NEW MEXICO and the MULTILINGUAL EXPERIENCE

HAITI
BELGIUM
QUEBEC
LOUISIANA
NEW MEXICO
We all know that New Mexico is multilingual. Every day we come into contact with members of the three great linguistic groups of the state: Indians, Spanish, and "Anglos." We are all aware that there are many advantages to be gained from this diversity, but that it is the source of problems as well.

Most of us are so accustomed to living in a multilingual state that we view our situation in purely local terms. Rarely do we think that other areas also experience multilingualism. The fact is, however, that New Mexico is not unique. Other nations experience the creative tensions produced by disparate linguistic populations; other nations experience the problems associated with multilingualism, often in a much more intense way. Failure to resolve these problems can lead to the destruction of the society, for language often becomes inextricably linked with other potentially explosive issues, such as ethnicity, class, and political power.

Recognizing that we can better understand our own multilingual experience by comparing it with others, the French Summer School of New Mexico, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church of Taos, and the Taos Arts Council sponsored a colloquium on 18 June 1979 in Taos on "New Mexico and the Multilingual Experience," with the support of the New Mexico Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The following articles are revised versions of the presentations given at that colloquium.

The cases presented include Haiti, where a small elite uses language as a means of continuing its domination; Canada, whose very survival is threatened by the desire of the province of Quebec to protect its linguistic heritage; Belgium, working hard to create a structure for the peaceful coexistence of different language groups; and Louisiana, where the moribund French language has been powerfully revived.

The last article draws conclusions about the relevance of these experiences to New Mexico. By comparing New Mexico with other nations and states, we hope it will become clear what is unique in our experience, and what is common to other societies.

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At the end of the eighteenth century Haiti, then known as Saint-Domingue, was the richest of the West Indian sugar colonies and France's prize overseas possession. From 1791 to 1804, Black slaves and free Mulattos revolted against the colonial masters, defeated an expeditionary force sent against them by Napoleon and finally proclaimed the independence of Haiti. Out of the first and only successful slave revolt in history was born the first Black Republic, the first Latin-American country to shake off the European yoke.

Despite the initial hostility of the slave-holding powers, England, Spain, France and the United States, despite its later exploitation by foreign merchants, despite the incompetence and corruption of many of its national leaders, Haiti has managed to remain independent until today. But her economic situation has become progressively more desperate, and all development experts agree that the country is facing a catastrophic future. One of the important consequences for this situation is the self-perpetuating selfishness of Haiti's urban ruling classes, which have always shamelessly exploited the rural majority and denied it education, civil rights and any share in economic and political power. This must be kept in mind when discussing the very peculiar linguistic situation which exists in Haiti.

French is the official language of the Republic and is used in governmental, administrative, legal and educational activities. It is the language of the mass media and of commercial advertisement. Yet 90% of the population neither speak it nor understand it; they are illiterate, and their only language is Créole. The 10% who handle French do so with varying degrees of facility and competence. The ability to speak French is indispensable for membership in the ruling classes. Social prestige always and political and economic power usually are directly related to fluency and elegance in the use of the official language. Obviously, the power elite has no interest in helping the poor acquire a knowledge of French. Paradoxical as it may seem, in Haiti the official language functions as a particularly effective barrier to social mobility. Whereas French is the exclusive preserve of the elite, all Haitians, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, Blacks and Mulattos, speak and understand Créole. Créole is the national language of the country, and many Haitian intellectuals have begun to argue that it should at least be granted parity with French. They claim that economic and human development will remain impossible so long as the ruling classes refuse to recognize the dignity, inherent worth and national authenticity of the people's way of self-expression. And they rightly point out how perverse it is to consider Créole (in which all Haitians without exception function perfectly) inferior or inadequate, and to condemn the country to make do with French, in which only a minute elite is fluent.

Linguists are not in complete agreement as to the origins of Haitian Créole. What seems most probable is that it evolved from a lingua franca spoken on board French ships during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a mixture of various Western French dialects which allowed illiterate French sailors to communicate with one another. To this lingua franca African, Portuguese, Spanish and English expressions were incorporated, since much of the French navy was engaged in the slave trade and sailors often had to deal with speakers of these languages. The first settlers of Saint-Domingue were seamen whose common language was créole lingua franca. This theory of the origins of Haitian Créole is not entirely speculative: a créole very similar to that spoken in Haiti and the other West Indies developed on the other side of the world, in the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, which was also settled by French sailors, at roughly the same time. As the French developed Saint-Domingue, it is very probable that Créole was used not only to communicate with slaves (who not only were not taught French but were explicitly forbidden to learn it), but among the native-born settlers themselves. We know, for example, that the first Créole-language poems and songs recorded were composed by French planters in the eighteenth century.

Be that as it may, contemporary Haitian Créole is in no way an inferior, simplified or bastardized form of French (as the ruling classes have long claimed). It is a highly original, complex and expressive language, whose lexicon is mostly of French or archaic French origin, but whose grammar and intonation are quite different; no French speaker can hope to understand and speak Créole without much study and practice.

Until quite recently, Créole was strictly a spoken language. For written communication, Haitians would use French, the language in which they were literate. Even today, Haitians who normally speak Créole to each other (closed family members, intimate friends) exchange letters in French. This is for two often complementary reasons. First, because they have been taught at home and in school that Créole is the language of the unwashed and that it is permissible to use it in informal and intimate conversation, it should not be dignified by adoption for formal speech or, a fortiori, for writing. And second, because it is only recently that a systematic effort to transcribe it has been made. Haitians are not being coy when they claim to have difficulty in reading Créole. As a matter of fact, the question of how to transcribe Créole and of which variation of Créole to adopt as standard will have to be solved before it can become a full-fledged written language. "Purists" still argue that rural Créole has been less "corrupted" by borrowings from French and other foreign languages, but it seems that, for reasons of logic and expediency, the Port-au-Prince variety will ultimately be chosen to provide the norm. On the question of transcription, there are two schools of thought. The so-called "etymologists" argue that the French transcription of phonemes should be used, while the "phoneticians" argue for a strictly phonetic transcription. Thus, they would transcribe the Créole word for "where" kibo; while the etymologists would spell it kibo, since it comes from the agglutination of two French words: qui and kibo. This is no idle quarrel, but reflects conflicting ideologies as to the nature of Créole and different strategies for the fight against illiteracy. The etymologists see Créole as essentially related to French, a fact they want to symbolize through French spelling. And they argue that making someone literate in Créole is half the job, since only literacy in French opens the door to advanced education and social mobility; learning the idiosyncracies of French spelling from the onset will make the transition infinitely easier. For the phoneticians, on the contrary, Créole is as different from French as French is from Latin, and should have its own system of transcription. They further argue that the gratuitous intricacies of French spelling would make the already staggering task of educating the people even more difficult. It appears that the phoneticians are carrying the day: newspapers, poems and even novels are beginning to appear and in the overwhelming majority of them, the phonetic transcription of Créole is used.

There is no doubt that, during the last twenty-five years, Créole has been rapidly gaining acceptance not only for progressive ideological reasons. A very large number of Haitians no longer have faith in the possibility of attaining economic and personal security within the country's borders. Emigration to the English-speaking islands, to Latin America, to Canada and especially to the United States has reached epidemic proportions. Since most of this emigration is illegal, statistics are at best approximate, but it is
estimated that as many as one million Haitians are living abroad, half of them in the U.S. If emigration, preferably to an English-speaking country, is one's ultimate goal, the motivation to perfect and refine one's French is weakened if not eliminated. Learning English will eventually prove much more advantageous and Créole is no longer an obstacle to success. Lower-middle class émigrés who return to Haiti for the holidays having forgotten most of what French they used to know and living illustrations that speaking the national rather than the official language is not proof of backwardness or incapacity. In the country itself, large numbers of fundamentalist American missionaries bypass French altogether; they evangelize and educate directly in Créole and if they teach another language at all, they teach English. It is almost certain that, today, more natives of Haiti are competent in English than in the official language of their country.

Obviously, the linguistic situation in Haiti is fascinating for the linguist and the sociologist. It may appear quaintly picturesque to us, but I am afraid it reflects the fundamental contradictions of Haitian society. Just as these social contradictions seem further away than ever from some sort of resolution, so does the chaotic linguistic situation appear to become more and more complex and unmanageable.

What does the future hold? The most varied and contradictory predictions have been advanced: gradual spreading of literacy in French to the whole population; parity of French and Créole as official languages; replacement of the former by the latter; gradual replacement of French by English and eventual English-Créole bilingualism. . . . I for one would not dare to speculate, and will end by stating an obvious truism: the evolution of the linguistic situation in Haiti will be organically linked to the social, political and economic evolution of the country. When, if ever, a movement of national reform, national solidarity and national progress develops, there is no doubt whatsoever that it will choose or fashion its functional means of expression from the component parts of Haiti's present multilingual incoherence.

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BELGIUM

Other people can hardly be expected to know anything about a small country beyond the fact that it exists, even if it has shown, as Belgium has, how people of different languages, different religious beliefs and philosophies of life, and of course different social classes can manage to live together. In accordance with standard journalistic practice, the only news out of Belgium is that of conflict, either international conflict or conflict within the country. But one could hope that at least that news would be correct, and that the writers would understand the background of conflict, and even share some of that background with their readers.

In the past two decades most of the conflict within Belgium has been between the two main language groups—the French-speaking and the Flemish or Dutch-speaking, and among the three regions of the country, French-speaking Wallonia, Dutch-speaking Flanders, and bilingual Brussels. So, if people in this country or in Britain have read any news from Belgium (except for news of the European Common Market, whose headquarters are in Brussels), it is likely to have been something about language or regional conflict. It is also likely to have been something that I shall give only one example, from among many that I could take from newspapers and magazines and otherwise serious books.

A few years ago the distinguished London weekly, The Economist, ran a series of articles called "Living with Nationalism." Its articles on northern Ireland was followed by one on Belgium. "Nowadays," it said, "Belgium tends to look more Irish than Ireland, torn as it is between French-speaking and Flemish-speaking factions." (Feb. 12, 1972, page 17.)

One did not have to "live with" French or Flemish more than a day to know better. "More Irish than Ireland?" That is ridiculous. There are no open sores of discrimination against any language or religious group in Belgium. No Franquisme, no secret murders or terrorist atrocities; no mass hatreds or fear, as in unhappy Ulster. Belgium is not, as northern Ireland is, a society more than half of whose citizens are profoundly alienated from their political system.

Not is Belgium, as The Economist wrote, "torn" between language factions. There has been bickering for two decades between the language groups, and the Belgians allow considerable weariness and frustration with the seemingly endless complications and negotiations that go on about language problems. But the groups involved do negotiate, and—despite all the references in the foreign press to "extremist" groups and in political science articles and books to "anti-system" parties—there is no significant group in Belgium that refuses to negotiate, and no political party that is outside the system: all parties, including those called "extremist" or "anti-system" by foreign commentators, have been in government coalitions in the 1970's at one time or another.

There have been lots of demonstrations, marches upon the capital, and similar protests by Flemings against the use of French here and there, protests by Francophones against Flemish power there and here. Occasionally some of the protests have got out of hand; occasionally the police—no gentler than in most other countries—have got out of hand. People have been roughed up recently in a handful of villages whose language practice has been in dispute between Flemish and Francophones for 16 years. But mostly the demonstrators have done nothing worse than black out the other language on road markers or street signs, or interrupt French-language mass in Flemish churches. The bickering and the negotiation wind up not in bloody ambushes, but in changing political coalitions and in complicated package deals about the use of languages in public administration and education, about cultural subsidies, and about the delineation of language frontiers.

The results are not heroic; they are not beautiful; they are not even neat and clear. Not all of the compromises will endure. But meanwhile the Belgians have been able and willing to amend an old constitution and to modify the political party system, the universities, and the structures of trade unions and other voluntary associations to recognize the changing needs and demands of language groups. This they have done in a spirit of compromise, by negotiation and agreement among the language groups' representatives in the political system. They have brought about a rough equality in the treatment of the two main language groups, and recognized the rights of the third Belgian language group, the tiny German-speaking minority. They have agreed on mechanisms that trade off protection of the rights of the French-language minority in the nation as a whole for protection of the Flemish minority in the nation's capital. All this has been accomplished almost without violence by government or opposition, without restriction of the freedom of publication or speech, and without exclusion of any Belgian language or regional group from the long continuing process of decision-making by round table conferences and mutual concessions.

Violence being human, it may yet come to the most peaceful of democracies, to Switzerland or Denmark or Belgium. There has been little violence, however, for a long time. So far are the Belgians from collective violence as a means of political expression or social change that in 1950, when the country was in the throes of a general strike against King Leopold III and three demonstrators were killed by police, the shock was enough to cause the King to give up his throne forthwith.

How does the linguistic issue in Belgium present itself? Belgium is the most densely populated country in Europe, except for the Netherlands. Its area is just one tenth that of New Mexico, but its population is eight times as great: thus it is 80 times as densely populated. The language groups live close to each other, but for the most part they live in one-language areas, and, except for Brussels, most people are not in contact with speakers of the other main language.

Most of the French speakers live in the southern region, called Wallonia; its chief cities are Liége and Charleroi, only French and German speaking. Most of the speakers of the Dutch language live in Flanders,
the northern region; its chief cities are Antwerp and Ghent. Only Dutch is spoken there, except for the remnants of the old French-speaking elites, who once dominated the economic, political, and administrative life of the region, but have lost that position since the Second World War.

Of the 9,600,000 Belgians, about 85 percent speak Dutch, and about 15 percent French. But of the million Belgians in the national capital, perhaps 80 percent or so are Francophones. The rights of the Dutch language and of the Flemish minority in the capital, and the rights of the French language and of Francophone minorities in the suburban municipalities around Brussels, have given rise to the most heated and complex political issues of the 1960's and 1970's, and a few of those issues are still subjects of controversy.

There is a third language group, deliberately ignored by most people in discussions of Belgian language problems because it is so small. That is the German-speaking minority, of about 60,000 people—a little less than the Indian population of this state. It lives in the eastern part of the country, surrounded by a francophone population except where it reaches the frontier with Germany.

New Mexico has a number of much smaller language and cultural groups, among the Indians, so it is especially appropriate to recall the German-speaking Belgians. Moreover, the quality of political life in any country must be judged by the way it treats its smallest minorities, especially the poorest and least favored.

The German speakers are not poor or ill-favored, but their history has been unhappy. Theirs is the fate of many border regions. During both World Wars their German conquerors treated them as Germans, subject to German military service. During the Second World War some of them collaborated with the Nazis. But others were active in the resistance, or sought refuge in other parts of Belgium. Not all of the aftermath of the war has been liquidated even yet.

German has been recognized as one of the nation's three national languages, however, along with French and Dutch. The area is recognized as one of the country's four main language regions, with special language rights for the francophone minority.

The main language regions are three: Flanders, which is unilingual Dutch; Wallonia, which is unilingual French, and Brussels, which—as the nation's capital—is administered in both languages. In addition, in various small areas along the language frontier, and in some of the Brussels suburbs in which many of the capital's Francophones have settled, there are special provisions for public services and schools in the language of the local minority.

Belgium is often called "bilingual." The state is basically that. But are many individuals bilingual? A significant number of Brussels people are more or less bilingual, although most of them have full command of only one language, and some of them have full mastery of neither. Elsewhere than in the capital, there are many more bilinguals among the Flemish than among the Francophones, because of the prestige and utility of French as a world language, and because of the opportunities in civil service employment and social and economic mobility that a command of French gives a Flemish.

The language frontier, which runs west to east across the middle of the country, just south of Brussels, has been almost constant for 1500 years. But throughout the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century there was an internal, social language frontier within Flanders: the masses and lower middle classes speaking Flemish dialects and only gradually learning correct Dutch; the elites speaking French. The biggest changes in modern times have been the recent disappearance of most of the French-speaking elites within Flanders, and the conversion of Brussels from a sleepy Flemish town at the beginning of Belgian national independence, in 1830, to a predominantly French-speaking national capital. The tensions that accompanied the elimination of the internal, social language frontiers within Flanders have only recently died down. The tensions caused by the struggle of the Flemish community as a whole to protect the Dutch language in Brussels and its suburbs continue.

Language is not all of culture, and regions have other interests—economic and political—beyond those of language and culture. The Belgian constitutional revision of 1970 decentralized much of the apparatus of the one unitary national state. It was "federalizing without federalism," as one of the architects of the constitutional revision called it. Let me summarize the complex set of institutions it created.

Belgium recognizes three cultural communities: French-speaking, Dutch-speaking, and German-speaking. Each has a cultural council with considerable autonomy in cultural matters.

It recognizes four language regions which I have already outlined. Then there are three political and administrative regions: Wallonia, Flanders, and Brussels, with some autonomy, but not autonomous finances. Their institutions are still being worked out. In addition, there remain the old institutions, the municipalities, important centers of cultural and political life, the old nine provinces, which are of some, but lesser importance, and a national state which is now semi-federal. The provinces are now all unilingual, except Brabant, which contains bilingual Brussels.

Complicated systems of "alarm bells," which produce a suspension of parliamentary action, and call for special majorities may be invoked in the cultural councils, the Brussels regional assembly, and the two houses of Parliament to protect the interests of the French-speaking minority nationally and of the Flemish minority in Brussels.

All this no doubt constitutes excessive complexity and over-institutionalization. The innumerable, overlapping new institutions are for the political specialist, not the average citizen, to understand. The dangers of over-institutionalization are those of immobilism and mutual veto, and of complexities depriving the average man and woman of a feeling of understanding and participation. But federalization without federalism is the best that the Belgian habit of round table discussions and compromise package deals could produce. As an alternative to linguistic discrimination or violent change, federalization without federalism in Belgium is worth our sympathetic, critical study.

by Professor Val R. Lornan
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The coexistence of two languages in Quebec has been the subject of numerous controversies. The support for French unilingualism, bilingualism, and even the Francophone community in Quebec have made different political choices. Some see the presence of French as a guarantee of a Canadian identity, while others have supported the maintenance of their language and culture. The British North American Act of 1867, the essential document of Canada’s constitution, guaranteed them this right.

For over 300 years the people of Quebec have courageously struggled to preserve their language, their culture, and their identity. Given their isolation from France and their encirclement by English-speaking peoples, their heroic determination merits respect even if it may have had tragic consequences on occasion. Their history can be followed through the story of their language.

The French people who came to New France in the 17th and 18th centuries brought with them the dialects of Northwest France from which the majority came. This language was stabilized in Quebec at the end of the 18th century. It evolved in a special way because of the isolation from France and from French influence. It gave birth to three sub-dialects which continue to exist today, each one related to a particular social class. The first sub-dialect is that of the elite which speaks a French very close to that of the elite in France. The second is that of the rural population which speaks a language maintaining many of the expressions of the original colonists. The third, called "joual", is spoken in the cities, especially in certain parts of Montreal. It is a colloquial language, very expressive and very close to everyday life.

For a long time the Québécois felt themselves inferior to French who accused them of speaking French badly. The Québécois desire to affirm the distinctive identity of their language and refuse to compare it on a normative level with the French of France but rather to follow a different development. They consider their language an integral part of their personality.

In the last two decades, writers have begun to adopt joual, the popular language of the cities, and to use it to enrich theatre, poetry, novels, and songs. This use of joual has provoked much discussion, but the most important result of the phenomenon is the affirmation of a specific linguistic personality.

The Francophone community in Quebec is a barrier to the social mobility of French-speaking Québécois who are obliged to master English in order to participate and compete in the key areas of administration, business, and finance dominated by the English since the conquest.

Until recently the Francophone community had to learn English in order to make a living while the anglophone community learned French, if he did so at all, for purely cultural reasons. What seemed intolerable to the French-speaking Québécois was that the 10% of the province's population which spoke English dominated economic life, controlled the universities and schools, and absorbed the immigrants while the French-speaking population in the rest of Canada was being assimilated by the English-speaking society.

The recession of 1957 forced Canadians and Québécois in particular to question economic, educational, and political management and to search for new solutions. In the realm of economic activity Quebec reaped the bitter harvest of the structural inadequacies created by having attracted labor-intensive industry at the turn of the century and later concentrating on primary resource exploitation by foreign interests rather than building up a manufacturing base adaptable to technological change. As far as education was concerned, the traditional objections to compulsory education led the province with underdeveloped human resources which limited options for future economic and social development. The federal government attempted to respect its constitutional responsibilities in diminishing economic disparities, but the economic tools used only maintained these disparities and the increase in transfer payments such as unemployment insurance provided no relief to economic structural inadequacies.

Between 1957 and 1960 the Québécois realized that they had been treated unfairly. The growing awareness of the levers of economic management from the hands of the federal government and private foreign interests. The clergy felt the whirlpool too for it had been an accomplice to economic and educational under-development since the conquest. The new motto, "Masters in our own house," became the rallying cry of a society bent on pulling itself up by its bootstraps and redressing economic and social injustice.
This sparked the “quiet revolution” which penetrated every activity, for the Québécois were behind in every sphere. It is debatable whether or not the quiet revolution of this period was successful, however the motto is still a constant guide to political decision makers and the search for autonomy continues. As far as language is concerned the fight for language rights is not only a battle against assimilation, but also a war which aims to give control of the province to the French-speaking Québécois.

There are two positions among supporters of French unilingualism in Quebec. The first argues that it is possible to promote French as the major language without taking away the rights of anglophones. Quebec can use the rights of its anglophones as a means of bargaining for the protection of francophone minorities in other provinces. This solution accepts the existence of a francophone Quebec within a restructured Canadian confederation. This is a federalist position.

The second position claims that it is not possible to impose French in Quebec without fighting against the privileges of the anglophones and that absolute priority must be given to safeguarding French language and culture in Quebec. This means leaving the francophone minority outside of Quebec to fend for itself. This position implies the creation of an autonomous Quebec, or according to the recent expression of the Parti Québécois, Sovereignty-Association—political independence with economic cooperation.

Inside and outside of the Parti Québécois there is a more radical movement, which wishes not only to replace anglophone power with francophone power in Quebec, but which also seeks to give real power to the working class. For those who take this position, the ethnic and linguistic debate merely masks not only the socio-economic problem but also ideological difference.

Whatever the political and social resolution of this problem may be, whatever choices Quebec may make, it is already clear that French is the dominant language of the province. In 1974 the Bourassa government proclaimed French the official language of Quebec. Since the Parti Québécois has come to power, French had become the language of education and of work. Immigrants are now being absorbed into the French-speaking sector. Quebec is assuming its francophone identity and is taking its place on the international scene.

by Professor V. T. Riddick
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As in New Mexico, the roots of bilingualism in Louisiana go back to the earliest European settlement, the establishment of a French colony at the mouth of the Mississippi in the last year of the eighteenth century. When the Louisiana colony was ceded to Spain in 1763, French remained the dominant language. Its position was in fact reinforced during the Spanish period when French-speaking Acadians, exiled from Nova Scotia by the British, began arriving in large numbers, and again in 1793 when French planters fled Santo Domingo, bringing along their creole-speaking slaves. When Louisiana was purchased by the United States in 1803, French was firmly entrenched along the Gulf Coast.

During the nineteenth century, French retained its position in New Orleans and in the southern parishes (Louisiana has parishes instead of counties). Every European revolution or recession sent Gallic immigrants to the Gulf Coast, especially to New Orleans and the urban centers where, together with the Creoles, the descendants of the early European settlers, they formed an educated elite. So it was in 1815 with Napoleonic exiles, and again in 1830, 1849, 1852, and 1870 with political refugees. In the rural areas, the some 14,000 Acadians of the eighteenth century spread and multiplied, not only because of their extraordinary fertility, but also because of their uncanny talent for absorbing and acculturating other ethnic groups, be they Germans, Spaniards, Bohemians, Irish, or Scots.

Today, however, English has gained the ascendancy in the cities, and bilingualism refers mostly to the rural areas where French has maintained itself in two oral varieties, Cajun and creole. Cajun, as spoken among the Acadians and their assimilated neighbors, resembles the French of New Brunswick. It uses maritime expressions, archaic words, and has borrowed freely from English. Creole, introduced by the Santo Domingo slaves, resembles the dialect of the West Indies and is spoken mostly, though not exclusively, among Blacks. The total number of French speakers is variously estimated from 300,000 to a million and a half. The 1970 census found close to 300,000 whites who claimed French as their mother tongue. (The question was not asked of non-whites.)

Cajun and creole survived in the rural areas because of isolation—geographic, social, economic, and cultural. Persecuted by the English in Canada, despised by the Creole aristocracy in Louisiana, the

LOUISIANA

In Louisiana, as in New Mexico, bilingualism means the struggle of a second local language for survival in the presence of a clearly dominant national language. As in New Mexico, the influence of that second language is obvious even to the most casual observer: place names are French, surnames are French, the foods advertised everywhere and the folk heroes whose names are emblazoned on motels, restaurants and canned goods are French. Bilingualism is pervasive in that southern region which stretches from New Orleans to the Texas border, a region within which French is spoken constantly, in stores, banks, homes, and bars. Much radio and television advertising is in French, and the inclusion of at least some French phrases is de rigueur for political oratory.
Acadians established themselves in the western prairies, swamps, and marshes where nature acted as a protective barrier and where they developed a vigorous, idiosyncratic culture. Moreover, the development of schools was slow until the 1930s. Before that, roads were few and bad so that rural children, white and black, attended school but irregularly. Furthermore, there were no reasons to develop reading and writing skills, and even less English fluency, which would be symptomatic of the codifiiation process.

The first part of the program has been admirably fulfilled. Coddifi bumper stickers and posters plastered all over south Louisiana proclaimed, "When you speak Coddifi, you speak Cajun![2] The program sponsored conferences which featured native Louisiana Francophones alongside speakers from France, Quebec, Belgium, French-speaking Africa, the West Indies made Cajuns feel that they belonged to a world-wide tradition. Moreover, the time was ripe: the search for roots, cultural as well as racial, had begun. In the space of ten years, attitudes changed radically, and the students who once denied their bilingualism now proudly marshal whatever shreds of French they have picked up from their grandparents.

The educational campaign has been less successful. In the 1930s, the program sponsored by Coddifi French in grades K through 12, was state-funded, it was impossible to deny participation to north Louisiana school systems whose legislators had voted for Coddifi credits. The program, underfunded to begin with, was therefore spread too thinly to be effective.

Because there were few native teachers trained to teach French in the grades, Coddifi brought over foreign teachers, mostly from France, Quebec, and Belgium, on a situation fraught with problems. The teachers usually come for only one or two years so that the teaching lacks continuity and articulation; the cases of course, students need time to be re-presented in some strongly Cajun or creole communities; not understanding the Louisiana school system which they find both rigid and overly decentralized, they often clash with administrators—many of whom, moreover, pay only lip service to the program and often deliberately impede the work of the young foreigners.

The foreign teachers were supposed to be a stopgap measure until native teachers could be trained. A second Language Specialist program (SLSP) was instituted to train certified teachers with fluency, or near-fluency, in Louisiana French to read and write a language already spoken and to give them a stronger grammatical and lexical foundation. In south Louisiana, where a large number of native speakers existed, the program worked fairly well. The other Louisiana universities, however, also began SLSP programs, and a curriculum designed for fluent speakers was applied without any changes to English monolingual speakers. To make the situation worse, the university demands that the proficiency scores required for SLS certification be lowered until they became meaningless.

The school boards, on the other hand, while complaining about the foreign teachers, showed no eagerness to replace them because the foreigners are paid considerably less than native teachers. Nor have state appropriations taken into consideration the fact that a program started in kindergarten, then expanded annually to more grades, would need more and more teachers until the thirteen years were staffed.

One can say, therefore, that the ambitious program to teach French in grades K through 12 has been less than successful. Its near failure, however, is more than offset by the overwhelming success of the psychological campaign, the tremendous enthusiasm among the young Cajuns, the rebirth of French literature which has taken place in the last three years, and above all the new sense of pride in the French heritage. One can hope that a grass roots movement will indeed implement one of the Coddifi slogans by forcing the schools "to rebuild what they have destroyed," and to cooperate wholeheartedly in preserving and developing bilingualism in Louisiana.

by Professor Mathé Allain
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NEW MEXICO

Despite recent efforts to clarify the linguistic situation of Spanish in New Mexico, large-scale research in this area is still urgently needed. The most comprehensive studies of the language are, unfortunately, badly dated. There are, nevertheless, a few good studies of recent vintage and there is a growing body of literature on bilingualism in New Mexico and the Southwest.

What emerges from this data, granted that it is incomplete, is a kind of an outline, or gestalt, of the state of Spanish in New Mexico today. When the New Mexican perspective is compared to the bilingual issues which are vital to Quebec, Belgium, Haiti, and Louisiana, many shared areas of concern become readily apparent.

Four major events in the evolution of Spanish in New Mexico are occurring simultaneously. The first is the shrinking of areas, if any, which are monolingual in Spanish in Northern New Mexico. The second event is the probability of an older language shift from Spanish to English throughout the state, particularly in towns and in the larger urban centers.
has been more than replaced by the continual influx of Spanish speakers, both legal and illegal, from Mexico and other parts of the immense Spanish-speaking world. Although it is difficult to measure the social impact of the recent Spanish-speaking arrivals in New Mexico, at least it is undeniable that the general awareness of the Spanish language as a socio-linguistic force to be reckoned with in New Mexico remains very high.

Another factor which cannot be neglected in considering the strength of Spanish in New Mexico is the Chicano Movement. As a part of the ever-widening political, social, and economic ramifications of this movement, there has been a great intensification of linguistic and cultural awareness on the part of the young people of Spanish-speaking descent. Many, although educated in English predominated or English monolingual Hispanic have experienced a cultural/linguistic anxiety, as one result of the Chicano Movement, which has led them, sometimes painfully, back towards the Spanish language. Code switching, that is, the free and easy shifting back and forth from Spanish to English that characterizes the Spanish of many Hispanic communities, may be a way station on a journey towards greater command of Spanish by the young Hispanos.

The continual growth of the Spanish-speaking population in New Mexico combined with the new awareness of the young Hispanics should magnify the impact of the Spanish language and Hispanic culture on all facets of New Mexican society. Keeping this in mind, Belgium, with its traditions of compromise, negotiation, and mutual accommodation which enable peoples of different languages and cultures to live in peace with each other, may well serve as an example for the development of appropriate institutions for ethnic and linguistic conflict resolution in New Mexico and the Southwest in the years to come.

There is a widely recognized pattern for language shift in an area such as New Mexico or Louisiana where a second language struggles to maintain itself in the daily confrontation with the dominant national language. The first generation will shift from Spanish monolingualism to Spanish/English bilingualism with a predominance of Spanish. The second generation will exhibit Spanish/English bilingualism with a shift towards English dominance. The third, or present, generation, will tend to shift towards a complete English language monolingualism. Obviously this outcome is only an indication of a general pattern. In actual life, there would be many and complex variations of this pattern.

The shrinking of areas of monolingual competency in Spanish in Northern New Mexico and the large-scale language shift from Spanish to English are roughly comparable to the linguistic erosion of French in Louisiana. In both New Mexico and Louisiana, what was the first language has become the second language and this second language has fared better in the isolated rural areas. In both states the second language underwent a social transformation from an all-purpose language to a language of the home. In both states the second language became heavily dependent upon an oral tradition and this tradition was seriously weakened in the earlier decades of this century by professional educators who led an assault on bilingualism. Finally, Spanish also became associated with a sense of group identity and it became de rigueur for the New Mexican politician to mouth a few slogans in Spanish. Radio and television programs will occasionally advertise in Spanish in order to take advantage of this sense of group identity. On the whole, however, Spanish has maintained a stronger posture in New Mexico than French in Louisiana despite the continuing opposition to the Spanish revival coming from powerful English-speaking elements of New Mexican society.

Surely there is a tragic irony at work here. Spanish, the language of a once mighty empire and of complex and dynamic nations and societies, and French, the language of high culture and of international diplomacy, surviving only in the out of the way bayous and mountains of this English-speaking nation. The native speakers of Spanish and French, with their prestigious cultures and literatures, were regarded as inferior in America and forced to do battle just to uphold the right to speak and study their own languages. In this battle, the ultimate victims are the children of all cultures who become locked into a monolingual ignorance of the world because of political, social, and economic actions taken, or not taken, by their elders, and because of educational policies adopted, or not adopted, by their parents and the school boards.

A glance at the history of the Southwest and of New Mexico will show what factors were at work in the survival of Spanish and the development of dialectical variation. The various southwestern dialects of Spanish are rooted in the pattern of Spanish conquest and settlement of this area. The conquistadores and the early Hispanic settlers followed the river valleys and the mountain cordilleras extending north from Mexico. The lines of communication therefore ran north and south. Lateral, or east-west communications remained very poor throughout the Spanish and Mexican periods of rule in the Southwest. Consequently, the Spanish-speaking communities of the Southwest had only slight, if any, contact with each other across the deserts and hostile territories which separated them. Under these conditions, it is not difficult to understand why differences in spoken Spanish would develop and flourish.

Turning specifically to New Mexico, Spanish survived, in part, because the Anglo conquest and colonization focused on the prairies to the east or swept around the mountain escarpments of the Sangre de Cristos on the way to California, effectively isolating northern New Mexico and allowing its Spanish language and Hispanic culture a historic breathing space, time for its inhabitants to survive the shock of contact with the Anglo invaders and to consolidate what they could of their language and culture.

Northern New Mexico, in a sense, is the Quebec of the Southwest. An English-speaking minority controls important sectors of the local economy there, while the Spanish-speaking majority suffer from extremely low incomes and state welfare dependency which has existed, in many cases, for several generations. The majority of the Northern New Mexico Hispanos, like the Quebecois, maintain their traditional cultural values and customs and many of the language expressions of the original Hispanic colonists. The Chicano Movement, like Quebec nationalism within Canada, has had the effect of intensifying the language awareness of urban Norteamericano, although the separatist political sentiment has not been as strong and has not yet become as well articulated as it has in Canada. As in Quebec, the street Spanish of the barrios is beginning to appear in poetry, songs, plays, stories and novels. There is, I believe, a veritable literary explosion beginning to occur among the Spanish-speaking of New Mexico.

As linguistic and literary awareness grows among the Hispanics of New Mexico, the standard Spanish dialect also assumes a greater role as a stabilizing force in New Mexico. There is some indication in recent studies that as the level of formal education taught in standard Spanish rises, there is at least a slight tendency to use standard Spanish forms with greater frequency. Standard Spanish has a critically important role as a bonding agent that will enable Hispanos and Chicanos to relate their own linguistic
and cultural experience to the enormous cultural resources of Spain and Latin America.

Haiti is an extreme example of what happens when linguistic chauvinism becomes the hallmark of a ruling elite. Language becomes a tool of oppression rather than a liberating force and the entire society suffers from an unintelligent and inhumane language policy. It is clear that without mutual respect and mutual understanding among all peoples, creativity, including the infinite possibilities of linguistic creativity inherent in all languages, all dialects, would wither and the world become a hostile camp where one would forever watch the enemy without who is the enemy within.

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