

LANGUAGE: ISSUES OF INEQUALITY

PHYLLIS M. RYAN
ROLAND TERBORG

EDITORS

2003

United States' Hegemony and Purposes for Learning English in Mexico

Ana M. Sierra and Arnado Padilla
Stanford University

1. Introduction

The impact of the United States on the lives of Mexicans has been studied from diverse perspectives and disciplines and for different interests. Examinations of Mexicans' opinion of the United States have found that the relationship between the United States and Mexico has given specific meaning to Mexicans' perceptions and views of the United States.¹ Studies of the meaning of Mexican nationalism in relation to the United States provide one approach to analyze and understand some specific elements that have contributed to shaping these opinions and attitudes. Most studies using this approach have emphasized the role of nationalism as a form of resistance to the hegemony of the United States. At the same time, it has been pointed out that nationalism, placed in the context of the internal political interests and struggles for power in Mexico, has become instrumental for the Mexican State to legitimize American models of economic development (Castañeda 1989; Meyer 1985).²

The geographical proximity with the United States and the spread of the American media in Mexicans' lives have contributed to the diffusion and acceptance of a global culture. In a situation of an asymmetric economic and technological relationship, the direction of cultural homogenization originates in the English-speaking country (Hidalgo, Cifuentes, & Flores 1996). Critics who have studied the influence of the impact of the United States on Mexican life have argued this influence is affecting all

¹ For example, Favela and Morales (1991) discuss the relevance and content of several surveys the United States Information Agency in Mexico (USIA) has conducted of Mexicans' opinions of specific issues related to the U.S. They note that the USIA has collected data on aspects such as the economic and political influence of the U.S. in Mexico, opinion of bilateral negotiations, and congeniality of interests. Business links between the United States and Mexico have been growing rapidly for the last ten years. Prominently, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the United States, and Canada has been in place since 1994 despite the overwhelming criticism of Mexican nationalists and the opposition by indigenous communities living in misery (see González Sousa, La Jornada, January 9, 1999).

²

social classes alike; nationalism is taking the meaning of imitation and assimilation into the "American way of life" (Monisváis, 1984 & 1987).

Phillipson's (1992) account of the diffusion of the English language and of its pedagogy shows that this language has spread along with the capacity of English-speaking countries, England and the United States, to maintain their political and economic power over other nations. Moreover, the tendency to use English as a "natural" language in international conferences has led to the belief that English is a "neutral" language free of associations with any powerful English-speaking country (Phillipson 1999:100). The "neutrality" of the English language in the context of Mexico was the object of research conducted at a university in Mexico City. Its main objective was to determine the extent to which university students in Mexico wanted to learn English because they considered it an international neutral language or because they associated this language with the United States. Therefore, the primary question addressed was whether students who wish to learn English do so because of a belief in the unquestionable superiority and leadership of the United States—the hegemony of the United States.

1. A Theoretical Framework

Our theoretical framework interprets the meaning of Mexican nationalism as a form of resistance toward the United States when it is perceived as a threat to Mexican sovereignty and cultural identity (Castañeda 1989). The approach to the concept of nationalism stresses that communities differ from each other in the "style" in which they imagine themselves. The style of Mexican nationalism is its defensive attitude toward the United States. As members of the "imagined political community" (Anderson 1989) which constitutes Mexico, Mexicans have a common historical account of intervention and active participation of the United States in the territorial and political configuration of Mexico.

Schools have reinforced this style of nationalism from the time Mexicans attend elementary school and study history. Early in their education, Mexicans learn that the United States took an active role demarcating the limits of the Mexican territory. Quoting from the compulsory elementary textbooks, Castañeda shows how the type and tone of the information used in these books underlines the importance of national unity. This nationalism is presented in a way that stresses the effects of actual external threats to Mexican sovereignty. The first example of a threat originating from the United States, the 1836 Texas secession, has inflicted a permanent mark on Mexicans, since it meant the first loss of Mexican territory to the U.S.

Some North Americans had obtained permission to settle in Texas, which then belonged to Mexico. Afterward they became dissatisfied with the Mexican government and became independent.... In order to subdue them, Santa Anna ventured forth with an army which arrived in desperate shape....

He emerged victorious in the first battles against the Texans, but was taken prisoner at San Jacinto. The lack of arms and money made it impossible to reconquer Texas. Since most of the population was of North American origin, in 1845 Texas became part of the United States (1989: 26).³

At the same time that students learn about the history of Mexico as a nation, their textbooks remind them that the northern neighbor has threatened Mexico's territorial limits and sovereignty. In addition, this quotation points out the ever-present disadvantages of Mexico and unbalanced relationship with the U.S. In fact, the U.S. policy of manifest destiny led to the conquest and colonization of all of Mexico's northern territory which includes the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Utah, and Nevada. This conquest was solidified by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 which continues to symbolize the U.S. domination over Mexico.

Students encounter the interventionist threat of the United States in Mexico in textbooks and in public opinion. This image of the United States is so prevalent in the public mind that when Mexicans talk about their territorial proximity with the U.S. and the consequences of past experiences, they summarize it all in one popular phrase: "poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States."

Specialists on the relationship between Mexico and the United States repeatedly point to one characteristic of Mexican nationalism that best summarizes the situation: its defensive posture toward the United States (see Castañeda 1989, & Vazquez and Meyer 1985). In Anderson's words, this type of nationalism has become part of the style in which the Mexican community imagines itself. This style touches directly on two aspects that constitute a nation: its limits and its sovereignty. The history of Mexico provides numerous accounts of the negative effects of the United States' intervention in Mexico regarding its territorial boundaries and the extent to which the sovereignty of Mexico has allowed the U.S. to intervene in the internal affairs of that nation.

One of the main criticisms of the Mexican State has been its use of the concept of nationalism in order to legitimize national projects. During the Porfirist period,⁴ for instance, the government used the banner of nationalism to legitimize the presence of a large number of foreign enterprises, claiming that such economic decisions were aimed at national prosperity. United States' investors dominated some large sectors of the economy such as mining, oil industry, and railroads. However, a growing Mexican middle class realized foreign investors had achieved control not only of the decisions

³ Castañeda's source of this historical account is: Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, Laura Barcia, Elizabeth Velázquez, Luis González, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, Victor L. Urquidí, and Francisco Eschbazer. Libro de Texto Gratuito, Ciencias Sociales, Cuarto Grado. México, D.F. Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1984, p. 94.

⁴ "the Porfirist period" refers to the period between 1884 to 1911 when Porfirio Díaz was president of Mexico.

concerning economic matters, but also of government agencies to be able to secure their investments. Just as the regime had managed to use the idea of nationalism to favor foreign interests, popular movements, in turn, used this concept to emphasize the lack of and need for economic nationalism, and the protection of sovereignty. The defense of national sovereignty became an issue when the United States government threatened to take military action to protect both U.S. investments in Mexico and the intervention of other countries in what the U.S. considered its geopolitical sphere. The presence of U.S. capital and the threat that the U.S. would intervene in internal affairs once again aroused a strong Mexican nationalism.

Protection from intervention and respect for a nation's sovereignty has characterized Mexico's foreign policy. This position has become a tradition for Mexico, and has its roots in experiences with the United States (Vazquez and Meyer 1985). Despite falling within the geopolitical domain of the United States and depending on economic ties with the U.S., Mexico has not always formed a political alliance with the U.S. More than siding with the United States' political interests, Mexico has often maintained opposing views concerning intervention and sovereignty of other nations.

Mexican nationalism has influenced the direction that Mexico's foreign policy has taken; the State has incorporated and used nationalism as part of its political strategy. However, several analyses criticize this appropriation of nationalism by the State and stress how it has formulated a type of nationalism that has also helped to legitimize a dominant worldview. Specialists in the study of the Mexican State have discussed its role in supporting some beliefs, values, stereotypes, and myths as a way to impose a dominant image of the meaning of nationalism and of a national culture.⁵ Bonfil Batalla (1990) elaborates on "an imagined Mexico" that does not take into account the existence of indigenous groups who speak different languages and whose values have not been considered in the concept of national culture the State has promoted. Our discussion of nationalism acknowledges that what Anderson calls the "imagined political community" reflects a set of experiences, values, and worldviews closer to a mestizo community than to the diverse indigenous population of Mexico.

The history of Mexico shows that the policy of language and cultural domination of the indigenous groups practiced by Spain during the period of colonization was continued after Mexico became independent. The Spanish language was used as a means to integrate the indigenous communities and to impose cultural homogeneity (see Aguirre Beltrán 1982; Batalla 1990; and González 1982).⁶

⁵ See Bartra, Roger. *La Jaula de la Melancolía, Identidad y Metamorfosis del Mexicano*. México, D.F.: Editorial Grijalbo, S.A., 1987, for a more detailed discussion of Mexican support of the concept of a national culture as an expression of the dominant culture.

⁶ Bonfil Batalla has estimated that about 56 different indigenous languages are spoken in Mexico today. See *México Profundo, Una Civilización Negada*. México, D.F.: Grijalbo, 1990.

Carlos Monsiváis has studied the relationship of the notion of nationalism to popular culture in Mexico. He discusses the role that different elements have played in the production of the symbols that forge identity and unity. He also focuses on the appropriation of nationalism by the Mexican State. He argues that the State has formulated an official nationalism that has restrained political mobilization and has allowed the acceptance of official projects presented on behalf of national unity, progress, development, and modernization. To a large extent, these projects have favored the indiscriminate adoption of imported technology and an accelerated industrialization modeled after the American technology (Monsiváis 1987).

Increasing trade, investment, debt, tourism, and assembly industries in a situation of economic and political asymmetry have coexisted with a defensive nationalism directed toward the United States. The economic and political independence that Mexicans have aspired to achieve has resulted in a project of economic integration with the United States. The process of modernization initiated in 1940 has developed to the point that the North American Free Trade Agreement has allowed an explosion of American companies and products in Mexico. In a situation of economic asymmetry with the U.S., hundreds of American "maquiladoras" or assembly factories that pay no more than 15 percent of an American hourly salary have settled in Mexico. The presence of these "maquiladoras" have caused strong reactions in Mexico, among other reasons because of the lack of control of their waste disposal. Besides, the main objection to these factors has always been that even when they are job sources, they do not contribute to the economic development Mexico (Castañeda, 1989:225-229). These jobs are low paying and the goods are sold in the U.S. or elsewhere with profits enriching the U.S. companies.

The perception of the opposition to economic integration in terms of its cultural impact:

is that economic integration would eventually entail far more political subservience, in foreign policy and domestic affairs, as well as a progressive fading of the country's heretofore vigorous cultural personality. Because of the attraction that the 'American way of life' holds for large sectors of Mexico's population, particularly its urban middle classes, the conservation of clear-cut barriers between the two nations is deemed of paramount cultural importance (Castañeda, 241).

The pressure for modernization after the American model has brought the growth of urban areas, the idea of efficiency as a basic value for productivity, and the acceptance of a universal culture transmitted by the overwhelming presence of the American media. In his discussion of the role of American television media in Mexico, Monsiváis (1987) states that the "American way of life" is perceived as the only possible model or option. Media nourishes the idea of a homogeneous culture and obliterates the differences of other societies.

The portrayal of an American type of life as presented by the mass media has found an ally in the Mexican television industry (Hidalgo, Cifuentes, & Flores 1996). Programming of both

private and State channels is mostly of American origin or is American influenced as seen in music, fashion, and consumption patterns. Even news programs often devote more time to news in the United States than to news of Mexico. Television reaches all sectors of Mexico. Several satellites allow nationwide access to American television, and commercial cable television brings many American channels into the homes of middle-class Mexican families. Monsiváis (1984) adds that television has supported cultural integration by the Americanization of Mexico not only by virtue of its cultural influence, but also by its portrayal of a capitalist mentality represented by a sentimental and competitive individualism. The influence of television cuts across social classes. For Monsiváis, this influence does not lead to a "denationalization," but to the national idea of imitation and assimilation in order to become a contemporary of the universal-read-American model presented in the television images.

Similar to the circumstances in other Third World countries, the main source of technology for Mexico is the United States. Due to the Free Trade Agreement with the U. S. the shelves of department stores throughout the country also have seen the influx of a large number of different American products the majority of which keep their original labels in English. Mexican products compete with the prestige of American products labeled with the international English language in a country where the majority of its 90 million inhabitants speak Spanish.

On the other hand, the effects of the economic integration are seen both as a possible solution to the critical economic situation of Mexico and as a threat to sovereignty and cultural identity. Scholars in the field of U.S.-Mexico relations have offered varying opinions about the conflicts and contradictions that emerge in a situation where the image of the United States is both negative and positive to the well being and construction of a nation. The study we report here explored the extent to which this image, defined as attitudes toward the hegemony of the United States, relates to the purposes Mexicans have for learning English.

Our theoretical framework also considered Kachru's conceptual approach of the description of the different patterns of diffusion and use of English (1988). Kachru has coined terminology that takes into consideration the social, cultural, and political factors associated with the spread of English. Kachru identifies three main situations where English is used: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. The inner circle refers to situations where English is the primary language, as in the United States, England, and Canada. The outer circle describes situations where the initial contact with English was through British or American colonization and where English has undergone a process of nativization and acculturation, for example India, South Africa, and Singapore. The expanding circle refers to countries where English is not used as the official language of communication, but where English has made its way mainly through the mass media, publications, and English teaching; this is seen in countries such as Egypt, France, and Mexico.

One assumption that guides this study is that the spread of English worldwide has grown along with the capacity of the United States to penetrate and influence cultural, scientific, economic, and political processes in other countries. A second assumption is that Mexican

university students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony have been shaped by the geopolitical, economic, and cultural circumstances of Mexico and the United States and the long history of contact between these two countries. Kachru's model provides a framework that allows the inclusion of the patterns of diffusion of English and the specific factors that have shaped the perceptions of the United States and of the uses of English by Mexicans.

The definition of hegemony in this study incorporated the concept of hegemony from the writings of Antonio Gramsci.⁷ The concept of hegemony used here referred to the hegemony of the United States as expressed in its economic, cultural, political, and military predominance in other countries. The concept includes the spread of worldviews influencing people's perceptions and approaches to reality and the construction of knowledge as well as political and ethical values (Bocock 1986).

Attitudes toward U.S. hegemony was defined as the favorable or unfavorable opinion that students had in respect to specific issues dealing with the impact of the United States in Mexico as well as U.S. international leadership.⁸ Specifically, this definition refers to the degree of Mexican university students' approval of the United States' presence in the media in Mexico, in Mexican economic development, in the development of science and technology, and in the spread of mainstream American values in Mexico.

The definition of purposes for learning English in this study referred to students' responses to the value of the English language in their lives, to situations where they wanted or needed to use this language, and to specific instances where they might use it.

Our study was directed at answering three research questions:

- 1) Do students' post-graduation plans reflect differences in the purposes they have for learning English?
- 2) Do differences in students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony reflect different purposes for learning English independent of students' post-graduation plans?
- 3) Is there a relationship between students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and their purposes for learning English?

⁷ The Italian political philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) used the concept of hegemony as a central concept for his analysis of the social and political movements of Italy, and specifically of the role of the State in the dissemination of values and norms. See Gramsci, Antonio. Selections from the Prison Notebooks. Edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971. We have drawn the main ideas and elements constituting this concept from specialists who have studied it in great detail in the work of Gramsci.

⁸ The definition of attitudes that we are using derives from the one provided by Fishbein and Ajzen, who give the following definition: "attitudes can be described as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (1975:6 in van Els et al. 1984: 116).

The 24 items used to measure students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony were factor analyzed to create a single uniform scale. A principal components factor analysis⁹ was employed to construct this scale. A one-factor solution was considered the most meaningful solution because all items had been conceptualized on a single dimension that explored issues related to the increasing links between the United States and Mexico. A cutoff score for the item loading was $+/- .300$. The resulting pattern included a cluster of 21 of the original 24 items that had the highest intercorrelation (see Table 1.1 in the Appendix).

The questionnaire had 26 questions on purposes for learning English. A scale to measure different purposes for learning English was constructed from the 26 items included in the questionnaire. Factor analysis was performed to create scales based on the responses themselves. A principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed on those items. A three-factor solution provided the most meaningful pattern configuration. The total variance explained by these three factors was 35.1 percent. The first factor measured 13.3 percent of the total variance, the second factor 11.4 percent, and the third factor 10.4 percent. The loadings for each factor are shown in the factor structure matrix presented in Table 1.2 (see Table 1.2 in the Appendix). These loadings indicated which items were associated with which factor and the strength of the association. A loading of $+/- .35$ was used as the cutoff criterion for including an item on a scale.

Ten items loaded on Factor 1, which was then labeled "Cultural Purposes." Questions included in the Cultural Purposes Scale refer to students' desire to learn English in order to understand American films, songs, television programs, to communicate with people from the United States, to work in a country where English is spoken, because they like the way English sounds, and because people who know English seem to be highly educated.

Factor 2 consisted of 7 items. The pattern comprising Factor 2 was labeled "Academic Purposes." Questions on the academic purposes scale emphasized the need to learn English in order to understand journals, textbooks, and literary works. These questions also referred to the usefulness of knowing English to conduct research and to write articles. Questions also measured students' willingness to put time into studying English, and their perception of how difficult they found the task of learning English.

Seven items clustered into Factor 3, this factor was named "Professional Purposes." The professional purposes scale measured students' interest in learning English because: only students who know English can get a good job, knowledge of English is necessary to become an outstanding student, English is required to keep up with innovations in their field, people who know English are more important than those who know Spanish, English is the only language that can be used to communicate with people from other countries, and it is necessary for them to learn English.

Another variable included in this research was post-graduation plans. Post-graduation plans referred to one of at least two options that students might pursue after completing their

⁹ Factor analysis offers the possibility of developing an empirical typology of intercorrelated variables into independent patterns of variation called factors. Those patterns under each factor delineate linkages among items that can be treated as independent categories (see Rummel 1967).

3. Methodology

Data collection was conducted at a public university in Mexico City, the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Xochimilco campus. To collect these data a questionnaire was developed. A two-stage plan was followed to construct a suitable instrument. This research instrument had to reflect as closely as possible the choices university students might have for learning English. The questionnaire also needed to reflect a broad range of possible attitudes toward the United States. Construction of a scale began with 16 semi-structured interviews with freshman students very similar in age and interests to those eventually to be included in the study sample. All 16 interviewees were studying at the university where final data were collected. Most of the interviews were completed in one hour and they were tape-recorded. Following the completion of the interviews, the audiotapes were reviewed and major themes were extracted from the data. These themes were then used to write items for the questionnaire. Once a sufficiently large pool of items was written, a pilot questionnaire was constructed.

During the second stage, the questionnaire based on data obtained from the interviews was pilot-tested with 50 freshman students at the same university. The pilot test was divided into two parts: (1) the respondents completed the questionnaire; (2) the respondents were asked to comment on the questionnaire. In addition to the student feedback, the questionnaire was examined for face validity by five judges. Finally, two additional judges whose field was Spanish stylistics and composition examined the questionnaire for clarity and appropriateness of language.

A random sample of 367 freshman students answered a questionnaire specifically designed to collect information for this study. This sample represented 25.6 percent of the morning-shift freshman student population. At this university, first year students register for the initial module called the Interdivisional Common Core. When we collected our data none of the undergraduate majors required students to study a foreign language. At that time, several majors were in the process of approving the study of a foreign language as a requirement for graduation. However, no students in our sample were taking English classes at the university.

The questionnaire used for data collection had 86 questions. This questionnaire consisted of five major sections. In particular, the sections on attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and on purposes for learning English contained questions that required the respondent to rate each item on a five point Likert-type scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Twenty-four questions referred to attitudes toward the hegemony of the United States. Respondents were asked, for example, to rate the overall quality of TV programs from the United States, the political role of the U.S. in relation to other countries, the increasing number of American companies in Mexico, and the linguistic potentiality of English as compared to Spanish. Another part of the instrument measured the extent to which students would accept the negative stereotypes of Mexicans as compared to Americans on such aspects as creativity and commitment to objectives.

bachelor's degree: (a) to enroll in a graduate program (with the possibility of both having a job and studying, or only studying), or (b) to get a job and become fully involved in their career. Students' post-graduation plans was included in the data collection design to explore how plans related to students' purposes for learning English. An additional objective was to determine whether students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and their post-graduation plans affected their stated purposes for learning English.

4. Results

Statistical analyses were performed to examine each of the three separate research questions.

1. Do students' post-graduation plans reflect differences in the purposes they have for learning English?

Students' responses regarding their post-graduation plans allowed us to group students into two categories: respondents who planned to go to graduate school and respondents who planned to seek employment following completion of their baccalaureate degree. A multivariate test of post-graduation plans and purposes for learning English proved to be highly significant [$F(3,349) = 9.32, p < .0001$]¹⁰. Once it was found that there was an overall F that was significant, the effects of post-graduation plans on each specific purpose were analyzed at the univariate level. For cultural purposes, the F ratio failed to attain statistical significance [$F(1,351) = 2.13, p = .15$]. However, highly significant findings were obtained for professional purposes [$F(1,351) = 10.82, p < .001$] and academic purposes [$F(1,351) = 21.02, p < .0001$]. The means and standard deviations for each purpose by each plan are shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3. Mean scores of those students planning to go to graduate school and those planning to get a job on cultural, professional, and academic purposes.

Plans after graduation	Cultural purposes ^a		Professional purposes ^b		Academic purposes ^c	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Graduate school	35.69	5.80	22.30	4.48	29.07	4.32
Get a job	34.41	6.45	20.49	4.57	26.48	4.85
ap = N.S.; bp < .001; cp < .0001						

¹⁰ The multivariate F tests reported here are derived from Roy's Greatest Root Criterion. This F statistic is frequently used in multivariate analysis. Subsequent "F" results marked with an * are also derived from Roy's Greatest Root Criterion.

Students who planned to continue their education with graduate studies had higher mean scores on the three purposes than those who planned to go to work. However, mean score differences were significant only for students wanting to learn English for professional and academic purposes.

As part of the statistical analyses, these results were further analyzed using attitudes toward U.S. hegemony as a covariate. This approach statistically equalized both groups of students—those going to graduate school and those planning to start their career upon graduation—with respect to their attitudes toward U.S. hegemony. In other words, introducing the hegemony scale variable as a covariate allowed examination of possible effects of the two different post-graduation plans and purposes for learning English as if the two groups were equal in attitudes toward U.S. hegemony. The F ratio for post-graduation plans and purposes was highly significant [$F(3,342) = 10.79, p < .0001$]*. This finding was confirmed at the univariate level of analysis.

The univariate analysis of variance of post-graduation plans on each of the purposes for learning English resulted in the following: for cultural purposes, significant results [$F(1,344) = 6.29, p < .01$]; for professional purposes, significant results [$F(1,344) = 21.79, p < .0001$]; and for academic purposes, also significant results [$F(1,344) = 18.58, p < .0001$]. The adjusted means for attitudes toward U.S. hegemony on cultural, professional, and academic purposes showed that the mean scores on each of the purposes scales was higher for those respondents planning to go to graduate school than for those who wanted to work. Table 1.4 presents the mean scores for each of the comparisons.

Table 1.4. Adjusted means of the two plans after graduation on cultural, professional, and academic purposes, covarying attitudes toward U.S. hegemony.

Plans after graduation:	Cultural purposes ^a	Professional purposes ^b	Academic purposes ^b
Go to graduate school	35.93	22.58	28.95
Get a job	34.26	20.20	26.60
ap < .01; bp < .0001			

This additional analysis indicated that there was a relationship between students' interest in attaining graduate level studies and the importance given to English. Students who planned to continue their graduate studies wanted to learn English for all three purposes. Their plans

to attain a graduate degree are related to the academic, professional, and cultural purposes alike. High interest in learning English for academic and professional purposes seem to follow logically students' future plans to go to graduate school. However, the additional finding that students who plan to continue their education are not only interested in the professional and academic uses of English, but also in the cultural usage of English is important.

2. *Do differences in students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony reflect different purposes for learning English independent of students' post-graduation plans?*

This question examined whether attitudes that Mexican students have of U.S. hegemony are determined by post-graduation plans. In order to examine a potential interaction on purposes for learning English, a measure of attitudes toward U.S. hegemony was included in a statistical model with plans after graduation.

The multivariate test of attitudes toward U.S. hegemony by post-graduation plans on all purposes for learning English was not significant [$F(3,337) = .47, p = .706$]*. The effect of attitudes toward U.S. hegemony was analyzed by each type of post-graduation plan in order to examine any possible differences between the two groups of students on purposes for learning English. The results showed no significant mean score differences on purposes in the attitudes toward U.S. hegemony by post-graduation plans. In other words, these findings are very important because they show that attitudes toward U.S. hegemony on purposes for learning English are independent of post-graduation plans.

3. *Is there a relationship between students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and their purposes for learning English?*

Multivariate analysis of variance was computed to determine whether differences of attitudes toward U.S. hegemony had an effect on purposes for learning English. The results of the analysis showed a highly significant effect of attitudes toward U.S. hegemony on all three purposes taken simultaneously [$F(3,342) = 46.36, p < .0001$]*. The extent of the relationship between attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and purposes for learning English was examined by computing Pearson correlation coefficients. A significant positive relationship between attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and cultural purposes ($r = .43, p < .0001$) was found. This correlation indicates that the greater the agreement with U.S. hegemony, the higher the scores on the scale that measured the desire to learn English for cultural purposes. The relationship between hegemony and professional purposes was also significant and positive ($r = .36, p < .0001$). The relationship showed that the more predisposed students were toward U.S. hegemony, the higher their scores on the scale measuring their interest in learning English for professional purposes. Finally, the relationship between academic purposes and attitudes toward U.S. hegemony was negative ($r = -.10$) and not statistically significant.

5. Discussion

Our findings support the conclusion that Mexican university students do not consider English to be a "neutral language." They associate English with the United States and their interest in learning English for cultural and professional purposes relates positively to their attitudes and opinions of U.S. hegemony.

The significant relationship between attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and cultural purposes shows a direct correspondence between the acceptance of the role that the United States plays in Mexicans' life, and the desire to become first-hand recipients of certain cultural benefits accessible only through knowledge of English. Further, the more students agree with U.S. hegemony the higher their desire to learn English for professional purposes. The items clustered under professional purposes (see table 1.2 in the appendix) describe the idea that knowledge of English is required in order to acquire social prestige and achieve a higher social status.

The analysis also shows that the attitudes students have toward U.S. hegemony are not correlated with their academic interests. Responses showed that this sample was highly interested in learning English for academic purposes, but independent of their attitude toward hegemony. Since the respondents completed the questionnaire in their classrooms at the Metropolitan University, Xochimilco campus, the setting may have influenced their perception of the need to learn English to do well in school. Even though a significant relationship between students' attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and academic purposes was not found, we cannot conclude that English is perceived as a "neutral" language. Students want to learn English not only for academic purposes, but also for cultural and professional purposes.

The meaning of hegemony in this study took into consideration that hegemony is expressed by intellectual and moral leadership and by the acceptance of this leadership by consent. Consent implies acceptance that has not been imposed by force and that results as part of social interaction. The adoption of prevailing views and goals may even become internalized by the person's common sense. A positive relationship between attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and cultural and professional purposes strongly supports an interpretation of students' consent to U.S. hegemony. Accordingly, our findings based on cultural and professional purposes as defined in this study may be similar to "consensual purposes" described by Femia (1981).

The non-significant relationship between attitudes toward U.S. hegemony and academic purposes shows that for all students, regardless of their attitude toward U.S. hegemony, the learning of English represents the key to accessing written academic information in English. Femia also identifies a type of consent to prevailing values, beliefs, institutions, etc., which compels conformity. He calls this type of conformity "pragmatic acceptance" (Ibid, p.40) Since interest in learning English for academic purposes may imply the perception of no realistic alternative, to learning English to achieve one's goals when studying at a university, these purposes may be called "pragmatic purposes."

The findings obtained in this study, support the argument that for Mexican university students the imagined community of English speakers pertains to the United States. Kachru's model (1988) accurately describes not only the pattern of diffusion of English, but also the prevalent association of the English language with the countries that have promoted its diffusion. It is possible to argue that for Mexican students, who in Kachru's model are located in the "expanding circle," the acquisition of English reinforces their association of this language with the central or "inner circle" countries, particularly with the United States. It is highly likely that associations between interest in learning English and communicating with speakers of English in the second circle or "outer circle" are not strong. This means that for most students knowledge of English is not associated with people from countries such as Belize, Barbados, Jamaica, Ghana, Tanzania, India among others where English is an official or semi-official language. It is also possible that Mexican students' main interest in learning English is not tied in any direct way with their interest in countries that belong in the same expanding circle, such as France, Germany, Algeria, China, and Jordan, where English is also a foreign language. Although evidence is not available about Mexican university students' interests in learning foreign languages other than English, experience indicates that when they become interested in another country, students prefer to learn the language used nationally in that country, e.g., French, German, Chinese, Arabic.

This study demonstrates that the purposes Mexican university students may have for learning English may conflict with the educational goals of public universities. The educational philosophy of Mexican public universities emphasizes the need to educate citizens capable of identifying the elements that may reinforce subservience and the acceptance of dominant interests and worldviews.¹¹ Therefore, educators cannot dismiss the fact that they teach a language (English) associated with values, interests, and worldviews opposite to their educational objectives. Institutions of higher education in Mexico need to integrate the teaching of English with ways that avoid reinforcing attitudes not compatible with their educational philosophy. Innovative language materials and pedagogies are needed. To this end, English language teachers and undergraduate faculty in Mexico need to work more closely in order to identify English linguistic skills and syllabi that correspond to the objectives and approaches to knowledge of undergraduate programs. In addition, syllabi for English language courses need to include not only the mastery of specific language features, but ways to analyze the extent to which the learning of English contributes to empower individuals.

Students of English should become aware of the factors contributing to its spread and to their desire to learn it. Phillipson (1992) points out that the structural power supporting the diffusion of English cannot be ignored. He mentions that some well-known applied linguists accept that they do not know how or why English has spread internationally. Placing English merely at the level of a tool hides the political, economic, and cultural factors

associated with this language. This acceptance of the socio-political order, or consent, is a basic component of hegemony. Consent implies agreement to specific persons, values, beliefs and helps to maintain ideological control of possible disruptive forces (Femia 1981:37,39). Gramsci allows that the acquisition of a critical consciousness, of a cultural and ideological battle will allow the break from the control of consciousness that supports the existence of hegemony.

Language learning objectives need to emerge as part of a growing awareness of the possible roles and uses that the learning of English can bring about. Similarly, language learners should be encouraged, for example, to identify who and what they are learning about when they use English, and what is the direction and source of communication in English. New directions for research need to be taken. For example, little is known about availability of updated scientific information in English, and about who has access to it in a country like Mexico where the university libraries are very inadequate in terms of information collection and storage. This question is even more critical because the internet is rapidly changing how information is disseminated around the world. Because of the internet English has gained even greater prominence as a language of influence and power. For Mexican students to be able to compete effectively in a global village connected by the internet English is even more essential than ever before. Further, if Mexican students passively consent to the hegemony of the U.S. through English what hope will there be for Mexico in the 21st century. After all, today's university students are Mexico's ruling elite in the decades to come. In the two decades prior to the closing of the 20th century, technocrats trained in the U.S. and sophisticated in the ways of U.S. economic and political practices have guided Mexico. In their march to raise the economic standard of living in Mexico, they have also moved the country closer to U.S. domination.

Other questions need to be answered: How is the increasing presence of the United States influencing and/or changing students purposes to learn English and their demand of English classes in public schools? How should universities respond to an increasing demand for English courses? and, What do English teachers believe should be taught at the university level? Answers to these and other questions will influence the approach to teaching English in Mexico. Regardless of the direction that English instruction takes in Mexico, institutions of higher education cannot dismiss the fact that English is not a neutral language. The findings of this study have demonstrated that the purposes Mexican university students have for learning English are strongly associated with their attitudes toward U.S. hegemony in Mexican public life. English has become the insidious glue that binds new relationships between people and nation states in ways that are not always beneficial for both parties. As Phillipson reminds us:

Hegemonic processes are not merely a matter of attitudes, beliefs, and values. Such processes contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of a structure in which some groups have more power and resources than others and are able to use these to their advantage (1999:100).

¹¹ See for example, "Ley Orgánica" under "Legislación" of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Autonomous Metropolitan University) in Mexico City in its WEB page, February 2000: <http://www.uam.mx/cgi-bin/detecta.pl>

References

- Aguirre Beltrán, Gonzalo. 1983. *Lenguas Vernáculas su uso y desuso en la enseñanza: la experiencia de México*. México D.F.: Ediciones la casa chata.
- Anderson, Benedict. 1989. *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, New York: Verso.
- Bartra, Roger. 1987. *La Jaula de la Melancolía, Identidad y Metamorfosis del Mexicano*. Mexico, D.F.: Editorial Grijalbo, S.A.
- Batalla, Bonfil. 1990. *México Profundo, una civilización negada*. México D.F.: Grijalbo.
- Bocock, Robert. 1986. *Hegemony. Key Ideas*, ed. Peter Hamilton. New York: Tavistock Publications and Ellis Horwood Limited in association with Methuen Inc.
- Castañeda, Jorge G. 1989. Introduction, *The Mexican Mind, From Mexico Looking Out, The Mexican Government, Mexican Foreign Policy, The Mexican Perspective, A Mexican View, The Fear of Americanization*. In *Limits to Friendship*, Robert A. Pastor, (ed.), 13-22; 23-38; 55-77; 167-194; 217-24; 299-313; 314-341. New York: Vintage Books.
- Favela, Margarita and Pilar Morales. 1991. México ante los ojos de Estados Unidos. *Este País*, julio, 3-9.
- Femia, Joseph V. 1981. *Gramsci's Political Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- González, Luis. 1982. De la Historia Nacional en México. In *Coloquio sobre la Cultura Nacional en México*, ed. Dirección General de Publicaciones. 57-64. Mexico D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- González Sousa, Luis. 1999. Entre el TLC y el EZLN. *La Jornada*, January 9.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.
- Hidalgo, Margarita, Bárbara Cifuentes, and José A. Flores. 1996. The position of English in México: 1940-1993. In *Post-Imperial English: status change in former British and American colonies, 1940-1990*, Joshua A. Fishman, Andrew W. Conrad, Alma Rubal-Lopez(ed.), 113-137. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Kachru, Braj B. 1987. The Spread of English and Sacred Linguistic Cows. In *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics, Language Spread and Language Policy: Issues, Implications, and Case Studies*, ed. H. Lowenberg. 207-228. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1988.
- Meyer, Lorenzo. 1985. Part Two. In *The United States and Mexico*, (ed.) Josefina Zoraida and Lorenzo Meyer Vazquez. 1-8; 95-198. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Monsiváis, Carlos. Por 64,000 pesos, dígame usted la diferencia entre estúpido y floor manager. (Del difícil matrimonio entre cultura y medios masivos). *Revista Siempre* (No. 1184, 10 de octubre de 1984):
- Monsiváis, Carlos. Muerte y resurrección del nacionalismo mexicano. *Nexos*, Año X, volume 10 (109, 1987): 14-22.
- Phillipson, Robert. 1992. *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phillipson, Robert. 1999. Political Science. In *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* ed. Joshua A. Fishman. 94-108. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rumel, R.J. Understanding factor analysis. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. X (No. 4 1967): 440-480.
- Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana. WEB page February 2000, <http://www.uam.mx/cgi-bin/detecta.pl>
- van Els, Theo, Theo Bongaerts, Guus Extra, Charles van Os, and Anne-Mieke Jansen van Dieten. 1984. *Applied Linguistics and the Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages*. Baltimore, Maryland: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Vazquez, Zoraida Josefina and Lorenzo Meyer. 1985. *The United States and Mexico* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

APPENDIX

Table 1.1 Factor matrix of the items dealing with attitudes toward the hegemony of the United States.

Table 1.2 Factor matrix of the items dealing with purposes for learning English.¹²

	FACTOR 1
1. I admire the economic development of the United States.	.608
2. If Mexico belonged to the United States, our economic situation would be better.	.565
3. The United States' help to other countries is always due to its concern in that other countries' have democracy.	.558
4. Usually, the films that I like the most are American films.	.555
5. Mexican people should be as persistent about their goals as people from the United States are.	.553
6. I like clothing that has words printed in English.	.543
7. The United States has a good economic situation because Americans are very hard workers.	.536
8. I think the United States produces the most advanced contributions in my field.	.528
9. I would prefer that Mexican family's traditions and relationships were like the ones in the United States.	.517
10. I like that clothing from more developed countries is sold in Mexico.	.512
11. We need more radio stations in English in Mexico.	.508
12. Americans have the most beautiful resort areas on the continent.	.494
13. Television programs from the United States are good.	.486
14. I think we need more American enterprises in Mexico.	.470
15. Linguistically, the English language is much richer than Spanish.	.470
16. We need to encourage scientists from First World countries to come to Mexico to teach us how to solve our problems.	.452
17. I think we should import any kind of technology.	.424
18. I think that Mexicans are less creative than Americans.	.412
19. We have lots of TV programs about the Mexican culture.	.395
20. I like songs by American singers.	.374
21. I think that folk traditions are emphasized too much in Mexico.	.343
Total variance explained = 22.3%	

¹² Numbers in bold indicate the factor loading chosen to define the pattern of relationship between items.

	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3
1. I want to learn English in order to make friends from other countries.	0.675	0.074	0.098
2. I want to learn English because I am interested in communicating with people from the United States.	0.651	0.125	0.156
3. I want to learn English to be able to understand TV programs in that language.	0.576	-0.127	0.047
4. I want to learn English in order to be able to get a job where that language is spoken.	0.551	0.142	0.195
5. I want to learn English because I like the songs in that language.	0.498	0.015	0.153
6. I have always had the desire to learn English.	0.487	0.389	-0.084
7. I think it is important to understand films in English instead of reading the subtitles.	0.472	0.188	-0.035
8. I want to learn English because I like the way it sounds.	0.425	-0.246	0.259
9. I want to learn English because when I hear somebody speaking that language, it seems to me that person is highly educated.	0.403	-0.276	0.396
10. I think I have to know English in order to travel to other countries where Spanish is not spoken.	0.359	0.113	0.212
11. I do not think that knowing English can be useful to do research during my university studies. ¹³	-0.062	0.681	0.029
12. I am not planning to write articles in English after I finish my studies at this university. [*]	0.046	0.606	0.162
13. During my studies at the university, I prefer not to take English classes so that I do not distract my attention from my work for the module. [*]	0.040	0.595	-0.049
14. I do not like to study English because I find it difficult to learn. [*]	0.234	0.557	-0.235

¹³ Questions with an * were coded and entered in a computer program with their opposite positive meaning.

III. Inequality and Discourse

*Writing a Language off: Anti-Maori Argumentation
in Letters to New Zealand Editors*
CHRIS LANE

The Beauty Mystique: Language and Gender Inequality
ZURAIDAH MOHD DON

	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3
15. I do not think I will need to read journals in English when I finish my university studies. *	-0.041	0.543	-0.024
16. I need to learn English because I want to read textbooks and articles in that language while I am studying at this university.	0.235	0.430	0.244
17. I want to read literary works in English instead of reading their translations.	0.277	0.351	0.285
18. It is necessary to learn English to become an outstanding student at university.	0.235	0.127	0.643
19. Only those students who know English can get a good job when they finish their studies.	0.138	0.030	0.640
20. I want to know English because I think that a person who knows English is more important than the one who knows Spanish.	0.135	-0.232	0.598
21. Those persons who do not know English cannot be informed about innovations in their field of studies.	-0.015	0.304	0.457
22. I am interested in knowing English because it is the only language that I can use to communicate with other people worldwide.	0.185	0.129	0.435
23. I want to learn English to be able to have a good financial situation when I graduate.	0.389	-0.059	0.406
24. I want to learn English out of need more than out of desire. * 14	0.255	0.229	-0.391
Total variance explained = 35.06% Factor 1 = 13.3% Factor 2 = 11.4% Factor 3 = 10.4%			
Common variance explained = 100% Factor 1 = 38% Factor 2 = 32% Factor 3 = 30%			

* This question was used to measure "need" for learning English as opposite to "desire" to learn it.