

**Y si hablabas en español, la mestra te pegaba –
An oral history of linguistic repression in Nuevo México after statehood**

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ABSTRACT. This paper examines linguistic policy in public education as it regards the use of the Spanish language in New Mexico. It is common knowledge that Nuevomexicano children were, for a time, punished for speaking their native Spanish at school. However, institutional histories such as the book *Public Education in New Mexico* (Mondragón & Stapleton 2005) do not cover these practices. Similar policies are well documented in the case of the American Indian boarding schools. Linguistic politics leading up to statehood and immediately after statehood have been described by Doris Meyer (1977), Robert Milk (1980) and Erlinda Gonzales-Berry (2000). For the period after around 1930, academic sources on the topic start to dry up. It is the aim of this paper to offer a reconstruction of linguistic policy and practice in New Mexico public schools throughout the 20th century. The data presented are taken from a corpus of sociolinguistic interviews collected by the author in the summer of 2011 and are known as Las Pláticas. The historical testimonies in these interviews provide evidence of corporal punishment for speaking Spanish in schools into the late 1950s, and a shift towards psychological techniques in later decades. They also offer an inside perspective on the effects of linguistic policy on the community. A secondary method of linguistic repression was the systematic denigration of the local dialect.

Keywords: linguistic repression, public education, Spanish, New Mexico, oral history

1. INTRODUCTION. This paper deals with linguistic practices in New Mexico schools in the twentieth century. Linguistic politics in the 19th and early 20th century are well studied (cf. Gonzales-Berry 2000, Meyer 1977, Milk 1980). For the period after 1930, however, I have found only two scholarly texts dealing with the issue (MacGregor-Mendoza 2000, Wilson 2006). Like MacGregor-Mendoza (2000), this essay will take the form of a series of narratives by Nuevomexicanos and Nuevomexicanas about their linguistic experience at school. These narratives provide insight into the evolution of educational practice during the twentieth century as it relates to the treatment of Spanish speaking children. The narratives come from my own corpus of sociolinguistic interviews, *Las Pláticas*. This corpus was collected in 2011 in the northern New Mexican communities of Albuquerque, Bernalillo, Santa Fe, Pecos and Abiquiú (Beké 2012).

I argue that until at least the 1960s there was a concerted effort on the part of schools to make children abandon Spanish in favor of English. Linguistic practice in many schools amounted to the linguistic repression of speakers of the subordinate language even in areas where those students represented a majority of the school population. This linguistic repression followed two distinct strategies, each linked with a dominant linguistic ideology (Bills & Vigil 2008). The first was to deny children the right to speak their native language while at school, often enforced by corporal punishment and humiliation. This is related to the English-only ideology. The decline of practices of corporal punishment for speaking Spanish in school can be interpreted optimistically as indicating a more positive attitude towards Spanish and bilingualism but also cynically as a sign that fewer children were learning Spanish at home. The second method of repression is the systematic denigration of the local dialect of Spanish as NOT PROPER,

SLANG and SPANGLISH. This seems to have been particularly prevalent in high school classes of Spanish, where foreign varieties were taken as correct and the model to strive for.

2. WHAT CAME BEFORE: LINGUISTIC POLITICS IN NEW MEXICO 1848-1930. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American war, promised New Mexicans the same civil rights as other American citizens. However, it would take until 1912 for New Mexico to become a state. Meyer (1977: 99) writes that:

It was evident [...] that conditions for congressional approval included the curtailment of the influence of the Catholic Church in the territory and the replacement of Spanish with English as the dominant language (Meyer 1977: 99).

Development of the public school network in New Mexico started in 1891. The law ratified in 1891 stipulated that “in school districts where the only language spoken is Spanish, the teacher shall have knowledge of both English and Spanish” (New Mexico law as quoted in Milk 1980). This part of the law was never enforced. On the contrary, those teachers who used Spanish were scolded by their superiors. Milk (1980:218) includes the following quote, which is representative of the attitudes of Anglo officials towards Spanish:

Drawbacks in some of the school districts are that some of the Spanish-American teachers are using the Spanish language a little too much in teaching... we need English-speaking teachers who do not use the Spanish (New Mexico School reports 1907-8, as quoted in Milk 1980).

The situation of Spanish in education did not improve after statehood despite enthusiastic promotion of Spanish nationwide as a means of capitalizing on the trade opportunities afforded by the then new Panama Canal. Gonzales-Berry (2000:177) observes “[there was] a space for

Spanish in the state's education policy, but there was no doubt that its status was that of a foreign language, always subordinate to English." She concludes:

What [policy makers] failed to acknowledge was that Spanish in New Mexico was *not a foreign language*. However, its treatment as such finally forced Nuevomexicanos to give up the arduous struggle for native-language rights as they pertained to the education of their children (Gonzales-Berry 2000:184).

Milk (1980:212) notes "a failure of most historical accounts [about New Mexico] to deal with the issue of language policy in education." This essay helps fill this gap in the literature by providing first hand oral narratives that document the practice of linguistic repression of Nuevomexicano children.

3. LINGUISTIC REPRESSION IN NEW MEXICO PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The first method of linguistic repression that is reflected in these interviews is the denial of basic native language rights, which are encompassed under the right to freedom of speech in the First Amendment of the US Bill of Rights. Nuevomexicano students attending public school systems were often not allowed to speak Spanish at school. This practice was not universal throughout the state, however, and in more isolated areas it took a long time before it became common. The oldest consultant for this project grew up on the Cochiti reservation in the 1920s and 1930s was educated in Spanish only. The transcriptions provided in this essay use nonstandard spelling to reflect dialectal phonology and morphology.

Interviewer: Dígame Lina uhm usted cuando iba a la escuela ¿les dejaron hablar español?

Lina¹: Yeah, pus antonces hablamos puro'spañol. Yeah, la gente, toda, ya hablaba puro'spañol, nunca naiden sabía inglés.

[I: Tell me Lina when you went to school, did they let you talk Spanish?

L: Yeah, well then we talked purely Spanish. Yeah, the people, everybody, still spoke purely Spanish, nobody never knew English.]

Since everyone at the Pueblo spoke either Spanish, Keres or both and there were no English speakers there, Lina went through school speaking Spanish. Her daughter grew up in California and Santa Fe in the 1940s and 1950s and had a very different experience.

Juana: Primero el español, pero mi mamá dice cuando vivimos en California, no podía hablar con los amigos que tenía en California, y luego pensaron que yo aprendí hablar en inglés, y luego cuando fui a la escuela no nos dejaron hablar en español, nos pegaban cuando platicamos en español [...] Y luego la gente no más hablaban a los niños en inglés,

Interviewer: En inglés, sí.

Juana: Sí. Só se perdió, y ahora de vieja uh quiero hablar en español.

[J: First Spanish, but my mom says when- when uh we lived in California, I couldn't talk with the friends I had in California, and then they thought that I learned to speak in English, and then when I went to school they didn't let us talk in Spanish, they would hit us when we spoke in Spanish [...] And then the people just talked to they kids in English,

I: In English, yes.

J: Yes. So it was lost, and now as an old woman uh I want to talk in Spanish.]

In this interaction, Juana talks about corporal punishment for speaking Spanish and sees a direct causal link with the loss of Spanish. Teachers would hit students for speaking Spanish and those students would later talk to their own children only in English in an effort to avoid them suffering similar treatment. From the narratives in the data, there appear to have been three major types of punishment for speaking Spanish: corporal punishment, public humiliation and confinement. José went to school in Pecos in the 1940s and 1950s and his story reflects the latter two types.

José: Hablo l' español porque esa jerga mi primer lengua.

Interviewer: Sí. Porque lo hablaron

José: En la casa

Interviewer: Sus papá-

José: Sí.

Interviewer: su- sus papás en la casa.

José: Sí, sí yo tuve que pedir permiso a ir al baño la primer vez en l' escuela en español.

Interviewer: hm ¿Y qué le dijeron?

José: Pues eh dígallo en inglés. [J's wife and I laugh] Y nos sujetaban mucho cuando estaba yo en l' escuela, a ella también, los castigaban si hablaban español.

Interviewer: ¿Qué tipo de castigos?

José: eh en ¿la hora de la comida? A mediodía. No íbanos a comer con los otros, los detenían. U los hacían escribir líneas diciendo I will speak English only. Y ahora no,

ahora'stá muy diferente, ahora. Hora conocemos la importancia del español y de otras lenguas.

[J: I speak Spanish because that slang [was] my first language

I: Yes. Because your parents spoke it

J: In the house

I: your parents

J: Yes.

I: your parents in the house.

J: Yes, yes I had to ask permission to go to the bathroom the first time in school in Spanish.

I: hm And what did they tell you?

J: Well eh say it in English. [J's wife and I laugh] And they would subject us a lot when I was in school, her too, they would punish us if we talked Spanish.

I: What type of punishment?

J: eh at lunchtime? At noon. We wouldn't go to eat with the others they detained us. Or they made us write lines saying I will speak English only. And now no, now it's very different, now. Now we know the importance of Spanish and of other languages.]

Around the same age as José and also from Pecos, Martha's story involves beatings and being sent home with a note on her forehead.

Martha: Primero aprendí 'spañol, y luego cuando comencé escuela tenía uno que aprender en inglés. Y si hablabas en español la mestra te pegaba. [she slaps the palm of her hand]

Interviewer: Te pegaba en la mano.

Martha: Y te hacían uh hablar en inglés, y resultó que aprendí l'inglés y se me olvidó l'español. [...]

Interviewer: ¿Se recuerda alguna historia en particular de la escuela que alguien había hablado en español y le dieron un castigo así, especialmente fuerte o algo así?

Martha: Pues a mí. Me daban con la jara en las manos si acaso no hablaba en inglés. Y luego no sabía hablar yo en inglés. Y luego me ponieron una nota aquí [indicating her forehead], y que le llevara a mi mamá, y cuando llegué a la casa lo leyó ella y me dice: ¿Cómo que no sabes cómo te llamas? Pues yo no sabía lo que me'estaban preguntando. Sólo mis hermanos toa la noche tuvieron que enseñarme cómo responder: my name is Marta, my name is Marta. Porque así era mi nombre.

[M: First I learned Spanish and then I started school and you had to learn in English. And if you talked in Spanish the teacher would hit you. [she slaps the palm of her hand]

I: She would hit you on the hand.

M: And they made you talk in English and it turned out that I learnt English and I forgot my Spanish [...]

I: Do you remember any stories in particular about the school that someone had talked in Spanish and they gave them a punishment, like, that was especially strong or something like that.

M: Well me. They would hit me with the willow switch on my hands if I happened to not be talking in English. And then I didn't know uh how to talk in English. And they gave me a note here [indicating her forehead], and I had to take it to my mom and when I got home she read it and she says to me: how is it you don't know what your name is? Well I

didn't know what they were asking me. So my brothers all night had to teach me how to respond: my name is Marta, my name is Marta. Because that was my name.]

Children speaking Spanish children were often beaten with young willow shoots, or *jaras*, that they usually had to gather themselves. It was not an uncommon practice to simply send children that didn't speak English home and exclude them from the education. It must be pointed out, however that the enforcement of English is not viewed as negative by all Nuevomexicanos. When I asked Nicolás, who went to school in Abiquiú in the 1930s and early 1940s, what language he used at school he answered as follows.

Nicolás: Inglés.

Interviewer: Inglés no más.

Nicolás: Oh yeah, no noj dejaban hablar español.

Interviewer: ¿Qué- qué pasó cuando hablaron español?

Nicolás: [...] Se nojaba la maestra con nosotros, nos decía que no- que no íbanos a l'iscuela a hablar inglés. Que íbanos a hablar inglés. Íbanos aprender inglés. Es que estuvo bien, estuvo bien. Yo agradezco eso 'hora, porque asina aprendimos inglés. Si nos hubieran dejado hablando español, pus español sabíanos, [he laughs] español sabíanos. Mi mamá no hablaba no más que puro español. Y y si nos hubieran dejado hablar español pus se hubiera complicado todas las cosas.

[N: English.

I: Just English.

N: Oh yeah, they didn't let us talk in Spanish.

I: What- What happened when you talked Spanish?

N: The teacher would get angry with us, she would tell us that we didn't- that we didn't go to school to talk English. [sic] That we went to talk English. We were going to learn English. And the thing is it was good, it was good. I am grateful for that now, because that way we learned English. If they had left us talking Spanish, well we knew Spanish [he laughs] we knew Spanish. My mom didn't talk but purely Spanish. And and if they had let us talk Spanish well everything would have gotten more complicated.]

The stories of beatings end with the generation of consultants born in the 1950s, after that the attitudes toward Spanish in education appear to become more ambiguous. Some factors that may have influenced this change include the emergence of civil rights movements, including the Chicano movement and the promotion of bilingual programs at a national level. Alberto grew up in Embudo during the 1950s and 1960s, and in his account, the teachers still wanted their students to only use English but did not enforce this behavior:

Interviewer: Y era una escuela, las clases eran todos en inglés ¿no?

Alberto: Eran todos en inglés ¿no? Verdad. En esos tiempos no- no no- no nos enseñaban, no querían quizás que habláranos español ¿no?

Interviewer: hm ¿Y por qué sería eso?

Alberto: No sé por qué sería, no querían quizáj que aprendiéranos español o pero no nos prohijiban ¿no? De hablar español en l'iscuela. Pero toavía creo que lo hablábanos ¿no?

Pero los maestros también eran hispanos también y eh había anglos también. Y no, no

estaba muy malo ¿no? Yo creo que si nos oían hablar español no nos decían nada. Pero nos decían que éranos de hablar inglés ¿no?

[I: And was it a school, the classes were all in English, no?

A: They were all in English, no? True. In those days they didn't teach us, they maybe didn't want us to talk Spanish, no?

I: hm And why would that be?

A: I don't know why that would be, perhaps they didn't want us to learn Spanish but they didn't prohibit us, no? From speaking Spanish in school. But still I believe that we spoke it, no? But the teachers as well, they were hispanos as well and eh there were Anglos too. And no, it wasn't very bad, no? I believed that if they heard us speaking Spanish they wouldn't tell us anything. But they said to us that we were supposed to speak English, no?]

The change in attitudes was not entirely positive, nor does it appear to have occurred with the same speed everywhere in the state. The narratives I have been able to collect suggest during the third quarter of the century, the position of Spanish in education was worse in the urban centers than in smaller villages and towns. A particularly potent counterpoint to the idea that linguistic policies and ideologies towards Nuevomexicano Spanish were simply changing for the better during this period is found in April's experience starting elementary school in Santa Fe around the year 1970.

April: Sí, hablé español hasta uh los años de cinco. Y luego cuando jui a l'escuela las mestrás dijo a mi mamá que ya no puedo hablar en español en l'escuela, no más inglés.

Interviewer: Hm ¿y sus padres qué hacían?

April: Nada nomás hablo con mi con inglés y luego con mi uh hermanos y m'hermanos nomás hablaron en inglés y no en español.

Interviewer: ¿Y sus hermanos no saben nada del español entonces?

April: No, no. 'hora hablan poquito

Interviewer: Hm van aprendiendo // pero

April: pero no lo 'prendió en la casa no.

Interviewer: Van aprendiendo de adultos.

April: Sí. Pero yo hablé hasta cinco con mis abuelos porque yo estuvo con todo mi abuelos cuando estando chiquita también. Porque mi papá 'staba trabajando construction. So mi mamá y yo estamos con mi abuelos.

Interviewer: Sí. Y con sus abuelos, ¿seguía hablando español después de eso?

April: Sí. Mi abuelita nomás habló en español. Ella en-tendió inglés pero no quería ell-

Interviewer: No quería hablarlo.

April: No, nononono. Ella dijo: No. Me gusta español. Usted habla conmigo en español. Pero con mis hermanos no podían hablar con ella porque nomás habló en español.

[I: You said that the first language you learned to speak was Spanish, no?

A: Yes, I spoke Spanish until uh I was five. And then when I went to school the teachers said to my mom I can't talk Spanis in school, only English.

I: hm And your parents, what did they do?

A: Nothing, they just spoke with me with English and then with my brother and sisters they just spoke in English and not in Spanish.

I: And your siblings don't know any Spanish then?

A: No, no. Now they speak a little

I: hm They are learning but

A: but no, they didn't learn at home, no.

I: They are learning as adults.

A: Yes. But I spoke until I was five with my grandparents because I was with all my grandparents when I was a little girl too. Because my dad was working construction. So my mom and I were with my grandparents.

I: Yes. And with your uh with your grandparents, did you keep speaking in Spanish after that?

A: Yes, my grandma she just spoke Spanish. She understood English but she didn't want to-

I: She didn't want to speak it.

A: No, nononono. She said: No. I like Spanish. You talk with me in Spanish. But with my brothers and sisters couldn't talk to her because she only spoke Spanish.]

We see in this narrative the kinds of generational disconnect that were created by these educational practices. Children who were monolingual English speakers as a result of such practices became incapable of communicating with their monolingual Spanish speaking grandparents. Professor Neddy Vigil informs me that house visits such as the one described by April were common practice in the cities (personal communication). Taken together, the denial of Nuevomexicano native language rights in education that happened until at least the early 1970s fits the legal definition of child abuse, as taken from the US government's child welfare

website “Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation”

(<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/can/defining/federal/>).

As such, it constitutes a government sponsored human rights violation which has been too long overlooked. These practices were informed by the English Only ideology, which holds that English is the only legitimate language of the United States. Since Spanish is not a legitimate language in New Mexico, under the terms of this ideology, its forced abandonment is not problematic. This ideology has to some extent found entry into the very speech communities that it harms, as Bills & Vigil (2008:17) identify the belief that English is good and Spanish is bad as one of five common linguistic myths threatening the continued survival of Nuevomexicano Spanish.

The second strategy of linguistic repression was denigration of local dialect forms. This happened at all levels of education, including the university level, but on the whole seems to have been most prevalent in high school Spanish classes. Rafaelita attended classes like this during the 1980s; her story shows the complex and contradictory impressions that many Nuevomexicano children had in these classes.

Interviewer: Y en la escuela ¿le enseñaron en inglés? ¿o en español?

Rafaelita: En inglés. [...] Tomé un- un curso de- de español pero n- [ridiculous voice] no aprendí nada. [...] No. Era raro. El español que me enseñaron en l'iscuela porque era the proper way I guess, to speak it [...] and I just knew [...] I knew the slang and, you know, what we spoke here at home.

[I: And in the school, did they teach you in English? Or in Spanish.

R: In English. [...] I took a course of Spanish but [ridiculous voice] I didn't learn nothing. [...] No. It was strange. The Spanish that they taught in school, because it was the proper way I guess, to speak it [...] and I just knew [...] I knew the slang and, you know, what we spoke here at home.]

After claiming that she learned nothing in Spanish class, Rafaelita reiterates the false belief that her home dialect of Spanish was not proper and slang. In other words, despite the class not improving her Spanish skills, it did result in her internalizing these self-deprecating beliefs about her language. That the classroom was indeed the place where she came in contact with these beliefs is ascertainable from another exchange, later in our conversation.

Rafaelita: Cuando yo estaba en el high school, se requería [...] para agarrar su diploma se requería tomar otro lenguaje. [...] podía tomar French, I could've took in French or Spanish. So I preferred to take Spanish because I knew it better. [she laughs]

Interviewer: Porque no sería trabajo.

Rafaelita: Yeah, yeah. So that's why I took Spanish, because I knew the concept of it and I had taught myself to read and write Spanish myself, so.

Interviewer: Y después los profesores, ¿le dijeron que hablaba mal? O

Rafaelita: No, no me dijeron que hablaba mal pero again, hablaba el slang, hablaba las palabras que dicimos slang, no lo hablaba propialmente, I wasn't speaking it properly.

[R: When I was in high school [...] to get your diploma it was required to take another language. [...] I could've took in French or Spanish. So I preferred to take Spanish because I knew it better. [she laughs]

I: Because it wouldn't be work.

R: Yeah, yeah. So that's why I took Spanish, because I knew the concept of it and I had taught myself to read and write Spanish myself, so.

I: And after that the teachers, did they tell you you spoke badly? Or

R: No, they didn't tell me I spoke badly but again, I spoke the slang, I spoke the words that we call slang, that I didn't speak it *propialmente*, I wasn't speaking it properly.]

Despite her proficiency and having achieved literacy in Spanish without instruction, Rafaelita was still lead to believe that she wasn't speaking it properly. The choice of wording for this negative judgment is of particular interest both in terms of the language in which it is expressed, English, and because of the semantics of proper. Ramona fails to translate the adverb into Spanish as *apropiadamente*. This is echoed in the interview with Simón.

Simón: No comencé leer en español hasta que ya era joven, ya tenía trece, catorce años cuando

Interviewer: Cuando empezó a tener clases de español

Simón: Clases de español. Sí.

Interviewer: ¿Y cuántos de esos hizo?

Simón: Yo hice no más un año en middle school y luego in high school un año ahí también. So tomé dos años, pero a todos modos, viniendo de la casa de- mis padres hablaban mucho en español y sus amigos vinían españ- pos aprendí ahí.

Interviewer: Y en las clases que agarró uh pues ¿cuál era la actitud frente al español que usted hablaba

Simón: ¿Y que estaban enseñando?

Interviewer: y el que estaban enseñando ¿cuá- cuál era la diferencia y

Simón: Sí. Sí [he laughs] Pues, ¿sabes qué? La diferencia- es el español de del norte Nuevo México es diferente ¿no? Es diferente de lo que los mexicanos ¿sabe? Es diferente que lo que estaban enseñando. Lo que enseñaban era más como como d'España. Era el español asina. Uh Más uh ¿cómo se dice? Proper o pro- era hm yo no sé cómo se- era proper Spanish so no tenían las clases de- no tenían las palabras slang, slang words que teníamos nosotros, yo no sé cómo se dice en español.

[S: I didn't start to read in Spanish until I was already a young man, I was thirteen, fourteen years old when

I: When you started taking Spanish classes

S: Spanish classes. Yes.

I: And how many of those did you do?

S: I did just one year in middle school and then in high school, one year there too. So I took two years, but in any case coming from the house of- my parents spoke Spanish a lot and their friends came Span- so I learned there.

I: And in the classes you took, well, what was the attitude towards the Spanish you spoke?

S: and what they were teaching?

I: and what they were teaching. What was the difference and

S: Yes. Yes [he laughs] Well, you know what? The difference- the Spanish of northern New Mexico is different, no? It's different from what the Mexicans, you know? It's different from what they were teaching. What they were teaching was more like from Spain. It was the Spanish like that. Uh More uh what's the word? Proper or pro- it was hm I don't know the w= it was proper Spanish so it didn't have the kinds of- it didn't have the uh slang words that we had, I don't know how you say it in Spanish.]

Like Rafaelita, Simón is unable to express this negative evaluation of his own language use in Spanish. This suggests that the origin of this attitude is outside the Nuevomexicano speech community, in dominant standard language ideologies. As Bills and Vigil (2008:17) point out, these judgments are “based solely on social judgments, judgments not directed at the language but at the group who speak that language.” These attitudes about Nuevomexicano are also often held by Spanish speakers from other countries (*ibid* 12) and form the basis of a linguistic inferiority complex among Nuevomexicanos. But what does it mean for a language to not be proper? The relevant parts of Merriam-Webster's definition of the word are “7a strictly accurate: correct [...] 8 marked by suitability, rightness, or appropriateness” (Merriam Webster Online). It follows from these definitions that something which is not proper is both wrong and rude. When applied to a language, as in proper Spanish, it not only makes a statement about linguistic correctness but also about appropriateness and therefore about the ethics of language use. Such attitudes about Nuevomexicano were sometimes met with resistance, as illustrated by Guillermo's story about arguments with a professor from Spain while attending the University of New Mexico in the 1960s.

Guillermo: Que siempre salía: no, pus, no eso es un arqueísmo o ¡qué pintoresco! Eso es algo que dicían los españoles en el siglo dieciséis o ese es una palabr'inglés. Y yo me ponía a hablar con ellos y decía pus'tedes les decía: ¿y si nosotros nos esperamos en el estado de Nuevo México hasta que la que la [skeptical tone, pausing] Academia Real d'España

Interviewer: viniera acá

Guillermo: viniera acá y nos diga cómo vamos hablar [his wife laughs] se va acabar el mundo. [we laugh] Y se me enojaban, ¿ves? Se me enojaban. Y les decía: miren, por ejemplo dijía al profesor español: aquí, en español, ¿cómo vas a nombrar un jet aircraft, un avión jet, un jet. Y luego me dijo: pus eso es un avión de propulsión de chorro [his wife laughs] y yo le dije: ya pa cuando diga eso va pasar el avión! [he laughs] Porque es un modo descriptivo muy largo de nombrar algo. Cordialmente, un jet es un jet, ¿no? Y ya, hoy en día se me hace que casi por to el mundo hispano ya dicen jet o'l jet, ¿no?

[G: He would always say: no, well, no that's an archaism or How picturesque! That is something the Spaniards said in the sixteenth century or that's an English word. And I got to talking with them and I said, well you I told them: and if we wait in the state of New Mexico until [skeptical tone] Royal Spanish Academy

I: Were to come here.

G: Were to come here and tell us how we are going to talk [his wife laughs] the world will end. [we laugh] And they got mad at me, you see? They got angry with me. And I told them: look, for example I said to the Spanish professor, I told him: here, in Spanish, what are you gonna a jet aircraft, *un avión jet, un jet*. And then he told me: well that is an

airplane with propulsion by jets [his wife laughs] and I told him: by the time you've said that the airplane will have passed! [he laughs] Because it's a very long descriptive way of naming something. Honestly, a jet is a jet, no? And now, today I think almost in the entire Hispanic world people say jet or *el jet*, no?]

Guillermo's defiance of the stigmatization of his dialect is based on two basic arguments: that the people passing this judgment are not qualified to do so, since they do not belong to the community and that the purist forms they propose are communicatively inefficient. Despite this evidence of resistance, the more common response when presented with this stigmatization of Nuevomexicano dialect appears to have been to accept it as at least partially deserved. Alberto is a Nuevomexicano and was a high-school Spanish teacher from the 1980s to the 2000s. I asked him if he had noticed any changes in the Spanish dialect that his students brought to the classroom.

Alberto: Sí se ha perdido ¿no? Creo que a lo mejor ¿no? Mejorando l'español y todo ese negocio.

Interviewer: ¿Ah? ¿Usted cree que eso mejoró lo que habla la gente aquí.

Alberto: Creo que sí. Creo que l'hablamos mejor ¿no? Porque el di- dailecto que tenemos aquí como por ejemplo decimos aquí troca ¿no? Mejor que camioneta y pero toavía se usa, en eh bilingüelismo quizás ¿no? Que solamente ponemos una 'o' u una 'a' al último de la palabra ¿no?

[A: Yes it's been lost, no? I believe for the better, no? Improving the Spanish and all that business.

I: Ah? You believe that that improved what people here speak?

A: I believe it did. I believe we speak better, no? Because the di *dailecto* that we have here, like for example we say here *troca*, no? Rather than *camioneta* and // but still we use it some, in eh bilingualism maybe, no? That we just put an ‘o’ or an ‘a’ at the end of the word, no?]

The loss of dialect features here is presented as a positive evolution. In addition, the problem with Nuevomexicano that this speaker identifies is the use of English loanwords, such as *troca* from ‘truck’ instead of the supposedly better *camioneta*, borrowed from French *camionette*. This is in line with García and Torres-Guevara’s claim that:

Language policies in education for the education of Latinas/os in the United States has focused on trying to make their English fit “native” standards, and their Spanish fit “foreign” standards. [This reflects] a monoglossic ideology, which values only monolingualism and ignores bilingualism (2010:182).

I will point out that if educators believe Nuevomexicano (or any US variety of Spanish for that matter) to be an inferior dialect of Spanish then this belief makes the denial of native language rights less problematic morally, since the language that is being repressed is viewed as illegitimate.

Despite all of this bad history, there is evidence that attitudes are changing. While previously no one thought twice about telling a student not to speak Spanish, nowadays this is perceived as an injustice and teachers who do so undergo investigation, as happened in August 2014 to a sixth grade art teacher at Rio Rancho Middle School who was accused of telling a student to only speak English in class (Rio Rancho Observer, 08/31/2014).

4. CONCLUSION. In this paper I have presented narratives from Nuevomexicanos and Nuevomexicanas that show that for much of the twentieth century there was a concerted effort on the part of schools to make children abandon Spanish in favor of English. These attempts at linguistic assimilation followed two main strategies. On the one hand, Nuevomexicano children were denied the right to speak their native language in schools, a prohibition that was enforced through corporal punishment, public humiliation and confinement. On the other hand, the local dialect forms were often the subject of ridicule and denigration, resulting in what appear to be subconscious feelings of linguistic inadequacy on the part of many Nuevomexicano speakers. The stories presented in this paper are just a few of the many that could be told, they do not represent the entire scope of experiences of Nuevomexicano children in the public education system. They do, however, represent real trauma. These events, and the linguistic ideologies which gave rise to them, should be discussed in New Mexico history classes at public schools in the state. In order to provide a more complete picture, future investigations of this issue could make use of the substantial body of historical narratives collected in Bills and Vigil's (2008) *New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish Survey*.

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¹To protect the privacy of my consultants, all names provided in this essay are pseudonyms.