Coloniality of Mixed Race and Mixed Language ᵃ

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter situates the study of race, language, and mixedness within imperial histories through which notions of racial and linguistic hybridity were and continue to be developed. It argues that questions of "mixed race" and "mixed language" are less about mixing races and languages and more about how evaluations of who and what is regarded as mixed are authorized in the ongoing reproduction of colonial hierarchies. After reviewing past research on mixed race and language, the chapter theoretically situates the concepts of race, language, and hybridity within a framework of coloniality that considers colonial, scientific, and liberal discourses surrounding imperial conquest. The chapter introduces four paradigms of mixedness that have been produced through this history: *immiscibility, absorption, blend*, and *end*. The chapter concludes with a case study to illustrate how notions of racial and linguistic hybridity frame a contemporary elite figure in the Philippines.

Keywords: language, race, mixedness, hybridity, colonialism, Philippines, elite

IN some respects, the notion of "mixed race" appears straightforward: people are mixed race if they were born to people of different races. For example, if former U.S. President Barack Obama has a black father and a white mother, he is mixed race (or "biracial" or "multiracial"). Yet this seemingly benign formulation rests on a set of assumptions: 1) that there is a thing in the world such as race; 2) that such races are distinct from one another; and 3) that a mix results from bringing such distinct races together. A further look at the Obama example illustrates that such racial logics arise and shift historically. For example, if Obama is mixed why is he also regarded as simply black but rarely, if ever, white? After all, he is often called the first black president though never just another white president. To consider how Obama is black is to consider the "one-drop rule" that was fundamental to the formation of the U.S. nation-state. The one-drop rule, which was devised during chattel slavery and was integrated into the Racial Integrity Act of Virginia in 1924, designated individuals with both black and white ancestry as not white but definitively black or "colored." That Obama is considered black in the twenty-first century is part of the ongoing rearticulation of how individuals like him were considered black since

at least the 18th century. In this chapter, I argue that to understand who gets labeled a race (e.g., Obama as black) or mixed race (e.g., Obama as multiracial) is to wrestle with the imperial histories through which racial typologies develop and shift.

The concept of mixed race can be intimately tied to that of "mixed language." Obama, to continue with the example, has been known to "styleshift," that is, shift his style of speech to sound more black or white in different situations (Alim and Smitherman 2012). In this sense, his speech can be understood as mixing languages just as his body can be understood as mixing races. But what are these "languages"? Ideological framings of English often accord it the status of a language and recognize an internal variation as (p. 187) comprised of at least one standard form that is positioned as superior to its dialects (Silverstein 1996). Whereas standard American English is often linked to the normative white speaking subject, American English dialects, such as "African American English," are often linked to marginalized populations that are racialized, regionalized, classed, and so on. But African American English can also be recognized as a "creole," combining English and West African languages since the transatlantic slave trade (Rickford 1974), whereas English is still often understood as a language This is despite the fact that English can "out-creole" creoles—that is, be more linguistically mixed than creoles (DeGraff 2005). So why isn't English widely recognized as a creole? For one, the term creole is not just a label for language, but a label for people, emerging under the conditions of colonialism and historically designating a range of social types: from colonial settlers born in the colony to settler-native mixed populations. In this chapter, I argue that to understand what gets understood as a language (e.g., English) or mixed language (e.g., African American English; creole; style shifting) is to wrestle with the colonial histories that frame its speakers.

This chapter situates the study of race, language, and mixedness within imperial histories through which racial and linguistic typologies have developed. Importantly, these typologies still organize contemporary perceptions of people and language. I will demonstrate how this is accomplished through "fractal recursivity" (Irvine and Gal 2000), a semiotic process through which a social distinction occurring along one axis (e.g., colonizer vs. colonized) can be replicated through divisions on one side of the opposition (e.g., colonized elite vs. colonized masses). Such "colonial recursivity" (Reyes 2017a) helps conceptualize how in the absence of formal colonial rule, colonial relations can be sustained through internal divisions of the colonized category. I will argue that notions of mixed race and mixed language are less about mixing races and languages and more about colonial recursivity, the ongoing reproduction of colonial hierarchies through the creation of nested distinctions among social types.

To be clear, this chapter takes a firm position that racial and linguistic mixedness is not an inherent feature of people or practices, but an attributed quality largely assigned by the "listening subject" (Inoue 2006). The listening subject is not so much a biographical person but a subject position from which the world is heard and reported upon. For example, in her work on so-called "schoolgirl speech" (*jogakusei kotoba*) in late-19th-century Japan, Miyako Inoue (2003) "explores the conditions of possibility for the schoolgirl to be

heard and cited and thus to be acoustically recognized as a cultural being by Meiji intellectuals as listening subjects" (2003: 157). She argues that male intellectuals purportedly overheard schoolgirl speech not because schoolgirls necessarily spoke that way, but because male listening subjects were wrestling with their own anxieties about modernity at the turn of the century. The listening subject is also a useful concept for considering questions of race, language, and mixedness through a colonial lens. I will argue that authoritative evaluations of who and what is regarded as mixed are produced by a listening subject that wrestles with its own anxieties over modernity, colonialism, nation-state formation, and political economic systems.

(p. 188) This chapter has four main sections. First, I begin with a review of past research on mixed race and language. I focus primarily on linguistic research on mixed race whether in the presence or absence of mixed language. Next, I theoretically situate the very notions of race, language, and mixedness within a framework of coloniality. I argue for a developed theory of how these concepts have been historically constituted through colonial, scientific, and liberal discourses surrounding imperial conquest. I then analyze how notions of hybridity become central in producing four paradigms of mixedness: *immiscibility, absorption, blend*, and *end*. Third, I draw on my research in the Philippines as a case study to illustrate the coloniality of racial and linguistic mixedness. I show how a Philippine elite social figure and linguistic register (Agha 2005) connect to notions of mixed race and mixed language in the recursive constitution of colonial hierarchies in the postcolony. Finally, I conclude with directions for future study.

Studies on Mixed Race and Language

Conceptions of race have been central to the development of many academic disciplines, including American (linguistic) anthropology in the late 19th century and American sociolinguistics in the mid 20th century. Much sociolinguistic work on language and race has been motivated by a distinctiveness paradigm, concerned less with the emergence of race and language as ontological categories and more with the correlation of seemingly distinct linguistic patterns with seemingly distinct racial groups. This paradigm often overlooks racialized formations, such as Asian Americans, who are not regarded as possessing a distinct language variety (Reyes and Lo 2009). This might also explain the relative absence of work on language and mixed race—again, a formation perhaps lacking the distinctiveness of both speech and group that is favored by this research paradigm.

In this section, I review key studies on mixed race and language over the past few decades. Much of this work is from and about the United States, due in part to how race has been conceptualized as a central organizing principle in American political economic structures. Following U.S. Supreme Court decisions that challenged racial segregation in public schools (*Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954) and anti-miscegenation laws (*Loving v. Virginia* in 1967), public discourses of "tolerating" (Brown 2006) racial difference shifted to those of valuing "diversity" (Urciuoli 1999, this volume), such that a purported growing acceptance of racial mixing could become an issue to celebrate or increasingly

fear. By the late 1980s, the field of mixed race studies was emerging alongside the movement for multiracial recognition on the U.S. census form (Daniel et al. 2014). Studies on mixed race and language gained momentum during this period in the 1990s, continuing through the era of Obama, the nation's first "biracial" president, to the current moment of an increasingly visible white nationalism whose promotion of racial purity is produced within an explicit anti-immigrant, antiblack, and anti-Muslim agenda (see also Dick, Durrani, Khan, Perrino, Smalls, this volume).

(p. 189) Below I highlight three main areas of focus across work on mixed race and language: 1) labels for mixed race; 2) racial and linguistic fluidity of mixed race speakers; and 3) the listening subject of mixed race.

First, several studies analyze the labels used to name mixed race. This research explores what these terms reveal about how mixed race is perceived in given times and places. Such labels often accrue both referential and indexical meanings that mutually reinforce a general undesirable quality of being racially mixed. For example, in addition to naming an aboriginal category distinct from First Nations people in Canada, the French term *métis* (mixed blood) referred to the progeny of *métissage* (interracial unions) in French Indochina in the late 1800s, where it became a trope for internal contamination and thus European degeneration (Stoler 1992). Also, although the Dutch term *Indo* acts as a shifter in that it can refer to either Indonesians in general or those understood as racially mixed, the label emerged historically from *Indo-Europeesch* (Indo-European) to mark both racial mixedness as well as lower class status associated with being mixed (Hewett 2017). Similarly, the term *hafu* ("half"), a Japanese label for biraciality, has been understood as signaling an inherent insufficiency: mixed race individuals as only partly (half) not fully (whole) Japanese. Efforts to replace *hafu* with *doburu* ("double") seek to correct this perception by suggesting that biracial individuals are not two halves, but two wholes (Shaitan and McEntee-Atalianis 2017). Yet it is important to note that it is not the label itself that causes stigma; it is the negative perception of being mixed race, regardless of what it is called. That mixed race stigma persists despite a new label (such as *doburu*) points to the limits of a referentialist ideology, which would predict that a change in name would lead to a change in value.

Second, much work emphasizes the movement across racial and linguistic boundaries by mixed race speakers. In one of the first sociolinguistic studies of mixed race, Bucholtz (1995) explores how a range of linguistic strategies is central to the performance of race among multiracial women in the U.S. Whereas one participant claims Japanese as a heritage language in order to authenticate herself as Japanese, another participant refuses to adopt black vernacular features in order to defy stereotypes of blackness. In all cases, Bucholtz claims that her participants "use language to challenge external perceptions and to lay claim to their own definition of ethnic identity" (1995: 362). Whereas Bucholtz centers on several mixed race women, Alim and Smitherman (2012) focus on one mixed race man: Barack Obama. They show how Obama adopts various linguistic strategies in order to "whiten" and "blacken" himself, while managing a narrow "sweet spot" so as to be read as neither too white nor too black according to particular audiences and situa-

tions. Similar kinds of styleshifting are explored in other studies of mixed race, from subtle intonational features among black-white biracial men in the Washington, DC area (Holliday 2016), to bilingualism among mixed race girls in Japan (Kamada 2009), to more semiotic assemblages of citizenship styles among multiracial high school students in Texas (Chun 2013).

Third, a growing body of research on mixed race has decentered speaker performance and prioritized instead how performance is framed by a listening subject. This is not to say that the studies above do not consider how listeners interpret speakers, (p. 190) including Alim and Smitherman (2012), who focus both on how Obama talked and on how people talked about how Obama talked. To the extent that notions of light skin can be taken up as a sign of racial mixedness, Urciuoli (1996) illustrates how assessments of speech can involve assessments of skin tone among Puerto Ricans in New York City. When Urciuoli played audio-recordings of speech to her research participants, one listener had difficulty accepting that the speaker on the recording was Dominican, until the listener concluded that the speaker must be "light skinned." In another example, Rosa (2016) analyzes a commercial for a hybrid car that features a bilingual Spanish-English-speaking father and a monolingual English-speaking son. While the commercial does not explicitly present either character as mixed race, it nonetheless maps "hybrid" qualities of a car onto person and language such that a Latinx futurity involves three generational shifts: a gas-Spanish-past; a hybrid-bilingual-present; and an electric-English-future. Finally, Lo and Kim (2011) examines how the speech practices of two mixed race male celebrities in South Korea are read in entirely different ways not because of differing linguistic ability but because of competing notions of citizenship. Although both men are English dominant with similar Korean proficiency, the celebrity whose mixedness is linked to colonial, military, and low-class origins is perceived as speaking vulgar, incompetent Korean, whereas the celebrity whose mixedness is linked to modern, elite, and cosmopolitan status is perceived as speaking refined, polite Korean. These studies highlight how mixed race becomes audible not because of how people speak but because of how speech and other signs are made into objects of perception through the authority of the listening subject.

Coloniality of Race, Language, and Mixedness

The research above has established an important foundation for work on mixed race and language. In this section, I theoretically situate the very terms "race," "language," and "mixedness" within a framework of coloniality. Although several studies discussed in the previous section take a similar perspective, I hope to further develop a theoretical framing of how structures of racial and linguistic mixedness have been historically co-constituted through colonial, scientific, and liberal discourses surrounding imperial conquest.

Coloniality of Race and Language

Coloniality, a term most associated with Latin American subaltern studies, is a theory of power that emphasizes the endurance of a range of colonial systems in the postcolony, in-

cluding modes of control over the economy, subjectivity, and knowledge (p. 191) (Mignolo 2001; Quijano 2000). Coloniality also foregrounds the continued centrality of race in organizing systems of human classification based on presumably natural, hierarchizable difference. The concept of race has its foundations in Christian theology, which distinguished Christians, Moors, and Jews based on notions of blood through the 15th century (Robinson 1983). The Age of Discovery (15th-18th centuries) ushered in concepts of race that shifted the emphasis from internal difference (e.g., blood) to external difference (e.g., skin) (Mignolo 2011). During the Enlightenment in the 18th century, notions of race were further developed in European science and philosophy, seemingly informed by global conquest in the production of racial knowledge. For example, Linnaeus (1758) developed a classification of four human types—*Asiaticus, Africanus, Europeanus, Americanus* —that corresponded to four continents, and Kant (1777) linked skin color to physical geography as well as moral character (Eze 1997). Simultaneously, European liberalism in the late 18th and 19th centuries informed racial governance during imperial expansion. Lowe (2015) argues that "as modern liberalism defined the 'human' and universalized its attributes to European man, it simultaneously differentiated populations in the colonies as less than human" (2015:7). The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed the rise of social Darwinism and eugenics, but also challenges to their assumptions about racial hierarchies from scholars like W. E. B. Du Bois and Franz Boas (see McElhinny and Heller, this volume). Despite decolonization movements across the 20th century, debates about racial difference have continued into the 21st century. Thus although modern race is understood as a colonial invention, "it has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it was established" (Quijano 2000:533). This durability is buttressed by the institutional and political economic forces that extend the colonial reach, in areas of governance, education, employment, and so on.

Just as categories of race were being configured across colonial histories, so too were categories of language. Studies in the colonization of language (Mignolo 1992), colonial linguistics (Errington 2008), and colonial language ideologies (Woolard 1998a) highlight how questions of language are intimately tied to questions of imperial conquest and Christian missionization. This research examines how language issues were entangled in the administration of empire, revealing cases where the language of the colonizer was not always imposed, such as in the Philippines where the spread of Spanish was limited to the colonized elite and where Christian conversion relied on translation into local languages (Rafael 1988). Studies also interrogate how the languages that Europeans encountered were not "discovered" but "invented" through colonial linguistic description (Makoni and Pennycook 2005). This work is attentive to the listening subject—that is, to the role of imperial authority (whether embodied in the colonial official or colonized elite) in converting linguistic practices into European modes of knowledge through the creation of grammars, orthographies, and so on. Seemingly objective characterizations of indigenous languages—as, for example, limited, simple, chaotic—could be mapped onto indigenous minds (Irvine and Gal 2000), becoming further justification for colonial conquest and tutelage within a benevolent mission to civilize the unmodern.

(p. 192) Coloniality of Racial and Linguistic Mixedness

While the above research does not ignore the connections between race and language in colonial histories, few studies foreground the "co-naturalization of race and language" (Rosa and Flores, this volume)—that is, how categories of race and language are constructed simultaneously and in service to one another. Building from these insights, I turn to consider the co-naturalization of racial and linguistic mixedness. Central here is the notion of "hybridity," which has organized the production and development of four paradigms of mixedness, which I introduce below. Viewing racial and linguistic mixedness through the lens of coloniality allows for a further interrogation of the formation of categories and subjectivities in the ongoing rearticulation of colonial hierarchies.

Hybridity has been a concept of sustained interest, from 18th century natural sciences on plant and animal crossbreeding, to 19th century racial theories on "mongrelizaton" and linguistic theories on creoles to 20th century humanities scholarship on the colonial anxiety surrounding cultural forms. In his comprehensive overview of the term, Young (1995) links 19th century conceptions of hybridity in the biological sciences, which referred to the offspring of what were recognized as separate species, to 20th century conceptions of hybridity in literary and postcolonial studies, which critiqued cultural imperialism. For Bhabha (1994), hybridity frames the ambivalences of imperial rule as enacted by colonized subjects, who relocate the signs of colonial authority through mimicry. Language is a central sign of this relocation, in that colonial contact is also linguistic contact, leading to multilingual adaptations that are outside the prescribed official languages authorized by the state, such as what linguists call pidgins and creoles terms which are meant to describe syncretic practices that result from the combination of two or more languages. Yet as Bakhtin (1981) notes, hybridity can also occur as "double-voiced" discourse within a language such that a hybrid construction can be an utterance that belongs "to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two 'languages'" (1981:304). Scholars emphasize that hybridity is not an objective, stable property but the ongoing product of interpretation (Chun 2017)—that is, a process not of "being" but of "becoming" (Ibrahim, this volume). Although hybridity might appear to destabilize categories, to judge something as hybrid is to presuppose the existence of "pure" entities (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Hill and Hill 1986). That hybridity appears to temporally follow purity might influence its common treatment as "new," as something of the present or near future, rather than as the invention of distinctly modern ideologies (Latour 1993; Reyes 2014).

McElhinny and Heller (this volume) emphasize how scholarly interest in pidgins and creoles began in the late 19th century, precisely as both evolutionary theory and colonial conquest were at their height. It is in this moment that racial and linguistic mixedness were co-constituted in the service of imperial authority, linking "bastardized" languages to the consequences of "unnatural" cross-racial sexual encounters. For example, eugenicists studying the effects of racial mixing in the early 20th century used Caribbean creole speakers to test their theories about the physical and mental degeneracy of people born (p. 193) of two races and two languages (McElhinny and Heller, this volume). Bolton

(2000) highlights how creole scholars adopt the vocabulary of racial theory, such as "monogenesis" (one species) and "polygenesis" (many species), to classify genetic relationships between languages. He also links late 19th century listening subject accounts of "Chinese Pidgin English" to concurrent anti-Chinese racism in the U.S. and Britain to illustrate how "the fear (and attraction) of racial miscegenation was at the heart of many western responses to pidgin English in China" (2000: 35). Errington (2008) discusses another mutual articulation of racial and linguistic mixedness in accounts of *Indo* mixed race speakers of a Malay-Dutch mixed language called *Petjo* in Indonesia. He argues that "just as their bodies were undeniable physical evidence of hybridity, which was problematic for a racial ideology of empire, so too their distinctive ways of speaking native Malay set them off as socially hybrid" (2008: 138).

Four Paradigms of Mixedness

Racial and linguistic hybridity has been conceptualized through various evaluative models, producing what I call the four paradigms of mixedness: "immiscibility," "absorption," "blend," and "end." These are paradigms in the sense that they represent relatively durable and seemingly competing theories of hybridity that can function as influential, totalizing worldviews across institutions and populations. These paradigms are not successive, but often concurrent, with elements of each still active today. Thus, what frames the criteria for distinguishing these paradigms is not a historical principle but a conceptual one that is formed from my analysis of scholarly and popular thought. Importantly, each paradigm is not neatly attached to a particular political position. Instead, each paradigm can be wielded for different ends, depending on what it is being harnessed in service for, which can range from upholding racist ideologies to emancipating us from those very ideologies.

First, some theories of hybridity, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, question whether combining racial or linguistic forms is possible or not. This is often determined by whether the forms to be combined are conceptualized as monogenetic (belonging to the same species), and thus blendable, or polygenetic (belonging to different species), and thus *immiscible*. Under polygenetic views, peoples or languages are comprised of different species: for example, colonial subjects as subhuman with non-human animal-like communication in contrast to the supposedly complex humans and languages found in the European metropole (Rosa and Flores, this volume). Similarly, before evolutionary thought, comparative philology relied on views of languages as having distant genetic relations across distinct "family trees" (McElhinny and Heller, this volume). These models suggest that polygenetic forms could not combine—that is, were immiscible—resulting in offspring that were infertile and degenerate in mind, body, and speech. When mixedness is evaluated as immiscible, it is often viewed as a threat to the condition of humankind, thus a problem to be controlled through further colonial intervention.

(p. 194) Second, some theories of mixing posit that the offspring of two forms only acquire the form of one, thus one form is *absorbed* into another. For example, according to the one-drop rule of hypodescent discussed earlier, the offspring of white male slaveholders

and black female slaves were regarded as black so as to deny land ownership rights and to expand blackness as legal property (Harris 1993). Protection of property from "hard-core bastards," a term used in Louisiana for children of interracial unions, was also the motivation for anti-miscegenation laws in the state (Domínguez 1977). Similar beliefs about mixed language rely on absorption, such as theories of "substrate influence," where forms from one language are assimilated into another, such as in accounts of the English language absorbing (and retaining) nearly half of its vocabulary from the French language after the Norman Conquest in 1066 (Culpeper 2005). Absorption is often tied to claims of legitimacy, whether in maintaining a hegemonic racial position, as in the case of white property ownership during slavery and Jim Crow, or building a hegemonic linguistic status, as in the case of English being recognized as a language, not a creole.

Third, other theories of mixing emphasize the feasibility, rather than impossibility, of two forms *blending* into one. Here, blending is perceived as resulting either in a combination of forms or in a new form altogether. Much work on codeswitching and other syncretic practice falls into this paradigm, both in foundational accounts of a "matrix language" (grammar) that combines with an "embedded language" (lexicon), and in more recent theorizations of complex heteroglossic arrangements (Woolard 1998b). Blends can be denigrated, as in accounts of pidgins as "simplified" and in the development of racial taxonomies containing stigmatized categories like "mulatto" and "quadroon." But blended bodies and languages can also be celebrated, such as Hawaiian speakers as "beautiful" (Maxwell 2012; Yu 2003) or Philippine bilingual *mestizos* (mixed race people) as valuable intermediaries between metropole and colony (Rafael 1995). Blends can also be framed as temporary before absorption takes effect, such as when American colonial officials framed Philippine mestizos as enjoying the benefits of European genes for only one generation (Baldoz 2008). Such divergent evaluations of blends illustrate how the state of being mixed itself has no stable value. The central question becomes: what are blends being harnessed in service for?

Finally, other theories build on futuristic conceptions of racial and linguistic mixedness as signaling the *end* of race and language. This paradigm often produces an utopian vision of the future, one in which we understand ourselves as both being without language, communicating instead through universal non-language semiosis such as emojis (Danesi 2016), and being without race, existing instead, perhaps, as a superior "cosmic race" (Vasconcelos 1997) due to the mixing of all races. Conceptualizing the end of race and language is built on a contrast between a present where individuals are interpellated into racial and linguistic categories and a future where racial and linguistic categories do not exist. Such a future may be resisted by those who benefit from racial and linguistic hierarchies, or welcomed by those who seek emancipation from such systems, as with critical work on "translanguaging" (García 2009), which seeks to transcend the concept of language by viewing communication as the combination of features that do not belong to any one language. As mentioned earlier, political positions cannot be easily mapped (p. 195) onto paradigms. The question instead is: what is a paradigm being mobilized to do and in whose interests?

Case Study: Philippine Elite Racial and Linguistic Mixedness

In the previous section, I discussed notions of race, language, and mixedness within a theory of coloniality. In this section, I present some of my work in the Philippines, where I conducted ethnographic research across a three-year period (2015–2017), to illustrate how the co-naturalization of racial and linguistic mixedness enables colonial recursivity, the ongoing rearticulation of colonial hierarchies.

This case study examines the links between conceptions of mixed race, mixed language, and the postcolonial elite in the perpetuation of colonial distinctions in the Philippines. It illustrates how colonial hierarchies in the postcolony do not disappear, nor simply continue or repeat. Rather, they are reconfigured through reassemblages of people and language as racially and linguistically mixed. For this case study, I focus only on "mix," though this concept articulates with others, such as "excess" (Reyes 2017a) and "fake" (Reyes 2017b). Below I examine how notions of linguistic and racial mixedness get linked to elite social figures and how one elite figure in particular—the "conyo" elite—is reportedly heard and seen by a private school-educated listening subject that is constituted, in contrast, as "middle-class elite." I focus on how qualities of people and language become iconized (Gal and Irvine 1995; Peirce 1932)—that is, stand in a relationship of resemblance to one another—in a manner that makes mixed qualities seem to inhere naturally in the conyo elite. This iconization of mixedness helps to recursively constitute colonial hierarchies by positioning conyo elites (not middle-class elites) as another iteration of the dubious, striving mestizo elites, who are accused of mimicking colonial authority with an "immiscible blend" of immoral and degenerative mixed qualities.

Race and Language in the Philippines

The Philippines was colonized by numerous empires, including Spain (1565-1898) and the United States (1898-1946). By the 18th century, the Spanish *casta* system of racial classification developed a mechanism for racial governance that was reformulated under U.S. rule (Kramer 2006). Spanish racial categories included *blanco* (both Peninsular and Insular Spaniards), *indio* (Catholic Filipinos), *infieles* (both highland animists referred to as "Igorot," and Muslims or "Moros" in the south), and *mestizo* (European-Filipino or Chinese-Filipino). Under American colonialism, new racial typologies were created. As a result of a survey in 1900, one report (p. 196) divided Filipinos into three distinct races that were hierarchically arranged, from dark to light: "Negrito," "Malay," and "Indonesian" (U.S. Philippine Commission 1900, vol. 1, p. 11; cited in Baldoz 2008: 83). But as a result of a census in 1905, another report recognized five races—"White," "Brown," "Yellow," "Black," and "Mixed"—as well as 25 linguistic groups.

Approximately 150 languages are spoken in the Philippines, with Tagalog in widest use. In 1937, President Manuel Quezon approved the adoption of Tagalog to form the basis of a new standard national language, which was later called Pilipino in 1959, and Filipino in

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1973. Since the 1970s, there have been efforts to develop Filipino as an amalgam of many Philippine languages, not just Tagalog. Yet the contemporary use of the label "Filipino" is still often synonymous with "Tagalog." Under Spanish colonialism, the Spanish language was not widespread throughout the Philippines, "limited to an elite, mostly mestizo (Chinese and Spanish) minority with access to university education in Manila and Europe" (Rafael 1995:107). Unlike Spanish empire, the U.S. invested in colonial language instruction through the establishment of a public school system throughout the Philippines in the early 20th century. English became a much more widely spoken language than Spanish. Fluency in English is still linked to the upper classes with access to university education, whereas limited English proficiency is a sign of the urban masses (*masa*) and rising middle classes.

Philippine Elite Mixedness: Mestizo and Taglish

I use the term "Philippine elite," a subject of enormous scrutiny in scholarly writings (e.g., Go 2008; Rafael 2000), to refer not to a single, static social position or economic status, but to renderings of various, historically situated groups to which privileges have been attributed. Throughout colonial histories up to the contemporary moment, Philippine elites have been viewed as playing various roles in establishing, dismantling, and reinstalling Spanish and American colonial rule. In the Philippines, elites are still regarded with deep ambivalence and suspicion: both as revolutionary heroes rising up against colonial power, and as self-interested collaborators benefiting from colonial governance.

Philippine elites have been understood relative to colonial categories of race, with mestizoness as almost a defining trait by the 1800s. Racial categories that were generated and reformulated under Spanish and American colonial rule functioned not only to justify colonial domination but also to establish separate statuses for the colonized elite. The Spanish caste system carved out distinct juridical statuses for people regarded as mestizo of different types, such as Filipino-Spanish *mestizo de español*, who, like the Spanish (or blanco), paid no tax, and Filipino-Chinese *mestizo de sangley*, who paid more tax than the Filipino, but less tax than the Chinese. The U.S. colonial state, in contrast, proposed a different theory of mestizoness. While the *ilustrado* (enlightened ones)—the cosmopolitan, reformist faction of the Philippine mestizo elite—claimed that a history of racial mixing led to a superior race of mestizo elites (p. 197) who were capable of self-rule, the United States regarded racial mixing as leading to "weakness" (Rafael 2000:81). The U.S. Census of the Philippine Islands in 1905 noted how Filipino-European mestizos—whose blood admixture was thought to yield benefits that lasted only to the second generation (Baldoz 2008:93)—were rejected by both Europeans and Filipinos. Mestizos thus strove to, in the words of the U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs in 1902, "attain the respect and consideration accorded to the superior class" and to "disown their affinity to the inferior races" (1902:51–52, cited in Baldoz 2008:85). At the same time, mestizoness "signifies the privilege associated with collaborating with and containing the workings of power" (Rafael 1995:105). Fluctuating views of mestizoness are thus articulated from multiple positionalities within political economic structures across Philippine colonial histories. In many ways, mestizoness does not so much name the product of racial misce-

genation, as much as point to a liminal, upward aspiring colonial subjectivity whose terms change under different imperial exigencies.

Philippine elites have been associated with different linguistic practices in different colonial periods, including a distinct style of what is commonly referred to as "Taglish" (word blend of Tagalog and English). In addition to Taglish, Spanish remains an undisputed marker of both elite status and a claim to a venerated Spanish heritage, and English, especially English-only, remains a clear sign of elite status, if not "cosmopolitan pretensions" (Besnier 2011:97). By the mid 20th century, Taglish was associated with elite linguistic practice, but not exclusively. Starting in the 1950s, Taglish became linked to a commercially driven popular culture, and thus became the object of scathing nationalist critique (Agoncillo 1961). But Taglish was also regarded as a language of public dissent in political cartoons (Rafael 1995). Types of Taglish have been attributed to *bakla* (gay men) (Manalansan 1995), cab drivers (Reyes 2017b), *yaya* (nannies), and bar girls (Bautista 1996). Elites can also be described as speaking a Taglish comprised of a set of features that distinguishes it from other Taglish varieties. Elite efforts to differentiate types of Taglish signal elite investment in the "maintenance of a linguistic hierarchy as a way of regulating the social hierarchy" (Rafael 1995:108). Taglish, therefore, is less a "language," and more a label for a set of socially recognized varieties whose usage signals relationships between social groups.

Conyo Language and People

Conyo is regarded as a contemporary iteration of the Taglish-speaking Philippine mestizo elite—in fact, an exemplar of racial and linguistic mixedness—and one that enjoys the usual advantages of wealth, but one that is also youthful, consumerist, and vapid. In contemporary Philippines, the term conyo can be multivalent. Conyo (also spelled: konyo, coño, cono, or conio) is often recognized as deriving from the Spanish word *coño*, a term for female genitalia that is also a popular curse word. Particularly in urban areas like Manila and among private school-educated youth, conyo also refers to both a type of person and a type of speech: wealthy, status-conscious, empty-headed youth, (p. 198) who attend or recently attended private schools and who speak a supposedly distinct form of Taglish. Even though conyo can be a label applied to any gender, it often signals feminized affect: for example, using expressive language, being overly concerned with one's appearance, or having a refined palate. In addition to these linguistic and class markers, conyo are often identified in racial terms: "mestizo" and "light-skinned."

Conyo language is recognized as a particular type of elite Taglish. Commentary on conyo language can be found in the 2012 YouTube video, "How To Be A Conyo." This five-minute video features only one character, "Petra Mahalimuyak" (the online persona of 19-year old Ashley Rivera), who alternates between describing conyo and acting as conyo. Petra has posted several other humorous short videos that range from delineating types of girlfriends to demonstrating how to dance. Excerpt 1 presents a transcribed segment from this video.

Excerpt 1. "Let's make *tusok-tusok* the fishballs"

Taglish is the official language of the conyos, or the rich kids. It's when you combine Tagalog and English. And you also have to have this *maarte* (dramatic) tone or accent. And then you emphasize on pronouncing some words. Or even make it slang. And you use the words "like," "*parang* (like)," "oh my god," "yuck," "ew," "*diba?* (right?)," "I know, right?" This is the perfect and overused example. "Girl, let's make *tusok-tusok* (skewer) the fishballs, over there in the *kantoh* (corner), where *Manong* (older male relative) is standing." Or, "my friend was *parang* (like), trying to make me *kain* (eat) the *isaw* (grilled intestines). And I was like, 'oh my god, no. It's like so *kadiri* (gross), *kaya* (you know)'.

In this excerpt, conyo are described as "rich kids" who speak "Taglish." According to Petra, Taglish is "when you combine Tagalog and English." But Petra clarifies that conyo speak a particular type of Taglish. For example, conyo Taglish speakers: "have this *maarte* tone or accent"; "emphasize on pronouncing some words"; "make it slang"; use certain words (e.g., "like," "*parang*") and a particular verb construction: English "make" plus Tagalog verb (e.g., "make *tusok-tusok*"). Through the use of quoted speech, Petra depicts conyo as enjoying "fishballs" but complaining about "*isaw*," street foods commonly found outside of urban private schools. Thus conyo do not simply "talk in Taglish," but are understood as using the emotive capacity of a type of Taglish to express agreement (e.g., "I know, right?"), surprise (e.g., "oh my god"), disgust (e.g., "yuck"), and other affective stances.

A widespread origin myth firmly embeds the emergence of conyo in colonial histories. This narrative tells of Spanish colonists in the 1800s favoring the curse word *coño*, which somehow caused them to be referred to as conyo. Then the conyo label expanded to envelop new groups based on incremental degrees of proximity to the sources of colonial power: from *Peninsulares* (Spanish born in Spain), to *Insulares* (Spanish born in the Philippines, or Creole), to mestizos, to the socialite upper-classes, and finally to the striving middle classes. Such origin narratives describe how the term conyo was once a label for the Spanish, but then broadened to include other racially configured groups as they became upwardly mobile.

(p. 199) I am concerned with the listening subject of conyo: the subject position from which conyo language and people are reportedly seen and heard. Like conyo, this listening subject is private school-educated, but through the act of overhearing and evaluating conyo, it carves out an anxious, moral, middle-class elite position instead. By "middle class," I do not name a rigid socioeconomic status but "a shared project of locating oneself in a new and legitimate space between two devalued social poles" (Liechty 2003:67), between the "provincial vulgarity of the urban poor" and the "corrupt elite lifestyles of foreignness and consumer excess" (Liechty 2003:61). This middle-class elite figure is produced through commentary that positions conyo as an undesirable Philippine elite (e.g., entitled, whiney), and itself as a desirable Philippine elite (e.g., sensible, aware). Similar to other postcolonial elite figures—such as "Kong girl" in Hong Kong (Kang and Chen

2014), "Peter" in India (Nakassis 2016), "burger" in Pakistan (Durrani 2016), "Model C" in South Africa (Wale 2010), "D4" in Ireland (Moore 2011), and "fresa" in Mexico (Chaparro 2016)—conyo is also about the creation of a striving internal other against which a sensible, moral, middle-class position can be constituted.

Iconization of Mixedness: Conyo as immiscible blend

The private school-educated listening subject often describes conyo language as an immoral combination of Tagalog and English with degenerative consequences. In this section, I analyze three discourse excerpts—taken from a college publication, newspaper, and blog—to illustrate how such evaluations produce an iconization of mixedness. This iconization creates a relationship of likeness between mixed language and mixed race that is simultaneously framed by two paradigms of mixedness: immiscibility and blend.

Excerpt 2 is from a 2011 piece in *Chinoy* (Chinese Filipino), a student publication of a private university. The title of the article is "Retracing our verbal roots: Language as perceived by the youth," written by two students. The article defends conyo language as "code switching" that is "commonplace" and "second nature" to "bilinguals," and compares it to how Chinese Filipino youth mix Tagalog, English, and Hokkien as a valuable way to maintain Chinese language and identity in the Philippines.

> **Excerpt 2. "Unholy Mix"**
>
> Conyo speak—English teachers and grammarians everywhere cringe at the sound of it. Considered an "unholy" mix of English and Tagalog, this phenomenon is commonly heard in (but not limited to) college campuses everywhere.

In this excerpt, the authors assign a label ("conyo speak") to a form of speech (a "mix of English and Tagalog"). They describe this "conyo speak" as something that is "heard" "everywhere" by them, but not necessarily spoken by them. By putting "unholy" in quotes, they present this evaluation of conyo language as authored not by them, but by (p. 200) "English teachers and grammarians," who "cringe at the sound of it." Thus two listening subjects emerge—the college student (who is reporting) and the English teacher (who is reported)—the former aware and critical of the latter. In the article, the authors defend a conyo language that is heard "everywhere" and denigrated "everywhere." Although the authors frame mixedness as a blend to celebrate, they recognize that others view mixing as a deviant, if not immiscible, practice.

Excerpt 3 is from a 2006 article in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* called "Leaving Manila," written by a recent graduate of a private university. In it, the author recounts his journey from Cebu (an island province of the Philippines) to Manila, where he attended the private university, then to Cebu again. He is critical of conyo and contrasts them with "wealthy Cebuanos," whom he describes as "laid back" and uninterested in status markers.

> **Excerpt 3. "Mangled Mish-Mash"**

> An amusing breed, known as "coños," acted as if they didn't know how to speak straight Tagalog, opting to communicate in a mangled mish-mash of Tagalog and English

Unlike the previous excerpt, this excerpt contains evaluative language claimed by the author himself, revealing a contempt for conyo as "an amusing breed" that speaks a "mangled mish-mash of Tagalog and English." Rather than draw a favorable comparison (e.g., between conyo and Chinese Filipinos), the author contrasts two types of elites: desirable "laid back Cebuano" elites and undesirable conyo elites. Moreover, the author claims that conyo is all an "act," suggesting that conyo pretend they cannot "speak straight Tagalog," thus producing an artificial image of themselves by "opting to" speak a "mangled mish-mash." Characterizing conyo people as a "breed" that is "amusing" and conyo language as "mish-mash" that is "mangled" suggests that mixedness is characterized as a blend not to celebrate but to denigrate, perhaps suggesting that the progenitorial "breeds" are immiscible given that their racial and linguistic offspring is bewildering.

Excerpt 4 is taken from a 2008 blog entry by a former student of a private university, who was reposting a piece about conyo language. Here and in other blog entries, she begrudgingly admits to being called conyo though at times seems to accept it.

Excerpt 4. "Bastardize Both Languages"

> [This piece] is more about the usage of Tagalog and English and making them *pagsama* (deteriorate). I know there are some Tagalog words *talaga* (truly) without translations *kaya* (so) we end up combining English with Tagalog. But more and more, it's like, we bastardize both languages 'coz of our *paggamit* (use) of the *salitas* (words)!

In this excerpt, the author describes conyo language as "deteriorat[ing]" and "bastardiz[ing]" both Tagalog and English. Although she might attribute "deteriorate" to the authors of the piece she is reposting, she presents "bastardize" as her own characterization. (p. 201) I argue, however, that the author potentially identifies with conyo in two main ways. First, she uses "we" twice to locate herself as also engaging in the linguistic practices under evaluation: "we end up combining English with Tagalog" and "we bastardize both languages." Second, she herself uses conyo language to talk about conyo language (e.g., "our *paggamit* of the *salitas*"). The author, then, is potentially positioned as conyo by speaking as conyo. Just as in the previous two excerpts, this excerpt simultaneously draws on two paradigms of mixedness: blend and immiscibility, in that mixing languages is framed as "combin[ation]," but also "deteriorat[ion]" and "bastardiz[ation]."

Although all of these excerpts are written by the private school-educated listening subject, the overt stances toward conyo vary: from defense (excerpt 2) to contempt (excerpt 3) to identification (excerpt 4). Yet they all produce similar reports about how conyo is understood as a mixed language that is both blended and immiscible: "unholy" and "mangled," and "deteriorates" and "bastardizes" its source languages. These are descriptions not only of language, but also of people. Mixed language gets linked to mixed race

through reference to immoral sexual unions with characterizations like "unholy mix," "bastardize," and "an amusing breed." Together these excerpts produce an iconization of mixed language and mixed people—Tagalog-English linguistic mixing and colonizer-colonized racial mixing—within evaluations that suggest mixing contaminates pure entities by creating perverse blends. Indeed, these characterizations of mixedness as "mish-mash" evoke both the sexual and racial frontiers within the boundaries of colonial rule (Stoler 2002), as well as a familiar panic over miscegenation as immoral (Bolton 2000). I argue that mixedness—felt here to be an inherent, problematic quality of conyo language and people—is instead a construal driven by negative evaluations of the conyo figure to which supposedly mixed features have been attached.

The private school-educated listening subject signals its reflexive capacity to critique from beside (excerpt 2-3) or inside (excerpt 4) the conyo category. Whether presenting evaluations as their own or others, the listening subject carves out a contrastive middle-class elite position by voicing anxieties about the supposed, problematic mixedness of conyo language and people. This is the case for excerpt 4 as well. Even though the author of this excerpt might reluctantly identify as conyo, she does so with an awareness, which conyo are accused of concealing (e.g., "act[ing] as if" in excerpt 3), thus elevating her moral standing relative to "other conyos." These excerpts collectively extend racialized historical iterations of mestizo elites as liminal, suspicious, and striving, thus producing a colonial recursivity that invents internal divisions of Philippine social types. Whereas "mixed" conyo language and people are positioned in rearticulated forms and structures of colonial governance, a middle-class elite contrastively emerges as its moral, less contaminated opposite: as more "fully" Filipino and less indelibly tainted by the bodily and linguistic traces of colonial histories. Here, the puristic push associated with indigenous forms is mobilized as a contending iconization of proper national identity.

This case study demonstrates how contemporary categories of people and language can be understood as products of colonial recursivity, as rearticulations of long-standing (p. 202) colonial distinctions. What appears to be a contrast between more and less desirable forms of Philippine eliteness can in fact be recognized as the expression of anxieties surrounding race, class, and modernity in a postcolonial nation still ordered by colonial structures. Through inventing elite figures and registers, a middle-class elite is constituted in contrast to a conyo elite, the latter of which is positioned as another iteration of the dubious, mestizo elite mimics of colonial authority, whose mixedness is framed as immoral and degenerative, and thus simultaneously blended and immiscible. It is through the containment of this internal other—not just an elite fraction of the formerly colonized (e.g., mestizo elite), but a fraction of the elite fraction of the formerly colonized (e.g., conyo elite)—that the middle-class elite listening subject grapples with its own fragile modern subjectivity: as the "right" kind of elite who is contrastively sensible, critical, and properly representative of the postcolonial nation. By locating the problematic elements of colonial residue onto the conyo figure, middle-class elites elevate their own moral standing and assert their rightful place within ongoing colonial hierarchies. Are not these middle-class elites the conyo elites they purportedly deride?

Future Directions

This chapter situated the study of race, language, and mixedness within colonial histories through which racial and linguistic typologies developed, yet still organize contemporary perceptions of people and language. I reviewed key studies on mixed race and language, situated concepts of race, language, and mixedness within a framework of coloniality, highlighted how competing notions of hybridity give rise to four paradigms of mixedness, and foregrounded the centrality of the listening subject in a case study that illustrated how racial and linguistic mixedness is tied to the creation of subject positions whose value solidifies or shifts across colonial and postcolonial projects. I argued that notions of mixed race and mixed language are less about mixing races and languages and more about colonial recursivity, the ongoing reproduction of colonial hierarchies.

I conclude by offering three brief directions for future work. First, studies on race, language, and mixedness should center squarely on the historical, imperial processes that give rise to categories, such that mixed race and mixed language are never treated as "real things," but as things made to seem real by wider and longer structural processes that regard them as such. Second, future work should privilege the listening subject, that is, how figurations of mixedness are rendered visible and audible by authoritative framings regardless of what people and language "do." Finally, since mixed race studies have been carried out predominantly in the U.S. and predominantly in relation to European race theory, more work needs to look outside of the U.S. and to consider alternate epistemologies, such as perspectives from the Global South, on the phenomenon of racial and linguistic mixedness. (p. 203)

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