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## Linguistic Terrorism in the Borderlands: Language Ideologies in the Narratives of Young Adults in the Rio Grande Valley

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Linguistic terrorism in the borderlands:

Language ideologies in the narratives of young adults in the Rio Grande Valley

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**Title:** Linguistic terrorism in the borderlands: Language ideologies in the narratives of young adults in the Rio Grande Valley

**Abstract:**

In the US/Mexico borderlands, local language varieties face frequent discrimination and delegitimization, described by Anzaldúa (1987) as ‘linguistic terrorism.’ The present study uses the three-level positioning framework (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) to analyze how young adults in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) in south Texas construct borderland identities by positioning themselves with respect to ‘linguistic terrorism’ in sociolinguistic interviews. In their narratives, young adults enact, ascribe, and accept but also reject, subvert, and reconstitute language ideologies, including national identities, raciolinguistic ideologies, and standard language ideologies. An understanding of these multiple and contradictory borderland positionalities holds important implications for critical language awareness as a way for language educators to counter ‘linguistic terrorism’ in both physical and metaphorical borderlands.

**Keywords:** positioning, narrative, language ideologies, raciolinguistics, critical language awareness, standard language ideology, linguistic discrimination

## 1. Introduction

The present study examines borderland identities through an analysis of how young adults in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) position themselves in narratives about ‘linguistic terrorism’ (Anzaldúa, 1987). The article begins with an overview of the sociolinguistic and historical context, followed by a theorization of ‘linguistic terrorism’ and a review of scholarship. Subsequent sections detail the methods and analysis of the study, and the discussion examines the potential role of critical language awareness for language educators in physical and metaphorical borderlands.

The RGV is situated in South Texas along the Rio Grande River, which forms a national border between the U.S. and Mexico. The region is home to a predominantly Latinx<sup>i</sup> and Spanish-speaking population. In 2010, 90% of the total population was Hispanic (U.S. Census Bureau [USCB], 2010a), and an average of 78.2% of individuals across the region reportedly spoke a language other than English at home (USCB, 2010b). The region is further characterized by recurrent contact between newly arrived immigrants, individuals who have lived in the community for decades, and *transfronteriz@s* (Zentella, 2013), who frequently travel between Mexico and the U.S.

Following the Mexican American War in 1848, Mexican Americans in the RGV lost most of their property and faced extreme racism, violence, and extortion (Richardson & Pisani, 2017). Speaking Spanish was discouraged and linked to ‘failure’ in schools (Armour, 1933), and these perceptions led to school segregation, implicit ‘No Spanish Rules’ (US Commission of Civil Rights, 1972), and punishments for speaking Spanish (Hurtado & Rodríguez, 1989). The

Civil Rights movement brought about change in this area, including the Texas Bilingual Education and Training Act of 1973 (Texas Education Agency [TEA], Institute for Second Language Achievement, & Advocacy Systems for Education, 2006). Still, many of these policies resulted in transitional bilingual programs, created to move children to English-only classrooms as soon as possible (TEA et al., 2006). More recently, a growing number of dual language programs in the area are supporting Spanish language maintenance (Taylor, 2018). This history of linguistic oppression and discrimination has had long-lasting effects on identity, education and language ideologies in this border region.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) describes her experience growing up in the RGV and defines ‘linguistic terrorism’ as the hostility Chicanos face from both English and Spanish speakers about their bilingual language varieties. Anzaldúa recounts how English speakers punished her for using Spanish in public school and forced her to take speech classes to eliminate her accent at college. Yet, she also describes how Spanish speakers criticized her Chicano Spanish as ‘deficient,’ describing it as deviant from standard academic rules:

*Deslenguadas. Somos los del español deficiente.* [Ones without tongues. We are those of the deficient Spanish.] We are your linguistic nightmare, your linguistic aberration, your linguistic *mestisaje* [mixture], the subject of your *burla* [jokes]. Because we speak with tongues of fire we are culturally crucified. Racially, culturally, and linguistically *somos huérfanos* [we are orphans]- we speak an orphan tongue. (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 34)

Anzaldúa’s depiction of Chicano speakers as ‘linguistic orphans’ depicts how they face discrimination from both sides, English and Spanish speakers.

Many scholars have applied Anzaldúa's (1987) theorization of 'linguistic terrorism' in diverse fields, such as women and gender studies (Cantú, 2011), education (Diaz Soto & Kharem, 2006), literature (Herrera-Sobek, 2006), critical race studies (Martínez, 1999), and Mexican American Studies (Álvarez, 2013). Such authors use this term to discuss issues of linguistic discrimination and oppression with Anzaldúa's unique border theory lens. As an RGV native, Anzaldúa's 'linguistic terrorism' is particularly meaningful in *this* borderland context.

In this study, language ideologies are defined as "beliefs, or feelings, about languages as used in their social worlds" (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 498). They are further understood as multiple and contradictory in communities (Kroskrity, 2004) and within individual speakers (Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Martínez, 2013). The following narratives are shown as active sites for the construction of borderland identities as individuals (re)position themselves with regard to language ideologies, such as national identities, raciolinguistic ideologies, and standard language ideology. In these "spaces between worlds" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 1), national identities are often exaggerated, and individuals who perceive themselves as belonging to a certain nation-state bound collective manifest this belief through social practices, such as speaking a certain language or identifying with certain culturally-relevant symbols (Wodak et. al, 2009, p. 29). Just as national identities conflate perceived nationalities and language, raciolinguistic ideologies "conflate certain racialized bodies with linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 150). Beliefs that certain physical features equate to certain ways of speaking are highly problematic. Similarly problematic is standard language ideology, a belief that there is one true, correct form. This ideology leads individuals "to stigmatize particular linguistic practices perceived as deviating from prescriptive norms" (Rosa, 2016a, p.

161). In these narratives, ‘standard Spanish’ uninfluenced by English is idealized, and Chicano Spanish is stigmatized. It is important to note that it is not only outsiders who enact linguistic terrorism. Chicano speakers themselves often internalize pervasive negative language ideologies (Anzaldúa, 1987; Toribio, 2002). In this way, friends, family and Chicano speakers themselves may engage in ‘linguistic terrorism.’ Standard language ideology is also often closely linked to the practice of ‘language policing’ (Blommaert et. al, 2009), or “the orderly management, negotiation and (re)construction of norms for language choice and use” (Leppänen & Piirainen-Marsh, 2009, p. 262), which can occur on both individual and institutional levels.

### **3. Literature Review**

Without using the term ‘linguistic terrorism,’ many researchers have examined these themes. Linguistic discrimination and oppression in school policies and practices in the Southwest are widely documented (Cole & Johnson, 2013; MacGregor-Mendoza, 2000; Rosa, 2016a, 2016b; Villa, 2002). Outside of school, linguistic discrimination has been considered in the workplace (Barrett, 2006), in court cases (Lippi-Green, 2011), in newspapers (Santa Ana, 1999), and in the media (Hill, 1999).

Scholars have also analyzed these themes in the context of narratives. In an analysis of narratives among Latin American immigrant women, De Fina and King (2011) find that ‘language conflict’ indicates broader conflict between racial/ethnic groups. Yet, they also note that while the women confirmed and reproduced dominant language ideologies, they also used narrative as a form of resistance against their marginalization (De Fina & King, 2011). Similarly, Christoffersen and Shin (2018) examine how older adult New Mexican Spanish speakers negotiate ethnic identities through narratives. One participant recounted how his teachers

explicitly enforced an “English only” ideology. Despite this rhetoric, the participants used narratives to reject ethnic identities ascribed to them by others and enact identities on their own terms. In a study of linguistic discrimination in the narratives of Latino college students, Rojas-Sosa (2015) reveals that the participants did not overtly qualify these situations as ‘racism’ or ‘discrimination,’ which she suggests may be due to internalized discourses of the denial of racism. Although it was not defined as such, each of these studies depict examples of ‘linguistic terrorism’ in narratives; and in each, language ideologies play a significant role. The present study investigates the language ideologies and ‘linguistic terrorism’ unique to the context of the borderlands, where language policing is experienced by Chicano speakers from both English and Spanish speakers.

#### **4. Methods**

The Corpus Bilingüe del Valle (CoBiVa) [Bilingual Corpus of the Valley] (Christoffersen & Bessett, 2019) documents the language varieties spoken throughout the RGV through sociolinguistic interviews (Labov, 1972a), the goal of which is to elicit natural and informal speech. Trained contributors and research assistants conduct hour-long interviews on various conversational topics with community members who are recruited through convenience sampling. Language-related topics are discussed during the last ten minutes, since heightened awareness of language may impact the participant’s speech. After the interview, participants fill out demographic information and a Bilingual Language Profile (BLP) (adapted from Birdsong, Gertken, & Amengual, 2012; Carvalho, 2012). The BLP collects self-reported data on the participants’ Linguistic History, Language Use, Competency, and Attitudes (See excerpts in Tables 1, 2, and 3). The interviewers also provide demographic information, including an open-



ended evaluation of their language abilities and an open-ended description of ethnicity.

Responses to all sections of these documents are optional, and the participants' audio recording, transcription, and documentation are de-identified.

Table 1. Language Competency

III. Competency	<i>(0=not very well 6= very well)</i>
12. a. How well do you speak Spanish?	
b. How well do you speak English?	

Table 2. Language Attitudes

IV. Attitudes	<i>0=disagree 6=agree</i>
16. a. I feel myself when I speak in Spanish.	
b. I feel myself when I speak in English.	

Table 3. Language Use

II. Language Use	Spanish	English
7. In a normal week, what percent of the time do you use the following languages with your friends?		
8. In a normal week, what percent of the time do you use the following languages with your family?		

For this study, the last ten minutes of the interviews, in which participants discussed language-related issues, were analyzed for 30 interviews in the corpus.<sup>ii</sup> 'Linguistic terrorism' was identified as a reference to language as the basis for overt or subtle, verbal or physical aggression. Based on this definition, 14 interviews referenced linguistic terrorism, and five of these included narrative accounts. This was based on De Fina's (2009) theorization that narrative accounts:

- (a) are recapitulations of past experience told in response to explicit or implicit interviews' evaluative inquiries,
- (b) involve explanations,
- (c) are recipient designed,
- (d) are generally oriented toward factuality, and

- (e) have a structure that varies considerably as it emerges as the result of the specific questions asked and the relationship between interlocutors. (King & Puntí, 2012, p. 238)

There were three narratives from young adults (18-25 years old) and two from older adults. This study focuses on the three young adults' narratives based on their potential to provide insight for borderland identities in language education. (See Table 4 for details on the participants.)

Table 4. Demographic Information on Selected Participants from the CoBiVa Corpus

<i>Corpus ID</i>	<i>Alias</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Mother's Birthplace</i>	<i>Father's Birthplace</i>
COBIVA007	Mayte	Nuevo León, Mexico	F	22	Mexico	Mexico
COBIVA011	Ana	Brownsville, TX	F	20	Mexico	Mexico
COBIVA012	Victor	McAllen, TX	M	25	Mexico	Texas

Initially, the storyworlds within the narratives were analyzed based on the following categories set forth by Labov (1972b) and described by De Fina & King (2011):

- Abstract: presents the gist of the narrative
- Orientation: presents details on time, persons, and places
- Complicating action: presents conflicts between characters and subsequent actions
- Coda: a closing utterance that relates past events to the present establishing connections between past and present, for example consequences
- Evaluation: presents the point of view of the narrator about the events (p. 169).

As narratives serve an important role in argumentation (De Fina, 2000), particular attention was attributed to how the narratives function as evidence for claims (Günthner, 1995) and contribute to a general thesis (Carranza, 1999), also referred to as 'exempla' (Martin & Plum, 1997).

Then, the analysis followed the three-level positioning framework (Bamberg, 2003; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). This framework is based on Davies & Harré's (1990)

positioning, which marked a shift in narrative analysis away from a static ‘role’ to a more discursive construction of a diversity of selves by a ‘choosing subject.’ Positioning Level 1 is the analysis of the relationships between the characters in the storyworld along with their events, settings and circumstances. Positioning Level 2 is the context of the interaction between the narrator(s) and interlocutor(s). Lastly, Positioning Level 3 analyzes how narrator(s) position themselves with regards to ‘dominant discourses’ or ‘master narratives,’ or powerful and pervasive language ideologies in society.

## 5. Narratives and Analysis

### *Narrative 1: National Identities*

The first narrative is from Mayte who was born in Nuevo León, Mexico and moved to Brownsville, Texas when she was five years old. Her parents were also born in Mexico, and Spanish is their dominant language. Mayte rates her language speaking ability as 3 in Spanish and 6 in English (0= not very good, 6= very good), although she acquired Spanish from birth and learned English at age four. Mayte reports that she speaks Spanish 30% of the time with her friends, and 80% of the time with her family. She travels to Mexico about four times a year and receives visitors from Mexico approximately three times a year. Mayte’s friend and classmate, David, interviewed her. He rated his Spanish speaking competency as ‘excellent.’

(1) “Mi bandera es la de México.”: Mayte (M) and David (D)

- 1        D:        In school, did the teachers ever correct the s- the way you speak (1.0)  
2                    or the way you spoke?  
3        M:        Ye:a:h?  
4                    Well, when I was younger,  
5                    Actually no.  
6                    When I was younger, when I came from Monterrey, it took me one, two, three, four,

7 It took me four years to start speaking Sp- English.  
8 Cuz I was like, “I ain’t gonna speak English. Like. I am a Mexican.”  
9 Actually when I was a little girl in pre-K,  
10 I didn’t like standing up, for the pledge of allegiance.  
11 D: hhh  
12 M: And like they would be like, “Get up!”  
13 D: hhh  
14 M: *¿Por qué no te paras?¿*  
[Why don’t you stand up?!”]  
15 D: hhh  
16 M: And I’m like, “*Esa no es mi bandera.*  
[“That’s not my flag.]  
17 D: hhh  
18 M: *Mi bandera es la de México.*”  
[My flag is the Mexico flag.”]  
19 M: hhh Like hhh that’s so funny. I would get in trouble.  
20 And then, it was- it wasn’t until second grade that a teacher like she spoke to me.  
21 And she was like, “I don’t understand. Why do you-, like why,  
22 I’m asking you in English, why do you reply in Spanish?”  
23 And I was like, “*No sé.*” Like “*Porque sí.*”  
[“I don’t know.”] [“Just because.”]  
24 And then like  
25 D: hhh  
26 M: And then she- I don’t even remember what she told me.  
27 But after that one talk, like I started speaking English.  
28 Like I knew English. I knew how to speak it.  
29 I just didn’t want to. Like I had like a pride thing.  
30 Like I was like, “No!”  
31 But um no- like, in English, my English was pretty good.  
32 Like I never really needed help in translating?  
33 (2.0) Probably?  
34 My Spanish is the one where like-  
35 when I had my *tía* was my Spanish teacher for Spanish literature,  
[aunt]  
36 she was like, “*Mayte, ¿cómo cómo estás diciéndome eso? Acabas de decir parqueadero.*  
[“Mayte, how are you saying this to me? You just said parqueadero.”]  
37 D: hhh  
38 M: *¿Esa no es una palabra!*”  
[That is not a word!”]  
39 And I’m like, “*Ok, tía, perdó:n.*”  
[“Ok, aunt, sorry.”]  
40 But yeah, yeah.

Here Mayte elaborates three distinct narrative sequences, or storyworlds, as she develops her argument and answers David's question in the storytelling world: pre-K (lines 1-19), second grade (lines 20-33), and Spanish literature class (lines 34-40). The storyworld (Level 1) of the first narrative sequence includes an abstract that summarizes the main thesis: Pre-K Mayte didn't speak Spanish because of her Mexican identity (line 8). The complicating action is presented when Pre-K Mayte doesn't stand for the pledge of allegiance (line 10). Within this storyworld sequence, Mayte presents a 'they' who yell at Pre-K Mayte for not standing up: "Get up! *¡¿Por qué no te paras?! [Why don't you stand up?]*" (line 12). It is not clear whether 'they' are teachers, students, or others in the classroom, but through the language alternation in the quoted speech, Mayte positions 'them' as bilingual, whether individually or collectively. In contrast, Mayte positions 'Pre-K Mayte' as Mexican and a Spanish-speaker, describing her pride in the Mexican flag (line 16) and her preference for the Spanish language due to its relation to Mexico: "I ain't gonna speak English. Like. I am a Mexican." (line 8). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Mayte sequence, the complicating action is the teacher asking Mayte why she replies in Spanish (lines 21-22). Mayte positions 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Mayte as bilingual, with a preference for speaking Spanish, demonstrated in her Spanish reply to this question (line 23). Mayte also positions the teacher as bilingual, at least receptively, and an arbiter of language choice, suggesting that English should be responded to with English. Mayte at first positions 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Mayte as an individual who chose to speak and respond in Spanish at school, but in a coda, Mayte positions a Later 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Mayte who starts speaking English after the teacher spoke to her (line 27). The last narrative sequence is presented as an argument that it was not Mayte's English but her Spanish that was corrected by her teachers (line 34). In this storyworld, Mayte positions her aunt as an arbiter of

proper language use and Mayte is positioned as a novice or substandard Spanish speaker, because she uses a term which is declared to be ‘not a word’ (line 38).

In the storytelling world (Level 2), Mayte is a dramatic storyteller; she uses distinct voices for each of the characters, a high pitch for the reported speech of ‘they’ in pre-K, and a lower tone for pre-K Mayte’s response. Her aunt’s reported speech (lines 36, 38) is lower and spoken quickly, with a sense of immediacy. Spanish Class Mayte’s apology is spoken in a sheepish, lower tone and at a slightly slower speed. All of this adds to the comic frame that Mayte creates for this narrative event, evidenced by her loud laughter and comment “Like that’s so funny” (line 19) as well as David’s responsive laughter throughout the event. At this level, it is also possible to analyze the relation of Mayte’s positioning in each narrative sequence and the formulation of the overall response. Although at first she responds ‘Ye:a:h’ (line 3) with a drawn out tone suggesting that it is obvious, she switches her response to ‘actually no’ (line 5), using the Pre-K and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade narratives as evidence that her English was “pretty good” (line 31) and thus didn’t need correction, although this is rather hesitant and characterized by rising intonations and hedging (lines 32, 33). In the last narrative, Mayte changes her response back to a ‘yeah’ (line 40), after she recounts an exemplum of her aunt and Spanish teacher correcting her Spanish. Her stated argument is that her English was good, and it was her Spanish that needed correcting, and thus her Spanish teacher was the teacher who corrected her. Her aunt’s critique (line 36, 38) is an exemplum in response to David’s question about teachers correcting her.

Mayte’s diverse positionalities relate to various societal discourses (Level 3). Pre-K constructs the concept of a national identity in several ways. Her use of a non-specific indexical ‘they’ (line 12) highlights an ideological distance between ‘their’ language ideologies and those

of pre-K Mayte. Pre-K Mayte further invokes the Herderian ideology of “one nation, one language, one people” (Hobsbawn, 1990; Bourdieu, 1991; Woolard, 1998) as she conflates Spanish with a Mexican identity (line 8). Mayte describes this as a choice related to language pride (Martínez, 2006), and unrelated to English proficiency (lines 28, 29). The criticism of Mayte’s Spanish in the last narrative sequence harkens notions of linguistic purism (Dorian, 1994) and standard language ideology (Lippi-Green, 2011), which suggest that there is one true pure and idealized form of a given language. The term ‘parquero’ is a very common borrowing in Mexican American Spanish, especially throughout the US/Mexico border region. Mayte’s aunt engages in “dialect dissing” (Zentella, 2002), as she elevates the status of an ‘idealized’ standard Spanish while diminishing the value of Mexican American varieties of Spanish or Chicano ‘dialects.’

### *Narrative 2: Raciolinguistic Ideologies*

The next narrative comes from Victor who was born in McAllen, Texas. His mother was born in Mexico, while his father was born in the U.S. He rated his Spanish speaking competency as 3 and English as 6 (0 = not very good, 6 = very good). Although he was exposed to both Spanish and English languages from birth, he had never taken a class in Spanish, and he described his language use with his friends as 95% English and 5% Spanish. With his family, Victor reported speaking English 85% of the time. Victor rated the statement “I feel myself when I speak Spanish” at 1 and “I feel myself when I speak English” at 6 (0= disagree and 6= agree). In the narrative below, Karen, a close friend who rated her own Spanish speaking competency as ‘moderately good,’ asked Victor whether he speaks Spanish.

(2) “I’m a little white, I’m a coconut.”: Victor (V) and Karen (K)

- 1 V: I, I understand it fine.  
2 Uh, with certain people I can s:pea:k it.  
3 K: Uh-huh.  
4 V: But the reason why I'm so uh self-conscious with myself that like-  
5 with someone I don't know.  
6 K: Mhm.  
7 V: Or like, I get (1.0) ((sigh))  
8 It's like a mind thing with me like.  
9 I'll start forgetting words or I'll mess up on grammar and then I start stuttering.  
10 K: Uh-[huh  
11 V: So] I won't do it.  
12 So like, if I'm talking with my stepmom or uh friends I know like  
13 or someone I know who won't call me out on bullshit cause they-  
14 I know they know nothing.  
15 K: Uh-huh.  
16 V: So like if I'm in front of Andrew or Mark, like I'll speak it fine,  
17 like they won't know when I mess up.  
18 K: Yeah.  
19 V: Or whatever, like I'm fine.  
20 Or like if I speak it with my stepmom,  
21 like we kinda have a thing,  
22 like we kinda understand each other.  
23 'Cause when she was learning English,  
24 she some- sometimes messes up on words. (2.0)  
25 And like I'll sometimes mess up on words.  
26 So we just kind of help each other, so that's fine.  
27 But like, if like I go like order food like somewhere,  
28 I know what I'm saying but you'll just see me like stutter,  
29 I'm like, "Aye (1.0) umm hmm eh ((sighs)) pue- ah fuck."  
[“Oh] [we- ] ((false start))  
30 K: hhh  
31 V: “Do- dos”  
[Tw- two]  
32 And like, it's a simple word.  
33 It's like uno dos tres cuatro.  
[one two three four]  
34 But like (1.0)  
35 when I'm trying to say it because I'm so: nervous.  
36 Like, “Don't fuck up, don't fuck up don't fuck up.”  
37 It's like, “Dos, tacos de (1.0) de papa, co-”  
[“Two, tacos of (1.0) of potato, wi-”  
38 And like, I'm like, “Jesus! I sound so fucking white!”  
39 K: Yeah.  
40 V: But yeah.  
41 K: So do you think there's like a judgment



42           like, that comes along with Spanish?  
43       V:     A little bit, because like, especially down here like  
44           if you like mis-, misspeak Spanish,  
45           like, “*Aye* you sound like a *gringo*.”  
              [“Oh]                           [white North American/Anglo/Yankee]  
46           Like “Okay, thanks. I’m a little white, I’m a coconut.”

Here Victor elaborates several storyworlds as examples of typical, frequent or example situations through the use of the future continuous (‘I’ll start forgetting,’ line 9), future (‘I’ll mess up,’ line 9), present tense, and hypothetical (‘if I’m talking,’ line 12). The abstract for the overall narrative is that Typical Victor doesn’t speak Spanish with people he doesn’t know (lines 4-5), and it is followed by explanations and reasons for this language choices. In several short storyworlds, Victor positions his stepmom, friends, Andrew, and Mark as benevolent characters who either a) won’t recognize Typical Victor’s Spanish mistakes (his friends, Andrew, and Mark), or b) will help him (his stepmom). Victor then introduces the taco order narrative sequence preceded by ‘but’ (line 27), a conjunction signaling a contrast with the previous information. This narrative sequence is not an account of a single event but an exemplar of going out to eat somewhere that he’ll need to order in Spanish. Victor positions Taco Order Victor as an insecure Spanish speaker through reported speech including false starts (line 29), fillers (line 29), pauses (line 29, 37), and repairs (lines 29, 33). In a response to Karen’s follow-up question about judgment that comes along with Spanish’ (lines 41-42), Victor positions people ‘down here’ as judgmental. Although no specific subject is mentioned, Victor reports their speech in “*Aye* you sound like a *gringo*” (line 45). The code-switching serves to identify these individuals as proficient Spanish speakers. Victor positions Judged Victor as resigned to a situation that he cannot do anything to prevent, through his quick, quiet response. He further positions Judged

Victor as agentive, creating a bicultural identity through the use of the coconut metaphor, which will be discussed further below.

At the interactional level, this narrative event is based on Karen's question of whether he speaks Spanish. Instead of a short response, Victor explains when he speaks Spanish, with whom he speaks Spanish, why he does or doesn't speak Spanish with certain individuals, and he describes what it is like for him in situations where he speaks Spanish. This in-depth and personal response is allowed by the fact that these two are close friends who are close in age. During Victor's narrative, Karen responds intermittently, showing empathy and active listening.

Victor's narrative demonstrates 'linguistic terrorism' from other Spanish speakers and himself through the internalization of a standard language ideology and raciolinguistic ideologies. His comment, 'I sound so fucking white' (line 38) and the constructed speech "you sound like a gringo" (line 45) clearly demonstrate "looking like a language, sounding like a race" (Rosa, 2018, p.2). Although Victor self-identifies as Hispanic, he experiences a situation described as "the incident" in mixed-race studies (Wallace, 2002), in which an individual is confronted with an attempted erasure or challenged to defend their ethnic identity (line 45). Victor responds to "the incident," positioning himself as bicultural, Mexican and American. The quick and quiet rhythm of this response suggests that he has used this metaphor before. As a Hispanic individual with one parent born in Mexico and the other in the U.S., this metaphor demonstrates his dual racial/ethnic and linguistic borderlands identity. Victor describes himself as a fruit that is white inside with a brown outer shell. He may even be comparing the brown skin of the coconut to his phenotype and the white inside to his language abilities. Victor's narrative demonstrates how individuals who do not fit common generalizations of phenotype and language

use are frequently faced with the decision of whether to accept or challenge other-ascriptions of identity (Bailey, 2000). The ‘Ok, thanks’ seems as if Victor accepts this identity, but Victor actually rejects the other-ascription through the coconut metaphor, suggesting that he is both (lines 38, 46).

### *Narrative 3: Standard Language Ideologies & Critical Language Awareness*

The last narrative is from Ana, a 20-year-old who was born in Brownsville, TX. Both of her parents were born in Matamoros, Mexico. She rated her Spanish oral proficiency at 4 and her English oral proficiency at 6 (0= not very well and 6= very well). In response to “I feel myself when I speak Spanish” and “I feel myself when I speak English,” Ana responded with 6 for both (0 = disagree and 6= agree). With her friends, Ana reported speaking 20% Spanish and 80% English during a normal week. With her family, she reported speaking 50% Spanish and 50% English. This interview was also conducted by Ana’s friend David, the same student who interviewed Mayte. In the excerpt below, David asked whether anything about the way some people speak bothers Ana.

(3) “Pero es lo mi::s:mo.”: Ana (A) and Eduardo (E)

- 1     A:     Tengo que pensar  
2     D:     hhh  
3     A:     si hay algo que que me fastidie que digan. (1.0)  
4     No.  
5     Pero mi mejor amiga se enoja conmigo todo el tiempo porque (0.5)  
6     que hablo como que medio *Spanglish*. (1.0)  
7     Y luego a propósito.  
8     Como ahorita estoy haciendo el esfue::rzo  
9     D:     [hhh  
10    A:     de] quiero hablar en español bien.  
11            Y con mi mamá siempre le hablo bien porque mi mamá  
12            ((gasp)) ¡Nombre! Si le hablo *Spanglish* volvé↑rí::a loca.  
13    D:     hhh

- 14 A: Pero con ella, como es mi amiga, (1.0)  
15 me vale. (0.5)  
16 D: Mhm.  
17 A: Y yo me pongo a hablar en *Spanglish*,  
18 todo lo que quiero. ((whispered)) (1.0)  
19 Pero ella sí se enoja y se corrige  
20 como que no le guste.  
21 Y así que, “Así no se dice”  
22 D: hhh  
23 A: “Se dice así.”  
24 Yo le digo, “Pero es lo mi::s:mo.”  
25 D: hhh  
26 A: Me entendi[es  
27 D: Pe]ro me entendiste.  
28 A: Sí, ahora yo le digo,  
29 “Pero me entendiste, ¿no?”  
30 So no. No creo que me fastidie,  
31 pero también creo que es porque ahora estoy tomando muchas clases de lingüística.  
32 Como que estoy aprendiendo más de acentos y *dialects*?  
33 *I’m not sure* cómo se dice en español esta pa[labra.  
34 D: Dia]lectos.

Translation:

- 1 A: I have to think  
2 D: hhh  
3 A: if there’s something that bothers me that they say.  
4 No.  
5 But my best friend gets mad at me all the time because (0.5)  
6 I speak like half *Spanglish*. (1.0)  
7 And then on purpose.  
8 Like now I am making the effo::rt  
9 D: [hhh  
10 A: that] I want to speak good Spanish.  
11 And with my mom I always speak well because my mom  
12 ((gasp)) No way! If I speak *Spanglish* to her she would go:: crazy.  
13 D: hhh  
14 A: But with her, since she’s my friend, (1.0)  
15 it doesn’t matter. (0.5)  
16 D: Mhm.  
17 A: And I speak in *Spanglish*,  
18 whenever I want. ((whispered)) (1.0)  
19 But her yes she gets mad and corrects  
20 like she doesn’t like it.  
21 and like, “That’s not how you say it.”  
22 D: hhh

- 23 A: “You say it like this.”  
24 I tell her, “But it’s the sa::m:e.”  
25 D: hhh  
26 A: You understand [me.  
27 D: But] you understood me.  
28 A: Yes, now I tell her,  
29 “But, you understood me, no?”  
30 So no. I don’t think that it bothers me,  
31 but I also think that it’s because now I am taking a lot of linguistics classes  
32 Like I am learning more about accents and *dialects*?  
33 *I’m not sure* how you say that word in Span[ish  
34 D: Dia]lects.

In this narrative event, Ana develops a main narrative about how Spanglish bothers her best friend, with a brief aside about her mother’s similar negative evaluation of Spanglish. Ana positions her friend as anti-Spanglish and Storyworld Ana as a Spanglish-speaker. In the embedded narrative sequence, Ana positions her mother as anti-Spanglish. She presents the difference between these characters’ relationships as related to the consequences of speaking Spanglish. She presents Storyworld Ana as speaking Spanglish with her friend but not with her mother. With her friend, Storyworld Ana even pushes back against her corrections in an exemplum of her own reported speech, “But it’s the same” (line 24).

Ana’s storytelling is animated, and she frames the narrative as comedic using dramatic expressions and changes in tone, speed, volume and pitch. For instance, Ana elongates the vowels (line 8, 24) and gasps audibly and performatively at the idea of speaking Spanglish with her mother. David responds with laughter, which is framed as the expected and unmarked choice. Towards the end of the dialogue, David is a more active participant in the co-construction of the dialogue. In response to Storyworld Ana’s quoted speech ‘But it’s the same,’ (line 24) and ‘You understand’ (line 26), David echoes with a similar, “You understood me, right?” which demonstrates solidarity and understanding. This prompts Ana to extend her

discussion of her perspectives on Spanglish, language variation, and her experiences in linguistics classes. David also offers a translation for a vocabulary word in the last line (line 34).

The ‘linguistic terrorism’ in Ana’s narrative comes from her friend and her mother in the form of ‘language policing’ (Bloomaert et al., 2009), shown most notably through the consequences or sanctions imposed for unapproved language use. With her friend, the consequences include her friend’s anger (line 5) and corrections of how Storyworld Ana should say things (lines 21, 23). As is customary in language policing, it is most effective when carried out by individuals of higher status or power. For this reason, Ana complies and doesn’t speak Spanglish with her mother (line 11); in fact, she uses the conditional ‘would’ (line 12) to describe the possible consequences, which demonstrates that she does not do this. On the other hand, Ana suggests that it doesn’t matter with her friend (line 15), who has limited control over her. Ana presents herself as regularly speaking in Spanglish with her friend, “as much as [she] wants” (line 18). The quick and whispered nature of this line highlights Spanglish as an act of linguistic transgression, a forbidden and unsanctioned way of speaking. To a certain point, it seems that Ana has internalized a standard language ideology, as she refers to the use of ‘normative’ Spanish without any English influence as “good Spanish” (line 10). Yet, Ana distances herself from this ideology as she reports continuing to speak Spanglish and countering her friend’s hegemonic discourse with her retort, “But it’s the sa::m:e” (line 24). Moreover, Ana suggests that her linguistics classes are part of the reason that she’s not bothered by diverse language practices. In doing so, Ana suggests that such classes offer a mitigating effect in situations of ‘linguistic terrorism.’

## 6. Discussion & Conclusion

The three narratives presented here demonstrate how young adults on the US/Mexico border face ‘linguistic terrorism,’ or hostility from English and Spanish speakers towards their border language varieties and borderland identities. Each level of analysis provides a unique layer of insight into this narrative, and when taken together they provide a more complete and in-depth understanding. In Narrative 1, Mayte positions her storyworld selves as changing over time. While Pre-K Mayte makes own language choices, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Mayte switches from subverting school language policy to an acceptance of school language practices, and Spanish Class Mayte ascribes to a standard language ideology. According to Mayte’s reasoning (Level 2), only her Spanish teacher corrected the way she spoke, but individuals in all three narratives correct her language choice. A level 3 analysis demonstrates how monolingual and standard language ideologies are internalized by Mayte in the final narrative sequence, delegitimizing her own borderland dialect and identity. In Narrative 2, Victor positions himself as an insecure Spanish speaker, his close friends and stepmom as understanding interlocutors, and other proficient Spanish speakers as delegitimizing his ethnic identity and his language. The interactional context with a close friend allowed for an account of language use and experiences. While others enact standard language ideologies and raciolinguistic ideologies, Victor rejects other-ascriptions of identity and instead asserts his own bicultural, borderlands identity through the coconut metaphor. In Narrative 3, Ana positions Storyworld Ana as a Spanglish speaker, and her friend and mother as anti-Spanglish. Her friend and mother enact monolingual and standard language ideologies as they engage in language policing of a hybrid linguistic practice such as Spanglish. Ana, in turn, polices her language around her mother; however, she rejects these negative evaluations of Spanglish and reconstitutes it as a positive language variety both within

the storyworld and in evaluations in the story-telling world. Each narrative shows how individuals enact and accept but also reject, subvert, and reconstitute language ideologies.

In Narrative 3, Ana describes how an increased awareness of linguistics has been influential in positive evaluations of diverse language varieties. Critical language awareness (CLA) is a teaching pedagogy which has seen increased interest in second/foreign language (Crookes, 2009) and heritage language education (Leeman, Rabin, & Román-Mendoza, 2011). CLA directly addresses and challenges hegemonic notions of language, through explicit discussions about the role of power in language policy and instruction. It advocates for teaching sociolinguistic principles of language variation (Valdés, 1995) but also the ideological bases for power differentials between linguistic varieties and a critical examination of resulting societal discourses. This approach can “help students critically understand their own lives and worlds, develop agency in making their own language choices, and participate in the building of a more democratic society” (Leeman, 2005, p. 36). Indeed, studies find a relationship between language awareness and language ideologies (Lindahl & Henderson, 2019).

While the context for this study is the physical US/Mexico border, the delegitimization of borderland identities and language varieties exist along “third borders” (Davis, 2000) and “vertical spaces” (Blommaert, 2003), characterized by social, ethnic and cultural boundaries. For this reason, CLA has an important place in all classroom. There are many ways to integrate CLA into the classroom; in fact, the present study is a byproduct of critical language pedagogy. At the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, students in select linguistics and Spanish courses conduct sociolinguistic interviews. The corpus is then used to prompt discussions on language variation, language ideologies, and other related themes. Critical language pedagogy allows



students to critically examine ‘linguistic terrorism,’ reject hegemonic language ideologies that delegitimize borderland identities and language varieties, and instead enact positive language ideologies that encompass the “spaces between worlds” (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 1).

#### Transcript conventions

- . at the end of words marks falling intonation
- , at the end of words marks a slight pause (longer than 0.5 seconds)
- ! animated tone, not necessarily an exclamation
- (0.5) a pause greater than 0.5 seconds with amount of seconds included in parentheses
- [ ] surrounding words denotes translation
- [ on numbered line denotes overlapping speech
- hhh laughter
- self or other interruption
- ? rising intonation in clause
- : elongated sound
- “ ” reported speech
- ↑ raised pitch
- (( )) comments

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<sup>i</sup> Latinx is used as a gender non-binary term for U.S.-based individuals of Latin American descent. Hispanic is used in the next sentence, because this is the term used in the U.S. Census. The other labels used throughout the article were chosen by the interviewers and participants as an open-ended response to 'ethnicity' on intake forms.

<sup>ii</sup> The development of this corpus and collection of sociolinguistic interviews is ongoing. At the time of analysis, there were 30 interviews in the corpus. This analysis is based on the first 30 sociolinguistic interviews collected in Spring 2018.