

Alicia Pousada (ed.), *Being Bilingual in Borinquen: Student Voices from the University of Puerto Rico*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. ix + 175 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.99)

*Being Bilingual in Borinquen* presents personal stories by university professors, Ph.D. candidates, school teachers, and other professionals about their experiences as bilingual graduate students. Some were born and raised in Puerto Rico, others were born in the United States and partially raised in Puerto Rico, and others were born and raised in the United States and other countries. In her concluding chapter Alicia Pousada sums up the main points of the essays, cleverly identifies some patterns among them, and insightfully analyzes their meaning.

The book's objectives are to uncover the causes of the contributors' bilingualism and to "isolate some of the variables that may be utilized in language planning to improve the language situation of all Puerto Ricans" (p. 3). The contributors interpret their lives as if they were longitudinal studies about their own linguistic habits, providing decades of qualitative data processed by the subjects themselves, who have become researchers of their own experiences. The narrations are by turns fascinating and tragic, and always interesting. The introduction provides a crash course in sociolinguistics and bilingualism, explaining how, depending on the level of exposure, a person can lose or gain proficiency in a language. It describes the five types of bilingualism as incipient bilingualism, receptive bilingualism, functional bilingualism, equilingualism, and ambilingualism. Pousada adheres to Bernard Spolsky's model of L2 learning, which emphasizes the social context and applies the concepts of word borrowing, code-switching, and translanguaging.

There follow 25 autobiographies by graduate students at the University of Puerto Rico. Their stories offer personal accounts told from diverse standpoints. The section about Nuyoricans illustrates the connection between language and identity by looking at different spaces, such as home, work, play, study, cursing, church, and school, revealing an intimate side that can't be described by statistical analyses or scientific research. The contributors' narrative styles vary, which gives the book real dynamism. Some are poetic, others are reflexive, some get political, and so forth, but they all display an excellent grasp of linguistic concepts and terms and remind us that when we study human beings all the theories in the world are no replacement for individual personal experiences.

The contributors offer various explanations for their bilingualism. For many, cable television, radio, and films were instrumental. Some focus on their par-

ents, others on their teachers. Most had bad English or Spanish teachers at some point but also exceptional ones that made the difference. Their stories bespeak a linguistically diverse Puerto Rico often not reflected in official statistics.

Pousada's conclusion analyzes the factors that the students identified as having been instrumental for them and reviews work on language in Puerto Rico by educators, linguists, and social scientists. Written as a set of autobiographies rather than as a collection of essays, the book listens to "the voices of the people who experience this (language) dynamic" (p. 145), treats them as success stories, and shies away from negative assessments of Puerto Rico's English teaching.

The book identifies some common causal variables among the contributors' linguistic experiences, such as caring adults in their childhood, linguistic opportunities, awareness of the benefits of language acquisition, nonjudgmental attitudes toward "others," personal relationships, openness to change, and willingness to take social risks. It describes the differences among the contributors in terms of the types of schools they attended, number of years in school, family structure, school curriculum, parents' employment, type of community, and country of origin. Pousada concludes that educational language policies in Puerto Rico have no flexibility to account for those factors. Hence, she proposes the creation of a nuanced language policy that may produce more bilingual people like those presented in this book and argues in favor of a new educational language policy that can help improve Puerto Rican residents' global economic and cultural competitiveness.

The book's overview of many linguistic terms, concepts, and theories will be useful for both specialists and nonspecialists. It also discusses the language laws in Puerto Rican history and their contexts. The conclusion claims that most people in Puerto Rico have no idea about language planning, underscores the presence of conflicting language attitudes, and suggests as a potential solution the Scandinavian model of *parallellingualism*, akin to diglossia but without the high/low varieties. Pousada also proposes an island-wide linguistic survey to reveal the day-to-day use of English and the differences between regions. In the end the book calls for dynamic language policies reflecting the many roads that lead to "the rich fields of multilingualism."

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