

Conflicting ideologies of Mexican immigrant English across levels of schooling. 2014. *International Multilingual Research Journal*, 8, 124-140. (Sarah Gallo, Elaine Allard, Holly Link, Stanton Wortham & Katherine Mortimer).

## **Conflicting Ideologies of Mexican Immigrant English across Levels of Schooling**

This article explores how language ideologies—beliefs about immigrant students’ language use—carry conflicting images of Spanish speakers in one New Latino Diaspora town. We describe how teachers and students encounter, negotiate and appropriate divergent ideologies about immigrant students’ language use during routine schooling practices, and we show how these ideologies convey different messages about belonging to the community and to the nation. Although the concept of language ideology often assumes stable macro-level beliefs, our data indicate that ideologies can vary dramatically in one town. Elementary educators and students had a positive, “bilinguals-in-the-making” ideology about Spanish-speaking students, while secondary educators used more familiar deficit accounts. Despite their differences, we argue that both settings tended toward subtractive schooling, and we offer suggestions for how educators could more effectively build upon emergent bilinguals’ language skills and practices.

Keywords: New Latino Diaspora; language ideologies; ethnography; emergent bilinguals

Word Count: 8500

Current debates about Mexican immigration to the US are pervasive, focusing on how Mexican immigrants behave and why they are here (Hamann & Reeves, 2012; Santa Ana, 1999). Longstanding residents evaluate new immigrants—assessing how they live and work, how they speak and act, and what effect they will have on communities and the nation (Dick, 2011; Shutika, 2005; Wortham, Mortimer, & Allard, 2009). Questions of if and how immigrants will join U.S. society extend beyond legal definitions of “citizenship” to broader issues of social and cultural belonging (Rosaldo, 1994). These accounts of immigrants provide resources for groups and individuals as they make sense of each other in daily interactions. Language is central to these construals of immigrants: beliefs about immigrants’ language can shape beliefs about the immigrants themselves, and this can in turn influence how they are treated (García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005; Hill, 1998; Zentella, 2003). People often evaluate language use in ways they would not evaluate ethnic differences alone, even though evaluations of language can index evaluations of ethnicity (Lippi-Green, 1997).

Language is also central to accounts of immigrant students in educational institutions (Razfar, 2012; Sayer, 2008). Language ideologies often position English as the language of belonging (Millard et al., 2004) and of schooling (Zentella, 2003). In the US today *emergent bilinguals* (García, 2009) are predominantly identified using a “language as problem” orientation (Ruiz, 1984): schooling should “fix” their multilingual abilities by making them English monolinguals. Spanish speakers in particular are often positioned as less competent than English speakers (Hill, 1998; Zentella, 2003), and English is assumed to be *the* language of the US and the only language of schooling (Zentella, 2003). These common ideas about who emergent bilinguals are, what skills they have, whether they count as members of the school and

community, and what educational possibilities they have influence their prospects and trajectories (Murillo, 2002; Hamann & Reeves, 2012).

Emergent bilinguals are the fastest growing population in U.S. schools, especially at the secondary level (Menken, Kleyn, & Chae, 2012). Much of the research on emergent bilinguals has focused on bilingual education in traditional Latino receiving contexts (e.g., García, Flores, & Chu, 2011; Menken et al., 2012; Sayer, 2008; Razfar, 2012), while less attention has been given to schools in the New Latino Diaspora (NLD) as they work with Spanish speakers for the first time. By comparing divergent ideologies of Mexican immigrant language use in elementary and high schools in the NLD, this article illustrates the diversity of schooling experiences that immigrant students confront.

Our analysis focuses on language ideologies—culturally-situated theories about the relationship between language and the social world (Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998)—in two distinct educational spaces in a NLD community that we call Marshall. The NLD is a demographic phenomenon in which increasing numbers of Latino immigrants are moving to regions of the US that have not traditionally been home to Latinos (Wortham, Murillo, & Hamann, 2002). We explore divergent ways in which educators and emergent bilingual students position Mexican students' English language skills, thereby imagining different educational trajectories for emergent bilinguals and conveying different notions of belonging. (See Allard et al., forthcoming, for ideologies about students' Spanish.) Drawing on comparative data from an elementary and a secondary school, taken from a larger, six-year ethnographic study in the town, our findings highlight how educators and students position bilinguals' language resources differently across schools. We document the complexity and heterogeneity of language ideologies within and across these settings and illustrate how

these ideologies are negotiated and appropriated. Elementary school educators had a more positive account of immigrant students' language skills, but there was heterogeneity within each school and neither built extensively on students' multilingual abilities. In the conclusion we discuss how these schools could capitalize more effectively on their emergent bilinguals' skills to combat subtractive schooling. We argue that designing programming "from the students up" (García et al., 2011, p. 17) holds great promise for NLD schools in particular.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This article describes language ideologies about Mexican immigrants' English that circulated among students and teachers in one NLD town. We focus on how these ideologies varied across elementary and secondary schools because educators and students had divergent views of emergent bilinguals' English. We show how these divergent ideologies conveyed messages about immigrants' belonging to the school and national communities. Although the concept of language ideologies often describes stable macro-level beliefs (Woolard, 1998), we follow more flexible accounts of language ideologies in practice (e.g., Razfar & Rumenapp, 2011; Razfar, 2012; Volk & Angelova, 2007). We show how they can vary across local spaces and how they can be flexible, dynamic, and contested.

Woolard (1998) defines language ideologies as "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (p. 3). Language ideologies establish connections between language and types of people, connections that have consequences for how people are identified, valued, and treated. As Woolard notes, language ideologies can be discovered by examining the way people use language and by examining metapragmatic discourse, or

talk about language (Silverstein, 1976). Sometimes overt, they are more often present as tacit “commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (Rumsey, 1990, p. 346). Seen as “natural, obvious, objective” views, not belonging to anyone in particular, ideologies of language can be used to create and maintain power (Gal & Woolard, 1995, p. 132).

Language ideologies are grounded in heterogeneous and variable social practice (Gal, 1998; Razfar, 2012), and thus “can be consistent and continuous in some situations and at other times contested and contradictory” (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2011, p. 251). Although dominant ideologies about English as *the* language of schooling often support restrictive classroom language policies, students’ and teachers’ communicative practices sometimes diverge from these policies and involve heterogeneity and contestation (Razfar & Rumenapp, 2011). Language ideologies serve as resources teachers and students appropriate and refashion through daily classroom interactions (Volk & Angelova, 2007). As students and teachers encounter and negotiate ideologies about Mexican immigrants’ English, they develop ways of understanding how language and people fit together. Language ideologies provide a useful analytic focus because they expose beliefs that often operate beneath consciousness but nonetheless have implications for people involved (Kroskrity, 1998).

As beliefs about the types of people who speak in a particular way (Schieffelin et al., 1998), language ideologies are a rich site for studying social exclusion. People might believe that a certain dialect “lacks grammar” and thus cannot be used to express complex ideas. Beliefs such as these seldom apply to language alone. Those who believe a particular dialect is unsophisticated typically assume that speakers of this dialect are themselves unsophisticated—thus characterizing the people as well as their language. Such characterizations have implications for how Mexican immigrant

students are treated as belonging, as well as how Mexican immigrant students view themselves as belonging to school communities and the nation. We use Rosaldo's (1994) term *cultural citizenship* to frame our discussion of language ideologies and belonging. According to Rosaldo, cultural citizenship is not about legal status: it encompasses full group membership and having a voice in basic decisions. We examine the language ideologies of Marshall educators across levels of schooling, exploring how their ideas about immigrants' language evaluate immigrants' belonging. We also explore how students negotiated and appropriated these ideologies through their own speech and practices. We examine how some educators and students saw language as a finite rather than an expandable resource.

As Agha (2007) argues, ideologies are not evenly distributed across social space. Agha's (2007) concept of *social domain*—the subset of people who recognize the link between a sign and the relevant ideology—describes how different actors might understand the same type of language in different ways. All language ideologies presuppose a social domain, and this domain changes as ideologies are taken up or modified. We believe that larger circulating ideologies must be investigated at the school level in order to understand how they are contested and reconfigured in daily interactions. Much of the work comparing language ideologies across educational settings has drawn upon teachers' reported data to contrast factors such as certification type, teaching experience, or ethnic background (e.g., García-Nevarez, Stafford, & Arias, 2005). Investigating the domains of ideologies across individual schools can reveal how teachers and students use ideologies to identify emergent bilinguals differently across these spaces. We argue that using an ethnographic approach that explores classroom interactions across schools provides a more nuanced understanding of local ideologies of Mexican immigrants' English.

## **Research Questions, Site and Methods**

We conducted a comparative ethnographic study of emergent bilinguals across levels of schooling in a NLD town. This research asked the following questions:

- 1: What language ideologies about Mexican immigrant English circulate among educators and emergent bilingual students at the high school and an elementary school in Marshall?
- 2: How are these ideologies negotiated and appropriated?
- 3: What do educators' and students' ideologies imply about cultural citizenship for emergent bilinguals?

### ***Mexican Immigration and the New Latino Diaspora***

Longstanding patterns of Mexican immigration have changed dramatically in the past fifteen years. Large numbers of Mexican immigrants have settled in the Midwest, the South and the Northeast—often in areas where Mexican-origin people have not lived, areas that have been referred to as the New Latino Diaspora (Murillo, 2002). Along with this wider range of destinations, the character of Mexican immigration has also changed. A migration that was mostly male and seasonal now often involves families settling more permanently (Durand & Massey, 2004).

Communities of the NLD have much in common, both in their attractiveness to immigrants and in how residents react to new arrivals. These communities are often home to agricultural or manufacturing industries that need labor (Grey & Woodrick, 2005; Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2005). While the arrival of many young residents sometimes revives a struggling downtown (Grey & Woodrick, 2005), receiving communities often react with hostility (Murillo, 2002). Host communities are usually ambivalent about the growing Mexican population, and conflicts over education and

social services arise in newspapers, local government and schools (Hamann & Harklau, 2010; Shutika, 2005; Wortham et al., 2009).

Schools in the NLD often face challenges and opportunities different from those in areas of traditional Latino settlement (Hamann & Harklau, 2010; Millard et al., 2004; Wortham et al., 2002; Zúñiga & Hernández-León, 2005) and educators in the NLD have less experience working with emergent bilingual students (Hamann & Harklau, 2010). However, NLD communities' attitudes toward immigrants are often more flexible than in longstanding receiving communities, which have more entrenched ideologies and practices (San Miguel, Jr & Donato, 2010). By exploring educational experiences across schools in Marshall, this article describes educational realities and opportunities for emergent bilinguals in NLD locations.

### ***Marshall***

Marshall (a pseudonym) is a suburban community of 35,000 in a large Northeastern metropolitan area that has undergone significant demographic changes since the mid-1990s. Once mostly European and African American, by 2010 the town was home to thousands of Mexican immigrants who had come for work. Many original middle-class residents had left for wealthier suburbs, while the Latino population had grown from under 3% in 1990 to 28% in 2010 (35% of the town is Black and 2% is Asian; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). As in other NLD towns, long-time residents had mixed reactions to the new immigrant population. Some praised immigrants as hard-working, family-oriented people and credited them for the revitalization of Marshall's commercial areas and churches. Others decried the strain immigrants allegedly placed on the town's social services.



### *Marshall Schools*

These demographic shifts were mirrored in school district enrollments, with Latinos comprising 25% of the total school population by 2011. Latino (almost entirely Mexican) students were concentrated in the elementary grades, reflecting the recent increase in young Mexican families. Within Marshall Area School District the Latino student enrollment had increased from 2% in 1987, to 18% in 2006, to 25% in 2011. In addition to being more numerous, Mexican immigrant students in the younger grades confronted different challenges. Older immigrant students included many teenage labor migrants who came to Marshall seeking work. Elementary-age Mexican students were born in the US or brought to Marshall at an early age. Changes in the composition of Mexican students across grades was happening rapidly. Their teachers were predominantly White women who had limited experience with multilingual settings, were monolingual English speakers, and had only recently begun working with Mexican students.

### *Marshall High School*

As the only public high school in the district, Marshall High School (MHS) educated working-class students from the town's urbanized center as well as middle-class students from more suburban areas. In 2006 approximately 100 students received English as a Second Language (ESL) services at MHS (out of 2,000 total students), and nearly all were Mexican (NCES, 2006 – 2007). In the time that we observed at MHS, different kinds of educational programming were available for emergent bilinguals. In 2005, when we began our observations, students took some mainstream elective classes in addition to ESL and bilingual content classes. However, in 2006, a shift to "small learning communities" coincided with more limited course options for emergent bilinguals. Since this change, they spent most of their time in classes populated exclusively by their emergent bilingual peers. In 2006-2007, these classes included ESL

reading and grammar, one English-medium sheltered content class, and transitional bilingual or Spanish-medium content classes. These schedules prevented emergent bilinguals from participating in electives and drastically reduced their contact with native English-speaking peers. The data included in this paper draw from periods before and after the reform.

A large number of emergent bilinguals at MHS immigrated to the US as teenagers, and it was common to meet students who lived without their parents. Many of these students worked 40 hours per week, and they often sent money home to Mexico. Students' educational backgrounds varied widely. Some had been educated in Mexican high schools and had grade-level literacy in Spanish. Many others had less academic preparation than their U.S-educated peers, and some had experienced interruptions in their formal schooling.

#### *Grant Elementary School*

Grant Elementary School (GES) was located in the downtown area and served four hundred students. The school served almost equal numbers of African American and Latino (almost all Mexican) students (NCES, 2010). In the lower grades, Latinos were the majority, reaching over 70% of kindergartners by 2010. Unlike the Mexican students at the high school, emergent bilinguals at GES were mainstreamed for the majority of the school day and separated for ESL pull-out services only 15 to 60 minutes a few times per week. Unlike the relatively small percentage of MHS students receiving ESL services (5%), over 30% of GES students were enrolled in ESL. None of the classes or curricular materials was provided in Spanish, however. Students were expected to use English for academic tasks, and only two classroom teachers spoke Spanish.

### ***Methods of Data Collection and Analysis***

We use ethnographic and discourse analytic methods to uncover language ideologies held by educators and students. Data collection included participant observation, interviews, and videotaped classroom sessions across both sites. The majority of MHS data were collected by Mortimer and Allard and come from the 2005-2007 school years. The majority of the GES data were collected by Gallo and Link from 2008-2010. All of the authors are English-Spanish bilinguals. Our research team has been conducting a larger, ongoing ethnographic project in Marshall since 2005. Although most of the data reported here were collected from the two school settings at different time periods, work at both schools has confirmed similar patterns continuing through 2011.

The present analysis is based on the data described in Table 1. An ethnographic approach is particularly well-suited to illuminate teachers' and students' language ideologies because it shows how ideologies are talked about and enacted within everyday classroom interactions. Our ethnographic analyses follow Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) and Maxwell (1996), iteratively drawing patterns out of fieldnotes, documents, transcribed interviews and logs from videotaped classes. Questions in formal interviews were representative of classroom-based observations and informal conversations (as in "convergent interviewing," Razfar, 2012). These interviews provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on language, learning and belonging in their classrooms.

Discourse analyses of these texts followed Wortham (2001) in attending systematically to patterns that index language ideologies. Using *Atlas.ti*, we coded the data for a number of themes. Early in the fieldwork at MHS some characterizations of students' language caught our attention, and we began to code for language ideologies. Because ideologies are reflected in people's talk about language, we coded all metapragmatic discourse (Silverstein, 1976), particularly instances when people talked

about Spanish, English or students' language. As noted above, ideologies explicitly articulated in metapragmatic discourse sometimes conflict with ideologies tacitly presupposed in language practices. Overt metapragmatic discourse and more tacit ideas about language were examined in all data sources.

TABLE 1

School Data

School	Data Collection	% Latino Enrollment	Field Notes	Educator Interviews	Student Interviews	Video Logs	Document Total
MHS	2005-2007	12%	104	10	7	15	136
GES	2008-2010	50%	124	10	8	42	184
<b>Total</b>			128	20	15	57	320

### Findings

We focus on language ideologies about Mexican immigrant students' use of English across schools, at a historical moment when the student populations in these spaces were very different. Through examining language ideologies, we explore how educators and students understood immigrants in this rapidly changing NLD location and what this meant for immigrants' sense of belonging. By attending to divergent language ideologies with different social domains across the schools, we explore how educators and students adopted different views of language and Mexican immigrants.

We limit our discussion to two main points: how language ideologies across the two schools were heterogeneous and at times contested and how language ideologies framed issues of belonging for Mexican immigrant students. We organize our findings around four types of ideologies: 1) ideologies of English-only schooling, 2) ideologies of students' bilingualism, 3) ideologies of students' teachability, and 4) ideologies of

learning English. In closing we discuss how our findings can inform educational practice and policy.

### ***Ideologies of English-Only Schooling***

EXCERPT 1: And my thing is, you come to this country, it's an English-speaking country, you need to learn English. Not for us to go to school to learn Spanish, nah!...I got to learn your language, see, because I'm in your country now.

*Interview, 10/09/07*

This quotation from a longstanding Marshall resident shows the widely circulating ideology that we call English-Only schooling: English is *the* language of the US and the only language of schooling. Although we focus on schooling in this article, we begin with a community-based example to contextualize language and identity in Marshall. While this attitude was less explicit in school, MHS and GES teachers talked about language—and English in particular—as something that students either had or lacked, obscuring both partial English proficiency and proficiencies in any other language that students might have. In numerous instances, teachers described students in this way.

EXCERPT 2: The ESL teacher says that the numbers are really swelling, that seven newcomers with “no lick of English” have arrived in recent weeks.

*MHS, Field Note (FN), 4/29/05*

EXCERPT 3: After the class is over the ESL teacher talks to us and expresses her frustration. She doesn't feel like they're getting it. Only a couple had some English, she says, before they came into the class.

*MHS, FN, 2/2/05*

EXCERPT 4: “Marbella [a new student]- she knew not one lick of English when she first came in.”

*GES, Teacher Interview, 6/9/08*

EXCERPT 5: When describing a student who spoke only Spanish in class: “She was just a non-speaker for a while.”

*GES, Teacher Interview, 6/16/09*

Expressed like this, English becomes a commodity, something that students either bring to school or do not. This construal of language proficiency masked students' varied language resources and discounted the effort they had made so far. In their everyday talk, which construed English as "*the* language," most teachers shared an ideology of English as the only language that counted. There were differences across contexts, however. MHS educators used the present and present perfect tenses to describe the "problems" of students not knowing English and increasing numbers of Spanish speakers in the school—thus describing this as an ongoing difficulty. GES teachers, however, mostly used the past tense when commenting on children's English proficiency, implying that students were progressing in acquiring English.

When English is considered to be "*the* language," Spanish proficiency is discounted. Many adults implied that speaking Spanish meant little more than not speaking English. At MHS these attitudes were articulated by administrators also, including one who lamented that teachers were trying to "read and write and speak in English to kids who can't read, write or speak their native language" (Interview, 4/29/05). A MHS ESL teacher positioned Mexican immigrant students arriving from the middle school as being in the worst position because of what he perceived as their limited linguistic and cultural knowledge. He felt they could no longer speak Spanish and that "they don't know anything about Mexico...and they know nothing about the US. They don't know anything" (FN, 9/22/09). Another administrator explained that students arrived with very little "language and education" (FN, 1/14/05). Although this referred to students' lack of English proficiency, the word "language" was used as a synonym for "English," erasing students' competence in Spanish. This administrator was in fact an advocate for emergent bilinguals, showing how even advocates sometimes positioned them as deficient. English was considered a necessary commodity

and children who were less proficient in *the* language thus lacked something crucial. Marshall educators construed language as a finite resource required for belonging and success.

### ***Ideologies of Students' Bilingualism***

Despite this widespread ideology of English as “*the* language,” an additional ideology existed at GES. Grant teachers, who almost uniformly spoke no Spanish, positioned Mexican students as bilinguals-in-the-making and consistently talked about the importance of Spanish. One said:

EXCERPT 6: I think it's great [that students use Spanish]. Like my kids use it all the time amongst each other, whether it's in the classroom or outside, and I embrace that. I don't want them to lose that. As long as they're trying to learn English, then I'm happy. *GES, Teacher Interview, 6/15/09*

Although English was unquestionably the language of schooling, many GES teachers viewed Spanish as also important. In earlier grades, where there was less academic pressure and fewer expectations that students enter school with English literacy skills, Spanish-speaking students were given time to develop their English, and Spanish was positioned as a resource. Although there were instances in which elementary students' Spanish abilities were overlooked by teachers and not counted as “language,” in general GES teachers contested the English-Only schooling ideology and adopted an “English-Plus” (Crawford, 1992) stance toward language use, in which it is seen as beneficial to maintain one's home language as long as one learns English also. This fits with the notion of a “polyglot citizen” (Rosaldo, 1994) and shows a more flexible stance toward belonging that allows differences. Nonetheless, the English-medium schooling model at GES resulted in few teacher-initiated opportunities for emergent bilinguals to draw

upon Spanish. It was often seen as a bridge to English and academic content, and there were no curricular opportunities for Spanish development.

Students at GES characterized English as the language of school and Spanish as the language of home, but their everyday practices contradicted this ideology by drawing upon both languages to achieve interactional and educational goals. For example, Ben said that he spoke “only Spanish at home and English at school” (Interview, 12/22/09). Yet he and others frequently drew upon linguistic resources in Spanish—practices referred to as *translanguaging* (e.g., García, 2009). For example, after discussing their drawings in English, first-graders Ben and Princess jokingly called one another “*Chillón*” [Crybaby]. Princess teased, “*Chillón. No, tú chillón porque siempre chillas a Kinder*” [Crybaby. No, you’re a crybaby because you always cry in kindergarten.] And Ben responded, “Because I always miss my mom. You know she cooks good. From Kindergarten *la comida guácala!*” [the food gross!] (Video, 3/10/10). In addition, Grant students regularly drew upon linguistic resources in Spanish while completing academic tasks assigned and assessed in English. For instance, when searching for the English term ‘water’ in a dictionary, Lorena sounded out the English phonemes, “‘R’, ‘S’, *este es* [this is] ‘S’, ‘T’, ‘U,’” before Yadira added, “*Acá está.* [Here it is.] ‘Water’” (Video, 4/14/10). Although there was no official bilingual curriculum at Grant, students discussed academic tasks in Spanish with each other and with researchers, fluidly moving between the two languages. Thus, although young Mexican students accepted that English was the language of school, they also engaged in flexible bilingual communicating and learning. García (2009) argues that translanguaging practices such as these mirror real-world language practices and have the potential to inform pedagogical approaches for emergent bilingual students (García et al., 2011).



At MHS, similar behavior was evaluated very differently. Many teachers negatively positioned Mexican students' translanguaging. For example, one monolingual English MHS administrator remarked that Mexican students have parents who speak "Tex-Mex," which she claimed was "not an actual language; it's a mix" (FN, 10/20/05). By refusing to accept it as "an actual language," she denied the community any language at all, framing them as deficient. Assertions about Mexicans' language competence, like this one, often carried presuppositions about who immigrant students were. Monolingual English staff members at GES and MHS thus interpreted students' translanguaging practices very differently, and their comments reveal divergent beliefs about their Latino students' capabilities and possibilities.

In contrast to MHS teachers' disparagement of students' English, some Spanish-speaking high school students contested this ideology—even to the point of condemning English use among Spanish-speaking Latinos. Students reported that when Spanish speakers talked to each other they never used English, not simply because speaking Spanish together was more natural but also because using English could be interpreted as arrogant. One Mexican graduate of MHS told us that, regardless of English proficiency, "Usually we don't speak English amongst us...I don't know if we're like ashamed that the other one is going to think that 'oh now she knows English and she thinks that she's better'" (Interview, 2/23/05). Emergent bilinguals often said that mainstreamed Mexicans "thought they were better" than those students still in the ESL program. In fact, one group of beginners concluded that, once they learn English, most Mexicans forget Spanish, forget where they come from, and think they're better than compatriots (FN, 11/28/06). These students interpreted the same behavior, a Mexican student speaking English, very differently than their teachers.

Although both schools emphasized English as the only or the most important language, language ideologies nonetheless differed. At MHS, teachers focused on what students lacked (English language and literacy skills), their Spanish skills were overlooked, and translanguaging was seen as undesirable. Language was construed as a finite resource, and only English counted. Emergent bilinguals did attend some Spanish-medium content classes, but these were designed as transitional rather than for enrichment. MHS students adopted an ideology that also tied language closely to issues of belonging, valuing Spanish as a marker of solidarity. Like their teachers, these Mexican high school students often construed cultural citizenship in an “either-or” fashion. Since they did not feel their languages and identities were valued at MHS, they often “othered” and felt othered by Mexican students who primarily used English. While at Grant teachers and students embodied a more inclusive stance, in which being a Spanish speaker did not preclude belonging, at MHS there was little space to be bilingual. At GES, most teachers adopted an English-Plus ideology, positioning Spanish as an additional resource that they hoped students would maintain. Although Grant students drew upon their translanguaging skills to complete academic activities in their English-medium classrooms, there were no school-sanctioned curricular opportunities to draw upon or develop their Spanish resources.

### ***Ideologies of Students’ Teachability***

EXCERPT 7: With the ESL population, I don’t see mainstream teachers really knowing them that well. I think that they take the language barrier as a way out to just say, ‘Well I don’t speak their language so I’m not going to, I don’t ha-, I can’t get involved.’

*MHS, Interview, ESL teacher, 4/6/05*

In this interview an MHS ESL teacher worried about how mainstream teachers viewed emergent bilingual students. Viewing students’ English language proficiency as all or

nothing let mainstream teachers off the hook until students learned English. We frequently observed this attitude. For example, one mainstream teacher said it was a good thing the researcher knew Spanish since some of the students had “this much English,” making an exaggerated hand gesture to create a zero. Along with casting language as something which students had little of, this teacher also assumed that she could not productively speak with emergent bilinguals herself. On the day she made this comment, we observed that she did not interact with them, acting as if the language barrier were insurmountable (FN, 2/2/05).

Such a view can have serious consequences for students framed as unreachable. Those who “lack language” may be treated like students with disabilities and excluded from mainstream activities. One high school administrator explained to us that, as part of the 2006 reform, emergent bilinguals were to receive programming explicitly modelled after Special Education: “the model for upper functioning Special Ed kids would work for upper functioning language kids” (Interview, 4/29/05). Though he intended to describe an organizational similarity in how the school schedule would be arranged, the parallel between “language kids” and “learning disabled” students also had currency among mainstream teachers. We observed that some mainstream teachers had lower expectations for them than for mainstream peers. One even asked us if it were possible to fail them if they weren’t doing well, or if they were like special education students whom teachers could not fail (FN, 11/3/05). In addition to challenges that educators often face determining whether students’ academic struggles are a product of their language proficiency or a learning disability (See Ortiz et al., 2011), some educators at MHS tended to conflate “language kids” with “learning disabled” students.

In contrast, GES administrators deliberately did not position emergent bilinguals as ESL teachers’ responsibility. Grant’s principal discussed how this had happened in

other local schools with similar demographics: “[C]lassroom teachers never had ownership of those students or what they were learning, or they weren't expected to learn because they didn't have the English,” (Interview, 11/6/07) which she viewed as problematic. Unlike MHS, where a small portion of the 2,000 students were Spanish speakers and the majority of these were placed in separate ESL classes, at GES over half of the students came from Spanish-speaking households, a third received ESL services, and all were placed in mainstream classrooms alongside English-dominant peers. Grant’s principal explained a central belief at her school.

EXCERPT 8: I don't hear teachers saying, ‘well if you get the ESL kids out of my room, I wouldn't be having these problems, or my test scores would be better’... I think it's because they're a much larger population here and they [teachers] see them as their students now, not a subgroup. *GES, Interview, 11/6/07*

GES teachers took responsibility for all of their students, regardless of background, and this was apparent in teacher-student interactions. Unlike MHS, where mainstream teachers tended to dismiss Spanish-dominant students as unteachable, teachers at Grant sought strategies and resources to engage with their emergent bilingual students.

Grant’s principal described the serious mistake that earlier district administrators had made in modeling ESL after Special Education: “So they [emergent bilinguals] became just like Special Ed students...And that was one of our big, big mistakes” (Interview, 11/6/07). She suggested that, as a school serving large numbers of emergent bilinguals, staff at Grant had already learned this lesson—whereas MHS was just encountering the issue. Mexican high school students in ESL also contested the linguistic segregation and dominant language ideologies they experienced, calling the current ESL system “racist” and noting that it didn’t encourage any English learning (FN, 3/21/07).

On this issue of mainstreaming, once again, educators' and students' ideologies differed across the two schools. Teachers' ideologies about language often served as a proxy for the students they considered teachable. At MHS many educators viewed students' developing English skills as reason not to be responsible for teaching them, but GES teachers did not do this. GES explicitly sought to include students with diverse language skills, while at MHS a deficit framing separated emergent bilinguals from mainstream students. Emergent bilinguals' objections were not powerful enough to shape decisions about the structures of their schooling. In this context, students had to navigate the tension between maintaining allegiance to Spanish and learning the dominant language, with language often serving as a proxy for senses of belonging.

### *Ideologies of Learning English*

EXCERPT 9: "They'll [Mexican students] just do – in the beginning of the year it's a lot of gesturing. They'll gesture to me or they'll say, '*maestro, maestro*' [teacher, teacher]...they'll mimic a lot, too."

*GES teacher, Interview, 6/15/09*

EXCERPT 10: "The last thing we want is Tarzan English, that broken, on-the-job English."

*MHS educator, FN, 9/30/05*

EXCERPT 11: [Mexican] students themselves speak in a put-on, Tarzan-like voice: "Me no speak English." "No speak English." *MHS, FNs, 2/2/06, 2/15/06*

These excerpts describe the same behavior, labelled by some MHS educators as "Tarzan English." At the elementary school level (Excerpt 9), simplified speech and using first language resources was considered unremarkable. GES teachers did not use labels such as "Tarzan English" to describe how emergent bilinguals talked, and they were confident that students would learn English—"they'll get it [English] when they're ready" (Interview, 6/15/09).

In contrast, MHS educators often applied deficit models to students' English language abilities. In Excerpt 10, one educator referred to immigrants' "Tarzan English," saying that he encouraged parents to speak to children in Spanish because they didn't want students learning "broken," "Tarzan English." The term "Tarzan" implies an uneducated, uncivilized person, with the characterization of language also casting emergent bilinguals as unsophisticated people. Such labels presuppose an opposition between standard language and some students' language, which is positioned as unsophisticated, underdeveloped and inappropriate for school.

Students were aware of these ideologies, and many did not accept them. Some appropriated these resources to position themselves differently. At MHS we witnessed students speaking in a put-on voice that could be construed as "Tarzan English," saying loudly "me no speak English" during an ESL Reading class (Excerpt 11). The "me no speak English" instances happened while reading Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, including discussions both before and during the chapter "No speak English" which describes an immigrant who grapples with homesickness and isolation partly because of her limited English. These particular students had a higher level of English proficiency, so we can interpret their utterances as playing with the personae of recent immigrants and ideologies about them. Several students used this phrase, in particular, on a day when a substitute teacher asked them to read aloud. As they did so, several students read with markedly lower fluency than they did with the usual teacher.

Deliberately taking on an exaggerated, limited-English speaker persona may have been a response to how they were positioned by others. Aware of how their language was interpreted as a deficit, they appropriated this ideology by mocking and playing with the identity being projected onto them. As in Jaspers' description of students faking incompetence in Dutch and "talking illegal" (2011, p. 1269), these MHS

students used stigmatized English to play with racist positioning. As Jaspers (2011) argues, however, instead of effectively questioning language inequalities, such play can reinforce linguistic hierarchies.

Emergent bilinguals were thus aware, on some level, of the dominant language ideologies at MHS. In some cases students' ideologies overlapped with these. They considered English critical to career success, for example, and understood that low English proficiency left them vulnerable to exploitation. Their ideologies contrasted, however, with those of many MHS teachers, who sometimes portrayed emergent bilingual students as less civilized and unworthy of community membership.

There were exceptions to these larger circulating ideologies as well. For example, in the following excerpt an ESL teacher at MHS contested the English-Only ideology espoused by her colleagues and highlighted the complexities of language learning and education.

EXCERPT 12: "We have a lot of teachers who have never even taken another language...They don't even know the process of what it's like to learn another language. So for them, they say, (in a gruff voice): 'It should be English only, they shouldn't, they're here, they came here, they chose to come here.'...The fact that they're [immigrant students] brave enough to even come to school and make the effort to try and learn another language is not an easy thing...You have this interlanguage and you have a lot of things going on."

*Interview, 4/6/05*

Like this MHS teacher, GES teachers considered students to be in the process of second language learning. They accepted how students spoke, expected progress, and were open to students' translanguaging. However, as we discuss below, despite the fact that GES teachers valued the benefits of bilingualism, no systems existed to develop this in the school.

## **Discussion**

Drawing on several years' ethnographic research, we have explored language ideologies at two schools in one New Latino Diaspora school district. These ideologies show how newcomer Mexican students' uses of English were characterized in ways that positioned them as belonging, or not, to local and national communities. We have demonstrated that language ideologies—which are often considered to be stable macro-level beliefs—in fact vary substantially across local spaces. Looking closely at how teachers and students explicitly and implicitly appropriate ideologies reveals this heterogeneity. Our analyses also show how characterizations of language use can be central to the social identification of immigrant students.

The local differences in language ideologies contribute to school environments that promoted distinct types of belonging for immigrant children. A Latina emergent bilingual student who entered MHS would encounter different messages about her language resources than a student who entered GES. Our data show how students from Mexican immigrant families at Grant, regardless of their language skills, were able to develop a clearer sense of belonging to the school community. At MHS, in contrast, Mexican heritage students faced negative or conflicting messages about belonging, messages that undermined relations between emergent bilinguals and their teachers and their peers. Some MHS students appropriated language ideologies that prioritized monolingualism over multilingualism, refashioning themselves as Spanish speakers who resisted English, an approach that may inadvertently impede their education.

“Subtractive schooling” involves educational practices that do not build upon and develop emergent bilinguals' languaging resources, prioritizing the development of standard English instead (Menken et al., 2012; Valenzuela, 1999). Our findings clearly show subtractive schooling at work in MHS. English was the only language that



counted, those who “lacked” academic English were often positioned as unteachable and beyond the scope of teachers’ jobs, and emergent bilinguals were sometimes conflated with special education students. Educational programming did include bilingual content courses, but this transitional programming was not designed to develop students’ Spanish resources and many students felt that their isolation in these classes detracted from their educational, social and language learning goals.

In contrast, Grant educators’ language ideologies contributed to a learning climate for emergent bilinguals in which diverse linguistic resources were celebrated and students felt a sense of belonging, even though the English-medium curriculum did not support bilingualism. The instructional model at GES did not provide opportunities for emergent bilingual students to become biliterate, nor did it foster bilingualism or biliteracy in the English-dominant children—despite their widespread desire to learn (Link, Gallo, & Wortham, in press). These were more benevolent forms of subtractive schooling that, over time, may also disadvantage emergent bilinguals.

Menken et al. (2012) describe how subtractive schooling at early schooling levels can contribute to ELLs’ academic struggles in high school. Although, at the time of our data collection, there were few Mexican students in Marshall who had been through K-12 schooling in the town, by 2011 the MHS ESL program was beginning to include students who had been enrolled in ESL at the middle schools. Educators at MHS considered this new group of students as especially disadvantaged because of their allegedly limited linguistic and cultural knowledge about either the US or Mexico. As Menken et al. (2012) suggest, early schooling that builds upon students’ language resources and teaches first language literacy is the most promising way to avoid such attitudes and outcomes. Similarly, García et al. (2011) argue that “any language-in-education approach—be it monolingual or bilingual—that does not acknowledge and

build on the fluid language practices and the translanguaging in bilingual communities is more concerned with controlling language behavior than in educating” (p. 9). In Marshall, too, such alternatives to subtractive schooling would offer better opportunities for emergent bilinguals at whatever level.

García and colleagues (2011) describe an alternative approach to bilingualism and schooling, one that builds upon emergent bilinguals’ hybrid language resources. Rather than practices that require standard language use across the curriculum, they advocate for educational practices designed “from the students up.” Across the Marshall school district, professional development is needed to help teachers find such opportunities and to open up what Hornberger calls “implementational and ideological spaces” (2005) within existing practices that support “fluid, multilingual, oral, contextualized practices and voices at the local level” (Hornberger & Link, 2012, p. 5). At MHS, such an approach could begin working with bilingual teachers to shift their focus from a transitional to an enrichment orientation (García, 2009) in existing bilingual classes. This could foster an environment in which translanguaging resources are valued and students would not find themselves having to choose between English and Spanish. At Grant, an emergent bilingual-centered approach would encourage bilingual programming that uses Mexican heritage students’ linguistic resources and develops their classmates’ interest in learning Spanish. Students already draw upon their translanguaging resources for social and academic purposes and pedagogically building upon these resources in the early grades could foster more positive trajectories for emergent bilingual students by the time they arrive at MHS. Professional development initiatives related to parent involvement have already opened up productive conversations about cultural resources among Marshall educators (Gallo & Wortham,

2012). Similar initiatives about students' languaging practices could help combat subtractive language ideologies.

Such an approach may hold particular promise in towns like Marshall where Latinos have only recently arrived. Compared with areas of longstanding Latino presence, we argue that NLD communities have more heterogeneity in educators' responses to immigrant students. Like other investigations of improvisational educational responses in NLD communities (Wortham et al., 2002), our analysis shows that Marshall students and educators both appropriated and resisted dominant language ideologies in their classrooms and that educators' ideas about their new students are heterogeneous and changing. While this flexibility creates great promise for more appropriate approaches to schooling for bilinguals, we do not discount the deficit-oriented ideologies prevalent at the high school. Although there is the potential for flexibility in the NLD, this is no guarantee that outcomes for Latinos will be better there than in traditional receiving areas. The potential for flexibility and better outcomes has not yet borne fruit (Hamman & Harklau, 2010). By uncovering subtractive schooling patterns in this NLD community, our research can contribute to reform—through, for example, increased collaboration between researchers and schools—before patterns of subtractive schooling become more entrenched.

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