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## 13

# A LITERATURE REVIEW OF RACIOLINGUISTICS IN DUAL-LANGUAGE BILINGUAL EDUCATION

## A Call for Conceptualizing Racialization

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In this chapter, I review empirical research on dual-language bilingual education (DLBE) that uses a raciolinguistic lens. The question guiding the review is: *How is a raciolinguistics lens being used by scholars researching DLBE?* The chapter starts with an overview of a raciolinguistics lens. I then describe the search for and analysis of the studies. Next, I present the 16 reviewed articles by highlighting how education researchers utilize and understand a raciolinguistic lens in their study. I then discuss the trends across the included research studies (a majority focus on: language/linguistic inquiries; who benefits from DLBE) and I offer possible future research inquiries. I argue that research employing a raciolinguistic lens would do well to define or conceptualize “race,”<sup>1</sup> including viewing Latinx<sup>2</sup> (the focus group of nine of the studies) as a racialized group, not an ethnic label. To conclude, I share implications for research and suggest possible future research directions for the United States and abroad.

### Overview

The legacies of racial discrimination influence people’s access to and the quality of schooling—which includes DLBE. Many DLBE programs/schools aim to serve students from racialized and language-minoritized groups, and this, coupled with society’s unjust conditions, motivates some scholars to research questions about racism in bilingual education and about the bilingual

schooling of students from underserved communities. An emerging framework that scholars employ to consider race and language in DLBE research is a raciolinguistic lens.

Flores and Rosa (2015) coined *raciolinguistic ideologies* to theorize about seeing the speaker's racialized group (e.g., Latina) as an important factor of how the listener (e.g., a teacher) evaluates the speaker's language appropriateness. Flores and Rosa claim that even when Latinxs (and more broadly, racialized people) use academic language, they will be heard by White-mainstream-English speakers (and others adopting standards of whiteness) as having inappropriate academic language since Latinxs are negatively racialized and speakers of stigmatized language varieties. Extending this idea of inappropriate language because of a speaker's racialized group, Rosa (2016) drew from raciolinguistics to theorize *languagelessness*, that is, Latinxs are not fully proficient/knowledgeable of either Spanish or English. These theorizations suggest that raciolinguistic ideologies influence people's evaluations of others and themselves and impact their decisions, with negative consequences for racialized people.

Since their introduction of the term, Flores and Rosa have extended the concept of raciolinguistic ideologies to theorize about the oppressive societal ideas that relate to language and race. For example, Rosa and Flores (2017) note that raciolinguistics also concerns the creation of the subject position—how language and race “co-naturalize” each other (for more components of a raciolinguistic perspective, see Flores et al., 2020b). Other scholars have extended the idea of raciolinguistics to focus on how people use language to racialize others and to shape ideas about race (e.g., Alim et al., 2016). Accordingly, scholars have conceptualized a raciolinguistic lens in different ways, with some using the lens to contribute insights into how language forms racialized categories, that is, delineating the boundaries of a particular racialized group.

The different conceptualizations of raciolinguistics lead to my questions: How is a raciolinguistics lens being used by scholars researching DLBE? How is DLBE research that draws from raciolinguistics contributing to understanding the racialization<sup>3</sup> of groups?

With the emergence of a raciolinguistic lens, a literature review focused on how scholars are using and understanding this lens in research on DLBE would help the field notice trends and possible directions for future research.

### **Literature Search and Analysis**

I searched six databases (EBSCO, JSTOR, Project Muse, SAGE, Taylor & Francis, and Wiley) with the key words “raciolinguistic” AND “dual language” OR “two way” (search completed December 2021) for peer-reviewed articles of empirical research. The literature review sought to include

qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research, and also U.S.-focused and international work; however, the articles that met the inclusion criteria are U.S.-based and all qualitative-based studies (except one). The 16 articles included in the literature review are marked with an asterisk (\*) in the reference list.

For my analysis, I read all the articles in their entirety, but I concentrated my analytic notes on how each article's theoretical-framework section describes a raciolinguistics lens and on how authors attended to racialization (or described "race"). I also noted how authors used raciolinguistics, where relevant/explicit, to inform their research study and discuss their findings and conclusions. In the findings section, I discuss all the included articles by highlighting relevant information that may be common in or may diverge from the group.

## Findings

I organized the 16 articles into three groups (however, some articles overlap into another group[s]). The first group ( $n = 9$ ) presents studies that centered linguistic research, language ideologies, and/or general issues about DLBE. The articles in the second group ( $n = 4$ ) centered questions about accessibility. The third group ( $n = 3$ ) describes studies that also or primarily theorized about racial ideologies.

### *Group 1: Centering Linguistic Research and/or Language Ideologies*

Nine of the articles nestled raciolinguistic ideologies within linguistic research and/or language ideologies. For example, Bauer and colleagues (2020) examined an African-American student's bilingual/biliterate identity development in regard to language ideologies. The authors referred to "raciolinguistic ideologies to describe the conflation of race and language" (p. 685) in that identity is (re)created through linguistic practices. Considering the imposition of identity labels, Chaparro (2019) mentions language ideologies and language socialization along with raciolinguistic ideologies. She notes that for Latinx children "Spanish and its ties to students' ethnolinguistic identities as Latinx is complex and affects students' use of Spanish and classroom experiences" (p. 2). Through her study in elementary-level DLBE, Chaparro develops her theorization of *raciolinguistic socialization*, which recognizes race and class as "consequential in the evaluations of children's language development" (p. 2).

Ascenzi-Moreno and Seltzer (2021) used a critical translanguaging approach along with the frameworks translanguaging and raciolinguistic ideologies to center language ideologies. According to the authors, a raciolinguistic lens

helps “point out how the language and literacy practices of emergent bilinguals of color are particularly stigmatized and misperceived” (p. 3). They analyzed teacher discourse to understand the ideologies guiding elementary-level teachers’ assessments of emergent bilinguals of color as readers. Two of the four teachers taught in a French/English dual-language program; the others were English-as-a-new-language teachers. Regardless of the context, the researchers found that “assessments negatively shape teachers’ perceptions of *all* emergent bilinguals as readers,” and, importantly, assessments “*further* marginalized emergent bilinguals of color” (p. 13, italics added).

Other articles that focused on language/linguistic questions and evaluating racialized speakers include Briceño and colleagues (2018). Briceño and colleagues drew from linguistic ideologies and raciolinguistic ideologies to highlight the challenge of “objective” assessment of language performance. They demonstrated that potential teachers’ internalized raciolinguistic beliefs (e.g., undervaluing their bilingualism/Spanish) discouraged them from seeing themselves as qualified to be bilingual teachers. The authors suggest that pre-service teachers should learn about sociolinguistic and raciolinguistic ideologies to promote their becoming bilingual-education teachers. In another study, these same authors (Rodríguez-Mojica et al., 2019) used autoethnographies to interrogate who is linguistically qualified to prepare bilingual teachers. They highlight the raciolinguistic ideology of positioning racialized Others as having inferior/incorrect language varieties and they call for teacher educators to learn about ideologies and develop their critical consciousness.

Along with Bauer and colleagues’ (2020) aforementioned study, three other articles considered Black students in elementary-level DLBE. Frieson and Scalise (2021) used a raciolinguistic lens to identify colonialization and racism as positioning Black Americans’ languaging as not worthy of being an “official’ instructional language in DLBE” (p. 216). This consequently frames the Black body/speaker as deficient and “uneducated.” Using this lens, the authors examined Black children’s language repertoires and how they challenged/conformed to policies promoting rigid language separation, with specific attention to how students reaffirmed their linguistic practices. In another study, Frieson (2021) similarly drew from a raciolinguistic lens to study Black children’s languaging in biliteracy centros (small-group instruction stations). In an article focused on Black girls’ literacies and counter-narratives, Presiado and Frieson (2021) connected raciolinguistics to Black girl literacies and translanguaging frameworks to show how two Black girls resisted oppressive raciolinguistic ideologies like languagelessness.

Examining a family with a child in a middle-school DLBE program, Hernandez (2017) used a raciolinguistic lens to connect deficit ideologies to the family’s struggles with the program. Despite the program describing all students as “language learners” (including White Spanish learners), policies and practices did not attenuate the perceived languagelessness and the

negativity of the deficit label of “English learner” given to Latinx students, thus disadvantaging these students compared to the White Spanish learners.

### *Group 2: Centering Questions about Accessibility*

Along with language ideologies, four articles also focused their inquiry on questions about accessibility to and who benefits from DLBE. For example, Alonso and Le (2020) report on a participatory action research (PAR) project where the authors collaborated with middle-school students to explore students’ perspectives regarding bilingualism. They also examined how the DLBE model could best be implemented in their school, which did not offer bilingual education. The research team specifically focused on the dual-language model because New York City was expanding DLBE. The authors mention a raciolinguistic lens as part of their theoretical framework on critical post-structuralist approaches to language. They describe how the lens shows that raciolinguistic ideologies benefited White-monolingual speakers and allows a focus on “how the language practices of minoritized communities are racialized” (p. 4). The authors conclude that the PAR project affected the implementation of the school’s DLBE by including *all* students in the school (instead of certain students).

Sun and Wang (2023) employed a quantitative-text-analysis method and critical discourse analysis to examine the webpages of over 200 DLBE programs in a southern U.S. state with a growing Latinx population. The authors used a raciolinguistic lens for a linguistic analysis focused on language, race, and power. They drew from this lens to reveal ideologies and power relations between dominant and minoritized languages and found that the interests of language minoritized children were largely ignored.

Wall and colleagues (2022) examined the school institutional processes that inhibited working-class Latinx families and Black families from accessing DLBE. They used a raciolinguistic theoretical framework to understand the “intertwined nature of race and language ... on ideologies and social hierarchies” (p. 2). They found that the raciolinguistic ideology of valuing White speakers’ English inhibited Black families and working-class English-dominant Latinxs from accessing DLBE.

Moving from centering language ideologies, Flores and McAuliffe (2020) completed a case study of efforts to expand DLBE in some predominantly Latinx, high-poverty Philadelphia schools. They offer a “raciolinguistic perspective on bilingual education” (p. 2) that examines how “language and race intersect in the maintenance of social inequalities even within efforts to promote bilingual education” (p. 2). Flores and McAuliffe emphasize a materialist framing of race, meaning racialization processes emerged from “the exploitation and genocide of racialized communities in service of the capitalist need for raw materials from colonized lands” (p. 2). They show

how the historical segregation and poverty that affects Latinxs also prevents DLBE programs from being successfully implemented and improving the educational outcomes of students.

### ***Group 3: Theorizing Racial Ideologies***

Three studies departed from the others in their attention to their conceptualization of race and/or racialization. Flores and colleagues (2020a) examined how elementary-level teachers in a DLBE K-8 school made sense of Latinx students whose first language is English and are simultaneously labeled English learners. By drawing from a social view of bilingualism and a biliteracy framework, the authors argue that the teachers made sense of Latinx students through discourses of languagelessness that constructed the *raciolinguistic category*: “English-dominant English learner.”

Chávez-Moreno (2022) coupled raciolinguistic ideologies with racist ideologies to examine middle- and high-school-level teachers’ assessments of their Latinx youth. I explained the conceptualization of race that guided my study and noted that Latinxs are a racialized group delineated by an assumed Spanish-language connection (a conceptualization I problematize; 2021b). I found, like Flores and colleagues (2020a), that teachers made sense of Latinx adolescents through discourses of languagelessness and racist ideologies. I argued that teachers believed that DLBE was “inherently culturally relevant” because DLBE provided Latinxs with Spanish-language/biliteracy schooling. However, this belief prevented teachers from seriously considering how the program could enhance youths’ critical-racial consciousness.

Martinez Negrette (2020) focused on how a DLBE kindergarten classroom socially constructed ideas about race, ethnicity, and bilingualism/languageing and how young children perceived these ideas. Negrette describes that the Spanish-language Latina teacher experienced a “‘darkening’ process” (p. 10) because of her Spanish use. Negrette shows how the program staff’s language practices and interactions influenced the children’s ideas about constructing “people as inferior/superior, normal/deviant, insider/outsider” (p. 11). Notably, in a rare example of the author being explicit about how they conceptualize race and ethnicity, Negrette described Latinx as an ethnic label—a “category referring to ‘cultural practices and outlooks of a community, which identifies them as a distinctive social group’” (p. 13).

The next section answers the review’s questions and highlights other trends across the included research studies.

## **Discussion**

For this review, I asked: *How is a raciolinguistics lens being used by scholars researching DLBE? How is DLBE research that draws from raciolinguistics contributing to understanding the racialization of groups?*

Scholars mostly used raciolinguistics to contribute insights about language ideologies concerning racialized Others, for example, to mark, examine, and challenge deficit views. Considering that Rosa and Flores (2017) note that raciolinguistics also concerns the creation of the subject position, using a raciolinguistic lens to offer theorizations about how language ideologies and racialization co-naturalize the category of a racialized group could yield a fruitful future line of inquiry.

In order to engage in such a project, scholars would do well to clearly conceptualize certain terms. A needed intervention for scholars interested in using a raciolinguistic lens is to distinguish between ethnicity and race, especially when using a framework said to be about “race and language.” To spotlight some of the issues that emerge from not clarifying the distinction, I next discuss viewing Latinx as a racialized group versus an ethnic group. Starting with race, social and basic science scholars have shown a biological concept of race to be erroneous; instead they advance the idea that racialized groups are socially constructed (e.g., Omi & Winant, 2015). Race (i.e., racialized groups) was invented to oppress and have whiteness reign supreme in a racial hierarchy by creating social categories, sorting people into those categories, and dehumanizing individuals by, for example, erasing the distinctions between people’s cultural practices (ethnicity). Social science has found that ideas and boundaries about racialized categories shift according to context, time, and space and that what delineates and amalgamates a particular racialized group is different; for example, the group cohesion may be based on histories of slavery and land theft (Molina et al., 2019).

Work that refers to these ideas and the consequences of racialization should, I suggest, conceptualize Latinxs as a racialized group—not an ethnicity, the varied cultural practices of the people in the group (Chávez-Moreno, 2021b). The alternative—thinking of “Latinx” as an ethnic group—leads to essentializing the cultural practices of U.S. people who originate from geographically diverse (and nation-state delineated) places such as California, Cuba, Colombia, and Central America. That is, designating Latinxs as an ethnicity reinforces the work of race by erasing variations in people’s cultural practices.

The Latinx racialized group’s boundaries have been problematically delineated based on a supposed connection that comes from the Spanish language (or assuming one should have these connections even if they do not; Chávez-Moreno, 2021b). To address this problematic social construction, I have argued for not defining Latinxs based on Spanish language/bilingualism and instead conceptualizing Latinx as a racialized group that has suffered from *multiple colonialisms*, which includes Spanish colonialism, American colonialism, and American imperialism.<sup>4</sup> By conceptualizing Latinxs with this description, we underscore race’s teleology and the histories that this racialized group shares without ignoring that they may have different cultural

practices (just as, e.g., Asian and Black folks have). For scholars using raciolinguistics in DLBE research, I submit that acknowledging that Latinxs suffer from the histories of multiple colonialisms serves to define the racialized group Latinx. Doing so specifies the distinctions and can lead to comparisons between Latinxs and other racialized groups, which can advance understandings about how language and race co-naturalize the category of a racialized group.

The aforementioned trend in the articles' use and emphasis of raciolinguistics being on language not on race may relate to which journals published this research, which may also point to the authors' orientation/training. This trend results in the development of theoretical frameworks being focused on understanding questions about language, leaving race, and racialization as undertheorized social constructs.

To conceptualize "race" in a study, some in the bilingual-education field may turn to critical race theory (CRT). In the reviewed articles, five studies used or mentioned CRT or its associated constructs (e.g., intersectionality, whiteness as property, counterstories) to highlight race issues and/or support their methodology (Chaparro, 2019; Martinez Negrette, 2020; Presiado & Frieson, 2021; Rodríguez-Mojica et al., 2019; Wall et al., 2022). However, I note that utilizing a CRT framework may not yield a robust conceptualization of race. Education race scholars have argued that CRT in education undertheorizes race (Leonardo, 2013) and lacks a racial theory (Cabrera, 2018). Scholars who find this argument convincing and are interested in examining the intersection of race and language may do well to look beyond CRT for theories that help conceptualize race and racialization. Considering sociological theories and other social science and/or humanities theories may prove productive (e.g., Enriquez, 2019; Lewis et al., 2019; Molina et al., 2019). I suggest other possible directions for future research in the next section.

### **Implications and Future Directions**

Among other implications, the reviewed studies highlight the need for practitioners and youth to learn about raciolinguistic ideologies. Scholars suggested that learning about such ideologies would help develop the critical consciousness needed to challenge oppressive practices and ideologies. This is an important contribution of this literature, and teacher education programs and practitioner professional development should seriously consider how to help teachers and youth learn about these ideologies. Future research that focuses on this level of analysis could provide implications that would help prepare practitioners to engage thoughtfully in this undertaking.

As is the trend in bilingual-education research (Chávez-Moreno, 2020, 2021a), most of the studies situated in classrooms/schools took place in the



elementary level (9 out of 12). The field would benefit from studies employing a raciolinguistic lens to examine interactions and/or experiences in secondary-level DLBE classroom/school contexts. Additionally, research is needed that centers particular racialized groups, for example, Black adolescents. This research could, for example, provide empirically based information about how secondary-level DLBE can attend to these students' experiences.

Some authors connected their raciolinguistic framework to colonization (e.g., Flores & McAuliffe, 2020; Frieson & Scalise, 2021), a much needed intervention in DLBE research. Employing a raciolinguistic lens along with theories on colonization and/or imperialism could illuminate future studies that focus on Indigenous-language DLBE, a context missing in the literature. The literature also points to the need for DLBE research to explicitly incorporate thinking about imperialism, and to conceptualize it as distinct from colonialism, especially when focusing on immigrant populations or teachers of immigrants (Chávez-Moreno, 2021c; Motha, 2014).

For future DLBE research that is set in and/or that wishes to compare transnational contexts, researchers should be careful to clearly conceptualize "race," given that place, space, and time all affect racialization. Indeed, a person who is considered Black (or any other racial category) in one context may not have the same racial categorization in another context. Considering the aforementioned ideas about racialization, the need to clearly conceptualize and contextualize the term "race" not only relates to future studies wanting to offer international comparisons but also to studies in a U.S. context.

Returning to what a raciolinguistic lens offers, Flores and Rosa (2017) note that raciolinguistics also concerns the creation of the subject position—how language and race co-naturalize the category of a racialized group. This aspect of the framework would serve well as a focus in future studies that use a raciolinguistic lens to explore how schooling interconnects language and race to form racialized group categories. Given many DLBE classrooms have a racially diverse student composition, future research could use raciolinguistics to connect racialization to language and then examine how DLBE engages in the process of delineating racialized group's boundaries.

## **Conclusion**

The 16 empirical research articles on DLBE that use a raciolinguistic lens have provided important contributions for the education field. Future research would do well to present the major conceptualization of "race" guiding the work and explain distinctions with other concepts (i.e., ethnicity) under analysis in the study. Given a raciolinguistic lens is an emerging framework in the study of DLBE, future research can continue to contribute important insights on how racialization and language intersect to affect the education experiences and opportunities of students and their communities.

## Notes

- 1 I use “race” in quotations in specific places to highlight its use as a term. I do not suggest using the quotations to signal the social constructedness of race, given so many other social constructs exist (e.g., gender) and adding quotations to all social constructs would clutter a text.
- 2 I use Latinx as inclusive of Latina/Latino/Latinx/Latine and to challenge gender binaries and to X-out the “Latin” because of its European reference; however, I use an author’s term when appropriate. The term “Latinxs” refers to people who reside in the United States and have suffered from multiple colonialisms, as I describe in this chapter and elsewhere (Chávez-Moreno, 2021b). Thus, I conceptualize differently the terms “Latinxs” (those who live in the United States) and “Latin Americans” (those living in Latin American countries).
- 3 Racialization refers to the process of socially constructing racialized groups by delineating their boundaries compared to other racialized groups (thus, is different from racial discrimination or individuals’ racial identities or racial identity development).
- 4 By pointing to Spanish colonialism and seeing Latinx as emerging from “Spanish speaking/Hispanic,” the Latinx category excludes Spanish immigrants and/or people living in the United States who come from Spain’s ex-colonies. Although some argue convincingly for Latinx to not only refer to people from hispanophone countries, I leave this discussion for a future piece.

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