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The battleground of metaphors: language debates and symbolic violence in Puerto Rico (1930–1960)

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Abstract: In Puerto Rico, the defense of Spanish and discussions of bilingualism have been conditioned by the island's local politics and its relationships with the United States. Previous research has looked at how identity politics and specific political players produced arguments in favor or against various language proposals. Yet, questions regarding the complex ideological nature of the language debate in Puerto Rico remain to be examined with greater focalization and critical scrutiny. To this end and employing an interdisciplinary approach to issues of language and linguistic representation, I explore the ideological complexity of bilingualism in Puerto Rico during several decades from the perspective of the politics of language and by taking into account the phenomenon of symbolic violence. I argue that particular metaphors of language exemplify the link between symbolic and material violence in the context of this society's struggles for political self-determination.

Keywords: metalinguistic discourse, metaphors, bilingualism, Spanish, English, symbolic violence

1 Introduction

This investigation concerns metaphors in essentializing discourses of language. These are significant because, as Cameron (2008) explains, the invocation and circulation of such metaphors goes beyond injecting drama and urgency into language debates. These metaphorical metalinguistic expressions go far beyond its overt subject to touch on our deepest desires and fears (cf. Cameron 2008: 268–269). One desired effect is to push others into actions, sometimes, of injurious consequences. Utilizing an interdisciplinary theoretical-methodological apparatus with a critical lens, I explore the ideological particulars of discourses of

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language contact (between Spanish and English) and their effects in the context of Puerto Rico's struggles for governance in the twentieth century. "To be or not to be bilingual in Puerto Rico" might sound like a tacky title of a scholarly monograph but it is (to this day) a crucial question in Puerto Rican society with many ramifications. Inevitably, the decision to speak one way or another involves collisions with painful social and psychological hurdles. With this study, I want to add to the general scholarship that explores the dynamics of language and power and the body of recent research that scrutinizes Puerto Rico's past and present problems with cultural and linguistic identities (Córdova 2008; DuBord 2007; Del Moral [see Moral] 2013).

Section 2 of this paper presents the theoretical-methodological paradigm in which this interdisciplinary study is embedded. Section 3 lays out the historical contexts, the convergence of events, actions, and sociopolitical conditions that fueled the debate and exchange of ideas regarding the question of language in Puerto Rico during the first half of the twentieth century. In Section 4 and 5, we articulate the discursive-ideological-dimension of the language debate, by comparing and contrasting the specific metaphors of Spanish, English, and bilingualism that surfaced and circulated in Puerto Rico, particularly between 1930 and 1960. Finally (in Section 6), we argue that, in these contexts, the metaphors that link some varieties of language to forms of genocide and suicide became instrumental in creating a climate of symbolic violence and in mobilizing political forces on the ground.[1]

2 Theoretical framework and methodology

We are indebted to researchers from the field of linguistic anthropology for developing the critical concept of language ideology, defined as "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard 1998: 3). In these subsequent discussions and analyses of the language question in Puerto Rico, language ideology is the operational concept. Language ideologies are multiple and complex. As Wiley (2000: 74) reminds us, "it is necessary to analyze language ideologies, which form the basis of actual policies, whether formal, covert, or implicit, in terms of their association with other ideologies [...] that have been used for purposes of social

1 I thank the anonymous reviewers for the opportune and critical comments that strengthened this investigation and paper.

control". Since Haugen (1966), critical discussions of language policy and planning stress the importance of not abstracting languages from their sociohistorical and ecological contexts (cf. Ricento 2000: 200). Linguistic anthropologists (Heller and Duchêne 2008) insist that we must understand the specific ideologies of language involved and that we need to discover how the object (language) and the discussion surrounding it are discursively constructed. For example, in relation to ideologies of language endangerment, Heller and Duchêne (2008: 6) remind us that "the central element of the construction of the problem is the concept of danger. Here the source and target of danger is the language constructed as an organic, systematic whole which has a life of its own outside of social practice". In the case to be explored here, the framers of the prevalent language ideologies spread and defend the idea that the cultural and biological uniqueness of Puerto Ricans is encoded in Puerto Rican Spanish. These framers include lexicographers, linguists, journalists, historians, literary figures, educators, and government officials, most of whom were educated or radicalized in the one-language-one-culture-one-nation ideological nexus. They insisted on the lexical purity of Spanish and the terrible threat posed to it by those beyond its boundaries, a threat which calls for those most loyal to act and to police.

A number of studies analyze the production and reproduction of these language endangerment discourses. Jaffe (2008), for example, points out one particular aspect, the deployment of "biological metaphors (death, extinction), which fuses the biological in the image of language as species" (61). This discursive-ideological construct is repeated in the texts and public discourses of the language agents or planners, legitimizing the problematic notion that language, like the community in which it is spoken, is naturally homogeneous and that its most loyal speakers can maintain its health only by repelling the virus-like attacks of contact-induced forms. This move, as Cameron (2008: 271) explains, involves recasting cultural (socially constructed) phenomena in biological terms. Drawing from Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Cameron (2008: 74) points out that this ideological-discursive practice consists of "describing something that is more difficult to grasp in terms of something that is experientially and cognitively more basic". "Language is the DNA of culture". Thus, the complex social dynamics of language disappear, succumbing to the old tendency to biologize culture. Another critical aspect we pay attention to is the ideology of the vernacular, rooted in nationalist organicism. Hutton (1999) calls this ideology "mother-tongue fascism." The idea is that every people should first and foremost speak a vernacular and that this vernacular definitely embodies a biological community bound by common blood, territory, and spirit (cf. Hutton 1999: 49; Cameron 2008: 278). In dialogue with Hutton, Cameron (2008) asserts that cotemporary discourses of endangered languages have a number of threads

in common with vernacularist nationalist organicism. Like Hutton, she insists that the history of these particular discourses is very relevant for "our understanding of contemporary discourse of language endangerment" (Cameron 2008: 271).

Research on language ideologies necessarily requires an interdisciplinary approach. Thus, in this instance, we apply insights from studies of language and power, critical social theories, and history. In the case that concerns us, the strand of history is relevant because Puerto Rican society has been shaped by the colliding forces of colonialism and nationalism. Since 1898, Spanish, the dominant language bequeathed by one colonizer (Spain) has had to negotiate and yield space to the language of another encroaching power, the US. In this island, the negotiations of language domains and the production of the public discourse on language have been carried out by various agents and interest groups. Their actions, reactions, choices, and constraints can be best understood through the perspectives of critical social theories. Thus, this inquiry is guided by the insights, anxieties, and warnings of sociologists, philosophers, historians most concerned with the ideological content of concepts, structures, and discourses (Bourdieu 1991; Fanon 1961; Foucault 1994). Bourdieu's notion of "symbolic violence" figures prominently in our analysis. It is a problematic concept because of its totalizing reliance on structural elements such as class. Nonetheless, it is applicable in our case as it helps to account for "the power to impose (or even to inculcate) the arbitrary instruments of knowledge and expression (taxonomies) of social reality" (Bourdieu 1991: 168). It is perhaps best conceptualized, within the context of inequity and conflict, as the interrelated imposition and complicit acceptance of a dominant world view with severe material consequences, primarily the securing or usurpation of an advantageous social position or capital. This form of violence is exercised without being recognized as such or without recognizing how the same agents affected by it contribute to its reproduction. To Bourdieu, male dominance is the paradigmatic form of symbolic violence. Then again, Cameron (2012 [1995]: 219) finds that the symbolic connection between exerting control over language and exerting control over things and events in the world is deeply embedded in human culture. Our intuition is that, as a signifying-semiotic device, symbolic violence mediates between ideological power and political violence (domination). In the case at hand, language mixing becomes a symbol of something that may not be happening (cultural poisoning) but makes itself visible or felt through the symbol (Spanglish). In Puerto Rico, representatives of dominant and counter language ideologies, all engaged their favorite metaphors of Spanish in order to unleash, justify or defy a given political arrangement. This happened in a climate of state-sponsored and insurrectionary violence, which we must also account for by employing the biopolitical analytical lens (Esposito 2008), where appropriate.

Methodologically, our procedure involves conducting a close reading of the discussions and debates over bilingualism and bilingual education in Puerto Rico in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s found in various texts (dialectological manuals, newspaper articles, policy statements, historiographies, lexicographies, pedagogical conference proceedings, and political speeches, among other text types). The corpus is made up of a series of key statements, value judgments regarding language or speech practices, from the texts authored by language agents or language professionals[2] including linguists. We also read their statements on language against the grain by paying great attention to the linguistic representations of Spanish, English, and Spanglish as organic entities or as metaphorical weapons endowed with symbolic force or defense capabilities. While we know that ultimately it is the speakers that can come to blows or launch missiles, not the languages, language mavens, guardians, and ideologues exploit these metaphors in order to mobilize people for action.

Metaphors are fundamental (cf. Lakoff 1987; Underhill 2011). So much of our talk and writing involves using metaphors, even when the object under discussion is language itself. Thus, we will pay very close attention to metaphors because as Fairclough (1989: 100) explains: "any aspect of experience can be represented in terms of any number of metaphors, and it is the relationship between alternative metaphors that is of particular interest here, for different metaphors have different ideological attachments". Like Gal (2013), we are also primarily interested in exploring very particular kinds of language metaphors, those which "project qualitative similarities across modalities and media that are derived from or extended to linguistic practices and made existentially real to speakers" (32). Moreover, the particular evidence we evaluate and contextualize in terms of the specifics of the time period under question is metalinguistic in nature because, as Joseph (2006: 138) notes: "cultural conceptions of language – including, crucially, the notion of its uniformity – come to us through the meta-comments on our utterances that can be shown empirically to be part of everyone's daily experience from infancy onward". Del Valle ([see Valle] 2013) has marshaled the field in Hispanic linguistics, producing exemplary studies which apply this type of interdisciplinary methodology to crucial issues and

2 We are aware of researchers' overemphasis on language and identity in Puerto Rico from the perspective of the elites (Mazak 2012). We hope to scrutinize the agentive role of non-elites in the construction of language and power in future studies, using ethnographic and other appropriate methodologies.

problems of language representation and ideologies from a glottopolitical perspective. In sum, the data collected from metalinguistic discourse provides insight into the interplay between the history of society and the history of language (primarily understood as conscious and unconscious acts of identity and social distinction) and insight into the dynamics of power and language in history (Auer et al. 2015: 9).

3 Puerto Rican history through the lens of language

After overcoming Spanish colonial tutelage in 1898 Puerto Rico entered a period of dependency on the US in which Washington controlled the legal system, the economy, and education (cf. Morales Carrión 1983). Early on, under US occupation, Washington-appointed administrators devised policies under the presumption that Puerto Ricans would simply embrace US cultural and democratic ideals for the sake of economic progress and prosperity. In spite of its political and economic association with the US for over a hundred years, Puerto Rican society has managed to maintain a separate cultural identity, highly symbolized by the use of the Spanish language (Clampitt-Dunlap 2000). This is much to the credit of the highly educated Spanish-speaking intelligentsia and their predecessors, politically active since 1898 and very keen on maintaining the cultural-spiritual bonds that tied them to Spain and Latin America. As Clampitt-Dunlap (2000: 26) explains: "the native intelligentsia [...] was perhaps particularly influential with the general population because of their public expression of national pride in the mass media and in politics. Many of the leading poets and novelists were also journalists for local newspapers". As these language professionals sought to maintain and emphasize ties with Hispanic culture and tradition, some intellectuals and politicians sought to make modifications to the legal framework in order to place local players in positions of power. In the process, they proposed legislation to make Spanish the only language of instruction. Furthermore, "there was great deal of support [for the language and culture of Puerto Rico] by teachers in the public schools, particularly during the 1930s [...] The Teachers' Association was also publically opposed to the use of English in the schools of Puerto Rico" (Clampitt-Dunlap 2000: 27). The production and circulation of language ideologies was epitomized by the persistently suggestive expressions of Puerto Rican ideals claiming a language capable of pulsating through their race and blood.

The primary purpose of all this linguistic self-image work and status planning was to forge a singular national Puerto Rican identity against US

policies designed to assimilate Puerto Ricans and promote USification through English as the medium of instruction in schools. In an often cited letter dated April 8, 1937, US President Theodore Roosevelt wrote: "it is an indispensable part of American policy that the coming generation of American citizens in Puerto Rico grow up with complete facility in the English tongue" (cited in Morales Carrión 1983: 237). The teaching of English must proceed, Roosevelt added, "with vigor, purposefulness, and devotion" (cited in Morales Carrión 1983: 237). These comments did very little to allay the fear that behind the bilingual education proposal laid hidden plans to develop a colonial school system. One teacher's (Inés Mendoza) refusal to use English as the medium of instruction led to her dismissal (cf. Clampitt-Dunlap 2000: 27). Yet, despite the preponderance of the defenders of the vernacular, the intellectual landscape in Puerto Rican society, mostly controlled by urban highly educated elites, was fragmented between those who wanted cultural and political independence for Puerto Rico and the so-called "pragmatists" (the populists) who wanted modernization and economic development under the protection of the US. Over the years, the idea of a unique Puerto Rican identity became increasingly linked to speaking Spanish. These decades of occupation and adaptation witnessed the increasing theorization of the linguistic state and history of Puerto Rico. Among the most often cited titles, we find: Epifanio Fernández Vanga's *El idioma de Puerto Rico y el idioma escolar* (1931), Agusto Malaret's *Vocabulario de Puerto Rico* (1937), Ismael Rodríguez Bou's *Problemas de lectura y lengua en Puerto Rico* (1948), and Navarro Tomás' *El español en Puerto Rico* (1948). Fernández Vanga, for example, provided one of the prevalent arguments against bilingual education:

> Precisamente porque el Gobierno de Estados Unidos ha reducido y rebajado nuestro idioma en nuestras escuelas elementales a la mediocre categoría de una mera asignatura, de una asignatura más, precisamente por eso es por lo que lo están matando. (Fernández Vanga 1931: 107)
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> [Precisely because the US government has reduced and demoted our language in our schools to the mediocre category of a mere subject, one more subject; that is precisely how they are killing it.[3]]

These language defenders helped promote the belief that Puerto Rico was one of the main sites of a prolonged and bitter battle between English and Spanish in the Americas (cf. Navarro Tomás 1948: 225). The discussions of language issues

3 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are ours.

mirrored the political positions, frustrations, and hopes of all Puerto Ricans aspiring to exercise self-determination:

> ¿Cuál debe ser el idioma de Puerto Rico, el idioma oficial, el idioma escolar y el idioma a secas? He aquí un punto que no está abierto a transacción ni **compromise**; nuestro idioma es este; así simplemente, éste: el idioma de Muñoz y de Hostos y de Baldorioty. Pedagógicamente, y por lo que hace referencia a la escuela elemental, no hay en ese punto compromiso ni transacción que valga: O idioma nativo o nada. (Fernández Vanga 1931: 109; emphasis in the original)

> [Which should be the language of Puerto Rico? The official language? The language of the schools? The language, period? Here is an issue that is not open for discussion or **compromise**; our language is this one; simply this one: the language of Muñoz, Hostos, and Baldorioty. Pedagogically speaking and as far as elementary education is concerned, there will not be any bargaining nor compromise on our part: our mother tongue or nothing.]

This was the Spanish-only position of those harboring independence-nationalist sympathies. Yet, as Vélez (2000) noted, despite biases in favor of English, the US government did not inflict upon Puerto Ricans the same inhumane brutalities experienced by Native Americans in the quest to vanquish their cultures and languages. Nonetheless, US Congressional discourse has historically construed Puerto Rico as an "incomplete subject," incapable of managing its crises, "mastering its people or the historical spaces they inhabit" (cf. Córdova 2008: 55).

The period between 1939 and 1959 is a focal era in my study. Sandwiched between the Second World War (1939–1945) and the Korean War (1950–1954), Puerto Rican society experienced a maelstrom of sweeping changes, including a mass population exodus from the rural areas to the cities, frenetic industrialization, and armed conflict as Puerto Ricans soldiers were conscripted to fight in the US war effort. In their struggle for increasing political autonomy, independence intellectuals and politicians sought to produce, shape, and deploy national symbols. The 1940s intellectual generation is singled out as the most pivotal in recent history (cf. Vientós Gastón 1964). In 1949, Puerto Ricans gained the power to elect their own political officials, among them, the first elected governor Luis Muñoz Marín. This victory was followed by the reversal of prior language policies and the establishment of Spanish as the primary medium of instruction in schools. It was an exciting and challenging period for the cultural agents and intellectuals most involved in language status policy planning. As we will discuss below (Section 7), to the contemporary defenders of the language, the representation of Spanish as an essential element of Puerto Rican ethnocultural identity remains crucial and integral to the production and control of public discourse (cf. Clampitt-Dunlap 2000: 27).

4 The linguistic elegy[4] and the linguistic cocktail: language representations

As the question of language gained more prominence in the 1940s' Puerto Rico greater interest in linguistic research developed. The feeling was that modern linguistics was best equipped to provide detailed knowledge of natural everyday speech, badly needed among scholars, educators, and the general public (cf. del Rosario [see Rosario] 1948). Some believed that linguistic research would produce accurate accounts of the structure and history of Spanish in Puerto Rico, affording Puerto Ricans a fuller sense of identity and enabling them to appropriate the historical-cultural context (the language base) necessary for nationhood (cf. Arce de Vázquez 1949: 53). Navarro Tomás, a linguist from Spain who worked in this Caribbean island, produced an account of Spanish in Puerto Rico that remained for many years the reference manual. While his findings and discoveries had been discussed prior, it is the publication of his *El Español en Puerto Rico* (1948) that marks the foundation of specialized linguistic studies in the island. In his account published by the University of Puerto Rico, we learn about many phonetic, lexical, and syntactic changes that occurred over the centuries, but a great deal of effort was also spent on describing the degree to which Spanish had remained "clean and set". Consistently, the linguist pointed out that despite some internal variation, Spanish in Puerto Rico essentially retained its uniformity in harmony with the state of the language throughout Latin America, (of course) under the tutelage of Spain (Navarro Tomás 1948: 218). *El Español en Puerto Rico* definitely produced reverberations among the essayists and cultural leaders who, with only a superficial understanding of the advances in modern linguistics, pounced on the arguments they found most appealing for their specific objectives. Certainly, one of these primary arguments was the need to resist the spread of English in the island through bilingual education and its structural influence on Spanish via language contact and codeswitching. A major uproar began, claiming that 50 years of US occupation had done grave damage to Puerto Rican culture by means of language. In the eyes of specialists, Spanish was increasingly accommodating too many loan words from English. Several linguists and their

4 What Milroy and Milroy (1999) refer to as "the complaint tradition," del Rosario called "the linguistic elegy" or the rant that along with language morality is deteriorating; that today women are more frivolous than yesterday; and that today's men have less judgement than yesterday (cf. del Rosario [see Rosario] 1985: 52–53). In this tradition, the so-called changes in linguistic behavior and in moral conduct are always attributed to foreign influence.

colleagues in literature and the media began more consistently describing "the grave danger" surrounding the common language of Puerto Rico (cf. Arce de Vázquez 1949: 58). From the typical anti-bilingualism stance, Navarro Tomás (1948: 225; also cited in Arce de Vázquez 1949: 59) argued: "La convivencia de dos idiomas equivalentes, ventajosa bajo determinados aspectos, es constante amenaza de confusión en el sentimiento lingüístico del individuo y de la comunidad". [The coexistence of two equal languages, beneficial under certain conditions, constantly threatens to confuse the linguistic identity of an individual and the community.] These statements help us frame and contextualize the discourses surrounding the issues of language contact, construed as a natural threat to Puerto Rican society. It is worth noting, that the beneficial bilingualism Navarro Tomás had in mind was the "pure" academic bilingualism of the elites and not the bilingualism of groups low on the socioeconomic scale. For example, here is how he described the speech practices of the Puerto Rican diaspora in New York:

> [...] Desde las alturas de Broadway a las densas calles de Harlem. Una continua corriente de puertorriqueños domiciliados en Nueva York esparce por la isla las influencias del español neoyorquino, el cual permite vocablos y giros que en Puerto Rico se ven más o menos refrendados por la opinión o el ejemplo de otros sectores de la población. La invasión del anglicismo sobre el español de Puerto Rico se complica con la descentrada acción de este apéndice continental que representa un censo mayor que el de San Juan. (Navarro Tomás 1948: 225)
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> [From the heights of Broadway to the congested streets of Harlem. A continuous stream of Puerto Ricans from New York spreads over the island the influences of New York Spanish, which allows words and phrases that in Puerto Rico are more or less endorsed by public opinion or by the example of other sectors of the population. The anglicist invasion of Puerto Rican Spanish is further complicated by the actions of this off center continental appendage, which represents a larger group than the population of San Juan.]

The ideology of language purism was engaged once more. On this occasion, a specific group of speakers (Puerto Ricans in New York) gets singled out as an external threat along with its contact speech practices, ultimately characterized as "a protuberance" or "contaminated." The anti-bilingualism discourse represented the diaspora as a stigmatized group, too assimilated to contribute to Puerto Rican society in the island. But in general, Navarro Tomás' negative views regarding bilingualism link up to an earlier idea circulated by local politicians that becoming bilingual would render Puerto Rico incapable of self-government.

These discussions place us before one of the most prevalent ideologies of monolingualism or the monoglot standard which typically opposes bilingualism and language contact. The ample literature on this subject (Milroy and Milroy 1999; Silverstein 1998) particularly discusses the beliefs that suppressing

linguistic diversity confers advantages on the state and the community. Theorists of nationalism such as Anderson (1983), and Hobsbawm (1990) explained how the rise of the modern nation-state and the advance of capitalism since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries relied on and widely spread the belief that using and defending the standard language-dialect along with the uniformed writing system of the ruling group will lead to more social unity and economic prosperity for the nation-state. In contrast, the adoption of non-standard speech practices will lead to stagnation, impoverishment, or fragmentation. In these related monoglossic ideologies, bilingualism and the use of mixed speech are construed as enemies, capable of endangering the social welfare of a nation and fracturing the identity of a community. Consistent with this particular language ideology, Navarro Tomás warned that the order of things changes when a foreign language exceeds the vernacular in linguistic resources or social interest (Navarro Tomás 1948: 225).

As we would expect, this feeling was not unanimous among Puerto Rican linguists and academic professionals involved in the intense language debate. Intermittently, even in such a polarized political environment, we could also find more nuanced views. For example, we find the Puerto Rican linguist Rubén del Rosario ([see Rosario] 1948) who, despite noting the cultural challenges for Puerto Rican youth, did not see Spanish at risk:

> Condeno eso y condeno mucho más. Pero estas convicciones, tan arraigadas en mí, no han empañado mi pensamiento; no me llevan a ver una influencia nociva del inglés sobre el español. Ni creo que ningún puertorriqueño deba escudar su regionalismo tras la bruma creada por el prejuicio y la incomprensión. (del Rosario [see Rosario] 1948: 145)
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> (I condemn [the cultural limitations of Puerto Rican youth in a pro-US environment] and condemn much more. But these convictions so ingrained in me have not dimmed my mind; they do not lead me to see the influence of English over Spanish as harmful. Nor do I believe that Puerto Ricans must shield his or her regionalism behind the fog created by prejudice and misunderstanding.)

Del Rosario, an avowed *independentista*, had been trained in Spain under the tutelage of Menéndez Pidal and Navarro Tomás. Del Rosario's understanding of Puerto Rico's language situation was very sensitive to the (ongoing) transatlantic struggle[5] between Peninsularists and Latinamericanists for the strict

5 In this regard, del Rosario (see Rosario) (1939: 7) did not mince words: "*es natural que España pierda la supremacía del lenguaje*." [That Spain lose linguistic supremacy is natural.]. For an analysis of these glotopolitical issues, see del Valle and Stheeman (see Valle and Stheeman) (2002).

control of the public discourse on and the image of Spanish in as many corners of the world as possible. His linguistic commentary sheds slight on the ideologies of language lived in Puerto Rico ("*nuestra manera de vivir y sentir el lenguaje*" [our way of experiencing and living our language]) (cf. del Rosario [see Rosario] 1948: 148).

5 Spanglish experienced as torture and suicide

Yet, it was a popular newspaper humorist, Salvador Tió, who wove the threads between academic and popular discourses. In the 1940s, he coined the term "espanglish" which is still the lightning rod in the language debates over diasporic Spanish-speaking communities in the US.[6] Tió mocked the lexical and morpho-syntactic results of linguistic contact by making up nonsense Spanglish items such as *treepar*, combining the English noun "tree" and the Spanish infinitive morpheme – *ar* and presumably meaning "to climb a tree/ *trepar un arbol*." In these descriptions, Puerto Rican speakers of contact Spanish are repeatedly associated with ridicule.

We begin to underline the specific metaphorical expressions with symbolic implications anchored on some form of violence. Tió, borrowing liberally and unreflectively from the work of the linguists working in Puerto Rico at the time, often disseminated the most colorful and aggressive rhetoric in discussions about language and the language situation of Puerto Ricans in the island (and beyond):

> Esa política proseguida en el país durante 50 años, y que por desgracia, y con una inconciencia cultural suicida, se prosigue aún en muchas de las escuelas privadas. (Tió 1954b: 87)

6 Spanglish is a generic term used to refer to the variable intrasentential and intersentential codeswitiching practices of Spanish-English bilinguals who use formal and discursive features of the two systems in their communication ("She's gonna *regañarte* [scold you]"). For many years, Otheguy and Zentella have debated over several aspects of this phenomenon. While they both acknowledge Spanglish as a natural consequence of language contact phenomena, Otheguy (2009) represents the formalist camp that questions the scientific validity of the term. Furthermore, Otheguy argues that association with this "ill-defined" category distances Spanish-speakers in the US from their Latin American and peninsular brethren and deprives them of opportunities to benefit in the pan-Hispanic linguistic market. On the other hand, Zentella (1997) represents the camp most concerned with the ideological complexity of the communicative practice and the communities' right to identify with this label. She conceptualizes the practice of said speakers as an instrument of self-affirmation and empowerment against racial discrimination.

> [That [language] policy has been applied in this country for 50 years and, unfortunately, it continues to be applied in many of the private schools with a culturally suicidal unconsciousness].

The language policy in question was the program of bilingual education. In these statements, the language policies applied to Puerto Rican society were consistently associated with attempts to crush the *boricua* soul or cause the death of the Puerto Rican spirit. Tió, who had lived in New York City and was familiar with its bilingual communities, wrote:

> No creo en el latín ni en el bilingüismo. El latín es una lengua muerta. El bilingüismo, dos lenguas muertas. (Tió 1947: 60)

> [I don't believe in neither Latin nor bilingualism. Latin is a dead language and bilingualism two dead languages.]

Tió expressed his concept of language in terms of a body part, playing with the semantics of Spanish which allows for the double meaning of *lengua* as language and the buccal body part. Moreover, this characterization tries to equate language change induced by contact with language death, alluding to the fact that Latin seized to be a language with native speakers as a result of the development of local dialects in contact situations. The implication was that without proper intervention Puerto Ricans would inevitably be facilitating the massacre of their own language. With these comments, Tió also focused attention on Puerto Ricans' lack of political agitation or their inability to determine the language question decisively in favor of the purists' solution was equated with suicidal tendencies of a social group. Again, he linked up to explicit expressions in the political discourse, like Quiñones' "state of passive suicide" (cited in Algrén de Gutiérrez 1987: 102).

Tió's discussions of language contact in Puerto Rico are complex and, at times, contradictory but there is a tendency to focus on the supposedly disastrous consequences of language contact phenomena. For example, Tió wrote:

> Pueden ser útiles [...] Pero todo calco que se aparta de las tendencias naturales de un idioma lo desfigura. Como el arsénico, por gotas, reconstituye. Por cucharadas envenena. (Tió 1954a: 98)

> [Calques can be useful [...] but every calque that departs from a language's natural tendencies disfigures it. It's kind of like the effect of arsenic. Drop by drop, arsenic changes the form and structure of something; spoon by spoon, it poisons.]

Approaching these analogies, we apply Esposito's biopolitical lens (2008) in order to understand the specific character of these language representations.

The metaphorical expression "disfigures it" entails that "language is a body" with physical features liable to be harmed, in this case by contact with a foreign and poisonous body (namely, English). With these terms, Tio also linked to the contamination metaphor that conceptualizes the language contact situation as an intake of toxic agents. These particular (metalinguistic) discussions accentuate the symbolic violence present in the imposition of or fight against dominant discourse styles or the standard or dominant language thrust upon a group of speakers. Tió employed these rhetorical strategies and metaphorical devices to press on the following question: if speakers are allowed to employ a poisoned language, what is to prevent them from poisoning the social body of the community?

In these series of discourses, we found metaphors that seek to highlight the infelicitous social consequences of undesired speech in terms of mental torture or physical injuries. Tió continued to draw precisely from organicist discourses (to be discussed below), which purportedly explain the fragile nature of language:

> No se puede legislar sobre el derecho a la vida de las palabras que surgen. Es el cuerpo social mismo el que se ocupa de aplicar la pena de muerte a la palabra soez, contrahecha, que desfigura el habla; que la degenera o la degrada. La mayor parte de las palabras nuevas nacen muertas o están condenadas a una vida efímera. La comunidad lingüística se encarga de aislarlas hasta que se acaban. (Tió 1954a: 100)
>
> [We cannot legislate over the right to life of words that emerge. It is the social body that's in charge of applying a death penalty to filthy crooked words that disfigure speech; that degenerates and degrades it. The majority of new words are born dead or are condemned to a brief life. The speech community will make sure to isolate them until they are terminated.]

"The right to life of words:" the implication here is that words are entities that live and die. Among these words, there are some that commit crimes against society. And, according to Tió, in the best case scenario, these "degenerate" words are eventually properly charged and penalized with isolation or some form of capital punishment not by individuals but by the social body. While marginally acknowledging the role of social agency in language change, these discourses repeatedly claim that there are natural laws determining the history of words or the results of any language situation. Frequently, words, themselves are (re)presented as either superior or inferior specimens subject to the unforgiven laws of nature and natural evolution. But more importantly, one implication that language defenders like Tió often fail to address is the sociological context, the fact that that the speakers of words are the ones on the receiving end of the social isolation and not merely the words by themselves. The speakers

of the "degenerate" words are the ones absorbing the shocks and the ones experiencing the psychological and social effects of stigma.

Nonetheless, these organicist explanations of language and the metaphors of symbolic violence became intertwined. For example, Manuel Rivera Matos, a journalist and political strategist argued:

> El idioma es algo que crece con nosotros como nos crecen el pelo y los huesos, y negarle la primacía que le corresponde como vehículo de enseñanza es deteriorar los resortes psíquicos de nuestra personalidad y truncar una porción de posibilidades creadoras. (Rivera Matos 1940: 174)
>
> [Language is something that grows with us, just like our hair and bones grow. To deny the primacy that it deserves as a vehicle of education is to damage the psychic springs of our personality and to truncate a lot of creative possibilities.]

According to this ideology of linguistic organicism, "language is a person." To a large degree, the producers and reproducers of this discourse in Puerto Rico managed to achieve a conceptual transmutation of the concept of language. Thus, thanks to all of their interdiscursive work, language begins to acquire biological characteristics of anthropomorphic beings: "language is something that grows with us, just like our hair and bones grow."

It must be noted that while these metaphors appear and reappear in different periods, they originate within a specific discursive tradition in linguistics which draws links between language functions and bodily organs, linguistic change and bodily consequences. Sampson (1980) explains to us that these conceptualizations harken back to nineteenth century linguists who regarded languages as organic bodies; "like every organic object [*organische Naturgegenstand*], is has its period of gestation and maturation, times of accelerated and of slackened growth, its prime, decay and gradual extinction" (cf. August Pott 1883; cited in Sampson 1980: 18). In spite of the advances in twentieth century linguistics, most linguists modeled their theories and methods within the cast of more successful scientific disciplines and traditions such as biology.[7] Furthermore, these biological theories of language were infused with pseudo-Darwinist principles, according to which language

7 Sampson (1980: 20) also mentions the possibility that Schleicher and company intended the equation of linguistics with biology to be interpreted metaphorically and not literally. Still, with all its problems, this manner of explaining linguistic phenomena is not completely removed from certain quarters of linguistic research; for example see Anderson and Lightfoot's (2000) *The human language faculty as an organ*.

and language varieties, like species compete with one another in a 'struggle for survival' (cf. Sampson 1980: 18). In his language representations, Tió went on to further elaborate these fascinating organicist and anthropomorphic metaphors:

> Algunos órganos no son imprescindibles. Algunos pueden seguir viviendo sin estómago. El corazón, ya lo hemos visto, puede transplantarse (sic). Pero no tenemos más que un cerebro. Y en una boca no cabe más que una lengua. Y no admite transplantes (sic). No es capricho que lo más duro en el cuerpo humano sean los dientes. Defienden la lengua. Y no hay **angustia** mayor que la del hombre que sabe que quieren **arrancársela**. Hoy, más que ayer, **la defendemos con uñas y dientes**. (Tió 1954a: 101; emphasis added)

> [Some organs are not required. Some people can live without a stomach. The heart, we have now seen, can be transplanted. But we only have one brain. And in the mouth, there is only room for one language. And the tongue cannot be transplanted. It is no passing fancy that the hardest part in the human body are the teeth. Their function is to protect the tongue/defend the language. And there is no greater **anguish** than that of the man who knows that others want **to rip it out**. Today more than ever, we will **defend it tooth and nail**.]

Tió's linguistic representation abounds with images of language as an organ, which increasingly take on the characteristics of subcellular structures. In the face of other encroaching or foreign organisms or [call them] pathogens, organ carriers (the speakers) should vigorously mount their defense. Note the violent image of the tearing out the tongue with which he equates the pro English educational policies supported by some Puerto Rican agents, who are, presumably, friendly to US interests. In his discussion of the nature of the mother tongue, Fernández Vanga (cf. 1931: 95) had resorted to the same the same bloody imagery.[8] This particular language metaphor had gained discursive ground. In another text, Tió argued:

> Y la importancia de la lengua en la preservación del espíritu nacional no puede ignorarse. Por eso quisieron cortárnosla. (Tió 1954c: 121)

> [And the importance of language in the preservation of the national spirit cannot be ignored. That's why they wanted to rip it out.]

8 In the context of literary discourses of early twentieth century Argentina, Ramos (2006) found similar deployments of these bloody types of metaphors and images which historically articulate social pandemonium and the prospect of language change through immigration.

Who would not cringe at the thought of experiencing tongue trauma and become prepared to act, to fight, or to run in order to avoid it? Tió forewarned about the pain and suffering to be inflicted by outsiders and traitors, unless upon Puerto Ricans fought back. The primary objective here is to make the consumer of the discourse draw a connection between language threat and social action.

An exaggerated sense of despair surrounded the question of language. Other individuals also began to discuss it precisely in terms of the danger it represented to the future life of Puerto Ricans. Tió (1954c) explained the juncture in critical terms, insisting that national pride was biologically useful and morally necessary. Tió characterized the politics surrounding the language question in more overtly violent terms: "*ese es el clima de la guerra civil*" [that is the climate of civil war] (1954c: 121). Tió concluded:

> El bilingüismo que se ensayaba no era otra cosa que el intento de suplantación de la lengua. Y eso equivale a **un intento de genocidio**. En individuos de cultura endeble ese shock cultural conduce al **aniquilamiento espiritual** y en repetidas ocasiones a la **autodestrucción**. (El caso de Hawaii es esclarecedor). (1954c: 124; emphasis added)
>
> [The bilingualism experiment was nothing more than an attempt to replace a language. And that amounts to an **attempt at genocide**. Among culturally flimsy individuals, that cultural shock leads to **spiritual annihilation** and, in repeated occasions, **self-destruction**. (The case of Hawaii is enlightening).]

In the above eight quotes, we observe the systematic association of the language organ with the national body and the implication that national security requires each citizen knows how to combat language change or those perpetuating it. The biological representation of political processes is very typical in folkish linguistics concerned with language endangerment. Highlighting an aspect of a phenomenon (bilingualism) in terms reserved for an entirely different class of phenomena (genocide/suicide) is also an instance of linguistic practice with crucial political implications. Tió's characterization also fed off Herderian ideas on how the personality of an individual, the uniqueness of a culture, lives through the language and any reduction of that language signifies a major irreparable loss to the person or the culture. However, in these circumstances, linguistic struggles can be best understood, as Knobloch (2006: 3) notes, "as a fight for rights and for the spread of the mother tongue (and therefore, of course, *against* the mother tongues of others)" (italics in the original). Puerto Ricans were to equate bilingualism with language death and act accordingly. These metaphorical gymnastics became instrumental in the mounting struggle against several aspects of the colonizing power of the United States.

6 Linking symbolic and material violence

In terms of policy, the language question was perhaps as equally pressing as the question of political status. Yet, we cannot overlook the fact that the noose of institutional violence had been effectively encircling everyday life in Puerto Rico for years. According to Zentella (1999: 165) the English – only laws helped to "fuel strikes, bloody confrontations, and an armed insurrection". But we must also note that for these events to have occurred symbolic and material violence had to be engaged. Certainly, the memory of the 1937 Ponce massacre was very fresh in the minds of most Puerto Ricans. In 1937, nineteen students were shot to death and two hundred were wounded by police after an unidentified shot was fired during a protest against the imprisonment of the revolutionary independence leader Pedro Albizu Campos (1891–1965). Defying orders not to do so, a militant group called "Army of Liberation" marched in the city of Ponce and were confronted by police. Shots were fired. There were casualties on both sides (Wagenheim and Jiménez de Wagenheim 2008: 180). In June 1948, the state assembly passed a gag law making any declaration of resistance to the political system or the espousal of violence against the local government and its institutions a felony. Parades and meetings of Nationalists and other groups were prohibited. The law was intended to criminalize political opposition and to ameliorate the US government's fears of communism's encroachment in the island and in Latin America (cf. Acosta 1993). Even as several economic and cultural changes helped consolidate the hegemony of the Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and the nationalist hopes of independence were dwindling, there were additional confrontations, protests, an uprising in the locality of Jayuya, and an attempt on President Truman's residency in Washington (cf. Picó 1988). In 1950, the independence leader Albizu Campos was sentenced to prison again for conspiracy to bring down the government. The case against him focused on twelve speeches[9] (pronounced between 1948 and 1950) in which he advocated violent resistance. While Albizu Campos has become a cherished icon of Puerto Ricans' struggles for self-determination, for a long time he was often associated with a legacy of violence (Picó 1988: 268). Several of his speeches contain references to language politics and utilize interesting metaphors of symbolic violence regarding the question of language. Take for example:

> El país necesita una voz con la cual oírse a sí mismo. Una voz nueva, clara, brutalmente franca. Que tenga la claridad que el país aún no ha podido vislumbrar, **la brutal franqueza que lo compense de todas las media voces**, de todas las orillantes insinuaciones,

9 See Acosta (1993: 203).

> los cobardes paliativos, los trémulos innuendos de la media-lengua colonial. (Cited in Figueroa Parker 2013: 95; emphasis added)
>
> [The country needs a voice with which to hear itself; a new, clear, and brutally frank voice. It must have the clarity that the country has been unable to fathom**, the brutal frankness to offset all the half voices**, all the vulgar advances, the cowardly remedies, the trembling innuendos of the colonial half-tongue.]

With this category of "colonial half-tongues," Albizu Campos singled out two targets: the speakers of contact Spanish and the defenders of the status quo. Throughout, there is a conscious and unconscious immersion in tropes of victimization and subsequently in heroism or martyrdom in which the mother-tongue depicted as one of the main victims in the trials and tribulations of the Puerto Rican people. The discursive stream was fed by more than one source.

Counterpoised to the *albizuista's* nationalist rhetoric of aggression, we find the so called "pacifist revolution" of the Popular Democratic Party led by Luis Muñoz Marín. Álvarez Curbelo (1995), borrowing from Gay (1993), utilizes the concept of "alibi of aggression" to argue that Muñoz Marín's civil discourse on behalf of a modern and democratic state was founded on or masked by policies of forced migration and military service that uprooted the Puerto Rican rural masses, displaced other vulnerable sectors of the population, and neutralized the militants of the nationalist movement. According to Álvarez Curbelo (1995: 93), the symbols of the emigrant and the soldier (particularly the Puerto Rican heroes of the Korean War) became completely operational metaphors for the state, which used violent events to pacify a restless population. Thus, the hegemony of populism, the consolidation of the status quo in Puerto Rico, was founded upon material and symbolic violence. Still, securing the loyalty of the masses in public life required proper attention to the mother-tongue maintenance discourses. Thus, in a patronizing speech before the national teachers' association in which he railed against the proliferation of English names for businesses, Muñoz Marín argued:

a. Y si desprecias tu lengua, ¿no te estás hasta cierto punto despreciando a ti mismo?" (Muñoz Marín 1953: 9)
   [In despising your language, are you not despising yourself, to some degree?]
b. No debemos hacer de dos de las grandes lenguas del mundo un burundangoso y empobrecido papiamento. (Muñoz Marín 1953: 10)
   [We must not turn two of the greatest languages in the world a junky and impoverished Papiamento.]

The particular reference to the Puerto Rican variety of contact speech as "a junky and impoverished Papiamento" is quite remarkable. Among Puerto Rican

speakers of Spanish, the adjective *burundangoso* derived from the noun *burundanga* for a worthless object is indeed very popular in everyday usage. However, in the context of the discourses thus far analyzed, the implication in the first sample above (10a) is that failing to prevent language mixing is tantamount to a violent act of self-hatred: linguistic suicide. Undoubtedly, these metalinguistic statements amount to more than the calculated hyperbole or the pandering of politicians trying to hold on to power or the rhetorical exercise of traditional and organic intellectuals alike claiming some sort of passionate linguistic expertise. Inevitably, many aspects of these ideas and representations become entangled in the concerted effort to persuade or incite others to take decisive action in the appropriation of power or counter-power.

7 Conclusion

Why must we carefully consider metalinguistic statements from politicians, nonlinguists, or humorists like Tió? Because individuals like Tió were rather effective in popularizing these beliefs and, more importantly, these discursive formations are still relevant today. These discourses continue to contribute to the production of language ideologies which become "common sense" among the public. Let us look at one recent example. Following the current language debate in popular media in Puerto Rico, I found contributions from none other than Tió's daughter Elsa Tió, a poet, recent winner of a an award in Spain for her defense of Spanish in Puerto Rico. In one of her interventions against the benefits of bilingualism and language contact as described by the linguist Aida Vergne (2014) of the University of Puerto Rico, Elsa Tió (2014) makes the following claims:

> Y créame no hay nada más colonizado que querer imponerle a un país, a una nacionalidad históricamente diferenciada como es Puerto Rico, y que su lengua acabe en esa **patética descomposición lingüística** [...] como escribió Wittgenstein [...] **un lenguaje dado es una forma de vida** [...] La lengua es lo más parecido a la libertad, no dominarla es aprisionarla y aprisionarnos. [...] Y créame, vamos a seguir conociéndola, amándola y defendiéndola, porque **estamos hechos de palabras**, porque la lengua en Puerto Rico es también nuestra patria y en ella se fragua nuestra unidad nacional y cultural. (Our emphasis)

> [And believe me: there is nothing more colonizing than the desire to impose upon a historically differentiated nationality like Puerto Rico and the desire that its language end up in **pathetic linguistic decomposition** [...] As Wittgenstein wrote [...] a given **language is a way of life** [...] Language is the closest thing to freedom; by not having command over it, we are imprisoning it and imprisoning ourselves [...] And believe me: we will continue to

learn it, love it, and defend it because **we are made up of words**. Because in Puerto Rico our country is also our language, where national and cultural unity are forged.]

Briefly, let us focus on the vitalist "languages are life species" metaphors that again harken back to nineteenth century European linguistics: if "language is a form of life," then as a life form it is vulnerable to external threats in the surrounding environment; and if "we are made up of words," then any attempt on those words is also an attempt on our physical wellbeing. Thus, we must do all we can to fortify those words before they get hurt or destroyed by contact. To reconsider these questions carefully and systematically, is not to deny the importance of linguistic self-confidence granted by competence in the mother-tongue nor to ignore the fact that the materiality of language requires embodiment facilitated symbolically by metaphors. To raise these issues and questions is to analyze matters critically. Again, in Elsa Tió's representation, we find the same discursive practice, exemplified by her father, of deploying organicist and vitalist theories of language with overtones of symbolic violence.

It is interesting to note how discursive memory almost guarantees the continuity of these organicist metaphors in one particular context. Yet, it must also be noted that their circulation is also affected by other more contemporary inflections of pan Hispamism in the "post-nationalist age." On October 2014, along with two other individuals, Elsa Tió received the Star of the Order of Civil Merit from The King of Spain for their work in the defense of Spanish. These awards and gestures from Spain are becoming more frequent. In 2016, Puerto Rico will be the site of the International Conference on the Spanish Language. Even as it suppresses linguistic nationalism in the Iberian Peninsula, Spain encourages Puerto Rico's sovereignty effort based on linguistic and cultural grounds. In the speech with which Elsa Tió received the award, entitled "El otro lado de la palabra [The other side of the word]," she talked about how Puerto Rican students are zealously engaged in preventing the atrophy of Spanish. According to this metaphorical logic, language has hair and bones and also muscles.

It is also remarkable how both status quo and pro-independence leaders share the same language ideological dogmas and metaphors of symbolic violence. Muñoz Marín's reference to linguistic self-hatred refers back to the metaphors of linguistic suicide and the reference to the "junky impoverished" Papiamento almost coincides with Tió's "filthy crooked words" characterization. Despite their thorny political differences, representatives of both camps single out the use of mixed speech as the culprit behind Puerto Rico's internal anxieties. Again and again, most of them call for the end of the "brutal" "bilingual contamination" (cf. Tió 1954a: 105). Why are both camps pulling on different sides of the same interdiscursive fabric? Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 18), remind us that while there

are many possible physical and social bases for metaphor, cultural coherence is crucial to the system. The ideological discursive cohesiveness empowers these institutional players to articulate the policies and practices that affect Puerto Rican society, while maintaining the semblance of acting logically and naturally. Ideological discursive cohesiveness lends credibility, rationality, and naturalness, allowing for the reduction of constraints on these players' ability to resort to or incite violence.

Finally, Frantz Fanon (1961: 30) wrote "violence is atmospheric," meaning that the pervading atmosphere of violence affects every domain of human activity. We concur that it plays not only an operative role but also an "informative one". In a politically charged setting, discourses on language thrive in an atmosphere of symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is the complex semiotic-ideological link between two important spheres of human affairs (communicative practice or discourse and conflict management or politics), worth investigating. Further study will require comparisons between the metaphorical tendencies discovered in the Puerto Rican archive of language ideologies and those in other cases of interest (Cuba and the Dominican Republic). In this endeavor, metaphors of language and metaphors of violence may be most significant objects of study. Metaphors are crucial in constructing worldviews, which are political through and through because they are born out of, shaped by, and mediated by conflicts that are part of life. With further study, we hope to rethink assumptions about language, while delving deeper into our exploration of violence constituted through speech, discourse, metaphors, and symbols.

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