

WHAT'S NEW IN SPANISH/ENGLISH BILINGUAL EDUCATION

What's new in Spanish/English bilingual education, at least in California and in Texas, is the growing awareness that we educators have grossly oversimplified the complex language abilities of our students.

Instead of bringing one language (Spanish) into our classrooms, these students have brought four or five.

Gloria Anzaldúa, in her book *Borderlands/La frontera* (1987), puts the situation this way:

"Chicano Spanish sprang out of the Chicanos' need to identify ourselves as a distinct people. We needed a language with which we could communicate with ourselves, a secret language. For some of us, language is a homeland closer than the Southwest--for many Chicanos today live in the Midwest and the East. And because we are complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages. Some of the languages we speak are

1. Standard English
2. Working class and slang English
3. Standard Spanish
4. Standard Mexican Spanish
5. North Mexican Spanish dialect
6. Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California have regional variations)
7. Tex-Mex
8. *Pachuco* (called *caló*)"

While Anzaldúa uses the word *language* loosely (sometimes meaning

LANGUAGE--as in Standard English versus Standard Spanish--and sometimes meaning SOCIAL DIALECT--as in Working class and slang English, Standard Mexican Spanish), she does articulate a point that increasingly bothers linguists. How does one categorize Chicano Spanish, Tex-Mex, and Pachuco?