use of the native language that resists the imposed standard. The metropolis pushes and the colony pulls back. To inform colonial language theory, we need to examine what this pushing and pulling looks like on the ground.

The types of English texts that entered Ramona and the way that they entered was linked to Puerto Rico's political relationship with the United States. Medical referral letters in English reflected a medical system that allowed for and encourages advanced education in the States, made easier because of citizenship and accreditation of Puerto Rican universities. Federal student loan information and federal tax forms in English were representatives of U.S. bureaucratic institutions encoded in text. Because all goods must be imported from the U.S., product labels and manuals in English entered the environment. Other texts were in English because of the U.S.'s role in the global economy and global consumer culture. Computer interfaces, videogames, and teeny-bopper web pages are among those. All of these texts are part of the push.

Though political and economic factors, to some extent, may have patterned the types and domains of English texts in Ramona, how participants interacted with those texts was of their own invention. This represents the push. When theorizing colonial language, attention needs to be paid to the way that people cope with being forced to use text that is not in their native language. In Ramona, people used community resources, seen here in language brokering practices, to make meaning out of texts such as a Pell grant form. In this way, language brokering can be a kind of resistance because it doesn't follow the expected pattern in the eyes of the metropolis. So can the "Spanification" of borrows from English, which I call appropriations, as described in Chapter 3. If you

make the colonizers' language unrecognizable to them, such as by changing "park" to "parkear," or "hang out" to "hangear," it rubs against the grain of standardization. The response to the push generates unexpected cultural practices that pull.

But the metropolis does not always impose text. People also chose to read and write texts in the colonial language. In the study of colonial languages, then, one needs to look at what texts are imposed and what texts are chosen and why. By "imposed texts" I mean any texts that one must read or write in the colonial language that would be preferable in the native language. The consequence of not reading or writing these texts would be some loss to the person. For example, not reading the Pell grant form could have led Sra. Torres's daughter to lose the grant if there had been some problem with the form. By "chosen texts," I mean texts that people do not read or write out of necessity, but rather chose to interact with. Not reading or writing these texts would not lead to real loss for the person. For example, if José did not read Britney Spear's web page, there would be no real consequences that would hurt him. It is understandable, then, why people read and write imposed texts (they have to). But what drives the decision to *chose* to read or write a text in the colonial language?

I submit that people chose to use a particular language because it is "the language of something." For bilinguals this is quite normal (and it does not always break down as easily as "home" and "school," as we tend to think in education). For example, in this study, English was clearly the language of computer technology (recall the agriculture teacher who got tripped up when the computer interface was in Spanish). English is the language of Hollywood, the language of videogames, the language of U.S. pop music. So what does this mean? That participants were choosing to be pushed? Well, yes and no. Though the texts associated with these activities were in English, the talk around text was

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almost always in Spanish. Just because the computer interface was in English did not mean that people spoke English whenever they were in front of the computer. It did mean that they code switched and/or appropriated necessary vocabulary to meet their communicative goals. They didn't say, "Hit print," they said, "Dale print." Some of them even searched the web with "hu-gle" (i.e., google). Bakhtin would certainly call that populating someone else's words with your own intentions.

We can understand and accept that people use different languages for different things, but our analysis cannot stop there. Again we have to step back and ask, why is English the language of computers? The very idea that English has been normalized to be "the language of technology" should be critiqued. We always have to put language choice into the context of history, economics, and globalization. Imperialism—a history of colonization—helps situated language choice. However, even when political independence is achieved (not the case in Puerto Rico), the language slate is not wiped clean. Economic forces such as globalization influence language choice and the types of texts in different languages that enter an environment. But again, this is only half (if that) of the colonial language picture. The other part is how people react to those texts that enter their world, and how people control and chose texts in the colonial language and why. Participants use community resources, as shown here with language brokering, to navigate texts that are both imposed (government forms) and chosen (Britney's website). This is power, then, in the Foucaultian sense of action upon action. Certain texts are imposed by the metropolis on the colony, an attempt to control the colony's actions. But the colony acts back—resisting—inventing actions that defy the intentions of the metropolis.

Complicating Our Understanding of Bilingualism

The definition of "bilingual" is certainly not without controversy. It is different in different fields, such as sociolinguistics, linguistics, and psycholinguists, and in laypeople's terms. As indicated earlier in this work, one of the goals of this research is to complicate existing notions of bilingualism, particularly those that see bilinguals as two monolinguals in one body. Definitions such as this privilege monolingualism by considering knowing one language to be normal. In fact, bilingualism (or trilingualism) is the norm for most of the world's population.

Class, Context, and Types of Bilingualism

Valdés (2003), in her review of competing definitions and understandings of bilingualism, concludes that "Many researchers have found it necessary to make a clear distinction between two very different types of bilinguals: (a) members of privileged groups who undertake the study of foreign languages and (b) members of minority groups who acquire the majority language in informal natural contexts and by being schooled in this language" (p. 39). Some researchers call the first type *elite/academic* bilingualism and the second type *natural* bilingualism; Valdés (1993) calls them *elective* and *circumstantial* bilingualism.

The distinctions between these two types of bilinguals are largely based on two factors: class and context. The first type of bilinguals come from a privileged social class (captured by the term elite bilingualism), one that values study of a foreign (read: exotic) language and has the financial resources to access education in that language. The second type of bilinguals are marginalized; they are often poor, having immigrated into the "circumstances" that call for them to be bilingual (captured by the term natural or circumstantial bilingualism). These people are victims of post-colonialism, of

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neoliberalism. They move as a result of the economic policies of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the forces of global capitalism (c. f. Galeano, 1997). Political and economic refugees, they are not of a privileged social class. This difference in social class is essential to understanding these two types of bilingualism.

But the two types also differ in terms of context. Second language researchers have long been fixated on the difference between learning English as a second versus foreign language. ESL, or English as a second language, has been used to describe language learning that takes place in contexts where immersion is possible, where people, according to researchers, have to navigate the world in English in order to "survive." EFL, or English as a foreign language, describes contexts of language learning where learners continue to be immersed in their first language in their everyday life outside of the classroom. Elective bilinguals are often learning EFL (or FFL, French as a foreign language, etc.) unless studying abroad. Circumstantial bilinguals are most often learning ESL. In their home contexts it is possible that they were learning EFL, but unlikely given their (often) low socioeconomic status.

Looking at Puerto Rico as a whole reveals an interesting mix of the two types of bilingualism. In terms of class, the distinction between elite/academic bilingualism and natural bilingualism applies. Bilingual immersion schools are available to upper-class Puerto Ricans with the economic resources to afford tuition. In these schools students learn English much like an English-speaking Canadian learns French in an immersion school. At the end of the day, they go back out into the Spanish-speaking world, but in school they develop high levels of academic proficiency in English. Natural bilingualism, on the other hand, is seen in the lower classes. Poor Puerto Ricans often travel between the States and the island, and they bring English that they learn back with them. This

was the case in Ramona, where there were many return-migrant bilinguals, such as Paco. Poor Puerto Ricans also have to negotiate text in English, as illustrated in this study. Participants in Ramona acquired English in formal and informal natural contexts and by being schooled in the language, just as Valdés outlines in her definition above. Texts in English surfaced across domains ranging from bureaucratic (quite formal) to entertainment (quite informal). And, of course, participants in Ramona had learned and were learning English as a subject in school. But, as Valdés's definition implies, poor Puerto Ricans are marginalized. They do not have the resources to send their children to bilingual schools, and thus, as a rule, poor Puerto Ricans who have never lived in the U. S. do not have the advantages in terms of academic English as do their higher-class co-patriots.

Puerto Rican bilingualism consists of a unique mix of bilingualism in terms of context as well. As shown by the data, there is a lot of English in the environment, not only in texts but in cable TV, Hollywood movies with Spanish subtitles, and music. This is much more English in the environment than one would find French or Japanese in the United States, for example. The setting is not exactly an ESL one, where language learners are immersed in English outside of the classroom, nor is it EFL, where there is little English outside the classroom. It is an odd mixture of both, rendering the ESL/EFL distinction useless, or at least not applicable. Puerto Ricans do not fit neatly into the categories of elective or circumstantial bilinguals in terms of context. Indeed, they are perhaps both at different times, depending on the activity that they are doing. They are elective bilinguals while creating their own version of a video game in English; they are circumstantial bilinguals as they negotiate a Pell grant form. As we have been seeing all along, Puerto Ricans defy the either/or categories that reign in the metropolis. I imagine

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that there may exist a similar mix of types of bilinguals in other colonial and formerly

colonial countries. Further research needs to be done to see if similar types of bilinguals

exist in similar contexts.

Institutional Versus Community Literacy and Bilingualism

Puerto Ricans, then, exist in a context where elective and circumstantial

bilingualism are two ends of a continuum. Where they fall on the continuum while

participating in various activities in English is related to what types of practices they are

participating in. As seen in chapter 5, people's participation in English literacy practices

was patterned to a large extent by how English was wrapped up in institutions. Puerto

Ricans could be described as circumstantial bilinguals when they participated in

institutional literacy practices, such as reading the Pell grant form and reading a medical

reference letter, where they communicated with the institutions of the government and

medicine respectively. In these situations, using English looked somewhat like Valdés'

circumstantial bilinguals, negotiating English because they "have to" in order to

accomplish their goals. Elective bilingualism could be used to describe some of the

participation in community literacy practices, such as reading a web page or writing a

song. In these situations, participants use English because they want to (though this is not

so uncomplicated as it seems, since, as mentioned before, these choices are also wrapped

up in larger issues of the economy and global capitalism).

Though I am describing bilingualism in terms of a continuum, all types of

bilingualism are not created equal. In the view of institutions such as the school, elite

bilingualism is better. That is, bilingualism between Spanish and varieties of English that

are institutionally valued (the language of wider communication) is preferred by

schooling. People who are return migrants and speak, for example, English from the

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Bronx are not as institutionally rewarded for their bilingualism as elite bilinguals are. The school system, in fact, works to maintain the stratification of types of bilingualism in terms of class, if not context.

Bilingualism, Class, and Education

As I finish writing up this research, I have started teaching at The University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. Mayagüez is in the middle of the west coast of the island, and is a big town compared to Ramona, though not compared to San Juan. We do, however, get students from all over the island (though mostly from the west coast) to study here. As I work teaching English to incoming freshman, I am beginning to get a sense of the range of English expertise that students come with. Many of our English major students studied at private bilingual high schools, while most of the students who pass into the non-credit, "remedial" English course I teach have gone to public schools.

My sense, then, based on both the systematic data collection completed for this study and my perceptions from my fist year of teaching at the university, is that there are three groups in Puerto Rico that can be characterized by socio-economic status (SES), low, middle, and high, and that bilingualism looks different for these different groups. The school system itself in Puerto Rico reifies the stratification of bilingualism by social class and context. The elite upper classes, who are themselves bilingual, have the money to send their children to bilingual or English-medium private schools. There, students are taught by bilingual teachers or monolingual English-speaking teachers from the United States, who may or may not have teaching certification but who do provide a real communicative context for English speaking. These kids likely have the goal of studying at some point in their higher education careers in the U.S., and perhaps of working there

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as well. When these Puerto Ricans emigrate to the U.S., they do so as higher education students or white collar workers.

The middle classes of Puerto Ricans may have the money to send their children to private schools, but these schools are often not bilingual or English-medium. (They may be, for example, local Catholic schools.) Children may also remain in public schools. This group will target higher education and employment on the island, though some may go to the U.S. to study. Their English language education is varied, and some would struggle with academic English.

The lower classes send their children to public schools, where they will receive hit-or-miss English education. This group may be actively participating in the *vaivén*, and thus will study part of their education in the U.S. and part in Puerto Rico. Since few schools in the U.S. and in Puerto Rico are set up to "handle" these return migrants, their academic proficiency in both Spanish and English suffers. Through the experience of living in the U.S., they may become natural/circumstantial bilinguals, speaking both English and Spanish. However, since their English is most likely a variety stigmatized by the schools and other institutions, they will not get the same kind of "credit" for their bilingualism as elites.

Thus, though educational language policy in Puerto Rico mandates English language study as a subject in school from kindergarten through twelfth grade, what this actually means varies, and this variation is closely related to social class. The policy means nothing to elites who can use their financial and social status to seek out an education for their children that linguistically and socially positions them to maintain their family's social status. For the rest, English education is hit-or-miss. I kept hearing stories from people in Puerto Rico about how the effectiveness of their English teachers

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varied year-to-year. Some years they would make good advancements in English, other years they were stuck filling in blanks with no real communication. Often times people reported there was no English teacher, that she had been sick on and off all year and there was no substitute. Public school policy is mostly at fault here: there is such a shortage of English teachers that many graduate certified to teach English with an appalling lack of training, and the Puerto Rican public schools have no system for getting substitute teachers (except for long-term subs). Thus, access to English is largely institutional and class-based: elite private schools allow for much more access than public schools. Though politicians and policies give lip service to bilingualism for all citizens, they perpetuate the institutions that maintain unequal access to English.

My claims here need to be substantiated by further research. For example, it is not well documented what instructional methods are being used in different institutions, and how this, along with teacher training, might play a role in access to English. There is also much variation in the quality of both public and private schools which has also been neglected, and perhaps over-simplified here. Regardless, a hard look needs to be taken at the educational system and how it is related both to class and language. Empirical research needs to illuminate the real situation in Puerto Rico.

In Ramona, participants in this study were from the middle and lower SES groups. But at the university, students come from the high and middle SES groups. Because of the university's English requirement, students in effect get "tracked," with high SES students passing out of the required basic English courses and middle SES students getting "stuck" there. These preliminary observations about the relationship between language and social class desperately need empirical research. Are my perceptions about these three SES groups and the relationship of language to SES true? If so, how should

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public school curriculum be altered in order to better serve the middle and lower groups? Are the instructional methods different between groups and if so, does this serve to reify class differences? Is this class divide, played out in language differences, typical of other colonial and neocolonial places? Is it true that the natural bilingualism of return migrants is undervalued in Puerto Rico, and if so, what can schools do to help these students who seem to be underrepresented in post-secondary education? How might race factor into the equation? After more than one hundred years of resistance to language shift, might the new threat in Puerto Rico be diglossia, with the bilingual elites increasingly in control of the domains of life that require English, and with greater access to the types of work currently available on the island, which is increasingly technical (pharmaceuticals, bio-tech industry)? A study of language, education, and class in Puerto Rico is urgently needed to inform educational language policy.

The Politics of Bilingualism

Of course, the complexities of bilingualism in Puerto Rico and other border spaces is necessarily political. A result of the circumstances surrounding this rather complex mix of types of bilingualism is what some would term "unbalanced" linguistic knowledge. Knowledge of the colonial language is necessarily incomplete, both for linguistic and political reasons. Linguistically, lack of access to native speakers and a high occurrence of communication in the colonial language in textual form partially explains a less-than-complete set of skills in the colonial language. Politically, excellent education in the colonial language for *all* people is never the goal. If it were to occur, the colonial power would risk losing political footing. As Freire (1997) teaches us, consciousness-ization would happen, and people might have the linguistic tools needed for full political participation. Thus, colonial language education is bad by design. But knowledge of two

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linguistic systems still deserves the prestigious title of "bilingualism," as people still clearly "know two." More research is needed to paint a clearer picture of precisely what bilingualism in different colonial contexts looks like.

Indeed, the whole idea of English being "the language of something" is hegemonic, and should not go unexamined. During a presentation I gave at the Puerto Rican Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (PRTESOL) conference in 2005, I suggested to an audience of English teachers that perhaps universities should investigate using science textbooks in Spanish rather than English. One of the audience members chuckled and said that this would not work because when his students were presented with Spanish texts they found them hard to read and asked for English ones. This suggests just how normalized English text has become. Perhaps more disturbingly, it indicates that Puerto Ricans are being denied academic reading proficiency in science in their native language. By limiting the available texts to one language—the language of the colonial power—we limit the kinds of knowledge that get disseminated and made in the context. In a truly bilingual society, texts in different languages would be used for different purposes, and always with a critical eye. Bilingualism should, ideally, open up the range of text available to a person. However, in Puerto Rico (and I imagine around the world), the hegemonic privileging of English as "the language of math/science/technology" limits who gets to participate in conversations about these topics. This seemingly "natural" division of language is actually very political and reifies relations of power.

Finally, I have proposed here a close link between types of bilingualism and class, and I have also suggested that not all types of bilingualism are equally valued by institutions such as schools. Can natural and academic bilingualism in Puerto Rico ever

become equal players? As long as there is bias against certain language varieties, bilingualism with these language varieties will also be undervalued. The notion of "prestige" language varieties still holds with bilinguals. This aspect of bilingualism merits further research. How are the opportunities promised to bilinguals in Puerto Rico mitigated by the varieties of Spanish and English in the individual's repertoire? Puerto Rico would offer an ideal context in which to explore the relationship between bilingualism, language variety, and economic/social opportunity.

Conclusion: Bilingualism in the Borderlands

The in-between-ness of bilingualism in Ramona, the resistance of fitting into either-or categories, is characteristic of life in the borderlands. In the borderlands, bilingualism is natural, expected, and facilitated by border practices such as language brokering, as illustrated in chapter six. In the bilingual world of Ramona, where borders were crossed as part of daily life in interactions with English text, even institutional literacy practices looked different, as communities worked together through brokering to negotiate those practices, transforming them, in a sense, into community literacy practices. As we study bilingualism in the borderlands, then, the creativity of border spaces reinvents fixed categories of bilingualism. Categories such as elective/circumstantial shift and meld and spilt again, defying our imposed definitions. Only more research into bilingualism in other borderlands will help us understand this dynamic, moving aspect of language learning and use.

Implications for Education

La Polla (formerly known as La Polla Records), a Basque punk band, has a song about U.S. imperialism that begins, "El imperio da gratis para todos las primeras lecciones en inglés" (The empire gives the first English lessons to everyone for free). The

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implication is that after that, you are on your own. As outlined in the literature review, colonial educational language policy does not always impose the colonial language, it also can withhold it. It is a catch-22: imposing English is cultural and linguistic imperialism, but withholding it prevents access to information and discourages political action. The history of Americanization through the school system in Puerto Rico has made people wary of English instruction, and rightfully so. However, providing less than excellent English education is politically silencing Puerto Ricans, and cutting them off from information that could help them participate more directly in debates about their future. That is why I advocate for an educational language policy that teaches English critically, and with an eye towards participation in a global conversation. Currently, English language educational policy in Puerto Rico does not take advantage of the linguistic resources of the community. Nor does it take advantage of the student's own use of and interest in English outside of class. The result for most students is an English education that is spotty at best, boring and torturous at worst. The following recommendations for English language policy and teaching are made in light of the findings of this study.

Build on Non-school Practices in the Classroom

I recommend an educational language policy based on a critical reading of the types of texts and communicative acts that occur in English in the setting (c.f. Hull & Schultz, 2002). In their free time, I saw students participate in the following English literacy practices that I think can be used in the English classroom: reading web pages about pop music, cartoons, cars and other things; designing video games that included titles and plots in English; writing songs; playing video games that relied on reading English text; writing a fan letter to an American movie star. Now, people may dismiss the idea of, for example, a project in which kids have to design the web page of a pop star in

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English. The act of bringing a fun, non-school practice into the academic world may immediately make it un-fun and school like, one might criticize. However, I believe that projects like this would work for English language teaching in Puerto Rico (and other colonial settings) because they follow the community's real-life experiences with what types of texts are in English and what types of text are in Spanish. Why would one read a story in English, for example, if outside of school stories are in Spanish? There is no authentic communicative need. But web pages are in English. It makes sense to create such a text, or read such texts, because they are expected to be in English. This reading and writing of English texts must always take place in the context of analysis of why these particular texts are in English and not in Spanish, explicitly exploring what is "normal."

That sounds great, but what will students do with their knowledge of web pages and video games when they have to read an accounting text book? That is where the critical part comes in. In the process of a web page project, for example, teachers need to emphasize academic language skills that transfer, such as awareness of audience, knowledge of genre, and how to analyze text to understand the genre's requirements. Just as in any language learning activity, teachers will talk about new and specialized vocabulary, and sentence structures needed to complete the task. Development of these meta-language skills in junior high would give high school teachers a good base to build on when moving toward more advanced English projects, and students would have a skill set that involved a level of critical thinking that they can transfer to future work in English.

This type of curriculum would require excellent teacher training. Teachers would have to buy in to the idea of using what students already know. They would have to be trained to look past "my students don't know anything" and be given the skills to identify

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holes in their student's English knowledge. To do the kinds of projects based on the

literacy practices that I saw, schools would need computer resources. In schools with no

resources, teachers would need to act as ethnographers to see what it is students are doing

outside of class with English if they don't have access to a computer. The point is looking

out into the community and building on what the community normally does in English.

The data here show that where there's a will there's a way, and even students who were

novice English users could participate in English literacy practices. The key is finding out

what those practices are in one's own community and making a curriculum that builds on

these. Current Puerto Rican language policy actually allows and encourages this, but

teachers are not trained to do it. The policy is very vague, and in that way encourages

ground-up curriculum design. Without trained teachers, however, the cycle of recitation

and copying in the English classroom will continue.

A Caveat on Cultural Exchange: Cultural Imports and Exports

There is a rather glaring problem with this recommendation, however. Let's look

at the products that young people are consuming in English in Puerto Rico: Britney

Spears, Ford low-riders, the SIMS videogames, Hollywood movies. All of them are

products of the metropolis, of a culture that glorifies blond hair and blue eyes,

consumerism. So isn't studying these products just another, perhaps more insidious, type

of Americanization? Well, yes. That's why any use of these commodities in the

classroom has to be accompanied by critical analysis and critique. One way to start such

a dialog in a Puerto Rican classroom would be to look at the types of pop commodities

exported by the U.S. to Puerto Rico versus those from Puerto Rico taken up in the U.S.

One could certainly argue that Daddy Yankee and Ricky Martin have reached heights of

popularity among mainstream U.S. consumers, just as Britney Spears has in Puerto Rico.

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But a look at who gets taken up and who does not would reveal interesting patterns, and Puerto Ricans are uniquely situated to make such an analysis. Ricky Martin, a light-skinned Puerto Rican who sings about love, is a "safe" cultural import and hit it big in the U.S., but Tego Calderon, who is black with an afro, who sings about his blackness and the oppression of dark-skinned Afro-Puerto Ricans, is not. It is this type of dialog that needs to be opened up around the use of any English text in order to avoid simply repeating an Americanization policy.

In addition, language policy and educational practices must strive to make Puerto Rican youngsters creators of popular culture, not just consumers. Currently in Puerto Rico, there is a great emphasis inside the classroom on reading. Productive of language get overlooked. Thus students see English as something forced upon them; they are not encouraged in education to take English up and make it their own, populating it with their own intentions (though some certainly do anyway). This productive aspect of language learning cannot be ignored. The cue should be taken from Lani, who not only played video games but designed them, not only listening to songs but wrote them.

Creating Spaces for Borders to Be Crossed

As argued in the last chapter, the findings of this study show that language learning takes place when people have access to other community members with whom they can exchange and develop their knowledge of English. This means opening up schools to the community through programs such as María's Title V grant, which created a way for community members to enter into the life of the school. The simple presence of people with different linguistic toolkits in a space that encourages their exchange of ideas provides opportunities for language brokering to occur. These language brokering events in turn develop both the English and Spanish of participants as they negotiate English

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text. The more schools can create programs such as these, the more opportunities students have to develop linguistically.

Further Research

Much of the research into language and education has been conducted in the United States or other metropolis countries. I am arguing for more research on language and education from colonies and former colonies because, as I hope I have demonstrated, that research will teach us something different about the nature of language. I hope that I have shown here that in Puerto Rico brokering looks different, bilingualism looks different, relationships between language and identity look different. Only by studying in different contexts can we round out what we know about language learning. The body of research is now severely biased towards the U.S. context. Though researchers have done a good job making knowledge about minority language populations in the U.S., until we broaden our scope to other contexts we continue to make knowledge that favors particular ways of being over others.

The most pressing research needed in the Puerto Rican context is a study of language, education, and class. How is the Puerto Rican system stratified in terms of both language and class? How do these two factors work together to reify social equalities? What language skills and resources are being ignored or undervalued, and how is this related to language variety and class? How is bilingualism in different language varieties of Spanish and English differently valued by institutions such as school? Research about bilingualism in Puerto Rico should also be compared to research in other colonial and former colonial contexts in an attempt to describe different types of bilingualism in a global context.

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Research linking ethnographic work with curriculum design and implementation is also needed, so as not to make knowledge in a vacuum. It is the responsibility of ethnographic researchers who want to influence education to work towards improving the educational systems they study not in twenty years, but for the very participants with whom they worked. Researchers must collaborate with teachers to revise curricula and implement new programs or techniques, and work collaboratively with educators to document and publish these innovations.

Finally, I think that the link between English language learning and technology needs to be explored more deeply in the Puerto Rican context. How do young people leverage what they have learned about English through computers and video games in their academic work in English, and vice versa? How do teachers build on kids' technological uses of English? In short, how do outside-of-school (often technology-mediated) uses of English work together with in-school English learning to promote English language development?

Conclusion: Demythologizing *el Difícil*

English is nicknamed *el difícil* (the difficult one) in Puerto Rico. The implication is that it is so difficult that Puerto Ricans never really master it. The language people in Ramona used to describe their English expertise indicated this: Estoy masticandolo/I'm chewing it; Quiero dominarlo/ I want to dominate it; Me defendo/I defend myself [against it]; Estoy peliando con el/I'm fighting with it. In short, people not satisfied with their English expertise were "en la lucha," or in the struggle to learn it better. And this learning was characterized as a fight, where one needed to defend oneself, to struggle in order to dominate that language that, in contrast to Spanish's easy roll-off-the-tongue, sounded like one was chewing each word. Do monolingual English speakers in the

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United States think of learning Spanish this way? Do they think of learning Spanish at all? In fact, I have heard Spanish characterized as "easy" by people who do not speak it. The implication is that you have to be smart to speak English, but not to speak Spanish. What this reveals is a lack of education about language, both in Puerto Rico and in the United States. Despite great advances in the field of linguistics in the past fifty years, the average public school student does not understand what it means to learn a language. According to participants, *el difícil* was so because of some characteristic of Puerto Ricans (presumably a deficiency) that made it hard for them to learn English. In general, people were not aware that learning language is difficult for everyone, that everyone struggles, makes mistakes, embarrasses themselves—that this very struggle *is* language learning. There is no other way. The data here show the great amount of English that participants in Ramona knew, but also raises questions about how schools serve to propagate the notion of English as difficult by not acknowledging community uses of English, by relegating English to a "special" class, by not teaching what it really means to learn a language.

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