7 Language diversity in the United States

Estados Unidos no tiene un idioma oficial

In 2019, during one of the early debates among those seeking the Democratic nomination for president, candidate Beto O'Rourke switched from English to Spanish as he answered a question about immigration. This prompted additional use of Spanish during the debate by Senator Cory Booker and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Julián Castro (the only Latinx candidate in the race). In discussing this unprecedented use of a "foreign" language in a presidential debate, many commenters and journalists saw the use of Spanish by candidates who are not Latinx as the worst kind of political pandering. To monolingual English speakers, O'Rourke and Booker (as well as Pete Buttigieg, who also often spoke Spanish during the campaign) seemed to be showing off their language skills to win points with Latinx candidates. The response from the Latinx journalists, however, was less critical, arguing that while speaking Spanish wasn't enough to win over Latinx voters, it was a positive step. For example, acclaimed journalist María Elena Salinas tweeted:

> Estados Unidos no tiene un idioma "oficial." El intentar hablar español aunque no es suficiente para ganar el voto latino, es una muestra de respeto a nuestra cultura. Obvio los votantes hablan inglés, son ciudadanos.
>
> [The United States doesn't have an "official" language. Although trying to speak Spanish isn't enough to win the Latinx vote, it is a sign of respect for our culture. The voters obviously speak English, they are citizens.]

These variations in viewpoints represent tensions between the potential indexical meanings one might link to the use of Spanish in a major national political debate. Because indexical signs convey *potential* meanings (as discussed in Chapter 1), the same sign may have different, even conflicting, interpretations. Some indexical meanings mark public uses of Spanish negatively. These meanings contribute to the language ideology that upholds the preservation of white public space by ensuring that critical public contexts are restricted to English.

While Booker and O'Rourke were seen as show-offs for demonstrating their Spanish competence, journalists treated Julián Castro's Spanish quite differently. Many reports of the debate noted that Castro had "admitted" that he was not fluent in Spanish, and some openly said that Booker, O'Rourke, and Buttigieg all spoke "better" Spanish compared to Castro. For US Latinxs, being told how "bad" your Spanish is a sadly familiar experience. The negative assessment of Castro's Spanish is founded in language ideologies about bilingualism in general, and US Spanishes in particular.

The Standard Language Ideology discussed in previous chapters has, as its foundation, the assumption that there is one true and correct way of speaking. In the United States, this

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"true" and "correct" language is English, and it is the imagined standard variety of this one language that is presumed to be the only appropriate language for public communication. The use of Spanish in a presidential debate is a major challenge to that ideology. A dominant American language ideology presumes that being monolingual is natural and preferable. Even though most of the world is multilingual, some people who grow up in bilingual communities in the United States (and many other Anglophone countries) are therefore presumed to be not fully capable speakers of two languages, but monolingual speakers of some language other than English.

Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latinx Americans are also familiar with being told how good their English is, as if native English speakers only come in Black and white. Castro graduated from Stanford and Harvard Law and served as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. Obviously, his English is better than "good." Since people often wrongly presume that people normally speak a single language, Castro's "lack" of Spanish serves to legitimize his "good" English. Of course, many Latinxs in the United States do not speak Spanish at all. Like Castro, they are often faced with being treated as somehow "inauthentic" Latinxs because they don't fit the stereotyped view of Latinx language use. Indeed, one congressional representative went so far as to say that Julián and his twin brother Joaquin studied Spanish as adults to become "retroactive Hispanics." Such use of linguistic competence to draw boundaries is a common way to enforce the assumptions within discourse structural racism. People of color who are perceived (usually by white Americans) as "articulate" in "standard" English are seen as somehow suspect, as if they then can't be legitimate members of their own ethnic group.

It is helpful, at this early stage of the discussion, to distinguish between foreign-accented (or L2) speech as discussed in Chapter 4 and bilingualism as we are discussing it here. The question of what it means to be a native speaker of a particular language is surprisingly complicated and deeply entwined both with the issues of language ideology discussed in this book and with questions of thoroughness or completeness of cultural and linguistic competence. Let us assume, for the purposes of our discussion, an overly simplistic definition of "native" which means something like "acquired the language as a child." This is often what linguists mean by the term, but it is wise to proceed with great caution since this definition of "native" excludes, among others, adults who learn to speak a truly foreign language in college or later, heritage language speakers who grow up with personal access to a second language through the voices of their parents, grandparents, or tribe, and members of the deaf community who, for whatever reason, acquire a signed language after childhood.

When we use the word bilingual (or trilingual, etc.), linguists typically mean people who have native competency in more than one language. Someone who is an English/Hindi bilingual has native speaker judgments, productions, and perceptions in both of these languages. This person may *sound* to an uninformed listener as if they have a foreign accent and therefore lack native speaker judgments about English. Or this person may sound as if they have "no accent" in both their English and their Hindi. The bottom line is that children born in the United States who grow up speaking both English and another language are still native speakers of American English just as they are native speakers of their second language. The reason this is important will become clear as we tease apart and investigate the various language ideologies monolingual Americans hold about the linguistic competence, authenticity, and, indeed, foreignness of people who speak languages other than, and in addition to, English.

It is also important to be careful with the use of the word "foreign." A bilingual speaker of English and Navajo cannot, in any sense, be said to be a speaker of a "foreign" language. ASL is not a foreign language. Hawaiian is not a foreign language. Arabic, Cantonese,

French, German, Hokkien, Mandarin, Swahili, Yoruba, and hundreds of other non-English languages are all learned by American children from American parents in the United States every day. As we will see, these children are almost always bilingual in English too but to call them or their non-English languages 'foreign' is really a comment on the acceptability or American authenticity of the person and not a statement of linguistic fact.

Spanish has been spoken in (what is now) the United States longer than English has, so it is not at all surprising that distinctive dialects of Spanish have emerged over time. Many parts of the future United States were colonized by Spain (rather than England) and, consequently, these regions have had Spanish speakers for centuries. For example, much of the southwestern United States belonged to Mexico before the Mexican American war (see Figure 7.1). Before the 1830s, Mexico controlled all of Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, as well as parts of Colorado.

In 1836, the Texas Revolution resulted in Texas leaving Mexico and becoming an independent nation. Mexico did not recognize Texas independence, so when Texas joined the United States in 1845, a war between Mexico and the United States ensued. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) ended the war with Mexico ceding what is now the southwestern

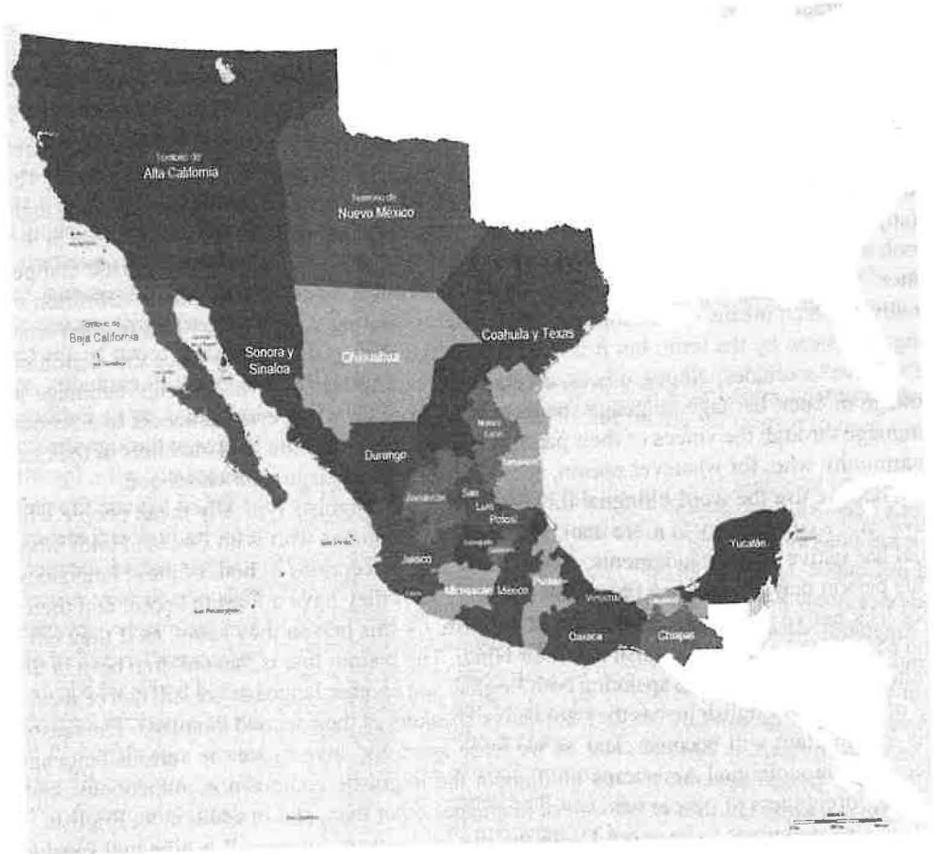

Figure 7.1 A map of the states of Mexico before the Texas Revolution (1835–1836)

part of the United States. Of course, many of the people living in or west of Texas were Spanish speakers, and many of their descendants continue to use Spanish today. The term *Chicanx* refers to these Spanish-speaking communities (and today the term is sometimes used to refer to all Mexican Americans who were born in the United States). While Chicanx Spanish is the main variety in the Southwest, the Spanish spoken on the East Coast shows more variation with numerous speakers of Caribbean Spanishes, like Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican Spanish.

As with ethnic varieties of English, the Spanishes of US Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, and Chicanxs are often regarded as "incorrect" compared to the "standard" Spanishes of Spain or Mexico. We have seen how language ideologies about American English end up reproducing racist stereotypes. Ideologies of Spanish show the same pattern. Language ideologies in the Spanish-speaking Americas typically view Chicanx and Caribbean American varieties of Spanish negatively. This is not particularly surprising as these are the varieties with a history of Native American (Chicanx) and/or Black (Caribbean) speakers. Indeed, the most denigrated variety of Spanish is probably Dominican Spanish, the dialect with the highest percentage of Black speakers. Chicanx Spanish (sometimes called *Caló* or *Pachuco Spanish*) is also highly denigrated throughout Mexico and Central America, with representations constantly linking Chicanx Spanish to racist stereotypes of "cholo" gang members. Even if Julián Castro had grown up speaking both Spanish and English, he could not use San Antonio (Chicanx) Spanish in a formal context without invoking these racist stereotypes and sounding especially "unpresidential."

These language ideologies reproduce the "double bind" seen with ideologies regarding ethnic dialects. Either one somehow merits discrimination because they are unable to speak "standard" English or they can't be a "real" member of their ethnic group precisely because they *are* able to speak "standard" English. The result is a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" approach to both languages other than English and Englishes other than the standard. The ultimate effect of this ideology is the erasure of ethnic varieties from public discourse which, again, serves to preserve white public space.

An old joke

Question: What do you call a person who speaks two languages?
Answer: Bilingual
Question: What do you call a person who speaks one language?
Answer: American
Sometimes the same joke is made about Brits. Though the focus is on the European context, you can read the perspective linked in this QR code to understand why this joke reflects a broad understanding of people who only speak English.

Language abundance

The idea that the use of Spanish in a presidential debate is surprising or somehow inappropriate demonstrates the strength of language ideologies that view the United States as a nation of monolingual English speakers. The United States has more Spanish speakers than Spain or any other country except Mexico (Instituto Cervantes 2019). Given the number of speakers of Spanish in the United States, it is rather astounding how *little* Spanish one finds in public discourse. Of course, Spanish is one of many languages spoken in the United States. There are also more than a million speakers (each) of French, German, Khmer, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Korean, and varieties of Chinese as well as hundreds of other languages with fewer speakers. The majority of these individuals also speak English, and, of course, many speak more than two languages.

There is also variation within languages other than English in the United States. Different Chinese languages occur throughout the United States with different languages dominant in different geographic areas, such as the predominance of Cantonese in New York's Chinatown neighborhood. Variation within global languages used in the States may also index specific ethnic/national identities, such as the numerous differences between Caribbean and Latin American varieties of Spanish.

The US Census asks those who speak another language at home to assess their own ability to speak English across four categories: *very well*, *well*, *not well*, and *not at all* (see Figure 7.2). Having been repeatedly told that their English is "bad," bilinguals often under evaluate their own speaking abilities. Even so, most census data tends to focus on those who say that they speak English "very well," as if those who rate themselves as *well* don't count as English speakers. Despite the possibility for underestimating English speakers, the census data show that the majority of those who use a language other than English at home are bilingual in English.

The breadth of linguistic diversity in the United States is a tremendous resource that, for the most part, remains underutilized. Indeed, in census data and educational materials, children who speak languages other than English are often categorized as "linguistically isolated" or having a "language deficit" simply because they have been exposed to a language besides English. Rather than suffering from a language deficit, it would make more sense to see people able to speak other languages as enjoying a language *abundance*. In today's globally connected society, it would make more sense to view those able to speak only one language as the ones who are somehow "deficient."

In the ideology which views native bilingualism as "wrong," one can see the interaction of language ideology with ideologies of race. People who are not easily categorized as white or Black are presumed to be foreigners or immigrants.

> Underlying the intersection of language and race is a language ideology that we call the ideology of nativeness, an Us-versus-Them division of the linguistic world in which native and nonnative speakers of a language are thought to be mutually exclusive, uncontested, identifiable groups. . . . At the core of this ideological model is a view of the world's speech communities as naturally monolingual and monocultural, whereby one language is semiotically associated with one nation.
>
> (Shuck 2006: 260)

For those who do not easily fit into the categories of Black and white, this ideology results in what is sometimes called the *perpetual foreigner syndrome* – a form of discrimination in

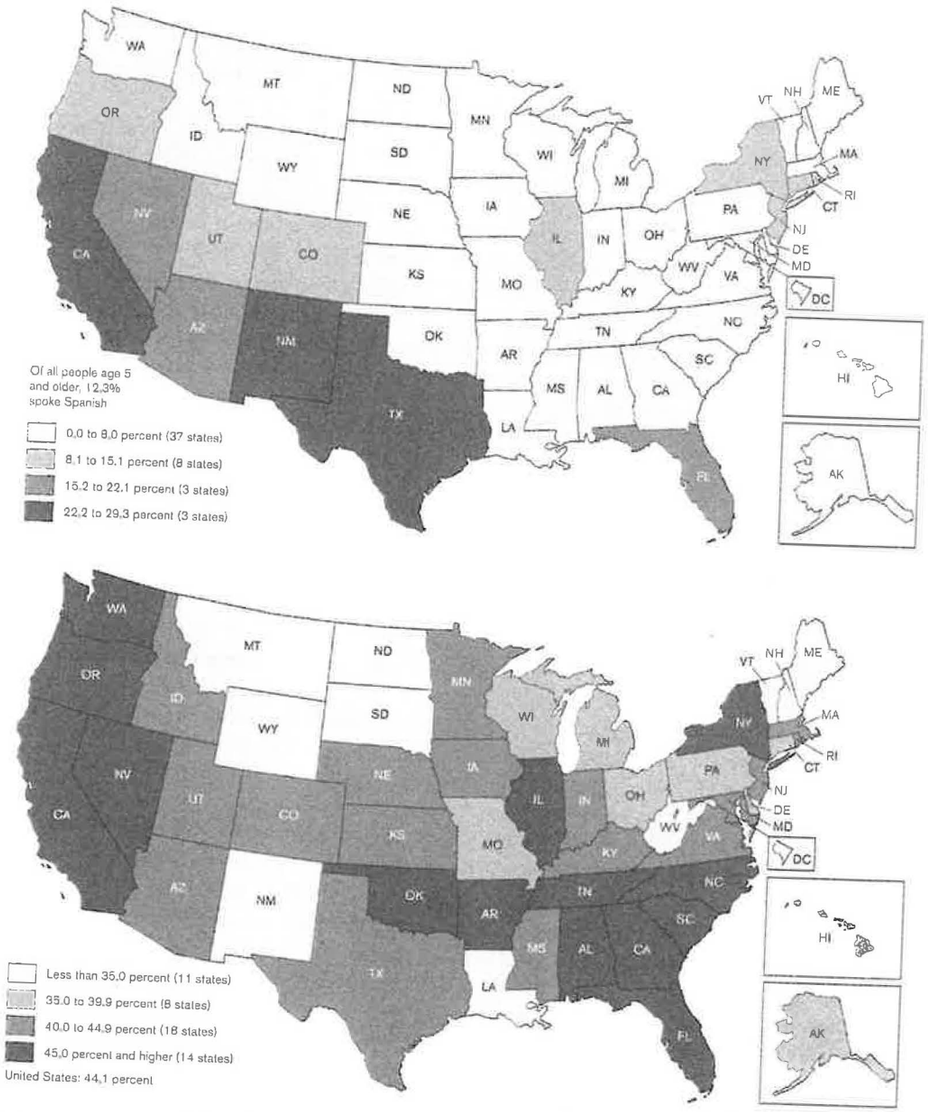

Figure 7.2 For population 5 years and older: a) Language other than English spoken at home; b) Percent of the population speaking a language other than English at home who spoke English less than "very well"

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2007, American Community Survey

which Asian Americans, Latinxs, Middle Eastern Americans, Pacific Islanders, and others are treated as if they somehow can't "really" be American. Indeed, many Asian Americans have experienced having a stranger challenge their "Americanness" in an all too familiar routine (Cargile et al. 2010; Cheryan & Bodenhausen 2000; Kawai 2005; Chang & Le 2010; Lee 1994):

A: Where are you from?
B: Milwaukee.
A: No, where are you *really* from?

The "really from" question conveys the ideology of nativeness behind the perpetual foreigner syndrome – if someone *looks* Asian, one must presume that they are a foreigner. The corresponding language ideology of monolingualism is found in the common follow-up remark: *Your English is SO good!* Once all Asian Americans have been categorized as "foreign," it is a short step to assuming that they probably can't speak English. (See Figure 7.3.)

Some people tend to think of language and nation as being in a one-to-one relationship: in France they speak French, in Spain they speak Spanish, and so on. But this "one nation, one language" ideology is just a myth to justify the imposition of linguistic uniformity. In France, they speak French, Breton, Occitan, Corsican, Alsatian, Walloon, Provençal, Basque, and numerous other languages. In Spain, they speak Spanish, Asturian, Galician, Catalan, Basque, etc. Bilingualism is the norm across the globe, and, actually, "it is difficult to find a society that is genuinely monolingual" (Grosjean 1982: 1). Even countries that are "officially" monolingual (the United States is not), like Guatemala, where Spanish is the only official language, numerous Mayan and other Indigenous languages are spoken natively (often along with Spanish) by millions of the country's inhabitants.

The view that each nation should have one uniform language emerged in the Enlightenment, not as a description of the real world but as an idealized view of what a modern nation state ought to look like (Bauman and Briggs 2003). The belief that all citizens of a given nation must speak the same language was promoted because it made it easier to control a diverse population. The idea of "one nation, one language" presumes that most individuals will not be naturally bilingual, as speaking more than one language would index multiple nationalities. The United States has always been a multilingual nation. Like other language myths, the idea of a monolingual America is founded upon false assumptions about language.

The myth of the monolingual nation involves several different discursive assumptions that all suggest that speaking more than one language is not merely unnatural but bad in some way. For example, Americans often assume that exposing a child to more than one language will somehow impede language acquisition. This is part of a broader ideology concerning the socialization of very young children. Cultures have different ways of dealing with the fact that small children are unable to use language in the ways adults do. Some expect the child to adapt to their environment naturally while other cultures attempt to change the environment to adapt to the child. The American approach is of the latter type. Expecting parents often feel the need to "childproof" their homes before the child arrives, blocking electric outlets and placing locks on cabinet doors. The same approach is taken with language. American parents often use *baby talk* (also called Motherese or Parentese) to make their speech easier for the baby to understand. The research on baby talk is sometimes conflicting. A recent study (Ramírez et al. 2020) shows that some components of what people generally think of as baby talk (in this case, higher pitch, slower tempo, and a wider intonation range) do have the potential to enhance language acquisition.

Figure 7.3 Overt housing and zoning discrimination and language ideologies limit access for those who do not speak English, pushing languages into "ethnic enclaves" like New York's Chinatown

Attempting to adjust one's speech to compensate for a baby's inability to talk, however, is not a universal pattern. In some cultures (like the Kaluli; see Ochs & Schieffelin 1984), the idea of interacting and translating for babies is just silly. Why would you try to hold a conversation with a baby who is unable to speak? It just makes more sense to wait until the baby can

reply before trying to hold a conversation. The acquisition of language is not affected by such an absence of baby talk or by lower levels of interaction with parents. Children learn language at roughly the same rate regardless of the specific types of language input they receive.

The assumption that the linguistic environment must be adapted to account for a baby extends to attitudes toward exposing children to more than one language. Children acquire whatever language surrounds them, and if two languages regularly surround them, a child will learn both and grow up to be bilingual. Making the child's environment monolingual does not help them acquire language. Being raised in a monolingual world offers no advantages for the child.

Holding babies

Cultures have different views of how adults ought to interact with infants who cannot yet speak the language of adults. Some cultures attempt to adapt the environment to the child more than others do. American parents typically adjust their speech and "translate" for children to overcome the infant's lack of language. Other cultures accept that infants are unable to talk, and adults do not usually attempt to interact directly with infants. Children will acquire language normally either way. We can see this difference in the way that people hold babies in different cultures. While Americans tend to hold babies close and face to face (Figure 7.4, left), in many parts of the world babies spend much of their time on their mothers' backs (Figure 7.4, right).

Figure 7.4 American girl holding a doll (left), Ghanaian girls holding dolls (right)

One correlate of the belief that a bilingual environment is somehow too difficult for children is the idea that people who are naturally bilingual can't really speak both languages. Within this ideology, people who grow up bilingual are viewed with a certain degree of suspicion, as if their linguistic abilities are somehow exaggerated or entirely false. This may surface about either language, including English. For example, we saw this myth in the discussions of Julián Castro's Spanish. Castro's Spanish was scrutinized in ways that just did not apply to other candidates who used Spanish in public. The myth of the suspect bilingual is also responsible for the tendency for English-speaking children with Asian or Latinx surnames to be incorrectly enrolled in classes for children who know no English at all.

The suspect bilingual myth also contributes to the denigration of US varieties of global languages. Special courses for "heritage" learners are offered for students who speak languages like Chinese or Spanish at home. Often, these courses involve high levels of criticism directed toward the language variety spoken by these "heritage" speakers. For example, some Chinese students are often criticized for their inability to read and write Chinese characters even though literacy and linguistic competence are separate issues. Spanish speakers are told that their language is "wrong" for not using the subjunctive voice (absence of the subjunctive voice is a basic feature of many US Spanishes). Thus, Latinx students, in this case, face criticism of their Spanish as "bad" or "wrong" in addition to criticism of their English as somehow deficient. This can ultimately mean that Latinx students are treated as if they have no language at all (Rosa 2016). And, of course, assuming that someone does not have the capacity for language can be particularly dehumanizing.

The assumption that natural bilingualism is not normal also surfaces in the view that bilinguals don't really speak either language but somehow communicate by putting together pieces of the two languages. This is usually conveyed by treating the two languages as a single entity, as in Spanglish, Chinglish, Konglish, Korenglish, or Navlish, among others. Terms like Navlish technically refer to using two languages (Navajo and English) in a single context. These terms tend to reproduce the negative evaluations of bilinguals' language use by placing speakers "in between" languages when the speakers are using both languages regularly. Ideas like "We don't really speak English, we speak Spanglish" simply reproduces the view that Latinx language is deficient in both English and Spanish. Here again, the reality is that bilinguals have language abundance rather than a language deficit. It is not that speakers alternate between languages because they can't speak either. Quite the opposite – people alternate languages precisely because they *can* speak them both. This process of moving back and forth between languages is what linguists call *code-switching*.

Code-switching may occur in several different ways. One distinction is whether the switch occurs between sentences (intersentential) or within the same sentence (intrasentential). Intersentential code-switching often marks some sort of shift in an interaction. For example, if you are waiting in line for a movie and speaking Vietnamese with your friend, an intersentential switch is likely to occur when you reach the beginning of the line and begin the interaction to purchase tickets. If you are speaking Spanish in a group and a monolingual English-speaking friend walks up, there will likely be an intersentential switch into English so that the friend can understand what is being said. Of course, code-switching within languages can also occur during an interaction without any obvious type of change. In some families, for example, a child may reply to their Korean-speaking parents in English so that every change in speaker is also a change in language.

Intrasentential code-switching is particularly interesting to linguists because it provides insight into the ways in which two (or more) grammars can be combined. Muysken (1997) categorizes intrasentential switches into three distinct types: alternation, insertion, and congruent lexicalization. Alternation occurs when a sentence begins in one language and switches to end the sentence in another language (example 1a). Insertion occurs when a

grammatical unit from one language occurs in the middle of a sentence that is otherwise in the other language (example 1b). Congruent lexicalization occurs when the two languages are merged to such a degree that it becomes difficult to tell which language the sentence might be in (see example 1c).

1. Types of code-switching (examples from Pfaff 1979)

   a. Alternation:

      Yo se, porque *I went to the hospital to find out where he was.*
      I know, because *I went to the hospital to find out where he was.*

   b. Insertion:

      Estaba muy *fancy* y todo.
      It was really *fancy* and everything.

   c. Congruent lexicalization:

      Anda *feeling* medio *nice* y *start blowing again.*
      He goes along feeling rather (literally: medium) nice and he starts blowing again.

The types of code-switching found in each context depends on the specific indexical meanings associated with each language. In contexts where the two languages have opposing indexical meanings, switches between languages are less common. Because of the political history of animosity between French and English speakers in Canada, for example, bilinguals in western Quebec typically have clear distinctions between when English is used and when French is used (Bourhis et al. 2007). For many francophone Quebecois, French indexes "our identity" and English indexes "outsiders." Thus, intrasentential code-switching is less common than intersentential code-switching, and patterns like congruent lexicalization are extremely rare. In contrast, for US Latinxs, Spanish and English both index Latinx identity, so the two languages are used together in more contexts and code-switching involves higher amounts of insertion and lexical congruence.

Code-switching between languages

Here are some examples of mixing English with different languages.

Cajun French-English

Je	pensais	le	*phone*	devait	pas	être	*out*	*of*	*order*	quand	il	sonnait
I	thought	the	*phone*	must	not	be	*out*	*of*	*order*	when	it	rang

"I thought the *phone* must (not) be *out of order* when it rang."
(Brown 1986: 400)

Arabic-English

Enta	arif	enn-aha	jab-at	nafs	al-soa'al	*like*	*three*	*times*
You (masc)	know (masc)	that-fem	brought-fem	same	the-question	*like*	*three*	*times*

"You know she brought the same question *like three times?*"
(al-Rowais 2012: 33)

Choctaw-English

imaama	ikpisokma	i*pampers*	shofficha
i-maama	i-k-pis-o-k-ma	i-*pampers*	ø-shoffi-(hi)cha
3sPOS-mother	3pSUBJ-Neg-see-Neg-CONJ-SR	3sPOS-*pampers*	3sAGT-take off-and

"When her mother isn't looking, she takes her *pampers* off."
(Kwachka 1991: 175)

Mandarin Chinese-English

這	是	個	*good*	*question*	但是	我	沒	有	*answer*
Zhè	shì	ge	*good*	*question*	dànshì	wǒ	meí	yǒu	*answer*
This	is	(a)	*good*	*question*	but	I	not	have	*answer*

"That's a *good question,* but I don't have (an) *answer.*"
(Chen 2013: 5)

Spanish-English

Bueno,	*in other words*	el	*flight*	que	sale	de	Chicago *around 3 o'clock*
Well,	*in other words*	the	*flight*	that	leaves	from	Chicago *around 3 o'clock*

"Well, *in other words,* the *flight* that leaves from *Chicago around 3 o'clock.*"
(Pfaff 1979: 300)

Vietnamese-English

(Name)	cũng	đang	*celebrate*	cái	sinh nhật
(Name)	also	(progressive)		(classifier)	birthday

"(Name) is also *celebrat*ing a birthday."
(Nguyen 2012: 44)

Intrasentential code-switching is an entirely normal linguistic phenomenon that occurs all over the world. Like all patterns in language, movement back and forth between languages is not random but is governed by rules. For example, switches from one language to another are much more likely in instances where the grammars of the two languages align. Consider the case of noun phrases in Spanish-English code-switching. In both languages, articles (like *the*) occur at the beginning of a noun phrase. But Spanish and English differ in the order of adjectives and nouns. In Spanish, most adjectives follow nouns (where English adjectives precede nouns):

2.	Spanish	la	casa	azul
		article	noun	adjective
	English	the	blue	house
		article	adjective	noun

For Spanish-English bilinguals, it sounds much better to switch languages after the article (where the grammars of the two languages align, like in 3a) than to switch between the noun and the adjective (where the grammars do not align, like in 3b).

3. a. She lives in the *casa azul*.
   Ella vive en la blue house.
   b. ? She lives in the *azul* house.
   ? She lives in the house *azul*.
   ? *Ella vive en la casa* blue.
   ? *Ella vive en la* blue *casa*.

Thus, for the examples in 3, the sentences in the first set sound fine, but those in the second set are likely to sound awkward and unnatural to native bilinguals. In Spanish-English bilingual communities, speakers (unconsciously) know these sorts of rules about possible ways to combine the two languages. So in addition to knowing the grammar of Spanish and the grammar of English, bilinguals also know the grammar of how English and Spanish can be combined. Indeed, one could argue that Spanish-English bilinguals use three times the amount of linguistic knowledge compared to English monolinguals. This is not, of course, to say that there is anything inherently wrong with being monolingual; indeed, the issue is that what could be seen as an abundance of linguistic knowledge (use of more than one language) is often represented as deficit (because it is interpreted as an inability to stay in one language due to a lack of fluency).

Like other forms of language variation, patterns of code-switching come to carry distinct indexical meanings. The contextual associations with using two (or more) languages are different from the associations afforded by each language independently. For example, speaking only Korean might be associated with formal contexts like conversations with elders or church events while English is associated with other formal contexts like school or interactions with strangers. But the combination of Korean and English might index more intimate contexts with close friends and peers who are also bilingual; speakers may develop close emotional ties to the ways in which languages may be combined. For example, Webster (2015) describes the affection many Navajos have for combining English and Navajo (described as "Navlish"), such as the combination of a Navajo possessive prefix (such as *shi-* "my") with an English noun, as in *shi*buddy ("my buddy") or *shi*heart ("my heart").

Because languages and combinations of languages carry distinct indexical meanings, norms emerge for different patterns of language use in different contexts (for example, Spanish at church, English at school, and both at home). Of course, the most important factor in determining what language to use is the language(s) known by the person listening to you. Switching into Spanish while speaking to someone who is monolingual in English would only produce confusion. Of course, switching languages may occur without a shift in context. Because language choices carry indexical meanings, the use of one language or the other (or both) may be associated to the topic at hand. It might just seem natural to switch into Tagalog (for example) when talking about aspects of Filipino culture or when discussing highly personal or potentially embarrassing topics.

They aren't talking about you

When hearing someone speak a language that you do not know, it is common to suspect that they are somehow talking about you. But this really doesn't make sense. Have you ever traveled to a place where you do not speak the local language? If so, it is likely that you were speaking your own native language to your travel companions for all sorts of reasons: trying to find your way, deciding what to have for lunch, looking for specific landmarks, and so on. Even in monolingual contexts, you might use some form of secrecy (code words, for example) to conceal the discussion from overhearers, especially if the context is particularly sensitive.

If a person is speaking a language that you do not understand, it is usually an indication that they aren't talking to you and what they are saying is probably of no concern to you. Often, people switch into a language other than English when they are discussing something sensitive or embarrassing. So there's no need to feel suspicious when someone next to you at the grocery store switches into Vietnamese. It might just be that they really need to pee and don't want to announce it to everyone in the store!

Over and over, one can see ways in which popular discourse denigrates bilingualism through representations that suggest that bilingual speech is somehow abnormal and reflects some type of language deficit. This is another example of discourse racializing language use. A monolingual English-speaking white person who learns to speak another language fluently is often revered as having a powerful intellect. They have achieved a great feat in acquiring a second language. A monolingual English speaker who is Asian or Latinx who learns to speak their "heritage" language is not regarded in the same way (despite having achieved the exact same skill as the white person). A Korean American who grew up speaking only English who decides to study Korean is likely to be regarded as some sort of "failed" Korean trying to acquire a "retroactive" identity. An English-monolingual who decides to study Italian after discovering she is Italian American (say, from ancestry.com) is likely to be regarded positively as someone who is putting in great work to understand their ethnic heritage (the exact same thing the Korean American is doing). Bilingualism cannot be an achievement for some and a deficit for others. The view of bilingualism as some sort of deficiency is founded in racism rather than in linguistic fact.

Some argue that bilingualism is socially divisive. If people don't all speak the same language, the argument goes, then they will start to fight with one another. This is, after all, the basis of the biblical Tower of Babel story. People point to Quebec as an example of multilingualism creating social division. The world is full of people who speak different languages and have no problem with people who speak other languages. Most of the world's countries

are multilingual and see no sort of social discord between speakers of different languages. One could easily use Switzerland, for example, as the counterexample to Quebec.

And, of course, social division and discord need not be based on speaking different languages. Most civil wars are not fought between speakers of different languages. Social discord among speakers of the same language is much more common. It is, for example, the reason that Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian has three different names despite being almost identical in terms of grammar. Indeed, the promotion of monolingualism can also produce serious social discord, particularly in cases where people try to forbid the use of other languages.

Yiddish in New York City

The United States has always been a multilingual nation. Although many immigrant communities switch to speaking only English rather quickly, other communities may continue using their language over long periods of time, especially in large cities with ethnic neighborhoods that allow for the language to be used in everyday life. A good example is Yiddish in Orthodox communities in New York City. A century ago, New York was a multilingual city, just as it is today. One advertisement for a play and ball being held in Manhattan in 1912 mixes English, Russian, and Yiddish, reflecting the language diversity of the Lower East Side where the play was performed. Today, both Russian and Yiddish continue to be spoken in New York, particularly in neighborhoods in Brooklyn. Yiddish is used widely in education, religious, and daily life in Hassidic Jewish communities. There are volunteer Yiddish-speaking ambulance services (see Figure 7.5). Yiddish is used to ensure both that patients can communicate and that they are not subjected to medical procedures that violate religious laws.

Figure 7.5 Hatzalah ambulance in Brooklyn
Source: photo courtesy of Tariqabjotu

The National Geographic Society regularly conducts surveys to determine the geographic knowledge of young people. One of the questions they typically ask is "Which language is spoken by the most people in the world as their primary language?" In a 2016 version of the survey (National Geographic Society 2016) given just to college students, 44% of respondents answered "English" (the correct answer is Mandarin Chinese). The language ideology of monolingualism is so deeply entrenched that the assumption most everyone in the world speaks English seems reasonable for many people. Despite the high level of confidence wielded by those willing to say, "You're in America – we speak English here!", the United States has no official language. It never has.

What the Constitution does have is the Tenth Amendment, which says, "Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence, and every power, jurisdiction, and right, which is not by this Confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled." This amendment gives individual states the right to make their own laws regarding anything not expressly covered or prohibited by the rest of the Constitution. So since no official language is declared in the Constitution (and it does not prohibit the establishment of an official language), states have every right to declare one themselves. And some have. Figure 7.6 shows the states (in black) that have made English the official language of that

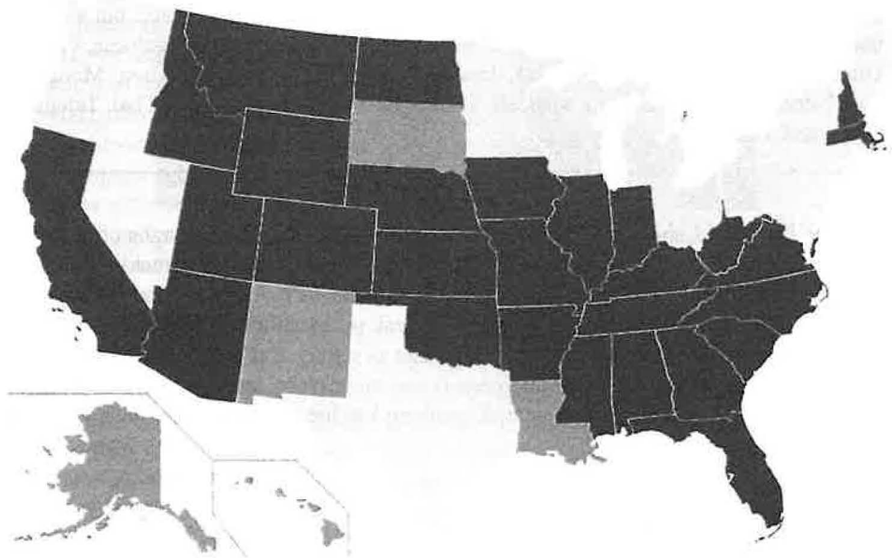

Figure 7.6 States with laws making English their official language (in black) and states that are officially multilingual to some degree (in dark gray)

state. Despite stereotypes that link English-only policies to conservatism and the South, most official English states are not in the South. The states in dark gray are those that have official bilingual policies or have given special status to some language(s) other than English. New Mexico and Louisiana have given special status to Spanish and French, respectively. Hawaii, Alaska, and South Dakota have added Native American/Indigenous languages to their policies, making them officially multilingual.

Of course, a state declaring English to be the official language is still subject to federal laws and regulations regarding the use of languages other than English. For example, the (1975 expansion of the 1965) Voting Rights Act requires ballots in other languages whenever the population speaking those languages is over 10,000 people or makes up more than 5% of the election district (the law technically combines voting districts and reservations). In 2000, President Clinton issued an executive order (#13166) requiring all federal agencies to provide adequate services to those with limited proficiency in English. This meant that any organization receiving federal funds must provide interpreters for all clients, a requirement that greatly increased access to medical, social, and legal services. For example, states that do not provide driver's license exams in languages other than English would risk losing federal highway funds. Even so, political candidates will still promise to stop offering the tests in other languages. Of course, state politicians can't change federal law, so such promises are empty appeals to xenophobia.

Voting rights

Some states may have laws with lower thresholds for determining which languages require ballots. For example, in California, state law requires ballots in languages when speakers make up 3% of the population (rather than the 5% required by federal law). Ballots in all languages are not available at every polling place, but across the state, ballots were offered in Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Hmong, Indonesian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Mien, Mongolian, Nepali, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Syriac, Tagalog/Filipino, Tamil, Thai, Telugu, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

With the Standard Language Ideology operating at full force, official English policies are irrelevant. English is the language of the United States even without a law making it official. Those who do not speak English still face numerous obstacles in American society. Speakers of languages other than English, like those who speak undervalued varieties of English, are constantly reminded that many view their language as wrong and unacceptable. Americans who are monolingual in some other language do not need to be reminded that they need to learn English; they know the importance of speaking English all too well.

Stolen childhoods

Cirila Baltazar Cruz is from the state of Oaxaca in southern Mexico, a state with numerous linguistically and culturally diverse Indigenous communities. Cruz speaks Chatino, an Indigenous language in the Oto-Manguean family. Chatino is no more like Spanish than Cherokee, Chickasaw, or Navajo are like English.

Figure 7.7 Polling place in New York City

Because of racial discrimination and systemic poverty in rural Oaxaca, Cruz was forced to come to the United States to find work that would allow her to care for her family. She arrived in the United States in 2006 and took a job at a Chinese restaurant in Pascagoula, Mississippi. In November of 2008, Cruz went to the Singing River Hospital and gave birth to a healthy daughter, Rubí. Rather than call in a Chatino translator, Cirlia was provided with an interpreter who spoke Puerto Rican Spanish, and the two could not understand one another (Cruz 2010). The social services representatives in the hospital constructed a set of reasons to remove the child from her mother's custody, claiming that not speaking English amounted to endangering the welfare of her newborn daughter (Byrd 2010).

A judge declared Cruz to be an unfit mother because she could not speak English, and her daughter Rubí was taken away from her. Ultimately, it was discovered that the couple who

received the baby were friends of the judge (and who had not gone through the proper legal channels for adoption). With the help of the Southern Poverty Law Center and a Chatino interpreter, Cruz was eventually able to regain custody of her daughter, but it took an entire year. Cirila Cruz was not the first woman to have her child taken from her simply because she spoke an Indigenous language and could not communicate in Spanish or English. It is quite common for speakers of Indigenous languages from Mexico and Central America to be given Spanish interpreters in medical and legal contexts (see Haviland 2003; Barrett et al. 2016). In these situations, Indigenous immigrants are harmed (e.g., refused treatment, jailed, or otherwise punished) based solely on their inability to communicate with an interpreter who doesn't even speak their language.

When the family separation policy for immigrants from Latin America was introduced in the spring of 2018, hundreds of children, many who spoke only Indigenous languages, were taken from their parents and placed in detention centers specifically for children. Although this policy of child separation was met with outrage as not reflecting American values, it is part of a long history of children being taken from speakers of minority languages, including both immigrants and Native Americans. Cirila and Rubí Cruz are part of a centuries-long tradition of taking Native children away from their families so that they could be "civilized," primarily through speaking English. In the early colonial period, children who were Wampanoag (the tribe in the Thanksgiving story) were regularly taken by British parents. Although the goal was to raise Indian children to be "civilized" though English, the children were often treated as servants rather than family (Silverman 2005).

In the 1880s, the federal government began forcing Native American children to attend boarding schools where they were separated from their families and communities. The main goal of these boarding schools was to eradicate the children's knowledge of their Native cultures, including their languages. Children from the same family were sometimes separated from one another so that it would be easier for them to lose knowledge of their languages. Children were regularly punished for speaking their language, even if it was the only language they knew. Richard Pratt, the founder of one of the largest boarding schools (Carlisle Indian Industrial School) described his motivation in this way:

> A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.
>
> (Pratt 1892)

Pratt was a strong believer in white supremacy, even going so far as to say that slavery was a "great gift" because it served to "civilize" Africans. Pratt's catchphrase, "Kill the Indian, save the man," became a popular means of justifying taking children away from their families.

Boarding schools for Native Americans often used "before and after" photographs (as in Figure 7.8) to demonstrate their success in "civilizing" Native children. This picture shows Hastiin To'Haali in 1882, when he first arrived at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School where he was renamed "Tom Torlino." The picture on the right shows Mr. To'Haali after being "discharged" four years later. Notice that the "after" photo was taken using a filter that makes the subject's skin appear to be lighter.

In some cases, when children returned to their communities, they were no longer able speak their native language, finding it impossible to communicate with their own parents. Boarding school graduates who could still speak their native language often refused to use

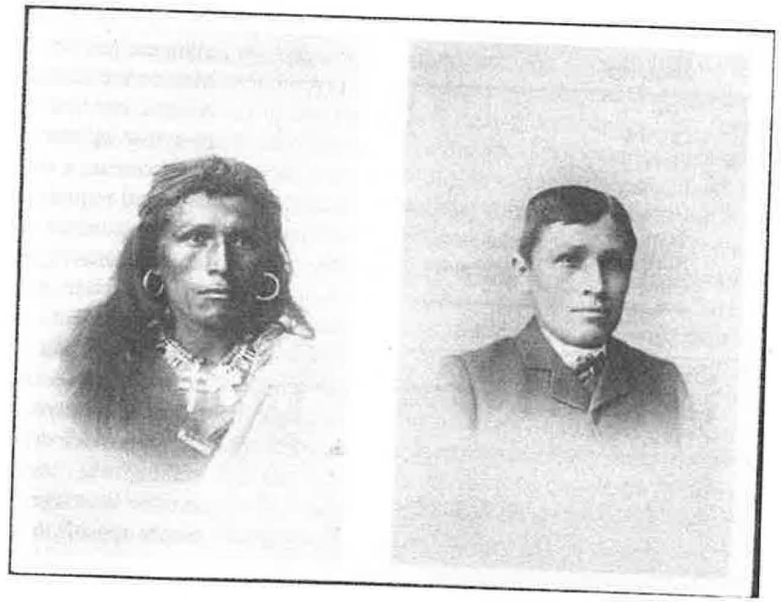

Figure 7.8 "Tom Torlino, Navajo, before and after," black and white photographic portrait of a Navajo by J. N. Choate,

Source: image courtesy of the Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library

it with their own children to ensure that their children would never suffer the punishments that they endured for not speaking English. The boarding schools are one reason that many Native American languages have very few remaining speakers.

Native American languages today

According to the US Census Bureau, the Native American languages with the most current speakers are as follows:

Language estimated number of speakers (2010)

Language	*Estimated number of speakers (2010)*
Navajo	169,471
Yupik	18,950
Dakota	18,616
Apache	13,063
Keres	12,945
Cherokee	11,610
Choctaw	10,343

(*Continued*)

(Continued)

Language	*Estimated number of speakers (2010)*
Zuni	9,686
Ojibwa	8,371
Pima	7,270
Inupik	7,203
Hopi	6,634
Tewa	5,176
Muskogee/Creek	5,064
Crow	3,705

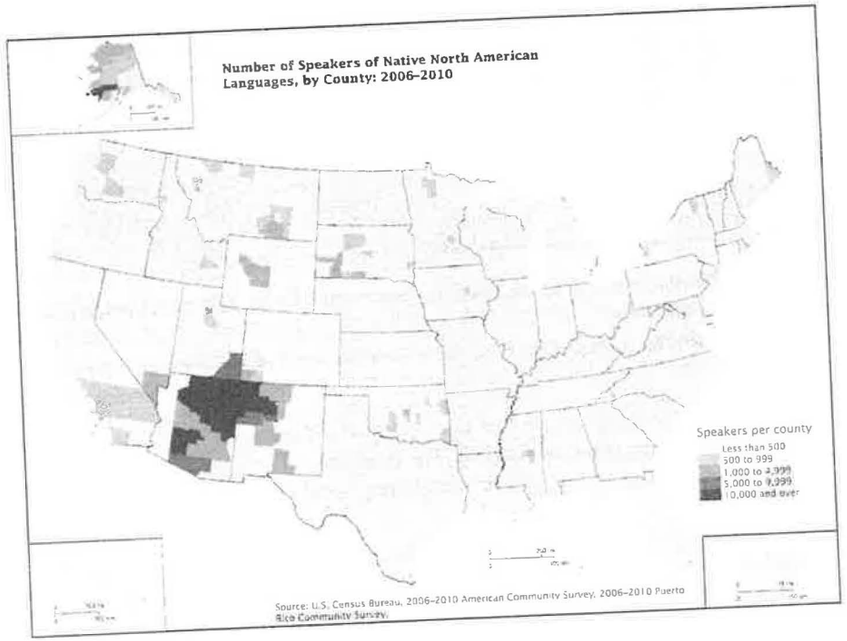

Figure 7.9 Speakers of Native American languages in 2010
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

Many Native American communities have now begun efforts to conserve and revitalize their languages. Different communities have taken different approaches to the problem, depending on their unique situations. Communities with no living speakers, or "sleeping languages" (Leonard 2008), typically begin by working through archival materials documenting the language as it was spoken. These communities use grammars and texts to develop materials for learning their community's traditional language. This also requires developing new vocabulary for the language because there may be gaps in the materials or because the language has no words for things that didn't exist when there were speakers. Developing new words (or *neologisms*) typically requires research on other, related languages that may already have words for the object in question. Efforts to begin using the language again typically focus on teaching the language to children. Because children pick up language naturally, they will end up with a regular, rule-governed language even if their parents learned the language from materials collected by a linguist years ago. Several language communities have taken this approach, including the Myaamia (Miami), Wampanoag, and Tunica.

In communities where there are a handful of elder speakers, communities may adopt a *master-apprentice* language program (Hinton 2001). In this model, a single speaker works one-on-one with a single younger speaker to teach the younger speaker to use the language across numerous contexts. In communities with few speakers, this program ensures that the language is passed down to the next generation. Working with a single apprentice makes it possible to put in the great amount of effort required to learn a new language. Once the apprentice learns the language, they can begin to use the language with their immediate family and begin to increase the number of speakers. The master-apprentice model was developed in the 1990s for use by Native American communities in California where many languages had only one or two living speakers. The main goal is to ensure that the master and the apprentice have sufficient time alone together to ensure that the apprentice learns to speak the language. Usually, the master and apprentice spend entire days together participating in real life activities like making crafts, cooking meals, or walking through nature. To facilitate learning, the two are not allowed to speak English. Doing activities together makes it easier to communicate without words, making it easier to avoid speaking English. The apprentice must be an active participant in the process, deciding what activities to perform and what topics the pair should focus on. Teaching is entirely oral (rather than written) to make sure that the interaction flows naturally and without pauses. Although the master-apprentice program was designed for the specific needs of communities in California, it has since been widely adopted both in the United States and in other countries like Canada and Australia (Grenoble & Whaley 2005).

Language in the Navajo Nation presidential election

The 2014 election for President of the Navajo Nation was disrupted over issues of language fluency. According to Navajo law, candidates for president and vice president must swear to fluently speak and understand Navajo. After the primary elections, one of the two candidates remaining, Chris Deschene, was accused of not being sufficiently fluent in the language (despite having campaigned in Navajo for several months). Deschene was subjected to a public "fluency" test before Navajo educators and government officials. Deschene refused to participate, responding to all questions with answers like, *nashintaa doo akot'ée da* (you are testing me and that is not right). It was decided that his refusal to participate in the fluency test disqualified him from being president. The decision was extremely controversial and resulted in the postponement of the election for another year. Voters later passed a resolution declaring that "fluency" would be determined by individual voters and not by a group of experts (Jacobsen & Thompson 2020).

In communities where there are more elder speakers, a different type of program known as *language nests* may be adopted. In a language nest program, individual elders are assigned a "nest" of young children. Typically, the nest meets together for at least part of the day at

nursery schools. The elder spends time playing and interacting with the children in their nest while only speaking in the target language. Because young children acquire language with little effort, the children in the nest will naturally begin speaking the language. The knowledge they gain in the nests is then reinforced through more formal language teaching in elementary school. The children's ability to speak their heritage language often inspires their parents to learn the language themselves. The stress of having your children speak to each other in a language you don't understand is enough to ignite interest in learning that language. The language nest program was developed among speakers of Māori, the Indigenous (Polynesian) language of New Zealand. Native Hawaiians were the first to introduce language nests in the United States, but these programs have been quite successful in other communities (Grenoble & Whaley 2005), particularly among members of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, including Seneca and Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk).

Many communities have combined these different approaches with other initiatives to encourage wider use of their language across social contexts. This includes the production of pedagogical materials for both children and adults and the development of classes for adults in addition to children. Companies like Rosetta Stone and Duolingo have developed teaching materials specific to several Native American languages (and continue to expand their offerings). Many communities have created online dictionaries and language lessons, including videos produced specifically for children. There are efforts to use Native American languages in social media, and more and more musicians, like Supaman (Lakota), are incorporating Native languages into their music. Several films and shows have been dubbed into Native languages, including *Star Wars* in Navajo, *Bambi* in Arapaho, and *The Berenstain Bears* in Lakota. Finally, there is a growing number of poets who write in Native languages or incorporate Native languages into their work, including Ofelia Zepeda (Tohono O'odham), Natalie Diaz (Mojave), and numerous Navajo poets like Rex Lee Jim, Laura Tohe, and Luci Tapahonso.

Language ideologies and English public space

Attempts to clear public discourse of other languages were not limited to Native American languages, as there have been repeated efforts to sanction speakers of other languages. One way that public discourse was/is kept clear of speakers of other languages is to enact laws preventing immigration from specific countries, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In the 1930s, over a million Latinxs who were US citizens were deported to Mexico to give their jobs to white people. During World War II, Japanese speakers were sent to internment camps to ensure that they couldn't communicate with the enemy. There have been laws banning other languages, particularly German. In 1923, Robert Meyer, a Nebraska schoolteacher was arrested for teaching a student to read the Bible in German. Meyer had broken a law that prohibited teaching children foreign languages before the eighth grade (based on the mistaken assumption that it would somehow interfere with children's acquisition of proper English). The case reached the Supreme Court where it was decided that the prohibiting the use of languages other than English was a violation of the First Amendment. Nevertheless, communities continue to attempt to find ways to restrict public discourse to English.

English dominance is ultimately achieved through discourse that promotes a monolingual language ideology. Denigrating ideologies that treat US bilinguals as if their language were deficient serve to silence speakers of languages other than English, often through self-censorship. Self-censorship is encouraged through repeated experiences of people being harassed for speaking a language other than English in public. The public use of other languages

is often met with suspicion, particularly from people who are concerned that someone might be talking about them behind their back. Representations of bilinguals as secretive and untrustworthy help instill the tendency to be suspicious or anxious upon hearing an unfamiliar language. This paranoia ultimately serves to discourage the use of languages other than English in public spaces.

In looking at ethnic dialects in Chapter 6, there are times when white people might mock or appropriate ethnic-indexing variation in ways that unintentionally reproduce the language ideologies that preserve white public spaces. In addition to discourses that denigrate bilinguals, these same processes of mocking and appropriation can be seen contributing to discourse structural racism by presuming that public discourse ought to be in English. Mock representations of other languages often portray other languages as gibberish in that the sounds produced have no meaning in the target language. For example, in the film *Friday*, Smokey (played by Chris Tucker) addresses a Latino acquaintance with a series of nonsensical syllables intended to sound like spoken Spanish (*poquite*, *moroso*, *marese*, etc.). With a few recent exceptions, Hollywood representations of Native American languages follow this gibberish pattern with "languages" made up on the spot by white actors (Meek 2006).

One of the most common forms of mocking can be seen in what Elaine Chun calls *Mock Asian* (Chun 2004). Unlike mock forms targeting a specific language (like Spanish), Mock Asian targets East Asians as a monolithic group, demonstrating that the target is an imagined race rather than about any specific language or culture. It completely fails to acknowledge, for example, that Asia, as the largest continent, is home to a rather varied set of cultures and languages (including Chinese, which, despite often being referred to as one language composed of many dialects, is really many different and not mutually intelligible languages).

Features of Mock Asian include using forms that index non-native English, such as replacing /ɹ/ with /w/ ("wrong" as "wong"), switching /ɹ/ and /l/ ("flied lice" for "fried rice"), adding a final [i] vowel to words ("you breakee, you buyee"), and the use of stereotyped stock phrases like "Ah so." One of the most notorious uses of Mock Asian is Mickey Rooney's portrayal of Mr. Yunioshi in the 1961 film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. As if to emphasize racist intent, Rooney's Mock Asian character is even given pulled-back eyes and fake buck teeth to make him even more of a caricature (Rooney was a white New Yorker). Perhaps the most common form of Mock Asian is the production of nonsense syllables meant to imitate Mandarin Chinese, especially the phrase *ching-chong* (Chun 2016). This phrase is meant as a form of pseudo-Asian mockery that indexes perceptions of Asian American language as both unintelligible and trivial because of its connection to sing-song English utterances (like *ding dong* or *ping pong*).

The use of this type of Mock Asian is ubiquitous. In 2002, for example, Shaquille O'Neal directed the form at fellow basketball player Yao Ming, saying "Tell Yao Ming, ching-chong-yang-wah-ah-soh." The use of nonsense syllables to represent the language of an ethnic group reduces their language to gibberish, indexing a lack of meaningful language (which, in turn, indexes a failure to be fully human). This mocking of the sounds of other languages also serves to push other languages out of public space – if your language carries no meaning, I can refuse to bother speaking to you at all.

Chun (2016) suggests that one of the best ways to challenge the racism of Mock Asian is through humorous responses like "You failed Chinese class, huh?" Chun discusses Jimmy Wong's "Ching Chong: Asians in the Library Song." Wong wrote the song in response to a rant against Asians posted by a white student at UCLA. In the rant, the white student complains about Asians speaking languages other than English in the library (among other things). She claims that whenever she is studying in the library, she hears Asians on their

telephones saying, "Ching-chong, ling-long, ting-tong." In his musical response, Wong satirically sings about being attracted to the racist white woman, claiming that the phrase she hears ("ching-chong") actually means "I love you" in Chinese.

Wong's performance uses humor to challenge many of the racist stereotypes that underlie Mock Asian forms like *ching-chong*. Imagining himself as a charming womanizer, Wong undermines not only the portrayal of the annoying Asian on the phone in the original rant but also undermines racist stereotypes that depict Asian men as lacking masculinity. By filling in the meaning of *ching-chong* (as "I love you"), Wong challenges the use of gibberish to represent the linguistic competence of Asian Americans. The power of *ching-chong* to dehumanize depends on the word having no actual meaning. By giving *ching-chong* meaning, Wong undermines the view of Chinese as nonsense with no communicative function. Giving *ching-chong* a meaning that refers directly to the racist herself also plays on white fears that people using a language other than English are talking about them.

Mock phrases like *ching-chong* reproduce the myth that bilinguals are unable to communicate in any language. Just as complimenting African Americans for being "articulate," Asian, Latinx, and Middle Eastern Americans may find themselves being "complimented" on how well they speak English. Telling a native speaker how good their English is isn't really complimenting them at all. It simply lets them know that you assumed they were unable to speak English based on solely on their physical appearance. In addition to people told *ching-chong* by random strangers, Asian Americans may also be taunted with Mock Asian English phrases like *flied lice*, popularized in media depictions like the one in the 1998 *Lethal Weapon 4*. Forms of mocking may also be intersectional with forms often combining racism with sexism, homophobia, or transphobia. The Mock Asian catchphrases "me so horny" and "me love you long time" combine racism and sexism to harass Asian American women specifically. As with these catch phrases, mock varieties circulate widely enough to become somewhat standardized in that they have the same form across numerous contexts. Mock varieties may have no real connection to the speech of members of the mocked community.

A good example of this is what Meek (2006) calls *Hollywood Injun English*, the imagined variety of English used in media representations of Native Americans. For example, Native Americans in film have often been portrayed as greeting others by raising their right hand and saying "How." Of course, this only occurs in literary representations and Hollywood films and has nothing to do with how Native peoples greet one another in real life. Hollywood Injun English combines bits and pieces of various historical representations of Native American speech, and some forms that emerged were only through the imagination of white writers. Hollywood Injun English is easily recognized as indexing Native American identity (despite never being used by actual Native Americans). Hollywood Injun English is widely recognized and occurs in numerous films, particularly in Westerns and films marketed to children, like *Peter Pan* or *Pocahontas*.

There are a number of stereotypical features of Hollywood Injun English, including unique lexical items (*heap* to mean "very," *many moons* to mean "a long time"), the absence of a copula (e.g., "He not back by sunset," "squaw no leave"), irregular verbal agreement (*it say* rather than *says*), and the use of the nonsensical verbal suffix *-um* (*gettum, burnum*). Here, racist terms like *Injun* or *squaw* (a racist/sexist term denigrating Native American women) typically occur alongside forms of Hollywood Injun English, linking the linguistic forms of Hollywood Injun English with more overt expressions of racism. It is common for mock varieties to co-occur with other forms of racist discourse.

For many Americans who are not Native, Hollywood Injun English is much more familiar than any varieties of actual Native American English. The fact that white caricatures of

Natives are more familiar that actual Natives demonstrates how linguistic representations authorize white control over public space. Not only are Native voices silenced; they are replaced with highly inaccurate mocking forms of Native voices imagined by white people.

In the case of African American English, we explored how the appropriation of African American slang by white people produces indexical bleaching, breaking the indexical link between slang terms and ethnic identity. There is a somewhat similar pattern with the appropriation of Spanish by white speakers. This use of (Mock) Spanish often co-occurs with racist tropes, such as the brownface use of sombreros and paper cut-out moustaches on Cinco de Mayo (see Figure 7.10). Jane Hill (1993, 1998) first described this particular type of Mock Spanish in which speakers who are not Latinx insert (real and imagined) Spanish words and phrases into their English (like Bart Simpson saying "Ay, caramba!" in *The Simpsons*). For the speakers who use these forms, the Spanish carries indexical meanings associated with being witty and cosmopolitan – a social persona who is familiar with other cultures and languages and uses that knowledge in humorous ways. For monolingual English speakers, a phrase like "Hey, chica!" is light-hearted and friendly. Hill found, however, that often these uses of Spanish unintentionally end up simultaneously indexing negative stereotypes about Latinxs. This occurs through linking negative connotations to Spanish words and showing a total disregard for the grammar of Spanish. This disregard for the structure of actual Spanish reinforces ideologies of bilingual language as disordered and naturally inferior to English (in other words, the same ideologies can be found associated with Mock Asian).

Hill lays out four basic types of Mock Spanish that all serve to denigrate Latinxs in some way: semantic derogation, euphemism, hyperanglicization, and the (mis)use of elements of Spanish grammar. Semantic derogation refers to the process where words take on new, negative meanings. There are numerous historical cases of gendered pairs of words where the female member of the pair undergoes semantic derogation. Examples include

Figure 7.10 The sombrero and fake moustache is the ("brownface") fashion equivalent to Mock Spanish; here, the former president of the University of Louisville (while still president) poses with his staff

Source: courtesy of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*

master/mistress (where *master* retains the original meaning but *mistress* comes to refer to a woman in a relationship with a married man) or *bachelor/spinster* (where *spinster* took on negative connotations associated with an "old maid" rather than a young single woman). Another example is the use of "gay" to mean bad, tacky, or stupid (as in "That is so *gay*").

In Mock Spanish, the process of derogation occurs with a number of Spanish words. An example is Spanish ways of saying "goodbye," including *adios* ("goodbye") and *hasta la vista* ("see you later"). In Mock Spanish usage, these phrases are often used to mean something more like "get the hell out of here" or "good riddance" rather than the innocent "goodbye" they convey in Spanish. Hill gives the example of Arnold Schwarzenegger's use of *Hasta la vista, baby* before killing his enemy in the 1984 film *The Terminator*. Here, the Spanish "see you later" comes across more like "see you in hell." Similarly, *adios* is often used to mean "get out" rather than "goodbye." Hill's examples include an (otherwise English) ad for a pest control that says "Adios, cucarachas" (*cucaracha* is the Spanish word for cockroach) and a greeting card that says "Adios" on the front with the inside text reading, "That's Spanish for 'sure, go ahead and leave your friends, the only people who really care about you, the ones who would loan you their last thin dime. . . .'" There are also instances of *Adios* being used this way toward Latinxs, as in using "Adios amigo" to let a Latino know he is not welcome. Other examples of semantic derogation include the use of *nada* ("nothing") and *pesos*. The use of *pesos* often indexes the idea of something being cheap, inexpensive, or low quality, as in advertisements saying, "Get it for pesos!" When English speakers use *nada*, they typically mean "absolutely nothing" as if Spanish *nada* is somehow less than English *nothing*. For example, when people repeat ways of saying *nothing*, it is usually the case that *nada* comes last (as in "Nothing. Zilch. Zero. Nada").

Hill's description of *euphemism* examines the ways in which Mock Spanish forms often substitute Spanish words for English obscenities, as with words like *caca* ("shit") or *cojones* ("balls"). Repeatedly using Spanish words to replace obscene, embarrassing, or disgusting forms of English only serves to strengthen the link between Spanish speakers and negative stereotypes of Latinxs as dirty or Latino men being hypermasculine.

The process of *hyperanglicization* refers to showing a disregard for Spanish grammar or pronouncing Spanish words in an exaggerated English accent. An example is the use of *Lava sus manos* for *Lávase las manos* ("Wash your hands") on signs in restrooms. In Spanish, one says "the hands" rather than "your hands" (a common pattern in many languages where parts of your own body are not possessed) so that *lava sus manos* uses English grammar with Spanish words. Another example is the restaurant *Dos Loco Gringos* in Hope, Arkansas. Actual Spanish would be *dos gringos locos* with the adjective following the noun and a plural-marking /s/ on the adjective *loco* ("crazy"). The grammar here is entirely English even though all of the words are taken from Spanish. Exaggerated mispronunciations are particular common in place names, like the California cities of San Pedro (pronounced PEE-drow), Palo Alto (with both "a" vowels produced with [æ], the vowel in *cat*), or Los Gatos (with the word for "cats" produced as "gattis" [gærəs]). Hyperanglicization is also common in the media, such as when Napoleon Dynamite's grandmother tells him, "Go make yourself a dang quesadilla" and pronounces *quesadilla* with an alveolar [l] (so that it rhymes with "vanilla"). Although cases of hyperanglicization are usually intended to be humorous, they reproduce a view of Latinx language practices as disordered while also imposing white control over the use of Spanish.

The appropriation of elements of Spanish grammar reproduces the same ideology of Spanish as disordered. One of the most common examples is to place an /o/ vowel at the

end of English words (often preceded by the article *el*), as in *el cheapo*. In particular, the -o suffix is imagined as a basic way of forming Spanish words, as in the phrase *no problemo*, where English *problem* is made "Spanish" by adding -o. The Spanish word for problem is *problema* with a final /a/ so that the Mock Spanish form uses the Anglo-imagined *-o* suffix rather than using the actual Spanish word. Another example is the suffix *-amundo* as in *exactamundo* or *correctamundo*. There is no such suffix in Spanish. These bits of imagined Spanish grammar serve to keep public representations of Spanish under the control of English speakers.

Many uses of Mock Spanish involve more than one of these strategies. For example, the phrase *Adios bitchachos* uses the "get out" meaning of *adios* in addition to *-acho*, a variant of the Mock Spanish *-o* suffix. Sometimes this phrase even occurs with an accent on the <o> in *adios* (*adiós*). This accent doesn't occur in actual Spanish, but it does seem to represent the hyperanglicized version of the word with three syllables (a-dee-yos) rather than the two syllable Spanish word (a-dyos). Although Mock Spanish seems like an innocent form of speech play, it typically indexes negative stereotypes of Latinxs and represents Latinx speech as highly disordered. It is common to find Mock Spanish embedded into anti-Latinx racist discourse, as with Donald Trump's use of "bad *hombres*" when invoking the racist stereotype of Mexican American men as dangerous gang members.

In addition to indirectly evoking racist stereotypes, the widespread use of Mock Spanish among English monolinguals leads to the use of Mock Spanish in white interactions with Latinxs. An example is the Mock Spanish phrase *no bueno* ("no good," cf. Spanish *no es bueno*), which is used by white people in some interactions with Latinxs, particularly Latinx employees. Mock Spanish often involves the code-switching pattern of insertion as in Donald Trump's 2018 statement, "The Fed is going *loco* and there's no reason for them to do it." The frequency of this pattern licenses the practice of addressing monolingual Spanish speakers with Mock Spanish. In a study of language use in an Anglo-owned Mexican restaurant (Barrett 2006), directives to Spanish-speaking employees were often in Mock Spanish, as in example 6.

6. Manager directives to Spanish-speaking restaurant employees:

   Thank you for trabajo-ing. (trabajo = "work," 1st person singular or noun)
   Did you put bolsas in your basura cans? (*bolsas* = "bags," *basura* = "garbage;" compare to Spanish *botes de basura* "garbage bags")
   You have to finish *todo eso, porque* I have other things to do. (*todo eso* = "all this," *porque* = "because")

In the last example, the only Spanish words spoken to the monolingual employee were "all this, because." The manager later chastised the employee for not finishing the work in question. When it was suggested that perhaps the employee didn't understand her directive, the manager replied that she knew he understood, but he was "just lazy." This was a common response when employees failed to understand forms of Mock Spanish. The problem was never recognized as resulting from the English speaker's failure to adequately convey a directive in Spanish. Rather, communicative failure was regularly blamed on the Spanish-speaking employee, usually drawing on racist stereotypes (of Latinxs as lazy, evasive, and dishonest). Here, the use of Mock Spanish ultimately leads directly to discriminatory treatment of Spanish speakers.

Language varieties like Mock Asian, Hollywood Injun English, and Mock Spanish all serve both to denigrate specific ethnic groups and to establish public space as English-speaking. They commonly co-occur with other forms of racist discourse. They also sanction the use of disordered language in interactions with individuals with different ethnic backgrounds. In addition to creating unwelcoming spaces through mocking, these mock varieties can result in discriminatory treatment toward ethnic minorities. Mock varieties place control over other languages in the hands of English speakers and reproduce language ideologies that serve as the basis for various forms of discrimination.

Embracing bilingualism

The indexical meanings associated with languages other than English in the United States simultaneously marginalize speakers of other languages and clear public space for discourse in English. Yet these associations are ubiquitous and impossible to avoid. A study of listener perceptions found that stereotypes of Latinxs could be triggered simply by changing the pronunciation of a single word borrowed from Spanish (Baird et al. 2018). Listeners heard English sentences containing Spanish borrowings (*taco*, *tortilla*, and *salsa*) that were produced using either English or Spanish phonology (e.g., English [ˈtʰɑkʰoʊz] vs. Spanish [ˈtakos]). When listening to a male speaker produce a single word in Spanish phonology, listeners were significantly more likely to judge the speaker as more easy-going and more masculine. When asked open-ended questions about the speakers, voices producing a word with Spanish phonology were described according to stereotypes of Latinxs. For example, when asked what sports the speaker enjoyed, listeners gave a wide range of answers for the "all English" voice, but they overwhelmingly said "soccer" as the answer when the speaker produced a single word with Spanish phonology. People are surrounded by language ideologies that forge indexical links between specific languages and racial stereotypes so that they become automatic responses that can easily be triggered with subtle forms of language variation.

The United States (and the entirety of North America, with its long-inhabited history) has always been a multilingual nation, despite efforts to ban or eradicate other languages. Although courts have repeatedly found that language choice is a matter of freedom of speech, public discourse remains English-dominated through language ideologies that denigrate other languages and their speakers. These ideologies include the belief that bilinguals are somehow language deficient despite speaking two languages, the idea that English is naturally superior to other languages, the belief that bilingualism is abnormal, and so on. It should be obvious that knowledge of more than one language is a valuable asset, yet monolingual language ideologies only recognize this value when monolingual English speakers learn another language as adults. This can be seen in the way that journalists felt the need to criticize Julián Castro's Spanish but felt no need to do the same to Beto O'Rourke, Cory Booker, or Pete Buttigieg. The ultimate result of this language ideology is the loss of the huge economic and political resources that bilinguals can offer.

The idea that everyone in America needs to speak only English is not only unrealistic but also ties directly to openly xenophobic ideas and is a form of discourse structural racism

meant to denigrate Latinxs, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Middle Eastern Americans, and so on. These discourses do much more than prevent Americans from reaching their national potential in a global world; they also serve as the basis for denying basic social-services and equal justice to communities where languages other than English are used. As is usually the case, racist ideologies stand in the way of progress, harming many more than those Americans who happen to be bilingual.

Discussion questions

1. Check out the census data linked in the QR code. It shows changes in the use of different languages between 1980 and 2010. What sort of trends do you notice in the chart? Which languages have seen the greatest changes across time?

2. Check out the census data linked in the QR code. What parts of the country have higher rates of people who speak English less than "very well"? What factors might contribute to these patterns? What do you think the difference might be between "well" and "very well"?

3. Have you ever studied another language? Was it difficult for you? If so, what struggles did you encounter? How do you think it would have been different if you had learned that other language as a child? If you are monolingual, how might you benefit from learning another language?
4. Read the full text of Pratt's statement linked in the QR code. What parts of this are surprising to you? Which components echo racist stereotypes about Native Americans that continue to circulate in wider discourse? Which components index stereotypes that have been overcome (in that they are no longer used in wider discourse)?

5. Think of the kinds of media you take in daily. What are some other examples of Mock Asian, Hollywood Injun English, and Mock Spanish? What are your perceptions of the characters who exhibit these mock varieties? Why do you think the creators chose to use this language?
6. Examine the code-switching examples in the text box earlier in the chapter. What type is each example (alternation, insertion, or congruent lexicalization)?

8 American Sign Language and deaf culture

How people communicate

Most people communicate with the world through sound: listening to a friend talk, watching a movie without subtitles, or knowing not to step off the curb because they hear a truck coming. This state of interacting with the world is so natural for most humans that people forget the complexity of hearing and don't typically even give a name to the group of people who live this way. When this group *is* given a name, they are called *hearing* in contrast with a much smaller segment of the population who do not communicate naturally with the world through sound, for whom we will use the familiar, but complicated, name, *deaf*.

The hearing often think of deafness as a tragic lack of hearing – as purely a deficiency to be overcome. Defining deafness as a lack of hearing is an oversimplification in at least two crucial ways. First, it essentializes complex, multi-faceted people in terms of the one ability they are sure to find difficult or impossible. As noted in Chapter 2, defining a category of people in terms of a single attribute is common in the reproduction of stereotypes. In this chapter, we will see how an ideology that reduces deaf identity to simply the inability to hear severely limits the agency of deaf people, manufacturing disability out of difference. Second, more subtly, construing deafness as merely a lack of hearing greatly constrains the ability of the hearing to see their deaf friends, neighbors, children, and fellow citizens as fully human.

When the hearing mention language, they are almost always referencing spoken (or written) language. Whether it is to complain about someone's accent or to criticize word choice, most of the hearing rarely think about sign languages or the variation that might exist within them. The experience of the deaf in a hearing world is all but erased in their minds. This erasure, however, is about more than lack of experience with people who are deaf. It is about the primary ideology hearing people have about deaf people: the belief that deafness is a deficit, not just a difference, and believing the deaf to somehow be helpless and pitiful.

Deafness is typically acquired through some sort of environmental event such as loud noise or childhood illness but can also, less commonly, be inherited. According to the US National Institutes of Health, an estimated 10% of deaf babies are born to deaf parents (known as "deaf of deaf"), but the other 90% of the time a deaf child will be born to hearing parents either due to an inherited trait for deafness or through illness during pregnancy. In the 1960s, for example, there was a pandemic of the disease rubella (aka German measles) which led to the "rubella bulge" of some additional 8,000 babies born deaf in North America during the years 1962 to 1965. This bulge is associated with dramatic and far-reaching changes to deaf education and culture which will be discussed later in this chapter. Even if not present at birth, deafness can come to literally anyone at any time through, for example, chicken pox, mumps, diabetes, prolonged exposure to loud noises, momentary exposure to extremely loud noises, etc.

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