**Multilingual realities, monolingual ideologies:
Social media representations of Spanish as a heritage language
in the United States**

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Abstract

Little is known about how monolingual ideologies and their effects manifest in online contexts as compared to offline contexts. We conducted a corpus-assisted discourse study to investigate this, with a focus on Twitter representations of Spanish as a heritage language in the United States. We analysed two corpora (one English and one Spanish – over 30 million words), examining frequencies, collocations, concordance lines, and larger text segments. The results revealed evidence of the same ideologies found in offline contexts: normative monolingualism (drawing on the one-nation-one-language ideology and language purity ideologies) as well as raciolinguistic ideologies. We show how the semiotic processes of iconization and erasure lead to the (evidently erroneous) essentialisation of Spanish heritage language speakers as a homogeneous group of un-American, racialized immigrants with broken language. This discursive creation of difference constitutes the basis for the systematic discrimination of Spanish heritage language speakers, thus reflecting and reproducing social inequality. Our findings therefore indicate the necessity of extending planning measures to protect heritage language speakers (and other minority groups) from offline contexts to online contexts.

Keywords: multilingualism, heritage languages, intergenerational language transmission, language ideologies, raciolinguistics, Twitter

1. Introduction

Around the world, more people are multilingual than monolingual – yet, many societies in the Global North are dominated by a single language and characterized by pervasive monolingual ideologies (Fuller 2018). Such ideologies strongly impact multilinguals' lives and languages: 'they shrink the odds that [minority languages] will be maintained intergenerationally, and they contribute to the oppression and subordination of multilinguals as less legitimate language users and less worthy citizens in modern nation-states' (Fuller 2018:123). Ideologies that promote the predominance of one societal language while devaluing linguistic diversity and knowledge of other languages have a particularly strong impact on speakers of *heritage languages* (HLs) – that is, 'languages other than the dominant language (or languages) in a given social context' (Kelleher 2010:1). By influencing HL speakers' language usage patterns, including intergenerational transmission, monolingual ideologies affect the language development of children from HL-speaking families – which, in turn, has macro-level and micro-level consequences. At the societal level, children who grow up to be active HLs speakers collectively contribute to the maintenance of these HLs (King et al. 2008). At the individual level, children's language outcomes affect their well-being and healthy identity development as well as family dynamics and interpersonal relationships among family members (see De Houwer 2021 for a literature review).

In this paper, we investigate whether – and how – monolingual ideologies and their effects manifest in social media representations of Spanish as a HL in the U.S. The first Spanish speakers arrived in North America in the 16th century; then, large waves of Spanish speakers entered the country as a result of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the annexation of Puerto Rico in 1898, and during World War 1. In recent decades, there has been a notable influx of newcomers from Latin America (Potowski & Carreira 2010), and at present, around 14% of the U.S. population use Spanish at home (U.S. Census Bureau 2019). Many newcomers arrived in the hope of better socio-economic opportunities than in their countries of origin. Yet, an English-only ideology has long been entrenched in U.S. culture, and other languages – as well as their speakers – are systematically denigrated (Leeman 2018). Research suggests that many Spanish speakers have thus come to view

their language negatively (see Surrain 2021 for a literature review). However, there are no previous studies of the manifestation of monolingual ideologies in online representations of Spanish as a HL.

Notably, there is no consensus on what the term *HL* means: there are various definitions based on scholars' fields and their specific focus (see Leeman 2015 for an overview). Here, following the tradition established by Fishman (2001) in the U.S. context, we employ the term *HL* to refer to a language other than English that has a particular historical and personal family relevance to their users. As Valdés (2005) notes, it is this connection to the language that is salient, and not the language users' proficiency. We employ the term *HL* because it is more specific than the umbrella term *minority language* – and because it allows us to capture the language's relevance to its users.

Linguistic representation refers to the choice of particular words for the description of a particular event, individual or language (Horbacauskiene 2021). Notably, such representation not only reflects ideologies and thereby relations of power between different social or linguistic groups; it is also through linguistic representation that discursive practices can establish and reinforce such ideologies and power relations (Woolard et al. 2009).

We live in a digital age, and 16- to 64-year-olds in the U.S. spend approximately 120 minutes per day on social media (Statista Research Department 2021). This is a large part of their waking hours. Consequently, investigating language ideologies on social media is of great importance. However, while recent decades have seen a surge in research regarding online communication more generally, there is a paucity of studies concerning language ideologies on social media. Moreover, while scholars seem to agree that social media platforms constitute 'key agents in ideologizing multilingualism' (Jaworska & Themistocleous 2018:69; see also Androutsopoulos 2010), there is almost no social media research about ideologies pertaining to multilingualism. A notable exception in this context is Vessey's (2016a) study of Twitter data from Quebec, which investigates representations of French and English. This study reveals divergent language ideologies and representations in French and English tweets. Vessey (2016a) concludes that in the Quebec context, social media not only replicate but also complicate offline language ideologies and power hierarchies. She stresses the importance of further investigating whether and how language

ideologies manifest on social media – and what implications this has. In the U.S. context, knowledge about language ideologies on social media is crucial for the protection of Spanish HL speakers as well as for minority groups more generally. Measures to protect such groups tend to focus on offline contexts – but an extension to online contexts may be necessary to fully capture the range of domains in which discrimination occurs.

We thus investigated discursive representations of Spanish as a HL by means of a corpus-assisted discourse study of recent Twitter data from throughout the U.S., comparing an English and a Spanish corpus of over 30 million words in total. The research questions (RQs) we posed were:

- RQ1: Do online, social media representations of Spanish in the U.S. reflect the monolingual ideologies that have been found to prevail in offline contexts?
- RQ2: Are there differences between the English corpus and the Spanish corpus regarding the discursive representation of Spanish as a HL (as well as its speakers)?

To contextualize our study, we begin by providing the relevant theoretical background regarding language ideologies as well as a socio-historical account of these ideologies in offline contexts in the U.S.

2. Language ideologies

Language ideologies are shared sets of beliefs that ‘construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world’ – and frequently, such ideologies become so well-established and naturalized that they are perceived as common sense (Woolard 1998:3). A central aspect of language ideologies is the essentialist linkage of language (e.g., use of a specific variety) with social categories (e.g., migration background or ethnic group membership). This illustrates that language ideologies are never about language alone. Instead, they ‘envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology. Through such linkages, they underpin [...] the very notion of the person and the social group’ (Woolard 1998:3). When these links come to be seen as collective truths, language ideologies have tremendous effects, ranging from the discrimination of individual speakers to the creation of entire social hierarchies. Notably, in societies where discrimination based on ethnic or other social categories is not officially acceptable,

language ideologies may legitimize discrimination based on linguistic grounds (Stroud 2004). Consequently, for instance, the widespread stigmatization of varieties ‘linked to skin that isn’t white’ functions as a proxy for racism (Lippi-Green 2012:253). This is increasingly investigated through the lens of *raciolinguistic ideologies* – that is, ideologies which ‘conflate certain racialised bodies with deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices’ (Flores & Rosa 2015:50). The raciolinguistic perspective that has emerged in recent years entails a fundamental critique of the ‘white gaze’ – that is, a perspective which grants privilege to white people’s cultural and linguistic practices, and which paradoxically depicts racialized speakers as deviant even when they engage in the same practices as white people (Flores & Rosa 2015). Research from a raciolinguistic perspective analyzes and critiques raciolinguistic ideologies, which invoke the racialization of both personhood and language as well as the perception that racialized speakers have no legitimate place in society (Rosa 2016). Raciolinguistic ideologies are closely connected with monolingual ideologies.

Monolingual ideologies (sometimes also referred to as *monoglossic ideologies*) are systematically-held sets of beliefs that assign great value to the dominant language in a given society while attributing little or no merit to other languages (Fuller 2018). In monolingual ideologies, language diversity is predominantly considered a consequence of immigration (Wiley & Lukes 1996) – and the devaluing of HLs reflects the denigration of immigrants themselves. There is a widespread belief that low proficiency in the dominant language indicates low motivation to integrate into mainstream society, while full mastery of the dominant language enables full societal participation (Fuller 2018). However, the notion that the acquisition of proficiency in the dominant language would actually lead to acceptance and inclusion is ‘naïve and simplistic’: ‘Racism and discrimination exist in spite of linguistic proficiency’ (Blackledge 2006:39). Moreover, evidently not all multilinguals are immigrants.

Of particular relevance in this paper is the ideology of *normative monolingualism*, which consists of two central beliefs: firstly, that the ‘natural’ state for a society is to be monolingual; and secondly, that if individuals do speak more than one language, their languages ‘must remain strictly separate’ (Fuller 2018:123; see also Fuller 2013). Normative monolingualism therefore

incorporates the widespread one-nation-one-language ideology as well as drawing on language purity ideologies. The *one-nation-one-language ideology* centres around the belief that a single, common language within a nation is key for fostering national unity and social harmony (Hobsbawm 1992). Relatedly, a central tenet of *language purity ideologies* is that the stability and integrity of national languages need to be preserved by protecting them from ‘disruptive “foreign” influences’ (Blommaert et al. 2012:14). Commonly, judgements concerning the purity of the language are considered to reflect the authenticity of speakers’ group memberships: ‘if you speak a “pure” language X, you are a “real” member of a culture Y’ (Blommaert et al. 2012:6). In societies where such ideologies have become naturalized, multilingual competence and language mixing are viewed as different and frequently even as abnormal (Ricento 2013) – and the widespread nature of these beliefs entails systematic discrimination of multilingual children (e.g., in educational contexts; Ricento 2013) as well as multilingual adults (e.g., in the work place; Zentella 2014). Normative monolingualism thus constitutes a hegemonic ideology that reflects and reproduces social inequality.

Notably, monolingual ideologies tend to be promoted and perpetuated by individuals and states alike. Bourdieu (2000:175) observes that ‘the State makes a decisive contribution towards the production and reproduction of the instruments of construction of social reality’. Yet, as Fuller (2018) elaborates, the very fact that individuals and states even feel compelled to foster a belief in the importance of one dominant language illustrates that, in reality, multilingualism abounds. If the dominance of a single language was not perceived to be threatened, there would be no need to promote monolingualism. Monolingual ideologies are thus effectively evoked ‘to erase the reality of [...] multilingualism’ (Fuller 2018:120).

3. Language ideologies in the United States

The U.S. constitute a prime example of such attempts to erase the reality of multilingualism. 22% of the population have a first language other than English (U.S. Census, 2019). Yet, none of these languages – neither the autochthonous nor the allochthonous ones – hold any official status. English is the de facto national language. While this is not enshrined in federal legislation, the

widespread ideology of English monolingualism ‘makes such a designation superfluous’ (Ricento 2013:529).

Normative monolingualism has a long tradition in the U.S. This began as early as the European settlers’ colonization of Indigenous nations, which entailed the erasure of Indigenous identities and languages (Endo & Reece-Miller 2010). Since then, cultural and linguistic differences have tended to be seen as a socio-political threat. Therefore, the idea was that in the ‘melting pot’ of the U.S., such differences should simply melt away (Endo & Reece-Miller 2010). Anyone not white, monolingual, and monocultural was established as un-American (Fuller 2013).

The one-nation-one-language ideology has always featured strongly in discourses at the state level. It is epitomized by Theodore Roosevelt stating: ‘We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house’ (cited in Clements & Petray 2021). Analyses of transcripts from U.S. congressional debates and proceedings show that the one-nation-one-language ideology remains pervasive: Political discourses continue to perpetuate the notion that, to be a full member of U.S. society, one must show English proficiency (Subtirelu 2013). This is also reflected in how language questions in the U.S. census centre English proficiency as the key factor in marking ‘full personhood and national belonging’ (Leeman 2018:23).

The one-nation-one-language ideology is also reflected – and further perpetuated – in everyday life. Previous research has demonstrated the essentialist linkage commonly made between speaking Spanish and being uneducated and/or unskilled (Kutlu & Kircher 2021). This linkage frequently results in the discrimination of Spanish speakers, even when they are proficient in English – with many being told to ‘go back to their country’ if they do not use English, and some even losing their jobs for using Spanish during working hours (Zentella 2014). There is thus a strong pressure to assimilate linguistically (as well as culturally). Many multilingual families find themselves caught between wanting to provide a Spanish-speaking environment to foster connectivity between their children and their community, on the one hand, and submitting to social pressure to live their lives in English, on the other hand (Surrain 2021; Kutlu & Kircher 2021).

Language purity ideologies, too, are reflected and further perpetuated in everyday life. This is exemplified by the systematic discrimination of multilingual Spanish-speaking children in educational contexts. Previous research in schools has found that translanguaging in the classroom is not appreciated as the ‘important communicative resource’ that it is (García & Hesson 2015:230). Instead, it is frequently deemed indicative of a state of ‘languagelessness’, where multilingual children’s performance in their languages is deemed to be impure and deficient (Rosa 2016). This tends to lead to these multilingual children being moved to and/or kept in English as a Second Language classrooms, which increases the academic gap between multilingual Spanish-speaking children and monolingual English-speaking children (Olsen 2010).

Such practices can be classified as instantiations of raciolinguistic ideologies since legitimized Americanness is tied to whiteness – and both of these are tied to ‘good’ (monolingual) English practices (Flores & Rosa 2015). Notably, this constitutes an issue of intersectionality: Many multilingual Spanish-speaking children (and adults) are disadvantaged due to both their immigration background as well as their racialization.

4. Methodology

To investigate whether – and how – such ideologies and their effects manifest in social media representations of Spanish as a HL in the U.S., we conducted a corpus-assisted discourse study of two corpora (one English and one Spanish) comprised of recent Twitter data. Twitter data were chosen because, unlike many other social media data, they are within the public domain.

The reach of different social media platforms varies across social groups (see Durham 2022 for a literature review). For instance, Twitter users tend to be from younger age groups, and it can be assumed that the voices of older generations are thus under-represented in our corpora. Moreover, the fact that not everyone has access to the internet and the electronic devices needed to use social media entails that socially-disadvantaged individuals are also likely to be under-represented. Additionally, even among active Twitter users, different individuals use the platform with different frequencies and for different purposes – and not everyone shares private views

online. Our findings therefore cannot paint an exhaustive picture of ideologies in online contexts. Nonetheless, as we will show, they provide systematic and meaningful insights.

Notably, our focus is on tweeters' original expressions of their ideologies. An analysis of others' engagement with the original tweets (in the form of likes, retweets, quote-tweets, and comments) would go beyond the scope of this paper.

4.1 Data collection

Once we had received Institutional Review Board clearance and this had also been approved by Twitter, we began our data collection. This took place over a period of 12 weeks, between July and October 2020. The socio-historical context at the time of data collection may have influenced our findings (and we discuss this in more detail below). Data were collected through the *rtweet* package (Kearney 2019) in the open-source statistical language R. Our code is available on OSF: https://osf.io/bgeut/?view_only=8a905e76b69143c68d318c3b62e3c865

By means of the *lookup_coords()* function, which uses Twitter's geotag data and selects the location(s) specified within the function, we collected tweets from the entirety of the U.S.. We used the *search_tweets()* function to enter our search words, including pertinent terms such as *Spanish*, *Spanish speakers*, *Spanish-speaking*, and *Hispanic* (as well as their Spanish equivalents). Thus, all tweets included in our corpora related to the Spanish language and/or its speakers in some way. To avoid capturing the same tweet more than once, we used the *include_rts* function FALSE.

Based on the downloaded tweets, two corpora were created: one containing English data (852,321 tweets amounting to 27,130,067 words) and one containing Spanish data (129,948 tweets amounting to 3,514,336 words). Based on Twitter's automatic language tagging procedure, predominantly English tweets with a few Spanish terms were included in the English corpus while predominantly Spanish tweets with a few English terms were included in the Spanish corpus.

4.2 Data analysis

The approach we took to analyse our data broadly fits under the remit of *corpus-assisted discourse studies* – an approach that has, in recent years, proved to be highly insightful in the examination of

language ideologies in diverse contexts and with regard to a range of different discourse types (e.g., Vessey 2016a; Jaworska & Themistocleous 2018; Kircher & Fox 2021).

Corpus-linguistic procedures can very effectively reveal discursive patterns in large amounts of data (Baker 2010). A commonly-used corpus-linguistic procedure is the determination of frequencies – that is, highly frequent words and phrases. ‘A community’s value system is built up and maintained, at least partly, by the recurrent use of particular phrasings’ (Stubbs 2001:166). Analysing the frequency of particular discursive representations can therefore reveal patterns and trends that allow for the identification of language ideologies (Vessey 2017). Consequently, making use of the Word List tool in the program AntConc (Anthony 2022), we examined frequently-occurring terms in our corpora. We began with rounds of deductive coding in which we grouped terms into three broad semantic categories: term linked with (1) the one-nation-one-language ideology and (2) language purity ideologies, both of which are part of normative monolingualism, as well as terms linked with (3) raciolinguistic ideologies. In the three broad categories, we included all terms that tapped aspects of these ideologies that had been established in the aforementioned previous research in offline contexts. Subsequently, we performed rounds of inductive coding to group frequently-occurring terms in each broad category into more specific semantic categories. This allowed us to establish six categories that yield more nuanced insights into the different ideologies: AMERICANNES and UN-AMERICANNES, which both relate to the one-nation-one-language ideology, PURITY and PROFICIENCY, which both relate to language purity ideologies, as well as EDUCATION AND SKILLS and RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION, which both relate to raciolinguistic ideologies. (We discuss these in more detail below.) To facilitate comparisons of these categories in the two differently-sized corpora, frequencies were normalized to words per million (wpm).

Another commonly-used corpus-linguistic procedure is the analysis of collocations – that is, words with which pertinent terms tend to co-occur. Isolated words are not understood to be meaningful on their own, and by establishing trends in how words cluster together, collocations analysis can shed light on discourse norms (Stubbs 2001). Considering collocation data can thereby provide fuller insights into the ways in which languages and their speakers are represented – and the ways in which ideologies are reflected and reinforced. For instance, collocations can reveal the

aforementioned linkages between languages and linguistic phenomena, on the one hand, and social categories, on the other hand (Vessey 2017). Using AntConc's Collocates tool, we therefore investigated which words frequently co-occur with the terms SPANISH, SPANISH-SPEAKING, and SPANISH SPEAKER(S) in the English corpus, as well as with the terms ESPAÑOL, HISPANO-HABLANTE(S), and the lemma HABLAR* ESPAÑOL in the Spanish corpus. We employed the standard search window of five spaces to the left and to the right of the search term (Baker 2006). We considered Mutual Information (MI) scores – that is, scores using a logarithmic scale to express 'the ratio between the frequency of the collocation and the frequency of random co-occurrence of the two words in combination' (Gablasova et al. 2017:163) – to establish that words were not merely co-occurring by chance. Following common procedure (e.g., Baker 2006; Vessey 2017), we took MI scores of 3 or above as evidence of statistical significance.

The examination of frequencies and collocations can be very fruitfully employed to study language ideologies in corpora. However, combining these quantitative corpus-linguistic procedures with qualitative data analysis yields even more nuanced insights by highlighting how ideologies function as naturalized assumptions that underlie discourse (Vessey 2016b). We thus considered qualitative data in the form of selected entire tweets and concordance lines that were created with AntConc's Concordance tool. Concordance lines 'present an individual lexical item within its "co-text" across numerous texts' (Vessey 2016b:6) in order to make discursive patterns more easily observable. All concordance lines for the lexical items we investigated, as well as a complete list of the collocations for our search terms, can be found through the OSF link above.

5. Results

5.1. Frequencies

The most immediate point to emerge from our frequency findings is that the same semantic categories were present in both corpora: AMERICANNESS and UN-AMERICANNESS, which relate to the one-nation-one-language ideology, PURITY and PROFICIENCY, which relate to language purity ideologies, as well as EDUCATION AND SKILLS and RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION, which relate to

raciolinguistic ideologies. Table 1 shows the words pertaining to each category, including their absolute frequencies, as well as the absolute and relative frequencies for the semantic categories.

[TABLE 1]

The AMERICANNESS category includes not only the eponymous term *America* and the associated words *American(s)/americana(s)/americano(s)* but also descriptors referring to *nationality/nacionalidad* and related concepts such as *nationhood*. The frequent mention of the term *patriot* and the presence of hashtags such as *#proudpatriot* and *#patriotpure* indicate the presence of a right-wing nationalist component of Americanness. As noted above, the one-nation-one-language ideology entails the belief that monolingualism is the natural state for a society, and in the U.S., the association of Americanness with monolingualism is thus pervasive (Fuller 2018). Consequently, the term *monolingual* is also included in the AMERICANNESS category.

The UN-AMERICANNESS category, by contrast, contains the term *multilingual* as well as the descriptors *unAmerican/antiamericana/antiamericano*. This category also includes descriptors relating to who is generally considered to be un-American, such as *immigrant(s)/inmigrante(s)* and people who are *foreign/extranjero(s)*. Moreover, there are terms relating to what is expected of these people, namely that they should *integrate/integrar* and become *assimilated/asimilado*. Both the AMERICANNESS and the UN-AMERICANNESS category reflect the one-nation-one-language ideology (Hobsbawm 1990). Yet notably, both corpora also contain hashtags such as *#proudlatina* and *#latinoproud*. While these hashtags make reference to being Latina/Latino/Latine – that is, a characteristic which is stereotypically seen as un-American (Fuller 2013) – they link this identity with pride. This indicates that not everyone who is Latina/Latino/Latine accepts the denigration that is commonly associated with being considered un-American.

The PURITY category provides insights into purity ideologies – that is, beliefs according to which multilingual individuals should keep their languages strictly separate (Fuller 2018). In addition to the eponymous term *purity/pureza* and related words like *pure/puro*, there are also numerous descriptors that relate to a lack of linguistic purity. These include *translanguaging*,

codeswitching, and *mixing/mezclando* as well as specific portmanteaus that are used to describe the mixing of Spanish and English in the U.S. – with *Spanglish* being the most common one. The frequently-occurring term *broken/roto* reveals the extent to which certain tweeters reviled this kind of mixing. There were only very few instances where the hashtag *#ispeakspanglish* was used, indicating that some tweeters were claiming this way of speaking as positive.

The terms in the PROFICIENCY category also provide insights into purity ideologies, but from a different angle: They reveal a widespread belief that the mixing of Spanish and English is due to lacking *competence/competencia* on the part of the speakers, who are not seen as *fluent/fluida/fluido* in their languages. This reflects the ‘languagelessness’ that is so frequently attributed to multilingual children when they use translanguaging as a communicative resource (Rosa 2016). Regarding Latina/Latino/Latine immigrants and their children, it is important to view this in the context of the aforementioned belief that low proficiency in the dominant language indicates low motivation to integrate into mainstream society – and that only full mastery of the dominant language enables full societal participation (Fuller 2018).

As noted above, the essentialist linkage of language with social categories is a central tenet of all language ideologies. In the U.S. context, the perceived linkage between being a Spanish HL speaker and being uneducated and/or unskilled – and consequently unemployed – is a prime example of this (Kutlu & Kircher 2021). This is clearly reflected by the words included in the EDUCATION AND SKILLS category. There was frequent reference to Spanish HL speakers not being *educated/educado* and therefore *stupid/estúpido*. The terms *unskilled* and *unemployment/desempleo* also have high frequencies. Notably, education and employment are not only domains in which language purity ideologies are particularly prevalent, but they are also the domains in which much of the systematic discrimination of Spanish HL speakers occurs (Rosa 2016; Zentella 2014).

The RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION category contains the term *racism/racismo* as well as related terms such as *racist/racista* and *racialized/racializado*. There are numerous descriptors relating to skin colors, such as *brown/morena/moreno*. The terms *black/negra/negro* are also included here. This is due to the fact that, in the U.S., the term *black* is at times used to describe individuals from

Latin America and/or of Latin American descent, even though they might not necessarily identify themselves in this manner (Wade 2010:12-13). The category also contains terms regarding the causes of racism, such as white Americans' misguided sense of being *superior* and thus identifying as *supremacist/supremacista*. Moreover, frequent mention was made of the consequences of racism – including the *stigma/estigma* attached to Spanish HL speakers and their way of speaking, as well as the resulting *bullying* and *harassment*. While all semantic categories that emerged from the frequency data are conceptually linked, and the terms in the other categories also provide insights into raciolinguistic ideologies, the descriptors in the RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION category do so most explicitly. The fact that *xenophobia/xenofobia* also occurred frequently in our corpora underscores the intersectionality at hand: Many multilingual Spanish speakers are disadvantaged due to both, their immigration background as well as their racialization.

[FIGURE 1]

Figure 1 provides a summary of the frequency findings from Table 1. Notably, it shows that the descriptors in the RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION category had the highest relative frequencies for the English corpus and overall. For the Spanish corpus, the descriptors in the RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION category had the second-highest wpm. The frequency findings thus point to the particular ubiquity of raciolinguistic ideologies in our Twitter data (which we discuss in more detail below).

Another notable finding to emerge from Figure 1 is that the relative frequencies of the terms in the PURITY and PROFICIENCY categories were higher in the Spanish corpus, while the wpm for all other categories were higher in the English corpus. This could be seen to indicate the internalization and amplification of prevalent language purity ideologies on the part of Spanish HL speakers, leading to self-derogation. However, caution is necessary in the interpretation of these findings (see below for a discussion of this).

5.2. Collocations

In both corpora, the collocation findings are in line with the frequency findings. For instance, SPANISH collocated with *illegals* (MI=4.01) and HABLAR* ESPAÑOL with *indocumentada* ('undocumented', MI=10.70), portraying Spanish HL speakers as illegal immigrants – and thus un-American. Moreover, SPANISH collocated with *bilingualism* (MI=3.36), which, as noted above, is commonly considered to be a key feature of UN-AMERICANNESS. SPANISH-SPEAKING collocated with *adjust* (MI=5.92), reflecting what is expected of such un-Americans: namely cultural as well as linguistic assimilation. Like the frequency findings, the collocations therefore indicate the pervasiveness of the one-nation-one-language ideology in our corpora. However, the collocations also support the aforementioned point that not everyone who is Latina/Latino/Latine accepts the denigration that is widely associated with being considered un-American. This is indicated, for example, by ESPAÑOL collocating with *orgullo* ('pride', MI=6.10).

There were several collocations with descriptors pertaining to the PURITY category, such as SPANISH collocating with *mixture* (MI=3.09), SPANISH SPEAKER(S) with *switch* (MI=5.81), and ESPAÑOL with *Spanglish* (MI=4.94). Additionally, there were numerous collocations with terms from the PROFICIENCY category, exemplified by SPANISH, SPANISH-SPEAKING, and SPANISH SPEAKERS all collocating with *fluent* (MI=5.24, MI=5.88, and MI=6.68, respectively). SPANISH also collocated with other relevant terms such as *fluency* (MI=4.61) and *proficiency* (MI=4.23). The collocation findings thus also demonstrate the prevalence of purity ideologies.

The term *unemployment* – which makes reference to a consequence of the lacking education and skills that are widely associated with Spanish HL speakers – was found to be a strong collocate of both SPANISH (MI=8.10) and SPANISH SPEAKER(S) (MI=13.15). As explained above, education and employment are the domains in which much of the systematic discrimination of racialized Spanish HL speakers occurs. Many terms pertaining to the RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION category also emerged as significant collocates of our search terms. For instance, SPANISH collocated with *racial* (MI=4.57) and *abuse* (MI=3.91); ESPAÑOL collocated with *matonaje* ('bullying', MI=6.83), SPANISH SPEAKER(S) with *harassed* (MI=5.87), and SPANISH-SPEAKING with *mistreated* (MI=7.02). The collocations therefore support the frequency finding that raciolinguistic

ideologies are highly prevalent in our corpora. The intersectionality of many Spanish HL speakers being discriminated based on both their racialization and their immigrant status is underscored by the collocation between SPANISH and *xenophobia* (MI=3.90).

Despite the systematic discrimination of Spanish HL speakers in the U.S., we found several collocates that confirm the importance of Spanish to (at least a certain segment of) tweeters. For instance, SPANISH collocated with *heritage* (MI=5.50), SPANISH SPEAKER(S) with *community* (MI=12.59), HABLAR* ESPAÑOL with *comunidad* ('community', MI=7.92), and HISPANO-HABLANTE(S) with *identidad* ('identity', MI=6.97). This indicates Spanish HL speakers' affective attachment to the language, and their awareness of it as a constitutive component of their social identities.

5.3. Concordance lines and larger text segments

The selected concordance lines and entire tweets also yielded abundant evidence of normative monolingualism (incorporating the one-nation-one-language ideology and purity ideologies) as well as raciolinguistic ideologies. In addition to lending support to the frequency and collocation findings, the concordance lines and larger text segments offered more nuanced insights regarding specific aspects of these ideologies.

The concordance lines for the term *America* (Figure 2) illustrate two key aspects of the one-nation-one-language ideology: First, that the use of English is deemed an integral part of Americanness; and second, that those who do not use English at all times (even within their own multilingual community) are considered un-American and un-welcome. As noted above, in monolingual ideologies, language diversity is predominantly considered a consequence of immigration – and the devaluing of HLs reflects the denigration of immigrants themselves. It is thus not surprising that our corpora contain statements such as those in the final line of Figure 2, and in the following tweet:

- (1) *My Cuban-republican family went to Tennessee and my abuelo [grandfather] spoke Spanish at some restaurant. They told them to "Speak English and go back to your country".*

The representation of Spanish HL speakers as un-American, which is epitomized by this recurring request for people to “go back to [their] country”, is not only symptomatic of systemic discrimination – it also entirely ignores that not all HL speakers are in fact immigrants. Another tweeter captured this when they wrote:

- (2) *I’m Hispanic, call me stupid cause I speak broken English, tell me go back to ur country but I was born here n I thought that was racist.*

The data show that at least some Latina/Latino/Latine people have internalised the one-nation-one-language ideology to the extent that they themselves deem English monolingualism essential to Americanness. The following tweet exemplifies this:

- (3) *This reminds me of actual ppl I know, who are of Hispanic descend and proud that they don’t speak Spanish because they’re American.*

Yet, a closer examination of the corpora also confirmed a point that had already emerged from the frequency and collocation findings: namely that not everyone who is Latina/Latino/Latine accepts the denigration commonly associated with being considered un-American. This is indicated, for instance, by these tweeters expressing their pride in stereotypically un-American characteristics – that is, their multilingualism and the ability to speak Spanish:

- (4) *Soy bilingue y con orgullo! [I am bilingual and proud of it!]*
(5) *I am very proud of being Hispanic and speak Spanish.*

The prevalence of purity ideologies is illustrated by the concordance lines for the term *Spanglish* (Figure 3). The final two lines show that speakers who mix the two languages are considered to have not only broken English but also improper Spanish. The perceived brokenness of their English is further exemplified by tweet (2), above. The perceived brokenness of their Spanish is further exemplified by the following tweets:

(6) *The way I talk has always been a huge insecurity of mine, I grew up with Spanish been my first language but i speak broken Spanish/Spanglish.*

(7) *A veces yo creo que i am never going aprender espanol pero como speak it fluently porque cuando yo hablo espanol que i speak it in very broken Spanglish. [Sometimes I think that I am never going to learn how to speak Spanish fluently because when I speak Spanish I speak it in very broken Spanglish.]*

Unsurprisingly, concerns about Spanish proficiency were predominantly found among tweeters who were clearly identifiable as Spanish HL speakers. Several tweeters attributed the perceived brokenness of their HL to their upbringing, and specifically, the fact that their parents did not want them to use Spanish. The following tweet is an example of this, which also alludes to an explanation for this lacking intergenerational transmission – namely fear of discrimination:

(8) *Really wish my parents weren't so self-conscious about their accents when speaking English so that they would have been more willing to let me speak more in Spanish because now I just speak in Spanglish or broken Spanish.*

As noted above, there were only very few tweeters in the corpora who seemed to embrace their way of speaking, and who claimed the term *Spanglish* as positive – as in this tweet:

(9) *I remember growing up feeling embarrassed when I was called out for being pocha [a Mexican-American person with limited Spanish vocabulary] for my Spanglish. Pero [but] now I celebrate it as part of my identidad [identity]!!!*

Both the concordance lines for the term *uneducated* (Figure 4) and the next tweet demonstrate the aforementioned essentialist linkage between being a Spanish HL speaker and being uneducated and/or unskilled:

(10) *Those people who speak broken English are so beneath you. Like that Hispanic maid who cleans your house.*

The raciolinguistic ideologies of the English speakers who wrote these tweets are at the root of the racism and discrimination whose discursive representations were so ubiquitous in our corpora. The following tweets serve as examples for discrimination based on speaking Spanish as well as Spanglish:

(11) *Vivo en otro continente, ayudando a otro país a que su economía no caiga, soportando racismo, xenofobia, incomprensión ... trabajando en puestos por debajo de mi sólida preparación. Pero me ignoran porque hablo español. [I live on another continent, helping another country so that its economy does not fail, enduring racism, xenophobia, misunderstanding ... working in positions below what I have been trained for. But they ignore me because I speak Spanish.]*

(12) *Quiero denunciar públicamente el acoso que recibo a diario sobre mi condición de idioma: el spanglish. Por su atención, gracias. [I want to publicly denounce the daily bullying that I receive regarding my language condition: Spanglish. For your attention, thank you.]*

Such discrimination starts early on; as noted above, it is particularly prevalent not only in the domain of employment but also in educational contexts. In fact, the following tweet indicates that discrimination happens not only based on children's own linguistic repertoires and language use, but also based on those of their family – and even based on their names:

(13) *2 of my 3 kids were coded as Hispanic bc of their father's names and bilingualism. They both experienced discrimination in elementary school.*

Despite the systematic discrimination of Spanish HL speakers in the U.S., a closer examination of the corpora again confirmed a point that had already emerged from the frequency and collocation findings: namely that at least a certain segment of the tweeters had a strong affective attachment to the Spanish language and were highly aware of it being a constitutive component of their social identities. This is exemplified by the following tweet:

(14) *As a kid my mom would always tell to not speak Spanish bc someone would call la migra [the immigration authorities] on us. So now as an adult hablo español cuando me dan las*

putas ganas porque [I speak Spanish whenever the hell I want because] Im mad proud of my past and my roots and fuck whoever thinks different.

[FIGURE 2]

[FIGURE 3]

[FIGURE 4]

6. Discussion

RQ1 asked whether social media representations of Spanish in the U.S. reflect the monolingual ideologies that prevail in offline contexts. The frequencies, the collocations, as well as the concordance lines and larger text segments demonstrated that all monolingual ideologies that previous research had attested in offline contexts were also present in our Twittter data. Specifically, we found evidence of normative monolingualism, which incorporates the one-nation-one-language ideology and language purity ideologies, as well as evidence of raciolinguistic ideologies. The data demonstrate that these ideologies have serious consequences for Spanish HL speakers, who experience systematic discrimination. Moreover, for many, the pressure to assimilate leads to disrupted intergenerational language transmission – which has negative consequences (including linguistic insecurity) for those not raised with Spanish.

The particular ubiquity of raciolinguistic ideologies in the data may be linked to the time of data collection. All tweets were written in the summer and autumn of 2020 – not long after the murder of George Floyd, when unprecedented numbers of Americans (and others) were calling out systemic racism and racist violence, and when these issues were also a prominent part of political discourses. The U.S. president at the time certainly did not dispel ideologies of legitimized Americanness being tied to whiteness and English monolingualism, and his status as an active Twitter user may have contributed to the reflection and perpetuation of racism and discrimination on this social media site.

Notably, the data in our corpora revealed two key semiotic processes by means of which non-HL speakers were constructing ideological representations of linguistic difference – namely

iconization and erasure. *Iconization* entails a transformation of the relationship between a language and the social images with which it is linked: ‘Linguistic features that index social groups [...] appear to be iconic representations of them, as if [their language] somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature or essence’ (Irvine & Gal 2000:37). This is exemplified by the essentialization of Spanish HL speakers as a homogeneous group of uneducated, unskilled, unemployed, and un-American racialized immigrants with broken language. The complementary process of *erasure* renders certain facets of the sociolinguistic reality invisible: ‘Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away’ (Irvine & Gal 2000:38). The non-HL speakers’ ignorance of HL speakers’ heterogeneity and their lacking acknowledgment of Spanish as a constitutive component of Latina/Latino/Latine social identities serve as evidence of this. The discursive creation of difference achieved through iconization and erasure constitutes the basis for much of the discrimination perpetrated by white monolingual Americans, leading to multilingual Spanish HL speakers’ unequal access to education, restricted socio-economic prospects, and frequent social exclusion. As Woolard (1998:19) notes, the ‘misrecognition or revalorization of the indexical character of language may make discrimination on linguistic grounds publicly acceptable where the corresponding [discrimination based on non-linguistic traits] is not’ – and that is certainly the case here. The linguistic discrimination of multilingual Spanish HL speakers is merely a proxy for the deeply-rooted, systemic racism and xenophobia in U.S. society, and these affect racialized speakers as well as immigrants and their descendants regardless of their language proficiency or use. Both normative monolingualism and raciolinguistic ideologies thus constitute hegemonic ideologies that reflect and reproduce social inequality.

RQ2 asked whether there are differences between the English corpus and the Spanish corpus regarding the discursive representation of Spanish as a HL (as well as its speakers). The most pertinent finding here is that the relative frequencies of the terms in the PURITY and PROFICIENCY categories were higher in the Spanish corpus, while the relative frequencies of the terms from all other categories were higher in the English corpus. This could indicate the internalization and amplification of purity ideologies on the part of Spanish HL speakers, leading to self-derogation.

However, caution is necessary in the interpretation of these findings. It should not be assumed that all tweeters whose data were included in the Spanish corpus are Spanish HL speakers; some may also be Spanish LX speakers. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that all tweeters whose data were included in the English corpus have English as their first and only language. In fact, it is evident from the concordance lines and larger text segments that the English corpus contains data from at least a certain number of Spanish HL speakers. Despite growing multilingualism, English remains the dominant language of the internet, including communication on Twitter – even among many multilinguals themselves (Lee 2016). It is thus not possible to generalize from the Spanish corpus to all multilingual Spanish HL speakers as a group, or from the English corpus to all monolingual English speakers as a group. Yet, with all due caution in the interpretation of our findings, it would not be surprising if Spanish HL speakers really had internalized and amplified the language purity ideologies that are prevalent among monolingual English speakers in offline contexts (Rosa 2016). It is not uncommon for discriminated groups to ‘internalize a wider social evaluation of themselves as inferior’ and to reproduce this ‘consensual inferiority’ as relative self-derogation (Tajfel & Turner 1986:11). Notably, the concordance lines and text segments allowed us to examine tweets from individuals who are clearly identifiable as Spanish HL speakers from the content of their writing. Many of these expressed insecurity, embarrassment, and frustration about the way they speak – thus lending support to the notion that they have internalized purity ideologies.

By contrast, the data suggest that the other kinds of ideologies were being challenged by (at least some) tweeters who are clearly identifiable as Spanish HL speakers. Specifically, some tweeters were resisting the one-nation-one-language ideology by refusing to accept the denigration that is commonly associated with being considered un-American. It is possible that these tweeters did not view being un-American as a negative trait at all and/or that they simply felt comfortable with having multiple social identities: as Americans and as Latina/Latino/Latine. After all, these identities are not mutually exclusive. Be that as it may, the data provide clear evidence of the affective attachment that certain HL speakers have to the Spanish language, and their awareness of it as a constitutive component of their social identities (see also Kutlu & Kircher

2021). The concordance lines and larger text segments from our corpora also clearly show Spanish HL speakers calling out racism and discrimination.

There is a plausible explanation for why Spanish HL speakers might be internalizing and amplifying language purity ideologies while at the same time challenging the one-nation-one-language ideology and raciolinguistic ideologies. The latter two are clearly linked to speakers' ethnic backgrounds – discrimination based on which is illegal and not officially acceptable in the U.S. By contrast, language purity ideologies are, at least on the surface, merely tied to language use – discrimination based on which is not legally sanctioned in the U.S. As noted above, in societies where discrimination based on ethnic or other social categories is not officially acceptable, language ideologies may legitimize discrimination based on linguistic grounds (Stroud 2004). We therefore hypothesize that it is easier for Spanish HL speakers to challenge ideologies that are overtly linked to ethnicity and migration background (like the one-nation-one-language ideology and raciolinguistic ideologies) than to challenge ideologies that are seemingly merely about language use, and whose connection with ethnicity and migration background is more subtle (like language purity ideologies). However, further research is needed to ascertain this.

Notably, the overall findings of our study are in line with those of the only comparable social media research regarding language ideologies in a multilingual context – that is, the aforementioned Quebec-based research by Vessey (2016a). While Vessey focused on different types of language ideologies, both studies clearly show that the ideologies attested in offline contexts also manifest in social media data. The fact that this has now been evinced in more than one context supports the notion that it is a general phenomenon. This is also in keeping with the results of previous research regarding online interactions more generally, and especially in the field of gaming, which showed that 'the Internet is not creating "new" social patterns but rather is an extension of ourselves' (Eklund 2015:527; see also Castells 2002). People's online interactions on social media are thus closely linked with their interactions in their offline lives. On the one hand, this explains why ideologies attested in offline contexts are reflected on social media. On the other hand, it means that online behavior has 'the potential to stimulate positive behavioral outcomes' in the offline world (Lavertu et al. 2020:1).

On the micro-level, this highlights the opportunity – and the responsibility – that we all have as individuals to challenge and resist ideologies which contribute to the systematic discrimination of minority groups such as HL speakers, online as well as offline. On the macro-level, it underscores the necessity for future research and debate regarding not only the role of language ideologies on social media, but also their implications for language policy and planning. As Vessey (2016a: 5) notes, the ‘unregulated status’ of social media entails that there is ‘little protection of minorities, including linguistic minorities’. While further research is needed to address how this can most effectively be undertaken, our findings indicate that planning measures aiming to protect minority groups ought to be extended from offline to online contexts in order to truly capture the whole range of domains in which discrimination occurs.

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Table 1. Frequently-occurring words for each semantic category in the English and the Spanish corpus.

Semantic Category	English			Spanish		
	Words	Abs. freq.	Rel. freq.	Words	Abs. freq.	Rel. freq.
Americanness	Americans (59092), American (55065), America (22018), nation (8121), patriot (6709), statehood (5092), nationality (1585), monolingual (19), nationhood (11), nationalization (11), nationalistic (11), nationalize (11), nativist (11), #proudpatiot (10), #proudamerica (3), #proudamerican (3), #proudtobeanamerican (2), #patriotpure (1)	157775	5815.502 wpm	America (1860), EEUU (863), americano (316), americanos (223), americana (139), nacionalidad (120), compatriotas (22), americanas (21), pertenencia (6)	3570	1015.839 wpm
Un-Americanness	immigrants (9907), immigrant (8825), immigration (4157), foreign (1350), assimilate (190), integrated (116), assimilation (86), integrate (75), integration (74), assimilated (59), unAmerican (57), multilingual (55), #proudlatina (10),	24988	921.045 wpm	#proudlatina (9907), #mexicoamericanas (8825), #lacionoamericans (4157), #proudlymexican (1350), #centroamericanas (190), antiamericano (116), #proudtobemexican (86),	658	187.234 wpm

MULTILINGUAL REALITIES, MONOLINGUAL IDEOLOGIES

	#proudtobemexican (5), #proudnativeamericanss (4), #proudpuertorican (4), #proudtobebblack (4), #latinoproud (2), #proudcubano (2), #proudhonduran (2), #proudmexican (2), #proudofmexicanwomen (2)			antiamericana (75), #inmigracionyrefugio (74), integrados (55), extranjera (10), asimilado (5), extranjero (4), inmigrante (4), integradores (4), inmigrantes (2), inmigracion (2), extranjeros (2), integrado (2), integrar (2)		
Purity	spanglish (10791), mixed (4076), pure (2354), broken (907), mixing (191), switching (179), hybrid (130), tex-mex (125), purely (123), purity (60), #indyspanglish (37), purest (25), translanguaging (11), espanish (8), codeswitch (8), #ispeakspanglish (7), purer (5)	19037	701.694 wpm	Spanglish (6341), puro (299), roto (128), mezclando (25), mezclado (17), pureza (10), codeswitching (7), puramente (5), tex-mex (5), impuro (3), mezclada (2), impureza (1), alternando (1)	6844	1947.453 wpm
Proficiency	fluent (778), fluently (240), incompetence (117), competent (104), proficient (70), proficiency (51), fluency (44), competence (26), competency (11), mastery (11), proficiently (3)	1455	53.63 wpm	competencia (72), fluido (68), incompetente (30), fluidez (26), incompetencia (13), fluida (8), competente (6), incompetentes (4)	227	64.59 wpm

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Education & Skills	unemployment (15539), school (10359), stupid (4865), schools (3023), educated (1348), employment (952), uneducated (338), skilled (123), schooling (66), unskilled (27)	36640	1350.531 wpm	escuela (274), escuelas (164), desempleo (137), empleos (112), empleo (108), colegio (83), estúpido (66), educado (15)	1176	334.628 wpm
Racism & Discrimination	black (127007), white (107984), racist (22532), racism (10108), brown (8831), racial (5835), supremacist (5395), ethnicity (5162), supremacy (2888), xenophobia (849), superior (422), bully (293), harassment (260), xenophobic (200), bullying (160), bullies (94), stigma (59), superiority (58), racialized (42), xenophobe (38), #antiblack (33), stigmatized (20), racialization (15), #englishsuperior (6)	297841	10978.26 wpm	negro (1089), blanco (973), racista (346), blanca (334), racismo (318), negra (157), moreno (145), morena (141), xenofobia (26), acoso (25), supremacista (17), etnicidad (16), estigma (11), estigmatizado (7), racializado (2)	3607	1026.368 wpm

Figure 1. Descriptors (wpm) for each semantic category in the English and the Spanish corpus.

Figure 2. Selected concordance lines for the term *America*

Have you ever been told “this is	<i>America</i>	we speak English here” at the store simply for speaking Spanish with your mom
My wife is speaking Spanish with her parents on the phone, was yelled this is	<i>America</i>	“Speak English!”
One of my neighbors think because it’s	<i>America</i>	you have to speak English here
It's only my Spanish-speaking friends who have ever been told to this is	<i>America</i>	Speak English!
I heard Beto speaking Spanish in a debate. We don’t just speak English in	<i>America</i>	we speak AMERICAN English.
when Latinos are speaking Spanish and were screamed at “this is	<i>America</i>	speak English or go back to your country”

Figure 3. Selected concordance lines for the term *Spanglish*

I used to speak	<i>Spanglish</i>	with the block girlyies too but when I moved I got embarrassed and stopped
That’s cool. Treat me like I’m dumb. But at least I don’t speak	<i>Spanglish</i>	in front of the patients
Done and recommend fix the language in the page.that	<i>Spanglish</i>	don't look very well
do you talk in	<i>Spanglish</i>	Or are you normal?
Except me, I speak broken english with a	<i>Spanglish</i>	accent
Most Latinos speak	<i>Spanglish</i>	believe me it ain’t proper Spanish

Figure 4. Selected concordance lines for the term *uneducated*

Hispanics are	<i>uneducated</i>	criminals
Greedy is American Dream, it is a total bull shit that has been sold to	<i>uneducated</i>	hispanic immigrants for decades
The Dems find true believers only among the	<i>uneducated</i>	and unskilled hispanic immigrant population who resent their own lives
Dominicans are too ghetto,	<i>uneducated</i>	and unskilled
But go off how im	<i>uneducated</i>	or somehow racist when ive encountered racism myself for being mexican here in America
I dont care, who you are do not call my little cousin low class and	<i>uneducated</i>	because she is Mexican Black.