

Introduction

The impetus for my research is an article by Larson outlining some of the bizarre outcomes stemming from baby naming laws in various US states. In particular, it is legal in New Jersey to name your child "Adolf Hitler", while in California, it is expressly prohibited to name your child "María", that is, with the proper Spanish accentuation. Baby naming being one of the most visceral acts of linguistic power, I wished to investigate further the relations between language and government power.

Speaking on the controversial issue of bilingual education, Huerta et al. writes that "nos quiere hacer creer que es una práctica "neutral," and that "la dimensión política, social, y de poder ...se deja fuera de la discusión." Sociolinguistics is grounded in the idea that language does not exist in a theoretical vacuum; instead, it carries social evaluations with real outcomes on those who engage in a particular language variety. Thus we will look at how these social evaluations and their juridical manifestations have played out over the history of the United States, the effects of various laws on American language communities, a more general paradigm of political linguistics, and the situation in California more closely.

Political Linguistics

Deficit Mindset

Language Repression

Language in the United States

Bilingual Education