Introduction to the Immigrant Experience

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It is fair to say that from its inception the United States has been, and still is, a nation of immigrants; a racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse nation. However, immigrants were (and are) often viewed as suspicious and threatening to nativist American values, such as English as the language of the land, Christianity, and Anglo-Saxonism (Ricento, 2014; Ricento & Wright, 2008). Thus, the political discourse, policies, and education in the United States have been rife with conflict between those identifying with such values and those who embrace diversity (i.e., multiple languages, religions, ethnicities, and races).

The roots of diversity in the United States can be traced not only to immigration, but to the violent treatment of Native Americans, a long history of slavery, segregation, the annexation of parts of Mexico, and the colonization of Puerto Rico (see Takaki, 2008). In addition, the United States' sphere of influence in Latin America and the Caribbean has led to civil unrest and sustained migrations from these regions, maintaining a steady flow of newcomers to major cities in the United States. As a consequence, New York City and other regions are home to large collectives of Latinos with their origins in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and the rest of the Latin American countries. Likewise, large Asian communities owe their existence to discrimination and to migratory exclusion policies dating back to the nineteenth century and only lifted in 1965. For the Chinese, Koreans and other Asian immigrants, as well as for Latinos, coming together and forming ethnic enclaves not only provided a means to preserve their own traditions, languages, religions, food, and music, but also ways of supporting and protecting one another. New York City is home to many of these thriving communities and to the studies we share in this volume.

The US has a long history of anti-immigration policies and discrimination. The Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 barred immigrants from Asia and the Pacific from coming into the United States, whereas the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924, severely restricted immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe. In contrast, the presence of Latinos went unabated due to geopolitical changes. The annexation of parts of Mexico

in 1848, the acquisition of Puerto Rico and the invasion of Cuba in 1898, uprooted and solidified large numbers of Spanish speakers in the United States (Gerber, 2011; Takaki, 2008). Their presence brought about the establishment of new communities, a recognition of their language needs and an assertion of their cultural influence on the mainstream. This growing presence of Latinos continues to threaten nativist American values, heeding calls for restrictive language policies, restrictions on bilingual education, and school segregation, which are not new, but are part of a recurring cycle.

Several examples of US anti-immigration policies are worth noting for their severity and parallels to the present-day restrictions on immigrants. Currently, several thousand children have been separated from their parents at the border with Mexico, when they sought to enter the United States. These forced family separations have generated national and international condemnation (see Ferguson, 2018). In the modern history of the United States, immigrants (and often their descendants) are the only group that can be stripped of their civil rights, divested from their possessions and livelihood, and ultimately be separated from their families. The most poignant examples are the treatment of Mexican-Americans and Japanese-Americans in the twentieth century. During the 1930s, under President J. Edgar Hoover, more than a million Mexican nationals and Mexican-Americans were apprehended, forcefully removed from their communities and "repatriated" to Mexico, ostensibly to preserve jobs for Americans. More than 60 percent of those removed were US-born citizens of Mexican descent, primarily children (Balderrama & Rodriguez, 2006). An analogous scenario took place under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, when Japanese-American families in the West Coast were dispossessed of what they owned, removed from their communities and ordered to live in War Relocation Camps during World War II. This ordeal affected anyone with a Japanese name, including US-born citizens, who were reclassified as "non-aliens" and stripped of their civil rights (Muller, 2012; Takaki, 2008). Although worthy of condemnation, it should come as no surprise that under the Trump administration new immigrant children are separated from their parents at the border. Our history has many precedents.

We introduce our work by pointing out that once again these are difficult times for immigrants in the United States. With President Trump, a distinctly anti-immigrant and nationalist agenda was ushered into the White House, an agenda that has precedence in our history. With echoes from the 1930s, Mexican immigrants today are vilified as criminals who illegally cross the border to take jobs from honest American workers. These fears are stoked with calls to build a border wall with Mexico (Lopez Paul, 2018). In addition, the recent separation of young immigrant children from their parents at the border and subsequent placement in camps across the nation, bring back memories of

how Native American children were separated from their families and of the Japanese internment camps in the 1940s (Hirschfeld Davis, 2018). The Trump administration has also condemned Muslim immigrants as dangerous to our national security. A travel ban on immigrants from several Muslim majority countries was upheld by the United States Supreme Court (Liptak & Shear, 2018). This travel ban echoes the restrictions based on ethnic, race and religious background that were enforced with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. As we note in several chapters of this book, these policies, rhetoric, and images have affected our children, who bring their fears to the classroom. They have also placed a burden on our teachers and schools, who must comfort students, while creating safe learning environments and school protected zones for families. And these policies and rhetoric have restricted the provision of bilingual education for countless numbers of children across many generations and into our present.

In addition to the turgid rhetoric against immigrants, deportations increased dramatically in the first year of the Trump presidency, including the removal of young people who had been brought to the United States as children and were protected under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Schools, hospitals, and the courts became places where immigration officials began to routinely round up undocumented immigrants. A gripping example, which increased school involvement in protecting immigrant families, is that of Romulo-Avelica Gonzalez, an unauthorized immigrant father who was arrested while driving his 12-year-old daughter to school (Castillo, 2017). His arrest was captured on video by his older daughter, who witnessed how her father was handcuffed and taken away. The arrest of Mr. Gonzalez shook several school communities, where many parents are unauthorized immigrants. This event gave the impetus to teachers to discuss with immigrant parents how to create a family plan in case of detention and deportation. Such family plans include having a Caregiver's Authorization Affidavit filed with the child's school or healthcare provider in order to allow a non-parent designee to pick up their children from school and to make school-related, medical, and care decisions on behalf of the children if the parents are taken away (Immigrant Legal Resource Center, 2017). Many of the parents in the studies presented in this volume have those plans in place, assigning someone with legal status to care for their children in case they are detained by the US Immigration and Customs Authority, otherwise known as ICE.

Therefore, this book is written within this urgent reality facing immigrant families. Our research, teaching, and the personal relations that we hold with many of the families in the following chapters take place in New York City, where immigrants from all over the world make their home. Our work provides a window into their lives, language, health, and education needs. We are indeed fortunate to live in such a diverse city and to be part of this global and yet

localized community. Under the progressive leadership of Mayor Bill De Blasio and former Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina, immigrants have found some level of reassurance that their schools and communities are protected from immigration authorities. The recognition of bilingual education found support under Chancellor Farina, who lent her voice to validate bilingual education and opened up many dual-language programs during her tenure. We expect this trend to continue under the new Schools Chancellor Richard Carranza, the son of Mexican immigrants, who grew up in Tucson, speaking Spanish at home and learning English at school.

Nevertheless, as the stories woven into the narrative of the chapters in this volume convey, New York City is ill prepared to support the language and education needs of immigrant children who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. That is, one out of four students in New York City public schools come from bilingual or multilingual backgrounds and are not afforded opportunities to learn in their home language. The language abilities of these children are routinely viewed from a deficit perspective and blamed on their parents, who are not fluent English speakers. All too often, educators and school systems fail to value their students' diverse language and cultural backgrounds, by focusing their efforts on closing language gaps in English. There is a disproportionate number of children from immigrant families who are evaluated inappropriately and placed in special education, including the provision of speech-language therapy services, which means their language needs are interpreted as a "language disorder." New York City has the highest number of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (English Language Learners) in special education, when compared to the rest of the nation (see chapters 2 and 3 by Crowley and Baigorri in this volume). It is difficult to understand why a culturally and linguistically diverse city like New York spends large sums and resources on placing emergent bilingual children in special education, rather than affording them the opportunity to learn in multilingual settings.

Main Goals across the Chapters in This Book

In this volume we attempt to lace together several strands, the social context for immigrant families and their children, the challenges they face, the commitment of parents to their children's education, the attitudes and skills of professionals working with the children of immigrant families, and the specific factors that influence language acquisition and learning. We address this by covering different immigrant groups, their languages and cultures (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Arabic). Many of the families in the studies presented are from low-income segments of the population. We discuss the intersectionalities of language development and learning, literacy, and

developmental disabilities and how families strive to improve conditions for their children.

Thus, we attempt to describe the diversity and multi-ethnic fabric of families with young children residing in New York City or in similar urban settings. This book is framed within two major theoretical perspectives: 1) a sociocultural approach (Bourdieu, 1991; Moll et al., 1992; Vygotsky, 1978), and 2) an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Haugen, 1972). Under the sociocultural approach, we point out that schools preserve the status quo by setting up language and cultural standards (Bourdieu, 1991, 1998) that largely exclude immigrants from active participation. We include funds of knowledge and the recognition that many immigrant families possess cultural, linguistic, and specific knowledge that can translate into social capital for their children (Bourdieu, 1991; Moll et al., 1992). This would be particularly true, if schools were willing to recognize the families and integrate such social capital into their curricula. Under the ecological approach, we recognize that the stakeholders in the studies in this volume are immigrants, and as such, their actions and language choices, and education opportunities for their children are influenced by policy, history, and the sociopolitical climate in the society where they live (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Moreover, we point out that during development, emergent bilinguals integrate all of their linguistic resources in communicating within their social contexts, in learning, and in developing their own identities. However, these linguistic resources and processes are not always recognized by the professionals serving our children, resulting in language loss and a shift away from the home or heritage language(s) to English, the majority language. Translanguaging or learning by accessing more than one language (García & Li Wei, 2014), language separation and the need to integrate learning (Cummins, 2007), and language loss resulting from ignoring the home language (Wong Fillmore, 1991) are explained in many of the chapters of this volume.

In this volume we will explore questions on how immigrant families support their children through school, within the context of their own expectations, preservation of traditions, language, and cultural values. Whereas these factors become more expressly evident as children get older, little is known about home language use and early-literacy practices during the preschool and early school years. These early factors can determine language and academic outcomes for children. There is also scant research on the particular challenges faced by low-income immigrant families (especially recent immigrants), and by families with children with disabilities. This volume aims to give voice to the families, and in so doing it also aims to foster connections between the home and school cultures. The ultimate goal of this collection of writings is to document the particular challenges faced by immigrant families with young and school-age children, as reflected in their own voices, and also in the attitudes of the professionals who serve them.

This collection of writings is expected to contribute toward much-needed policy reforms to improve how culturally and linguistically diverse families are included and integrated into decisions affecting their children's education. There is currently no book linking research and practice from the fields of speech-language pathology, bilingual education, and public health on the needs of immigrant families and their children. In this interdisciplinary volume, we bear in mind the vital role of speech-language pathologists in differentiating language disorders from language variation (see chapters 2 and 3 by Crowley and Baigorri) and in providing guidance to parents on how to raise their children with more than one language (see Chapter 4 by Castilla-Earls). We consider perspectives on heritage language and in raising their children transnationally from Chinese immigrant families (see Chapter 6 by Ijalba and Qi), we learn about educational expectations and parenting styles in Korean immigrant families (see Chapter 7 by Ijalba and Yoo) and in Hispanic families (see Chapter 5 by Sepulveda and Ijalba, and Chapter 9 by Ijalba and Giraldo) and factors influencing the language needs of Arab-Americans (see Chapter 12 by Khamis-Dakwar). We open a window into the literacy practices at home of immigrant parents who speak Mixtec and Spanish (see Chapter 8 by Velasco and Kabuto). We highlight the crucial role of teachers, their unique potential to bridge the classroom and the home and to make immigrant parents feel welcome in our institutions (see Chapter 13 by Velasco). We present a comprehensive view of bilingual education, including the many roadblocks in providing a fair and equitable education to diverse students (see Chapter 1 by Ijalba and Velasco). Finally, we integrate the health needs of immigrant families by considering early intervention (Chapter 11 by Puig), perceptions on disability (Chapter 10 by Ijalba) and alternative health practices (Chapter 14 by Tuñón Pablos). Our work includes participatory research, bringing the voices of the families as stakeholders into the topics of study. Thus, our book is aimed at a readership that includes parents, educators, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, social workers, and healthcare professionals.

Methodology and Perspectives

The research compiled in this volume offers a mixed-methods methodological lens to the linguistic experience of immigrant families in the United States. Every chapter includes extensive reviews of the literature in related areas of study. In addition, many chapters provide empirical data and detailed analyses based on quantitative and qualitative data gathered from interviews, language samples, home visits and ethnographic observations, surveys, and focus groups. The studies presented in this volume aim to provide a personal perspective, thus they are based on case studies and small groups.

The Ecology of Language in the Home, Education, and Society

In the current volume we include manuscripts reflecting the range of experiences in raising children with more than one language, as viewed by major ethno-linguistic groups in New York (Hispanic, Chinese, Korean). These three immigrant groups were expressly chosen because of differences in their cultural, social, and academic outcomes for children. In addition, we include a chapter on Arab-Americans, highlighting their cultural and linguistic diversity and some of the particular challenges they face in our society. In spite of these differences, commonalities among these groups include the parents' manifest desire to raise their children with more than one language and to pass on their cultural heritage.

Despite important family values, parents must confront strong societal pressure that advances a monolingual English culture and education from an early age. When we compare the families and children presented in this volume, we can find distinctions in parental beliefs, early socialization practices, educational expectations, afforded opportunities, and markedly different school experiences. These combined factors operate to demarcate starkly dissimilar paths and education outcomes for the majority of children from immigrant families.

In this book, we aim to pay particular attention to disentangling the issue of "disabilities" from what can be academic gaps based on language, social, and cultural differences. Recognizing the fact that children can have different cognitive and learning abilities, how these abilities are maximized from an early age is an issue for all children. Multiple languages and cultures are great learning resources that are under-recognized and under-utilized. Moreover, the view that "bilingualism" can be detrimental to learning is evident in educational policies that translate into the removal of bilingual programs from the general and special education settings. By reviewing research showing the benefits of learning more than one language for children across the range of cognitive and learning ability levels, the importance of advancing multiple languages, literacies, and cultures becomes more explicitly evident.

Additional factors we aim to cover in this volume are those that are crucial in defining policy for bilingual education, including health priorities and public health interventions for immigrant families. When educational systems and political structures create policies that only advance the majority language and culture, such policies can be disabling rather than empowering to children from diverse cultural and language backgrounds. In the United States, the overrepresentation of children from ethnic and language minorities in special education, attests to the ineffectiveness of such language policies and practices in education. Extending the problem, children from low-income immigrant families have diminished access to healthcare and to early education than children

from parents who were born in the United States. Such inequities in the social support networks can be particularly harmful to low-income immigrant families and to their children who are US citizens.

Our book aims to invite reflection on the strength, resilience, and rich diversity of immigrant families and their children. Only by inviting such reflection can we aspire to avoid deficit perspectives and learn to appreciate the contributions of immigrants to our society. The studies presented ahead are conceptualized within a sociocultural approach, by acknowledging the crucial role of schools as gatekeepers of knowledge and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), the importance of social interactions in language acquisition and in teaching and learning (Moll, 2014; Vygotsky, 1997), and the accumulated funds of knowledge that all families bring to the table and influence how their children learn (Moll et al., 1992). In addition, the language samples and situations presented are discussed from the perspective of ecology of language (Haugen, 1972) or the interactions between how speakers use language within their environments, such as the home, family, school, and community. We consider the unified nature of language in bilingual and multilingual speakers from the perspective of translanguaging or the advantages of accessing all their linguistic resources in learning (García & Li Wei, 2014). Finally, we frame these interactions within the larger societal context and its influence on families and how they raise their children (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

The chapters in this volume are grouped within three Parts to provide a wide lens of analysis: I) Immigration, bilingual education, policy, and educational planning; II) Bilingualism, literacy ecologies, and parental engagement in immigrant families; III) Cultural perceptions on disability, the home language, and healthcare alternatives among immigrants.

This collection of writings showcases the heterogeneous nature and linguistic diversity within immigrant groups (e.g., the case of Mixteco and Fujianese). They also address issues on language differences vs. language disorders, with particular attention to policy and best practices in the educational planning for children of different ages (early intervention 0–3, preschool 3–5, and school age 5–18). We consider the challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse families in low-income brackets, who often have unauthorized legal status and are first-generation immigrants with US-born children. When these families have children with disabilities or special needs, they face legal hurdles in obtaining services for their children. Analogously, numerous families experience an educational system that disables and deprives their children of their heritage language and cultural identity.

We also report on immigrant mothers of children with autism and how they often encounter difficulty understanding autism and accessing specialized services. We detail how emergent bilingual children from various language backgrounds (Spanish, Chinese, Korean) are deprived of a dual-language

education and how their parents support their children's learning at home. Many parents teach the heritage language, including literacy at home or share their concerns about language learning. This is contrary to widespread perspectives about immigrant parents as unengaged in their children's education (see Valencia & Black, 2002).

This volume is different from other books published in the field, in that it aims to integrate the voices of parents as participants in the research and the topics of study. As such, this volume will serve to bridge concerns at both ends: What families experience in raising their children bilingually or multilingually and how our institutions support or fail to support diversity when educating the children of immigrant families.

In conclusion, the multiple perspectives in this volume bring together the voices of families, children, and professionals within a social and human ecological framework. The studies presented highlight the diversity of cultures and languages (Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, Arab-Americans), and how immigrant families negotiate their expectations about language and education for their children within US institutions and at home. We conceptualize our work within a social framework to consider the sociopolitical context of immigrant families and how this impacts how children are raised at home and their educational opportunities. We consider the numerous forms of language by recognizing that our participants communicate and use language(s) in different contexts and for different purposes at home, within their family, work, and within our institutions. We provide a window into the lives of participants by sharing their challenges, struggles, strength and what they are willing to sacrifice for a better future for their children. We frame this collection within the current social context and political discourse that feeds anti-immigrant attitudes, while highlighting the resiliency of immigrant families in the face of adversity.