

2018

HERITAGE SPANISH LANGUAGE CONTEST
MAGAZINE

Mi lengua heredada es más que un segundo idioma
My Spanish is more than a second language



Spanish at PSU

You have a valuable cultural and linguistic heritage. Your bilingual experiences give you an intuition for languages – a talent – that most monolinguals don't have. We want to help you build on that talent, increase your proficiency and develop your language skills for professional use. Spanish is represented in many departments at PSU, including World Languages and Literatures, Chicano/Latino Studies, Geography, Sociology, International Studies, and History. Connect with student community at PSU through Las Mujeres de la Raza, MEChA, Latina Dance, Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, Caribbean Community Connection, Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting, and La Casa Latina Student Center. There are also many Hispanic cultural events at PSU.

Course Information

FALL TERM:	WINTER TERM:	SPRING TERM:
SPAN 201H TR 10-11:50	SPAN 201H TR 10-11:50	SPAN 201H TR 10-11:50
SPAN 301H TR 14-15:50	SPAN 301H TR 14-15:50	SPAN 301H TR 14-15:50

For more info, contact the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu



iHey Tú!

¿Hablas español hasta que te toca decir una palabra that you don't know how to say in Spanish? Do you wonder why some words in Spanish have accents and some don't? These are the classes for you! Enrich your language skills with an instructor who targets key areas of development specifically for heritage speakers of Spanish. Study among others developing their voice on the same borderlands between English and Spanish...

SPANISH 201H: For students who haven't studied their Spanish language heritage as an academic subject. Emphasis on the relevance of your cultural and linguistic heritage for academic pursuits. Focus on vocabulary development, grammar, and spelling. For the best placement, advising is suggested. Contact the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu

SPANISH 202H: For students who are beginning to integrate their linguistic and cultural heritage into their academic pursuits. Further focus on spelling, grammar, and greater academic vocabulary. Prerequisite: Spanish 201/201H, or with the recommendation of the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu

SPANISH 203H: Fulfills the BA and MA Foreign Language Requirements. Introduction to academic and formal registers. Continuing focus on grammar, spelling, and greater vocabulary development. Prerequisite: Spanish 202/202H, or with the recommendation of the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu

SPANISH 301H: Fulfills the BA and MA Foreign Language Requirements. For students interested in writing and speaking Spanish for professional purposes. Focus on formal and academic registers. Study of linguistic diversity. We recommend you take 301H, 302H, and 303H in order. To register, contact the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu

SPANISH 302H: Fulfills the BA and MA Foreign Language Requirements. Further focus on academic and professional registers. Appreciation of diverse linguistic communities and cultural production. We recommend you take 301H, 302H, and 303H in order. To register, contact the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu

SPANISH 303H: Fulfills the BA and MA Foreign Language Requirements. Fosters formal understanding and expression of the bilingual and biliterate experience. Advocacy of multilingualism and multiculturalism. We recommend you take 301H, 302H, and 303H in order. To register, contact the Spanish Adviser: world@pdx.edu

More Info: Visit our web page for info about courses, minors, majors, certificates, master's degrees, professors, study abroad, internships, capstones, exchange programs, and career opportunities: www.pdx.edu/wll/spanish



2018 Award Winners

Dr. Roberto De Anda (left) and Aimée Carreón-Serna and Robert Sanders (right) with the 2018 award winners: Génesis Cctlali Arámbula, Sarah A. Carranza, Eglantina Sloan Zúñiga and Ariel Andréa Iannone-Román.

The 2018 Heritage Spanish Language Contest asked students to share the life significance that Spanish holds for them. The 2018 prompt is “*Mi lengua heredada es más que un segundo idioma/ My Spanish is more than a second language.*” Through essays, testimony, and poetry, the contestants shared with us the personal, social, and political values both inherent and cultivated in their Spanish-English bilingual experiences. Their writing reflects bilingual heritage at the intersection of changing global and local attitudes towards Spanish-English bilingualism.

This year’s contestants are very compelling. They evidence deep reflection on contemporary and historical movements as well as on artistic and linguistic concepts that enable an elevated dialogue about being Spanish-English biliterate in America today. The images they share range from personal, nostalgic, sensual, and intimate memories to social scenes, political constructs and philosophical abstractions. We are grateful to them for sharing their experience.

Our mission: The Spanish for Heritage Speakers Program at PSU fosters linguistic empowerment through reflection and self-discovery while leveraging heritage language skills for intellectual achievement, social advancement, professional gain, and greater communication with families and communities here and abroad.

Our sponsors: We are very grateful for the sponsorship we’ve received from the Department of World Languages and Literatures and Chicano/ Latino Studies, from the President’s Diversity Mini-grant, and from PSU’s Office of Global Diversity and Inclusion – specifically the office of Carmen Suárez.

Thank you, judges: Cynthia Gómez of Diversity and Multicultural Student Services; Pedro Torres of La Casa Latina Student Center; Ethan Johnson of Black Studies; Craig Epplin, Eva Núñez, and Isabel Jaén of World Languages and Literatures; Roberto De Anda of Chicano/ Latino Studies; Eddy Álvarez of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies; and Javier Casado Pérez of the Graduate School of Education.

2019 Prompt: “*Mi acento dice.../ My accent says...*”

– Drs. Robert Sanders & Elena Avilés

Bryna Cortés



Spanish Language Poetry by Bryna Cortés

Duérmete niña

I can feel Spanish
tastes, smells, voices, in my heart
Papa's lullaby.

Quiero el español

Quiero el español, el idioma que
many were shamed for and told to throw out.

Quiero el español porque soy una hija como
many others who are trying to hold on.

Quiero el español porque soy una
United States citizen and am proud of my family heritage.

Quiero el español porque es el único idioma que
mis abuelitos conocen y quiero hablar con ellos.

The Language with Lengua

Being Mexican is not just in the hips,
but also the rolling "rrrrrrrrr."
Humming, purring;
No gurgles, no blubbering.

I have it in my name,
so I have to get it right.

So when I say "arriba,"
you hurry with that clap in your step.

That kind of spine-tickling
rumbling calls from mariachi,

Lion roars, coyote laughs,
mexicano ¡ay, ay!s and rolling r's.

“The importance of these poems is to reflect on the nostalgic and dignified feelings that Spanish can ignite. “Quiero el español” discusses an issue that is not really talked about, which is the pain that many children of Spanish-speakers have because their parent or parents did not share the language with them. The typical reason that it was not shared has to do with the fact that these parents grew up in areas where their language was not accepted, was considered delinquent, and was discouraged from use. This has caused distance and can be isolating for these children when seeking to join Latin American communities.

“The Language with Lengua” aims to show the nostalgia and excitement the qualities that speaking Spanish can bring; there is so much emotion that is hard to express, that comes from hearing some of the sounds of Spanish.

The haiku “Duérmete niña” is important to me in sparking similar feelings to “The Language with Lengua,” and has a very personal connection because it is about a funny lullaby my dad created and sang to me when I was a child.

és

Mi lengua heredada es más que un segundo idioma.
It is a powerful weapon!
Like the Marine and their M16,
I will master la lengua de mis padres, de mis ancestros.
Because in my mind, the more I speak it the more they will listen!
North, Central, and South America, are we not all Americans?
Dividido y separado por fronteras creadas por el colonizador.

Latinoamérica es una hermosa colección de países
que crean una abundancia de recursos.

However, those resources have not benefited the majority of the people in those countries,
but those elite government and business individuals
and many first world countries.

Our ancestors have been sacrificed so that others in the Global North can benefit.
Immoral practices to keep our people in poverty.
Unreasonable debt acquired by puppeted leaders.
CIA operations that pushed us to revolutionary actions.

Now some of us
are desperately clinging to a nation whose government no longer sees value in us.
I understand, to an extent, how it must feel to not know of the country de tus padres,
knowing only of the country that your parents felt was their only option to survive.

You are all expenditures for the betterment of their investment.
Because the world is a business, a monopoly of the haves and those who will not have.
You all have the opportunity to go back to a country that desperately needs individuals like us...
However, you desperately cling to this country because you are afraid.
Afraid of the unknown,
afraid that you will not fit into your new home.
Afraid of the fact that you are to return to countries that have been exploited
by the very country you so desperately cling to.

Mi lengua heredada es más que un segundo idioma,
es un instrumento para cambio de los indígenas.
Comandante Zebedeo dijo que “otros benefician, y los verdaderos trabajadores
siguen siendo los mismos, con sus brazos cruzados y sus tierras explotadas.”
Haré mi parte y seremos libres pronto.





¿Valió la pena?

Mi familia, hispanohablantes.
Mis mejores amigos, hispanohablantes.
La comunidad, hispanohablantes.
Me, English speaker.

For the longest time I had decided not to talk at all.
¿Pero dónde fue eso que me atrapó?
This fear of trying to be like everyone else,
It's pointless.

I sucked it up and learned what my family, friends and the community are speaking.
But more than that,
Aprendí el idioma de dónde vengo,
La lengua que me llevará a lugares.

The struggle of learning was definitely a challenge worth accepting.
The amount of time reading, watching videos, listening to music,
Was totally worth it.
Jamás dejada fuera de la multitud.

“Mi’ja, who are you?”
Not this weak little girl.
It was a way of gaining acceptance from everyone.
Pero deberían haberme aceptado desde el principio.

Todo está en el pasado ahora,
Y todo lo que puedo buscar en el camino está por delante de mí.
Being bilingual has opened more opportunities for me,
Only guiding me to greater places.

No puedo permitir molestarme con todos
Porque todos son mis amigos.
Suelta las cosas que te están frenando
Y sólo ve.

“These three poems reflect who I am. I have not written poetry in such a long time, and to get back with such a strong topic was a great experience. To write about my struggles of being different from “my people” was only breaking through the barrier to see that we are all united in some way or form. Writing about my heritage Spanish language opened my eyes to see the great advantages I have and learn about where I truly came from. These three poems will tell you what lies behind my walls and how we are to never be divided.”

Unity From Our Differences

Hermanos y hermanas,
Venimos de nuestras propias historias
Pero todos venimos del mismo idioma hablado:
El español

Yo soy la voz de Costa Rica,
La voz de Argentina,
La voz de España,
Pero mi voz está fuera de este mundo.

Aunque el color de mi piel es del que desapruebas,
Mi corazón es de quien amas.
Pero, ¿por qué esta división entre nosotros?
Ámame por quien soy realmente.

Hermanos y hermanas,
No compitamos entre nosotros,
Sino regocijémonos por nuestra lengua.
¡Regocíjate de tener este tipo de diversidad!

Les damos poder a nuestros antepasados
Porque sus voces no han sido enterradas.
¿Sientes la herencia correr por tus venas?

Hermanos y hermanas,
Esta es nuestra herencia,
Este es nuestro idioma.

Todos fueron hechos para ser diferentes,
Pero no juzguen a los demás por sus diferencias;
Acéptenlos y aprécienlos.

Porque soy una hispana de piel clara,
Es un orgullo hablar mi lengua cultural,
El español.

Chica Blanca

My skin color reflects the walls that I am trapped within.
My blazing brown hair wipes all others aside.
You have permanently painted my cheeks with a shade of rose,
Placing me in places where I don't belong.

Surrounded by my own people,
Curious to know as to how I was created like this,
Observing every move I make,
Waiting to make a mistake.

Hearing the familiar sound of theirs coming from me,
Come to me with open arms.
Living in fear for perfection;
I shouldn't be dealt with.

Another day with my other people.
All is fine;
No worries,
For I am just like them... supposedly.

As soon as my mouth opens, yours drops wide.
This is not something that I should have to prove to you.
Blind to see that I have potential,
Soon enough I was starting to become blind myself.

Speaking a second language is more than a skill,
It's power.
Confidence slowly grew in me,
And judgements started to die.

Génesis Cetlali Arámbula



My Spanish Is More Than a Second Language

Yo estoy incompleta sin mi español; es una gran parte de quien soy y de la manera en que yo vivo mi vida. Sin la lengua, el conocimiento se pierde y para mí esto significa que sin mi español, no tengo idea de dónde vengo, qué significa mi nombre, ni de dónde viene mi pasión en el aprendizaje.

Mis abuelos se mudaron aquí (de México) cuando mi mamá era joven. Ellos sabían que al mudarse a los Estados Unidos, sus hijos y nietos iban a tener una vida con muchas oportunidades. Mi mamá creció en California y por esa razón era más conveniente, para ella, hablarme en inglés más que en español. Cuando yo era joven, daba por hecho mi español porque sabía que me ponía en categorías. Era muy mexicana para unos y a la misma vez muy americana para otros. Aunque yo sí entendía el español, no tenía la confianza para hablarlo. Dudaba de muchas de mis palabras y poco a poco, junto con las circunstancias en que vivía con mi familia, se me fue olvidando mucho de mi español.

Durante mi segundo año de *high school* me mudé a Oregon a vivir con mi Tita (mi abuelita). Fue entonces cuando empecé a utilizar más mi español, para comunicarme con mi Tita.

Ella me contaba lo duro que ella y mi mamá trabajaban para asegurarse de que todos en la casa tuviéramos suficiente para comer y vivir bien. En ese momento aprendí que las cosas que necesitan más trabajo son las que tienen más valor. Aunque batallo mucho con mi español, no dejaré de luchar para que mejore.

My passion for learning was sparked by my family's commitment to keep us healthy and have us enjoy a life they were not able to. Although I was constantly being put in categories by others as a young girl, I needed to understand that none of that defined me. My comprehension in Spanish looked different because of my family dynamics and there was nothing wrong with that. My family is from Mexico but I was born and raised in the United States. I am Mexican-American and not one more than the other. I learn and speak in English, and although my Spanish is not perfect, I am still able to communicate with my family.

To me, being bilingual is amazing, because I get the best of many worlds. I am able to dive into the beautiful Mexican culture, receive a university education, along with experiencing the culture and diversity of the Spanish language. In my heritage Spanish class, I am always left with curiosity because of the road Spanish has traveled. I am fascinated with everything there is to learn. In one of my classes, I learned the origin of my middle name, along with how it can be pronounced. *Cetlali* means *estrella* and came from a Uto-Azteca language called Nahuatl and is also a name that has been adapted to the Spanish language, a name my mom gave to me.

In addition to learning, I enjoy dances that are popular in Spanish-speaking countries such as Argentine tango, and bachata, and salsa. Going to events where I get to dance are even better because I am able to practice my Spanish as well as listen to the distinct accents everyone has, which differ in every tongue. I appreciate all of them for the stories and histories they carry.

Yo soy Génesis Cetlali Arámbula y ser bilingüe is the passion that continually drives and makes up who I am.

My Spanish Is More Than a Second Language...

The time spent during my childhood, from my time in San Diego, California for nearly a decade to when I was 9 in Des Moines, Iowa surrounded by *paisanos*, I never realized how much significance my Mexican culture had for my neighbors, my friends, and even my father, who was from Mexico. All around me, I heard the sound of *mariachis* and *banda* music, *paisanos* speaking Spanish, the fresh handmade *pan dulces* and *tacos* from the supermarkets. Although I could not speak Spanish, I was glad to be part of something beautiful. Despite my struggles from childhood, not being able to understand the challenges and barriers *los paisanos* had to go through, it was pretty obvious to me that I did not fit with the crowds all around me because of my lack of Spanish as well as my being far more “gringo” than *mexicano*.

Therefore, little by little, there was some greater power inside of me, pulling me, attracting my attention into mastering the language as well as waking up and having the chance to visit my homeland, my home that I never got the real honor of seeing that did not include Tijuana, where my family and I went shopping and eating during the holidays. When I was 15, I began to take classes at my high school, learning Spanish for 3 years (the very same language my father couldn't teach me out of fear of misleading me and because of his struggles with grammar) and opening my eyes to exploring more of Mexico. However, I was soon left with a decision to move to Portland, Oregon in order for me to start attending college.

Soon after moving to Portland, I had the honor of speaking both languages. However, I was faced with many issues surrounding my identity not just as a Mexican, but also as a bilingual speaker, challenges being around gringos and also being around very few Mexicans and whether or not I could express spoken Spanish safely, like in Southern California. In addition, there was something off about me after being in Portland for a little while. I realized that I cannot enjoy the traditional food like I did in California, or speak Spanish with my other friends without going around hearing Spanglish, or go to events with other *paisanos* like the *charrería* and *ranchería* festivities.

After coming here, I realized how much I changed and that things like this happen for a reason. It was so that I could finally wake up and value the language for myself as well as expressing the things many Mexicans cannot or would not do. After visiting my father's birth state of Veracruz last year, I began to fall in love with the place: the authentic cuisine,



the Son Jarocho music, *las playas*, but especially the people, whom I admire so much and with whom I connect in Spanish.

As a result, I felt incredible, all the time seeing how much I was learning by myself as well as seeing the people around me perceive how unique I am from many other *paisanos*, speaking not just English but also Spanish every day. Preserving the language in a unique place like Mexico allows me to be different from others, who only spoke English, because I felt a connection, a connection so strong but that I never have the honor of sharing with my Anglo friends. Now, *paisanos* see me as a “jarocho.”

In conclusion, I am glad to finally speak Spanish, knowing how much it will benefit me, but also because being a Mexican means having a lot of pride in your country and your culture. Now I see myself differently from many other *paisanos*, finally waking up after visiting Veracruz at the age of 20 and wanting the chance to move to Mexico, eventually, because of how I feel over there, connecting with my people and with my bilingualism. I know for certain I can make much more of a difference for my people. Now I am happy to say how my heritage, along with the chance to speak both Spanish and English, means more than just having two tongues. These two tongues put me at an advantage over others who solely speak Spanish; it's a bridge between two separate worlds, two separate worlds that I am beginning to know more. Being bilingual is an achievement, an honor that I will never forget.

Paul Raemon Kachris-Newman



Reroot to Remain

A sense of place is a valuable thing. My father's mother, *abuela* Rosemarie García, was the first in her family to be born on mainland U.S. soil. Her father, Isidore, emigrated from Spain, and her mother, Blanca, was Puerto Rican. They met while living in Cuba in the 1920s. When I reflect on my father's family I recall a passion for dancing, family loyalty, and a decisive Catholic compass that was ironclad. Did I mention the dancing?

When I was four years old, my mother fled with us to a domestic violence shelter in Albany, New York. My father was an abusive drug addict and the situation had escalated into a crisis. I was fortunate my mother's family stepped in and filled the gaps where things needed fixing. What they could not prevent was the fragmentation we endured as a result. In the years to follow, I would lose all contact with my father's family. The Garcías have passed and it is my job to decide what I will carry and what I will leave behind.

I began playing classical Spanish guitar as a hobby when I was 13, shortly after I lost contact with my father's family. This cultivated an expression that rooted me to something bigger than myself. I imagined the family I would never know, and maybe some of them played guitar too. Maybe we shared the language of music if nothing else.

My eldest brother Marcial has a different father, who is Puerto Rican. Concerns about "enoughness" permeated my childhood. I have always looked up to my brother but I never looked enough like my brother. The world will not see my brother or my father when they look at me. I had to recognize my own face. I had to find myself or remain invisible.

In darker times, I have looked for light in the words of others. "The nobodies: nobody's children, owners of nothing. The nobodies: the no ones, the nobodied, running like rabbits, dying through life, screwed every which way." Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America* situated my heritage as both oppressor and oppressed. I felt empirical truths melting my ignorance. I believe this is a valuable part of identity building (acknowledgment of what has come before you) even if it is difficult. For me, expanding my awareness of my heritage is about coming home. By embracing both the beauty and the tragedy of my mixed legacy, I come closer to something authentic. If I can position my personal privilege and deficits within a deeper responsibility towards participatory peace, I can aspire to be something great. I am both the product of an abuser and a future healer. I can be enough; *un poco de todo*.

I am a film student. The film I am currently producing is called *Village to Village*. I have been to Mexico twice over this last year documenting Syrian refugees who are attending universities there as part of a project dedicated to intercultural organizing called *Proyecto Habesha*. I traveled from Aguascalientes to Mexico City alone with abysmal Spanish language skills and a lot of camera equipment. It became clear that my heritage is not a luxury attachment I get to enjoy when it is convenient; it is my responsibility to become more fluent, to become a more effective advocate.

I began taking Spanish lessons at PSU in 2015. I still fight a timid emotion connected to my "enoughness." I also know I do not need to believe everything I think. Feelings can lie. Failure — when it comes to language — is the only way to grow.

This summer, when I graduate, I am traveling to Spain. I am meeting a previously unknown younger brother who was also raised without my father. He lives in Germany and will meet me near Oviedo, Spain, the birthplace of our great-grandfather, Isidore. We will meet for the first time and reflect on the more than 25 years we lost and the family we both never knew. I have a long way to go before I will be fluent, but learning Spanish is changing my life. There is much more to being bilingual than what can be expressed in any single language. *Una sensación de lugar es algo valioso*. My children will know and love Spanish. Did I mention the dancing? These, I keep.

Mi lengua heredada es más que un segundo idioma

Joel Pérez



Mi lengua me dijo de Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla y El Grito de Dolores, que dio inspiración a la lucha de independencia para México.

Mi lengua me contó de las batallas de Pancho Villa y Emiliano Zapata.

Mi lengua me ha inspirado con los discursos y luchas de César Chávez.

Con mi lengua escuché la música de “El rey del acordeón,” Ramón Ayala, “La reina de la salsa,” Celia Cruz y “El rey de música ranchera,” Vicente Fernández.

Mi lengua me hizo reír con la comedia de Roberto Gómez Bolaños “Chespirito,” Mario Moreno “Cantinflas” y María Elena Velasco “La India María”.

Mi lengua me explicó cómo ver los murales de Diego Rivera, el arte popular de Frida Kahlo o el cubismo de Pablo Picasso.

En mi juventud mi lengua me dejó imitar mis héroes de deportes como Fernando Valenzuela, que jugó para el equipo Los Dodgers de Los Ángeles. Quise ser gran peleador de boxeo como Julio César Chávez y Roberto Durán. Mi lengua me contó cada vez que pelearon, contándome de cada golpe dado y cada golpe recibido.

Mi lengua me dijo la historia de mi familia, con raíces en México, que viajaron para Texas, buscando trabajo en Arizona, California, Idaho y que encontraron una nueva vida en Oregón y Washington.

Y en este nuevo país, algo pasó con mi lengua. Me separé de mi segundo idioma. Pensé que ya no lo iba a necesitar. Era mucho trabajo mantener dos idiomas, dos lenguas. Y con cada broma, cada insulto, de que no hablo mi lengua sin acento ni con las pronunciaciones correctas, estaba desalentándome a aprender más de mi segunda lengua. Cada año que pasó se me olvidó más mi lengua. Me encontré preguntando a mis abuelos “cómo se dice” cada vez que hablaba con ellos. Sólo hablaba mi idioma cuando era necesario. Ninguno de mis amigos, ninguno de mis primos, ninguno de mis compañeros de trabajo hablaba español. Se me olvidó cómo escribir, cómo leer, hasta cómo hablar. Y así era mi vida hasta un día cuando todo cambió.

Un día en noviembre de 2016, comencé a escuchar que mi lengua, mi cultura, mi gente, no tenía valor. Comencé a escuchar que mi lengua no tenía derecho a existir en este país. Que no hay espacio para dos lenguas en este país. Comencé a ver mi segunda lengua con nuevos ojos. Como un novio viendo a su novia después de una larga separación. Yo descubrí la belleza, la elegancia, la sofisticación de mi lengua. La primera lengua de este país. La lengua de mis antepasados. La lengua de mi futuro.

Con mi lengua puedo hablar con 437 millones de personas en el mundo. Millones de ideas, conceptos y creencias a los que tengo acceso para aprender y crear.

Ahora sé que tengo que luchar para aprender y hablar mi idioma. Tengo que asegurar que mi lengua tenga el mismo valor que otros idiomas. Necesito enseñarles a otros que mi lengua es hermosa, inteligente; y es importante contar nuestra historia y cultura en todo el mundo.

Mi lengua heredada es más que un segundo idioma, es todo lo que soy, todo lo que puedo ser.

Ariel Andréa Iannone-Román



Estos 3 poemas significan la combinación de dolor y orgullo que he sentido viviendo en los Estados Unidos con una herencia mezclada. Mi madre es costarricense y mi padre es angloamericano. Siempre había dificultades y *culture shocks* con el mundo alrededor de mi familia. El español era mi primera lengua, pero perdí mi conocimiento poco a poco cuando empecé a asistir a la escuela, porque sólo se hablaba inglés. Por eso estoy estudiando español para heritage speakers en la universidad. Quiero aprender el español que viene de Latinoamérica. Estoy orgullosa de mi herencia mezclada, y mi español es mucho más que un segundo idioma.

Mi verdadero nombre

I. Llámeme por mi verdadero nombre,
no el nombre del mar
o de la tierra
o de la montaña.

Llámeme por el nombre de los espacios
que bailan siempre en medio de dos mundos
donde el mar toca la tierra y la montaña el valle.

Llámeme por el nombre que dice todo en un sonido,
el nombre que dice gringa y latina
al mismo tiempo.

II. Call me by my true name,
the one that sounds as simple
as checking both the Hispanic and White boxes
on some census form.

Call me by the name that sounds like the flow of my Spanish
when I'm arguing with my mom,
and I'm not over-thinking every word.

Call me by the name that doesn't ask one part of me to be ignored,
the name that sounds like who I really am.

III. Llámeme por mi verdadero nombre,
the name that is all my names at once.
Necesito este nombre porque todavía estoy aquí,
standing between dos culturas,
sintiendo que no pertenezco in either,
viviendo con los privilegios de uno
mientras que las partes de mí que sólo hablan español
se hacen más pequeñas.

Llámeme el nombre que es la única verdad que yo sé;
y si el inglés tiene que ser la lengua
que me rodea todos los días,
the glass jar that holds my heart
in an invisible, rigid embrace,
entonces el español siempre será la miel
que llena mi corazón.

Ronald Hernández

My Spanish Is More Than a Second Language



Because language is a fascination, it is as much a hobby as it is heritage. By way of region alone, communication comes with a variety of accents and dialects, noticeable *tells* that display a curiosity to ask “where are you from?” Thus, it is also a conversation starter. I could wear it like a fashion statement and others would ask me where I got it, tailored with domestic as well as imported materials. But what makes it more than external, something not merely just spoken aloud? Instead of being a second language, as if simply following the singular in sequence, it should be seen as an exponent, shaping my understanding by an order of magnitude as when I am able to visit and immerse in its cultures. Absorbing as much as possible, I squeeze it out like CO₂ from the volume of oxygen I hold within; to rejuvenate blood into a running red, transforming its presentation once expressed openly. It is my understanding that the romantic languages were written in red — enthralling history. It expands my own world to break nationalistic barriers, seeing past borders like a second sight, yet with an awareness, a sixth sense of autonomy, independence, and distinction.

To read books, hear songs, and watch films all as if I were on a scavenger hunt always onward to that next clue towards the bilingual prize. The literature is like being welcomed into the family, into open pages and open arms, but with an alter ego, being the black sheep. A familiar song, a whisper in your ear, where I only know the chorus, with a rhythm that dances, and brings you along. A separate film category where I know what’s going on even if for only half of the time. It gives me all the more reason to watch them again as I enjoy the subtitles. It is an ellipsis and an exclamation point. Learning a language is an experience, a skill formed from practice — as committed as an athlete, as creative as a conductor. My Spanish is more than a second language, it is second nature; if I am the tree, it is the forest, a river flowing into a vast ocean, a synergy forming from its very own confluence. I soak in words from different worlds, the varying linguistics lingering at different latitudes and longitudes, clinging to their cultures. To say that Spanish is just a second language is to say that a map is just a picture, knowing the basic layout is fine, but getting to know the terrain firsthand is to see and feel its shape as we explore our horizons.

Eglantina Sloan Zúñiga

El bilingüismo/ Bilingualism

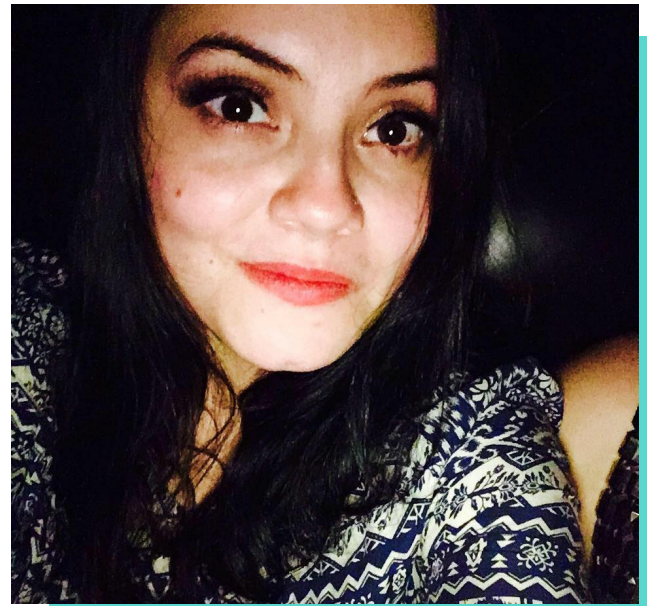
My Spanish tastes like
mangoes and horchata
and when I speak it
my tongue
moves
like a dancer
of tangos and bachata...

Thinking that it has a place in this world,
my Spanish changes rules like Cortázar
and makes art like Frida Kahlo.

But every now and then
my Spanish stays at home sick,
building up memories of la patria.

Pero mi español también se alegra cuando piensa en el inglés,
el cual sabe a frambuesa y calabaza
y cuando lo pronunció los adjetivos danzan
al revés...

Pensando que ocupa un lugar en este mundo, mi inglés es
educado y le gusta leer a Audrey Lorde
y hacer arte como Alex Gray,
pero de vez en cuando
mi inglés se siente triste como La Llorona
porque piensa en el español
y en su patria,
que se le quedó en casa.



La poesía confundida

La poesía que sale de mis labios
está confundida,
no sabe ni qué idioma habla.
My tongue moves one way
while my brain is hosting a dance
between two lovers
and two rivals:
el español y el inglés.
No saben bailar juntos;
se les enredan los pies
while my tongue moves,
confused,
because it's been colonized
twice.

In the first poem (left), I wanted to express the bittersweet feeling of being between cultures. I wanted to give personification to the languages I speak because I feel somehow as if they are their own personae. I first included some of the fruits and tastes characteristic of each culture. I also included some of my favorite artists in both cultures, because being bilingual expands your knowledge since you get to explore different views and styles. I also made languages feel both happiness and sadness because that's exactly what an immigrant feels. In matters of structure, the second poem (right) has both Spanish and English, it pretends to be a translation of each but we know that things get lost in translation, in this case, things get lost from culture to culture. But at the same time, other characteristics get added.

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El arte de ser inmigrante/ The Art of Being an Immigrant

My Spanish means more than a second language. In fact, it's my main one.

La poesía del inmigrante trasciende lenguas y barreras.

Con sus distintas lenguas, afiladas como cuchillos, están dispuestas a luchar por sus ideales, por sus carreras, por sus familias.

La poesía del inmigrante carga con un compromiso colectivo; tira los estereotipos al suelo y anda con pies cansados de tanto correr.

La poesía del inmigrante está desvelada y cansada de tener que justificar su existencia. Tiene mucha hambre por los temas que la invaden la pobreza y la tristeza.

Pero la poesía del inmigrante es luchadora, capaz, y no se rinde jamás.

This poem, "Confused Poetry," represents the struggle and resistance of your mother tongue while you're learning and using your second language. That resistance is also the resistance against the extinction and replacement that are common when trying to assimilate into other cultures. The poem is a confusion in itself since you won't be able to read it if you don't speak both Spanish and English. But even if you do, that doesn't mean you will be able to understand it.

At the end I added that my tongue has been colonized twice because my bilingualism is the product of both colonization and imperialism. Bilingualism is a great thing, but I also like to recognize the truth and I like to give a voice to that part of history that has been silenced. Both languages, Spanish and English, were forced as a way of assimilation, and since then they have been consider superior to others as well. With my poem I hope to bring another perspective about those languages.

My Spanish is more than a second language, in fact it is my main one and with this poem I wanted to open a door to discuss that. In addition to heritage students, there are also immigrant students who represent what being bilingual means. I wanted to add that my poetry and the poetry of so many immigrants has great value since it has the privilege and the responsibility to give voices to our communities. Being an immigrant is an art in itself, a struggle in itself; it has beauty in itself. Often times, when we talk about diversity, multiculturalism, and multilingualism, we somehow and ironically manage to exclude immigrants' voices. I am here to say that my voice has been broken, silenced, and hidden. I'm also here to say that my accent is strong and loud and proud.

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