The evolution of the English language in daily life in Puerto Rico: A socio-historical analysis of recent events and their impact

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my amazing family. Going back to school after all these years was a decision I was able to make knowing I counted on your support. Thank you for your understanding, sacrifice and patience throughout the past four years of our lives.

To my daughters: Génesis and Kassandra, Mommy showed you that if you really want something, work hard and never give up. I will always be here to guide and support you both on your life endeavors.

A big kiss and hug to my three marvelously loyal dogs for staying up late with me in bed and cuddling by my side while I burned the midnight oil all those nights studying after a long day at work. Pepper, Roxy and Lola; you girls are the best.

It is never too late to set a new goal in life. May this inspire you to strive to be better, have faith and believe in yourselves. I love you!
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The English language has been present in Puerto Rico since the mid-19th Century when contact between the U.S. and the island commenced by means of trade. However, with the arrival of the U.S. troops at the end of the 19th century, the use of the English language changed drastically. Although many attempts were made in those first decades to Americanize the Puerto Ricans, these ultimately failed due to their strong cultural and political ideologies. This cultural-political resistance persisted throughout the majority of the first century of the U.S. control of the island, however, in the past three decades, the proliferation of English speakers who are native to the island has grown significantly, along with the use of the language in daily life. To understand how and why these changes have occurred, we must identify the major socio-cultural changes which have taken place on the island from the 1970s to the present.

The major technological advances, the phenomenon of globalization, and the major socio-cultural changes which have occurred within this period cleared the path for the insertion of English into daily life outside of the ESL classroom. Domínguez’ (2012) dissertation served as the motivating catalyst for my research, when in her concluding remarks she states that “the two cultures present on the island (Puerto Rican and American) seem to be entwining and creating a syncretic new variety unique to the island” (p.133). By means of the socio-historical approach I will analyze data which attest to how the presence of the English language has been on the rise since the 1970s, with a sharp upturn since the introduction of the internet on the island in the mid to late 1990s. Upon completing this analysis, I will briefly summarize my work with special attention to the possible implications of my findings for language planning and policy on the island, as well as for ethnolinguistic identity and language loyalty in Puerto Rican society.

Keywords: socio-cultural, socio-historical, cultural-political, technology, presence, politics, English, language, Puerto Rico
Biography

Sandra Ruiz is the third and last child of a Puerto Rican couple who decided to go to the United States to follow their dreams. She was born and raised in New York for the first 15 years of her life. She was brought up bilingual, since her schooling was purely in English while Spanish was the language spoken at home by her mother. Upon moving to the island in the mid-1980s, Sandra was thrust into a new culture and language at a difficult time in her life: her teenage years. Fortunately, her mother had kept her in touch with her roots while growing up, including the language, making the transition less painful. Nonetheless, she was, for many years considered the “gringa” of the group and was forced to relegate her speaking of English to scattered opportunities.

Sandra graduated from high school in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico and decided to go back to the states to live and attend college. Between here and there (deciding on where to plant roots was a tough decision throughout her early adulthood), she was able to graduate Magna Cum Laude with a BA degree in Teaching English as a Second Language in 1992. Sandra immediately enrolled in her master’s degree in English Linguistics at the University of Puerto Rico in Rio Piedras, graduating in June of 1996. Two months later, she gave birth to her first-born daughter, Génesis Chloé, to whom she dedicated her MA thesis. At the time, the UPR was in the process of obtaining accreditation for their PhD degrees in English, so Sandra set out to raise a family and develop her career, never forgetting her desire to go back and complete her PhD.

Between 1996 and 2014, life happened. Sandra worked hard to build a reputation for herself as an English teacher for the Department of Education of Puerto Rico, a
professor at the University Ana G. Mendez, as well as an online course designer and teacher for the DE. She also gave birth to her second and last daughter Kassandra in 2003, completing her family. After more than 20 years of professional experience, when her eldest daughter was ready for college, Sandra decided to go back to school and finish what she had pending. It is with great pride, and much hard work that she arrives to where she is today. Graduating a few days shy of her 50th birthday, Sandra proves age is just a number and reminds us that IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO REACH YOUR GOALS!!
Chapter 1

Introduction

In the 2012 second edition of *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*, Muriel Saville-Troike, a leading linguist in the field, introduced a new area of study, “Computer interaction,” to her chapter on the social contexts of acquisition. Keeping abreast of how new technologies are impacting second language learning has become ever more important to both the field of second language acquisition and the teachers whose responsibility it is to further the learning of English as a Second Language (ESL). In Puerto Rico, a Spanish-speaking Caribbean island attached to the largely Anglophone United States, these new technologies are changing how ESL students and the population in general interact with the English language in ways which can importantly add to our understanding of second language acquisition and the social contexts of language use in the Caribbean.

The English language is currently the only required second language taught in public schools in Puerto Rico. It is well known that the teaching of English here in Puerto Rico is a political issue. The fact that it has been imposed as the second language to teach, since the arrival of the U.S. Americans¹, not allowing students the free will to select the language of their choice, at least in public schools, has made teaching an uphill battle for educators. Students begin taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes as early as kindergarten; yet after 12+ years of language education, many do not have

¹ According to authors of textbooks such as Fred Jandt and other publications in Intercultural Studies and Communication, the use of U.S. Americans in place of just Americans to refer to the U.S. constitutes a statement with the purpose of dismissing the sole term 'Americans' to represent the people of the United States. The term 'Americans' refers to the people of the Americas, from the north to the south of the American Hemisphere.
enough command of the language to communicate effectively in a real English language scenario. Although this might be a crude reality for many, there is also a growing sector of the population who can do extremely well if put in the same language situation. What, then, are the factors that can contribute to this disparity in English language skills? Why are there those, who have never set foot off the island and who do not come from English speaking families able to communicate effectively in comparison to their peers?

Currently, there are many technological resources both in and out of the classroom which can help reinforce what is being taught. The status of English in Puerto Rico has evolved in the past three decades.

This is a personal confirmation I can make. Having devoted more than 20 years to educating others in the English language, I have had many opportunities to interact with English learners and speakers in various arenas. I have seen a marked difference in the level of mastery of certain speakers, who, despite having similar formal educational experiences, present remarkable differences in their performance. It is for this reason that I became interested in studying these language phenomena in Puerto Rico. Another justification for my project is the scarcity of work concerning this socio-linguistic trend. However, perhaps the main reason behind my selection of this research topic is to contribute to a change in views of the importance of learning and using the English language in the society in which we currently live. It is well known that given the current critical economic and social situation of the island, many have decided to move to the mainland in search of better job and educational opportunities as well as a better quality of life for their families. This movement of our population has created a stronger need for bilingual citizens who can compete for jobs with the locals of whichever state in which
they choose to relocate. Although it is unfortunate that we are losing so many professionals, it is also the case that many do come back to the island. Those who do, have incorporated English in their lives even more so than before they had decided to relocate to the United States.

I also believe that the educational system as the pillar of English language education can take a cue from these socio-cultural changes and aim to create a truly bilingual citizen. Curriculums can be modified to accommodate this changing view of the English language. Its importance for the future of the citizens of Puerto Rico, according to the trend, will increase justifying much needed changes. I hope to contribute to that movement with my study.

1.1 Historical background

The English language has been present in Puerto Rico for over a century, dating back to the mid-19th Century when sugar and molasses were produced on the island and exported to the United States. However, with the arrival of the U.S. troops at the end of the 19th century following the Spanish-American War, the use of the English language changed dramatically. In 1945, Cebollero quoted Victor Clark, who directed island education during the military regime, asserting that:

Puerto Ricans had little devotion to their native tongue and spoke not Spanish but a “patois” with little value as an intellectual medium. There is a bare possibility that it will be as easy to educate these people out of their patois into English as it will be to educate them into the elegant tongue of Castile (p. 6).
Since the people of Puerto Rico were perceived to be so racially and culturally different and easy to “educate” for their lack of mastery of an elegant tongue, it then became the aim of the U.S. to “Americanize” the island by means of language, culture and government. Aida Negron de Montilla (1975, pp xi-xii) delineated fifteen criteria for identifying these attempts of Americanization of Puerto Ricans through educational policy. These were:

1. Attempts to impose the celebration of holidays characteristic of the American nation and not observed in Puerto Rico previous to the conquest and cession of the Island to the United States.
2. Attempts to organize patriotic exercises bearing on the allegiance and emulation of the United States.
3. Attempts to render honor to American symbols and heroes.
4. Attempts to transfer content of American courses of study to the curriculum of Puerto Rican schools.
5. Attempts to replace local textbooks by continental ones, depicting the American way of life.
6. Attempts to copy the organizational structure of the American school system and the school laws prevailing in the States in setting up Puerto Rico’s educational system.
7. Attempts to recruit American teachers in lieu of native ones.
8. Attempts to organize teachers’ study tours to the United States.
9. Attempts to require the mastery of the English language as a legal qualification in the certification of teachers.
10. Attempts to provide facilities for Puerto Rican students to complete their education in the United States.

11. Attempts to introduce American organizations of students such as Boy Scouts of America and others which promote allegiance to the United States.

12. Attempts to expel from the school system either students or teachers engaged in what the Department of Education considered to be anti-American activities.

13. Attempts to emphasize the benefits of American citizenship.

14. Attempts to substitute the vernacular as language of instruction.

15. Attempts to promote a sentiment for statehood and disregard any independentist sentiment.

Most of these criteria involved the propagation of U.S. customs, symbols, holidays, and history as well as duplicating the organizational structure of the American school system. The remaining criteria were centered on establishing English as the language of instruction on the island. More than ten language policies have been redacted throughout the history of the U.S. in Puerto Rico; however, after 120 years of occupation, the idea of learning by imposition still leaves a bad taste in the mouths of the island natives. Each of these policies will be examined in greater detail in the next chapter.

The many attempts of transculturalization were met with much resistance by Puerto Ricans due to their strong cultural and political ideologies. This cultural-political resistance persisted throughout the majority of the first century of the U.S. control of the
island; however, in the past three decades, the proliferation of English speakers who are native to the island has grown significantly, along with the use of English in daily life. To understand how and why these changes have occurred, we must identify the major socio-cultural changes which have taken place on the island from the 1970s to the present. The major technological advances which have taken place within this period have cleared the path for the insertion of English into daily life. With the arrival on the island of cable television in the 1970s and the internet and cell phones in the 1990s, English became much more accessible to the average person. Most of the population currently has access to the internet by means of a cell phone, thus expanding their contact with English, the predominant language on the net.

The arrival of the digital era has impacted the teaching of English as a second language in our public and private educational systems as well. The impact that technology has had on education is one of the important aspects to be examined in my dissertation. This phenomenon is not exclusive to our island and is currently being more widely studied. Further along in this chapter, I will present a brief review of studies that have addressed language issues in this field.

In addition to the changes in English language instruction on the island, there has been a strong presence of English in the media. Puerto Rico has a few local English-medium newspapers and magazines, among the most popular currently are Caribbean Business and The San Juan Daily Star. These are available in print as well as digital format which have allowed them to reach larger English-speaking markets. However, The San Juan Star, a daily print newspaper founded in 1959, lost many of its subscribers and ultimately was forced to discontinue circulation in 2008 due to the movement towards
digital media. In addition to these sources, we also have a local English-speaking channel, CBS Puerto Rico, as well as other media outlets which I will examine in greater detail in this research investigation.

I will also focus on how English has been incorporated into general usage in venues such as government offices and local businesses. Most importantly, however, are the socio-cultural forces that have made these changes possible. For example, there is an ever-greater presence of IT devices and media products on the island from abroad as well as an ever-growing number of mega stores and online shopping sites which have made it possible for Puerto Ricans to purchase them. These changes have influenced the views of the population towards the use of and need to pose greater English language proficiency in Puerto Rico. Together with the waves of circular migration which have historically occurred on the island at crucial points in history, there seems to have been a steady shift in attitude toward the use of the language without the threat of “betraying” or “losing” Puerto Rican cultural identity.

Studying this linguistic phenomenon in Puerto Rico may bring forth relevant information which will contribute to successfully developing bilingual individuals on the island without having them sent off island to strengthen their second language skills. The impact that the presence of English in Puerto Rico has had on society has not been studied in recent years and with all the important changes that have occurred, I believe it needs to be revisited. The use of social media, cable television and the internet are producing a new cohort of bilingual citizens who have acquired these skills in an innovative manner outside of the classroom.
1.2 Justification

As stated by Dominguez (2012) in the concluding remarks of her dissertation previously mentioned, the two cultures present on the island (Puerto Rican and American) seem to be entwining and creating a syncretic new variety unique to the island. According to her, “it seems that a new identity is being forged, one that is not linked to any particular language but rather includes the heart of a people and their evolving traditions, customs, and beliefs” (p.133). This study serves as the motivating catalyst for my research. The number of people willing to learn and use the English language on the island has multiplied, allowing for a growing presence of the language in everyday life. This is partly due to the opportunities for upward social mobility made accessible by learning English. This does not solely apply to those who decide to learn the language to leave the island, but also to those who see the benefits of being bilingual to obtain better career opportunities with island-based businesses which have their headquarters on the U.S. mainland, or which have international ties which require the use of English. Local companies also seem to be encouraging bilingualism among their employees in an effort to broaden their markets.

English-speaking Puerto Ricans have taken their use of the language outside of the workplace. It is now not uncommon to see the use of English in media (signage, advertisements, local television and radio), as well as in daily conversation. This has been made possible by changing socio-cultural views of English among the population. Dominguez (2012) shows how what was once an extremely politicized debate on the imposition of English as an attempt to Americanize the population and a threat to the Puerto Rican national identity has slowly shifted with English being increasingly seen as
a useful second language. Those who want to advance professionally understand the importance of English and embrace opportunities to use and practice it.

In my dissertation, I will examine how the presence of the English language has been on the rise since the 1970s and how it has taken a sharp upturn since the introduction of the internet on the island in the mid to late 1990s. I will accomplish this through gathering data from many sources including newspapers, cable television, online sites available to locals, as well as studies in population changes. After a careful search, I have not encountered an academic study which has incorporated all the areas which I intend to cover, and in this sense my proposed research will be breaking new ground.

1.3 Research objectives

I propose the following research objectives:

(i) To study the presence of the English language on the island, from a socio-historical perspective, beginning with the U.S. gaining control of the island in 1898.

(ii) To present, discuss and analyze the language policies formulated and implemented with the aim of teaching English in public schools from 1898 to the present.

(iii) To document the various types of technology that have been introduced to the island over the past few decades, and to correlate these with ongoing socio-historical and socio-cultural changes that have been becoming a part of everyday life in Puerto Rico.

(iv) To analyze the statistics provided by the Department of Education and The College Board related to the results obtained by Puerto Rican students in
English on these standardized tests (“Pruebas Puertorriqueñas, Pruebas META and Pruebas de Admisión Universitaria”) administered yearly between 1995 and 2017.

(v) To analyze trends over time in the use of English on television, and to compare the presence of English on broadcast television with the presence of English on cable television.

(vi) To analyze trends over time in the use of English in government documents as well as in local state and federal courts and the changes which may have occurred in the use throughout the period established in this study.

(vii) To examine how social media and the internet have impacted the use of the English language on the island in the past ten to fifteen years by identifying and analyzing language use on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter Wattpad, YouTube, Netflix and mobile app cable television.

(viii) To study the changes in population on the island with particular attention being paid to how the circular migration of those who have left the island and returned in the past few decades has stimulated more extensive use of English in Puerto Rico.

Although this is not an area at the center of this study, in order to contextualize my results socio-psychologically and socio-culturally, I wish to compare studies/dissertations published between the 1920s and the 1980s on the one hand, with studies published from the 1990s to the present, which track the evolution of attitudes among Puerto Ricans concerning their ethnolinguistic identity with Puerto Rican Spanish (PRS) and concerning the possible threat posed by the use of English to PRS.
1.4 Research questions

Based on these goals, I propose the following research questions:

(i) What strategies did the U.S. utilize upon arrival on the island to introduce the English language? How effective were these strategies, and if they were unsuccessful, what were the reasons for their failure?

(ii) What have been the multiple English language policies implemented on the island throughout the history of the U.S. presence? Did the U.S. appointed Commissioners (now known as Secretaries) succeed at their attempts? What factors influenced their policies?

(iii) What salient socio-historical events and socio-cultural changes defined the first period of U.S. occupation (1900-1950), the second phase (1951-1989) and finally, the past few decades (1990-2018)?

(iv) What changes have been made in the educational system during the last thirty years to incorporate the English language on a wider scale? Have these been effective according to the standardized test results?

(v) What effects have the changes in the population of the island had on the presence of the English language? Is it more widely present now than 30 years ago?

(vi) How has the use of English changed in government entities, mainly federal and local courts and state and municipal government? Is English more widely present now?

(vii) How did the arrival of cable television in the 1970s and of the internet in the 1990s affect Puerto Rican society?
What impact have social media had on how English is used in Puerto Rico? What effects have they had on the ethnolinguistic identity of the Puerto Rican people?

1.5 Theoretical framework and methodology

The theoretical framework of this dissertation rests on the socio-historical approach. In this approach frequently used in the study of sociology and linguistics, the researcher examines the major historical and social events in order to understand and explain a phenomenon. One basic assumption which the socio-historic approach shares with all forms of “general sociology” is the notion that social structures are self-contained entities with lives of their own which largely determine both the behavior and consciousness of the individual human beings within their orbit (Schwartz,1955).

Another one of its premises, according to Schwartz is that it differs from general sociology in its “historicism”. The socio-historical school of thought claims that historical events can produce changes which are exclusive to one specific community, varying according to the cultural aspects of the said society. Put in Schwartz’s words “the whole socio-historic process may be compared to a living organism in which the variant emerging social structures may be considered as so many stages of growth within the over-all process” (p.135). As far as the relation to language, the field of socio-historical linguistics was established back in the 1990s. Suzanne Romaine’s 1982 monograph entitled Socio-historical Linguistics; Its Status and Methodology, is regarded as the foundation of this particular field of study. In her writing, Romaine correlates linguistic variation with external factors as found in historical data. However, before Romaine,
Weinreich et al. (1968) emphasized the need to incorporate external factors into a theory of language change.

Therefore, historical events pertaining to certain key periods, lead to social and linguistic changes. These language changes need to be studied from many perspectives (social, historic, linguistic, and cultural) in order to reconstruct a broad picture of the context in which they came about, ensuring a comprehensive social and historical validity. Studies on the presence of English on the island will be analyzed from the start of the 20th century to the present, together with the socio-historical events and socio-cultural changes that have impacted the use of English on the island. With this approach, it will be possible to better explain how the presence of English in Puerto Rico has changed throughout the decades.

Within this theoretical framework, the methodology that follows is one in which salient historical publications in the form of books, dissertations and studies will be read and analyzed in order to determine what these sources of information have to say with regards to the presence of English in Puerto Rico from the 1970s onward. All of the research questions for this study can be answered through the examination and analysis of the following- as mentioned above, that is, articles, studies, statistical publications, and books about English in Puerto Rico from 1898-2018 with a particular focus on the effects of language policies, as well as on social, political, historical, and cultural changes.
Chapter 2

English language policy and education in Puerto Rico

2.0 Introduction to language policies and education

The relationship between the English language and the people of Puerto Rico has historically been one of conflict for most of the 100 plus years since the island became a possession of the United States. Despite the political, economic, social and cultural changes which Puerto Ricans have undergone, in this period, they never succumbed to the “American way” and to this day, have been able to maintain their strong cultural identity, native language, and for the most part, customs and traditions, avoiding their attempts at “transculturalization.” However, in the past decade, there has been a change in attitude towards the English language which has been years in the making. The reasons are multiple, and I will be discussing the possible causes and effects for this socio-cultural phenomenon to have actually occurred.

In order to fully understand the reasons why Puerto Ricans rejected the English language and American culture for so many years, we need to go back to the time when it all began. Puerto Rico has seen many changes throughout its history. Before the Spanish “discovered” the island, the Taino people lived here in an organized societal manner. The Spanish invasion and colonization of Puerto Rico brought with it their customs, traditions, language, educational system, government, etc. In other words, “Puerto Ricans” resulted from an amalgamation of the few Taino customs which survived the Spanish debacle, the influence of the African slaves forcibly brought by the Spaniards, and the Spaniards per se. During the 400 some odd years the Spanish ruled the island, they strongly helped to create a unique culture of people who learned to live the Spanish
way of life while incorporating some of their own traditions. In addition, and in a syncretic manner, they incorporated characteristics of the African culture which are still quite evident. Those four-hundred years served to instill a strong Puerto Rican identity amongst the islanders.

During that colonial period, English had made its way into the lives of the Puerto Ricans through trade. Merchants dealt with Americans who traded gunpowder and grains in exchange for sugar, molasses, rum, tobacco and leather produced here (Pousada, 1996). Wealthy Americans settled here and built haciendas, forming small English-speaking enclaves on the countryside. Puerto Rico was a poor island, but it possessed a thriving literature and developing commercial class. However, it was not until July 25, 1898, that the Americans cemented their presence on the island. With the signing of the Treaty of Paris following the Spanish-American War, the U.S. gained possession of the island. Upon the retreat of the Spanish, an opportunity to completely take over arose. The overhaul of the island would not only impact the political system the United States intended to impose on Puerto Ricans: their culture, language, and educational system.

2.1 Language policies from 1898 to the 1960s

U.S. intervention in Puerto Rico completely changed the way of life of those who lived on the island at the time. The Americans came here with the intention of substituting all that was Spanish, including the government (courts and laws), customs, traditions, language, and education, among others. As a direct consequence of the invasion, new laws and policies were introduced, including the imposition of English as the medium of instruction in all grades. As Negrón de Montilla, Meyn and Osuna (as
cited in Pousada, 1996, p. 500) declare “English was forcibly imposed in Puerto Rico as a plan openly dedicated to the creation of a territory loyal to the United States’ interests.”

As early as 1899, the American appointed governor to the island, Guy Henry, established the new educational system to be implemented. Learning English was an essential aspect of the Americanizing goals, and the Education Department played a unique role in its implementation. The first educational institution created by the United States military regime was the Education Bureau, under the United States Department of the Interior.

These goals included the elimination of Catholic education which was the Spanish system of education. American teachers were brought to the island and a new concept: graded schools were introduced. In addition, school subjects were implemented following the U.S. system. These included major and minor coursework. Some of the major subjects were languages, math, government, history, and politics. Minors included music, drawing, writing, spelling and hygiene (Schmidt, 2014, p.51; Cabán, 2002, p.126; Soto, 2005, p.7).

In addition, it was established, that unlike Spanish schooling, where parents paid the teachers and covered the costs of supplies for their children, the government would cover the teachers’ salary and education would be free of charge for the students. As far as language went, the U.S. believed that Puerto Ricans had to prove their loyalty to the nation, and the easiest way to impose that was through education.

The United States’ Congress approved the Foraker Act in 1900 to create a civil government for the island, consisting of three republican branches of government. However, not all officials were locally elected. The Governor of Puerto Rico and the
Commissioner of Education were to continue to be named by the United States’ President. The Department of Public Instruction was created in that same year, under this act. Until 1948 all educational policies were controlled by the federal government in Washington which oversaw the appointment of Commissioners of Education. These commissioners oversaw the implementation of language policy and, in an effort to motivate English language learning, brought English teachers from the United States, had regular classroom teachers take English language tests and provided stipends for those who taught English. In all, seven language policies have been implemented in the Puerto Rican public educational system. They appear in *The movement against teaching English in schools in Puerto Rico* (Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987) and are summarized below.

The first language policy (1898-1900) was implemented under Commissioners John Eaton and Victor S. Clark who was initially his assistant and later his replacement. Eaton established the tone for the next fifty years of language policies. Their policy’s purpose was to make English the medium of instruction in all grades. The second policy (1900-1904), under the direction of Commissioners Martin G. Brumbaugh and Samuel M. Lindsay, stipulated that Spanish be the medium of instruction in the elementary grades with English as a subject. In high school, however, this pattern was inverted, giving English a predominant position as the language of instruction. Under this language policy Commissioner Brumbaugh placed great emphasis on the organization of the elementary schools, including bringing teachers from the mainland and sending island teachers to the mainland to advance their competency in English. Brumbaugh invited North American educators to come to Puerto Rico to participate in the Teachers’ Institutes and Summer Schools he created to better prepare local teachers. He also
established summer normal institutes, which had the objective to encourage teachers to become certified by means of a test much as is required currently. In total, 22 of the 129 applicants were ultimately certified (Cabán, 2002).

During Brumbaugh’s term, the Legislature of Puerto Rico approved the Act to Establish Public Schools in Puerto Rico on January 31, 1901. This created a centralized school system and placed virtually all powers in the hands of the Commissioner of Education. According to this law, under sections 4, 8, 14, 15, 18, and 20, the Commissioner had the power to: order that schools enforce his directions, intervene in the placement of teachers, dismiss teachers, determine teachers' salaries, determine who would teach English, and institute disciplinary laws for teachers and students in schools (Solís, 1994, p. 60; Negrón de Montilla, 1990, pp. 46-47). The educational system was divided among school districts and school boards, both directed by superintendents who answered directly to the Commissioner. Before this law, school boards had greater influence on the selection and hiring of teachers and operations of the school system, since they had greater autonomy. Now, however, Superintendents were in charge of evaluating the teachers’ work and made their recommendations for their reappointment to the Commissioner, who made the final decision. This centralized system, however, lacked effective communication and participation channels for teachers and communities, which allowed the Commissioner, being the undisputable expert, to make the policy changes he deemed necessary without the consent of those involved, making him most unpopular.

The duties and influence of the Education Commissioner transcended the school system. His membership in the Executive Council made him a very powerful figure on
general policy-making processes. This is mostly due to the fact that the Education Department demanded from twenty-five to thirty-seven of the government’s annual budget; making it the government agency with the largest percentage of the total budget.

The Commissioner’s participation in legislative affairs involved the Education Department in insular politics. The Commissioner was chosen in Washington, without confirmation from the Puerto Rican legislature, which isolated him from Puerto Rican politics but not from the political influences from the mainland. Consequently, he became vulnerable to political pressures from legislators and other cabinet members. Ultimately, non-educational government agencies exerted influence over educational policies. This allowed language entrepreneurs foreign to the Puerto Rican idiosyncrasies to involve themselves in the educational policies of the island. Despite his efforts, Brumbaugh’s term ended in 1901 due to a reaction against the importance he gave to the use of Spanish as the medium of instruction in the elementary grades.

Brumbaugh’s successor, Commissioner Samuel M. Lindsay (1902-1904) believed that to Americanize the people of Puerto Rico, they would need to internalize American institutions. To achieve this, he sent 540 teachers to Harvard and Cornell Universities to take summer courses. To further his objectives, he founded the University of Puerto Rico, whose focus was to prepare teachers in English. Lindsay also organized a certification-testing program for Puerto Rican teachers. During Lindsay’s incumbency The Official Languages Act of 1902 (the official law that governs language policy in Puerto Rico) was implemented. The law stipulates that “either Spanish or English … be used in government transactions.” This act was clearly not intended to protect the rights of the English-speaking minority, but rather to establish the legal presence of English on the
island. Another intention was to allow English-speaking administrators to conduct their business in English (Morris, 1995; Barreto, 1995). The Official Languages Act was abolished in 1991 and then reinstated in 1993.

Between 1904-1915, Commissioners Roland P. Falkner, Edwin G. Dexter and Edward M. Bainter implemented Language Policy # 3 in the 1905-1906 academic year. The emphasis on English instruction, initiated by Eaton in 1899, grew in new and larger proportions under Falkner's administration. The commissioners decided to go back to using English as the medium of instruction in all grades, with Spanish being taught as a subject. Falkner wanted all Puerto Rican teachers to be fluent in English. To accomplish this, he established on-island English courses for all teachers, summer classes in the United States for groups of teachers, economic incentives for those teachers who demonstrated excellent progress in English, and an annual exam, as stipulated in the New School Laws of 1905 that he authored, to obtain a teacher certification. Despite the shortage of teachers fluent in English he insisted that English be the language of initial literacy in the schools.

The initial resistance to his policy was attenuated by his ability to forge an alliance with important members of the Puerto Rican political elite. Unlike his predecessors Brumbaugh and Lindsey, whom had provoked hostile public relations with Puerto Rican educators and politicians for their Americanization tactics, Falkner capitalized on the political goings-on of the period. At the time, Falkner gained support from the Partido Republicano, which was in favor of the inclusion of Puerto Rico to the United States federation. This prevented their opposition to Falkner's Americanizing tactics, which they considered necessary to facilitate annexation. Although his tenure
only lasted until 1907, Falkner’s language policy was extended until 1916 by the next three Commissioners, Edwin Dexter, Edward Bainter, and Paul Miller.

Edwin G. Dexter replaced Falkner from 1907 until 1912. Dexter went a step further, requiring English to be the language of instruction in rural schools, extending the use of English as the medium of instruction to first grade, eliminating Spanish courses from the first-grade curriculum, and starting military instruction in public schools. He was harshly criticized for shortages of teachers, textbooks and effective methods. The opposition to Falkner’s policy during Dexter’s management grew due to the movement started by the Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR from now on). Teachers had struggled to create a union since at least 1900, but it was not until 1912 that the AMPR emerged. The association campaigned for the elimination of English as the medium of instruction in schools, creating political alliances with the then popular Puerto Rican party, Partido Unión. The AMPR represented a widespread concern of the time: the individual costs on teachers in terms of time and resources invested for learning English and adapting to the new teaching methods. This led to Dexter’s substitution in 1912 by Edward M. Bainter. To calm the resistance which had arisen, Bainter accepted the AMPR petition and modified the language policy allowing the utilization of Spanish language teaching in the first grade, with content courses (nature, health, and hygiene), divided up between Spanish and English up to eighth grade. English would continue to be the language of instruction in all high schools. Rural schools were to be exempt from this revised policy due to their lack of resources and would teach in Spanish only. As a result of the teacher protests, the annual English exams for teachers were abolished and the Legislature of Puerto Rico created a special position of Supervisor general of Spanish
who would oversee the teaching of Spanish in the public schools and ensure that Puerto Rican children continued to learn their vernacular in school.

In 1915, Language Policy #4 took effect under Commissioners Paul G. Miller and Juan B. Huyke. Under this policy, Spanish was used as the medium of instruction for the first four grades, while in the transitional fifth grade half of the subjects were taught in Spanish and the other half in English. Then, from grades six through twelve, English was used as the medium of instruction. Paul G. Miller was well-accepted by both the political party in power and the Teacher’s Association (AMPR) for his ‘slogan calling’ for the conservation of Spanish and the acquisition of English. He pushed for the Americanization of Puerto Ricans as U.S. citizens and expected the educational system to reflect his perspective.

In 1921, Juan B. Huyke became the first Commissioner of Education of Puerto Rican descent, at a time of key political changes. In 1917, the U.S. Congress approved the Jones Act. This law reorganized the island’s government by eliminating the Executive Council and creating a popularly elected Senate. It also renamed the House of Delegates as House of Representatives and most importantly, extended U.S. citizenship to Puerto Ricans. The Commissioner of Education, however, continued to be appointed by the President of the U.S. Despite this, the Jones Act affected the Department of Education in a key way: it reduced the centralization by limiting the Commissioner’s leverage over public policy. Huyke no longer possessed the political pull he had had before this act.

Notwithstanding, Huyke continued his predecessor’s policies aimed at the Americanization of the islanders. He believed that because of such policies, Puerto Ricans would assimilate to United States lifestyles in all respects. In his Circular Letter
No. 23, dated August 29, 1923, Huyke sent a clear message to all the teachers: “Any teacher unable or unwilling to teach in English may be asked to resign” (cited in Negrón de Montilla, 1971, p.192). In addition, Huyke ordered that all high school students had to pass an English oral and written test upon graduation. Moreover, all schools had to publish all materials in both languages. His passion for the English language led him to found *The Society for the Promotion and Study of the English Language* for students in the eighth, ninth and tenth grades. Those who belonged to this Society wore jackets with the United States flag on it and were required to speak English amongst themselves. Lastly, he established a system in which results on English examinations were used to classify schools academically.

Initially, Puerto Rican teachers did not object to his policy for fear of losing their jobs. Nevertheless, a growing concern for the effectiveness of the policies led to widespread teacher protests. By this time, there had been a rise of the APMR’s inherence in Departmental affairs. The Puerto Rican legislature was forced to request a study of the school system. Between 1925 and 1926, the International Institute of Education of Teacher’s College at Columbia University conducted a study, which upon conclusion, recommended the use of Spanish as the medium of instruction until the seventh grade. Huyke called this “the suppression of English”, since he felt that bilingualism could most easily be achieved during childhood. This theory holds true today, especially when it refers to the command of the phonological system of the second language, but not necessarily true of the other systems of language). As has happened throughout the history of English in Puerto Rico, the islanders of the time denounced the imposition of English and Huyke resigned amidst public outrage.
José Padín replaced the Miller/Huyke educational language policy with a new policy that reduced the role of English in 1934. This fifth policy went back to Brumbaugh’s concept of using Spanish in the elementary grades and English in high school as the medium of instruction. His views favoring Spanish as the medium of instruction while maintaining English as an important language can be seen as instrumental in the emergence of ESL instruction in Puerto Rico. The new policy was justified theoretically on grounds that children learned content such as science or history best in their mother tongue. Padín’s supporters, including the AMPR applauded him. He was coined as "the first true Puerto Rican Commissioner of Education" (Cebollero, 1945; Algren de Gutiérrez, 1987). Padín’s approach began in 1934 and lasted until 1949, with an interruption during Commissioner José Gallardo’s tenure, between 1937 and 1942.

In 1937 Jose M. Gallardo became the Commissioner of Education. His policy progressed and changed over the next few years. In basic terms, Spanish was the medium of instruction in grades one and two with English as a subject. In grades three through eight Spanish and English were used as the medium of instruction in varying subjects, together with a progressive increase in the time allotted to instruction in English. At the high school level, English was the medium of instruction, while Spanish was taught as a subject. The reason for this inconsistency between the languages used in the different school levels was largely due to the pressure the Commissioner received from the then President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt.

For the first time, a President of the United States expressed his thoughts on the issue of language policy in Puerto Rico. Roosevelt was not happy with the language situation on the island and felt that the next generation of Puerto Rican American citizens
should grow up having English language competence as well as understanding American ideals and principles and making use of the opportunities that their American citizenship afforded them. Roosevelt did, however, point out that it was not his intention to diminish the Spanish legacy but rather to make clear the importance the English language had for future generations of Puerto Ricans.

Despite Roosevelt’s intentions, and a series of pedagogical experiments carried out by Gallardo between 1937 and 1942, the language policy reverted to Padín’s approach. Gallardo did try to improve teachers’ English competency by emphasizing teacher training. English supervisors were appointed in almost all the school districts. The supervisors visited the schools and observed the teachers and students to help identify their most common errors and to remedy them. It was claimed that many teachers, as a form of resistance to the policy, secretly taught in Spanish and used English only when a supervisor came to visit. Even though teachers were sent every summer to the United States to study the language and North American teachers were brought in, the goal of assimilating Puerto Ricans through the English language was not accomplished. These measures were met with mounting resistance, forcing many commissioners to resign. One commissioner who bravely went against this policy, Mariano Villaronga, was forced to resign in 1947 because of his openly pro-Spanish views which were not well received in Washington.

The years 1946 to 1949 were decisive in Puerto Rican history. Luis Muñoz Marín was the first governor to be elected by the people of Puerto Rico in 1948. During the first years of his term, he re-instated Mariano Villaronga as Commissioner of Education. Villaronga continued to openly support the use of Spanish, not English, as the medium of
instruction, and shortly thereafter, Spanish was officially established as the language of instruction in the public schools of Puerto Rico.

The year 1952 was also crucial in the political history of Puerto Rico, marking the change of the island’s status to a ‘Commonwealth’ or Freely Associated State, *Estado Libre Asociado*. This allowed Puerto Ricans to have their own constitution and elect their own government. With this new power, it was necessary for the governor to address the language situation officially. Spanish then became the official language for most government agencies, except for those of the federal government. One of Villaronga’s other endeavors was to create the English Program office. Efraín Sánchez Hidalgo was named Commissioner briefly between 1957 and 1960. Under his tenure, the use of government television, WIPR, as a means of dissemination and guidance on the work of the Department of Public Instruction, was established. He was also credited with making great efforts to bring the parents of the students to school, as collaborators of the student learning process.

In 1960, a newly appointed Secretary of Education, Cándido Oliveras expressed the need for Puerto Ricans to refocus on their mother tongue, Spanish. He pushed to reinforce the teaching of Spanish and went as far as threatening private schools with the loss of their accreditation if they failed to comply with his orders to teach in Spanish. This was the basis of Language Policy #7. This plan was met with resistance by U.S. Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, who presided the Commission of Education and Labor of the Federal House of Representatives. Powell threatened to suspend federal funding to the island’s public educational system if Oliveras followed through with his plan to penalize private schools. The government of Muñoz Marín was forced to
withdraw its support to the Commissioner, on the basis that the state (PR) could not prohibit private schools from using the language of instruction preferred by the parents of the students who were paying for their tuition (Torres-González, p.210).

2.2 Language policies of the 1970s to the present

The next thirty years brought more than ten different heads of the Department of Education. Although each used their term to promote changes and innovative projects, none had to deal with language policies since the general policy remained intact until the 1990s, which signals the focal point or juncture of this investigation. At this point in Puerto Rican history, due to waves of circular migration, as well as the introduction and availability of flourishing, technology, changes in attitudes towards the English language were underway. Initially, they were met with resistance; therefore, attempts at strengthening the mother tongue were made to counteract the American influence.

On April 5, 1991, Governor Rafael Hernández Colón, a member of the Popular Democratic Party (PDP), revoked the Official Language Act of 1902, which had established the official status of both English and Spanish. In what many considered to be a political move to gain more votes, knowing what a strong sense of nationalism is felt by the Puerto Ricans, he made Spanish the exclusive official language, with little effect on language policy on the ground. Celeste Benitez, who had become the first woman to head the Department of Education in her first term in 1973, was brought back as what was now called Secretary of Education. During her short term (1991-1992), Benitez was recognized for important contributions to the public-school system. Professor Benítez postulated that the student was the “reason to be” (razón de ser or raison d’être) of the Educational System and that he or she had the right to cultivate a better future. Benítez
oversaw the preparation of the Student Guidelines Handbook, the School Council Guidelines Handbook and the Regulations for the Exams required to obtain a Teacher’s Certification. However, this new policy was short lived; the 1992 elections in Puerto Rico brought about a change to a pro-statehood government, which proposed a new view on language policy.

Newly elected Governor Pedro Rosselló of the New Progressive Party (NPP) re-instated the Official Language Act of 1902, allowing for either English or Spanish to be used in governmental transactions. Governor Pedro Rosselló, fulfilling a campaign promise to return English to its original status to facilitate the eventual acceptance of Puerto Rico as a state, promptly revoked the “Spanish-only” law and signed into effect Law No. 1, which essentially conformed to the stipulations of the original 1902 law. In 2003, the Commission of Education, the School Language Policies, Science, and Culture of the Puerto Rican Senate produced a report on language in Puerto Rico, which concluded that it is precisely this sort of politicization of the conflict over bilingualism that has led to language learning problems among Puerto Rican children. Given the demands of the “information age” under Rosselló’s government, a newly energized English Program office quickly created new standards, curricula, programs and projects directed at developing bilingual citizens. At the beginning of 1997 the Secretary of Education, Víctor M. Fajardo, presented The Project for the Development of a Bilingual Citizen. This initiative promoted the following objectives:

1. Begin literacy in English and Spanish during elementary school.
2. Allotted 90 minutes of instruction in Spanish and in English at the intermediate level of instruction.
3. Utilize the English language to teach science and mathematics.

4. Provide immersion programs in English for high school students, as well as writing workshops in Spanish.

5. Promote opportunities and incentives for teachers who are teaching in English so that they may develop professionally and obtain certifications in teaching English.

6. Develop an exchange program which permits Puerto Rican teachers to improve their English skills in the United States and bring North American teachers to Puerto Rico in order to help Puerto Rican teachers on the island improve their English.

7. Provide technical assistance and supervision in English and Spanish in all school districts.

These objectives have a similar view of the policies from the early 1900s where the use of teachers from the states was promoted, as well as the project that sent Puerto Rican teachers to further their English studies on the mainland. For these reasons, the project received much criticism from local cultural and academic institutions. To date, there has been no comprehensive study carried out to gather and analyze the scope and achievements of this project. Despite his vision, Fajardo’s agenda was left incompletely implemented when the PDP returned to the helm of government in 2001.

In January of 2001, Governor Sila María Calderón from the Popular Democratic Party took office. During her term, the language policy debate was brought up more than once; however, she refused to change existing legislation, due to her political views which promoted the use of Spanish as a reaffirmation of cultural identity. César Rey was
appointed Secretary of Education during Calderon’s term in office. Although Rey did not focus on the language policy, he did promote the teaching of Spanish in public schools. He believed that students needed to focus more on perfecting their mother tongue. He published the “Proyecto de Renovación Curricular: Fundamentos Teóricos y Metodológicos” in 2003 which contained the philosophical and psychological principles about the nature of education and the different aspects of the formal educational process, as well as the philosophical, scientific and evaluative principles on which the elaboration of the curriculum for the Puerto Rican school is based (p. v). I had the opportunity to meet and speak with Dr. Rey during a workshop in which I participated at the University of Puerto Rico or UPR in July of 2018. He is currently part of the faculty at the University and has worked on many important social projects. I asked him about his experience as the former Secretary of Education and he expressed that although he had many important and innovative ideas and projects he wanted to implement on a long-term basis, unfortunately, the Department of Education is at present still highly politicized, limiting the scope of work any Secretary of Education can carry out. Historically, it has been and still is a position which is designated by the governor and therefore must follow the political policy established at the time. In other words, if the position were one not appointed by any one government official, the Secretary would have autonomy to carry out his or her agenda for a longer period of time (not restricted to electoral terms), in an effort to better the education of the public-school students. Upon Rey’s departure from the position, the following secretary, Dr. Rafael Aragunde, continued the curricular renovation agenda between 2005 and 2008 while he was Secretary of Education.
It was not until Puerto Ricans elected NPP or New Progressive Party candidate Luis Fortuño as their governor in 2008, that a change in policy was proposed. Fortuño announced that his goal was to make “all public-school students … bilingual within 10 years” later clarified as 2022 as a result of the press statement (Associated Press, 2012, p.8). Former Secretary of Education Edwin Moreno was appointed to oversee the implementation of the project. It established a bilingual curriculum in 31 schools with the intention of incorporating another 35. As under previous administrations, upon not being reelected, Fortuño’s policies were not continued, highlighting once again the importance of having a language policy free from political influence.

PDP candidate Alejandro Garcia Padilla was elected governor in 2012, and during his four-year term, he did not implement any major changes in the educational system. Classes were taught in Spanish except for the English language class in most public schools, apart from those which continued to belong to the initial group of bilingual schools. Currently, two years since the election of NPP Governor Ricardo Rosselló in 2016 (son of former Governor Pedro Rosselló), due to the fiscal situation of the island and the horrific disaster caused by Hurricane Maria in 2017, changes to language teaching or policy have not been undertaken, despite the appointment of a U.S. born Secretary of Education, Ms. Julia Keleher (who resigned in April of 2019). The island is presently experiencing a difficult social and political period which ironically provides a special opportunity for the implementation of alternative learning methods, particularly those that depend on technological tools and which focus on the student as an individual.

Thus, in summary, there were basically three waves of language policies on the island in the years described so far. First, as I discussed above, there was language
substitution which lasted briefly only to be followed by an attempt at bilingual education. Following that period, it was decided that English would be incorporated as a subject, while the remaining classes would be taught in Spanish, much like today. Therefore, if English was present in the school system since the very beginning of U.S. presence in Puerto Rico, why did it not succeed in producing an English-speaking population? The reasons are multiple. One of the most important was that which has already been stated: the lack of qualified teachers on the island. Notwithstanding the efforts made to bring fluent American English-speaking teachers to the island, these were usually assigned to schools in or close to the metropolitan area. This implied that in the rural schools across the island, native teachers, poorly prepared in the English language due to important historical circumstances and to being pawns of political exchanges, such as the Hispanic American War, carried out these functions. Although they most probably had the best of intentions, crash courses in a second language fail to produce a highly qualified teacher. In addition, another influencing factor was the fact that many students dropped out of school by the 3rd grade. This loss of frequent contact with the language and opportunities to practice it were bound to impact them negatively, particularly when one takes into consideration the situation in which their parents, were most likely in; this is to say that they did not speak English with a considerable level of proficiency, much less at home. Only those who were lucky enough to continue attending school had a better opportunity to master the language. Of these, a small percentage was able to further their studies in high school and even a lesser number of students might have had an opportunity to travel off the island for educational and/or professional purposes.
The most important factor, that is, the guiding principle or salient value of Puerto Rican culture and of all things important to Puerto Ricans, is that of cultural identity. Thus, it is understandable that the forging idea, moving force and salient feeling that has had the greatest influence or impact on Puerto Rican history, is precisely that of cultural identity. Puerto Ricans have a very strong identity which is closely linked to the use of their Spanish language, culture, and values. Puerto Rican citizens who lived through the American invasion and immediate years after had established a way of life about which they felt passionately. The arrival of these ‘outsiders’ who tried to force their culture, language, values, government, and religion, upon them, among others, were met with strong resistance. They responded to U.S. presence by maintaining their mother tongue, customs, religion, and values intact. They might have been forced to reluctantly accept the American way of government and educational system, but they never abandoned their strong Puerto Rican culture and pride, maintaining it despite the circumstances. It was a forced engagement with which they had to deal; follow the new rules and go to school to learn this newly “imposed” language. However, upon arriving home and in their community, they were free to use their native language.

2.3 The Department of Education: 1990s- present

The Department of Education (DE) is the largest government agency, with the largest budget and workforce on the island. The number of students has been steadily decreasing over the past two decades. Census data indicate that there has been a steady decrease in the birthrate on the island, as well as massive migration which directly impacts the number of school-aged children on the island. Starting in the 1950s, with the Great Exodus, explained in social-political terms in Chapter 3, where close to 500,000
Puerto Ricans left the island with the hope of finding a better life for themselves and their family. Further, smaller waves followed. Between 1960 and 1970 a total of 214,000 people left. This is half as many in the previous decade, but together, this figure represents an alarming number of the population to lose in such a short amount of time. The movement slowed down in the decade which followed, only to rise to 116,000 in the 1980s and 1990s. In other words, in forty years, Puerto Rico lost almost three quarters of a million people. Between 2000 and 2018, the rate at which the island has been losing its inhabitants has remained steady. Since 2004, when Puerto Rico suffered an economic downturn, Puerto Ricans have been leaving for other parts of the United States. Between 2005 and 2013, the island lost 5.5% of its population. According to the 2015 Migrant Profile, published by the Puerto Rico Statistics Institute, the island’s migration indicators reached historical records during 2015, with 89,000 people moving to the U.S. permanently, 5,000 more than the total reported the previous year. The report also noted that Puerto Rico’s youth dominated the emigration wave, with an average age of 28. Teachers and professionals in management and sales stand out among the professionals who fled the island. Specifically, between 1,800 and 4,500 emigrants were educators. Most recently, Hurricane María, a catastrophic storm of great proportions that hit the entire island in September of 2017, provoked a massive wave of migration. An estimated 150,000 people fled the island to different parts of the U.S., mainly the southern states. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, in Florida alone, over 12,000 new students were enrolled in the months following the hurricane.

These changes in population ultimately had an adverse effect on the public-school educational system. The growth in enrollment it had experienced during the 1980s and
1990s has receded. As a public-school teacher for the past 24 years, I can personally attest to this. I began teaching in 1994, at the high school level. At the time, there was a great prestige attached to the profession and it was a position many wanted to have. In the mid-1990s there was a boom in the number of students enrolled. According to “Censo 2000: Estadísticas de Población de Puerto Rico”, the island’s population increased from 3,196,520 in 1980 to 3,522,037 by 1990. This was a period in which many families had three to four children each. Those numbers of children were reflected in the number of students per classroom at the time. In 1994 teachers, such as myself had groups of forty to forty-four students per class (teaching five class periods a day).

According to The Department of Education’s Annual Statistical Report of Public Day Schools, the number of students has been slowly but steadily decreasing at present. This phenomenon arose as a result of a period of great changes in society. If we compare the past four decades, school enrollment has been declining. For example, in the 1989-1990 school year, there was a total of 650,491 students. At this time, given the sizeable number of students enrolled, new schools were being constructed to better accommodate them. Teacher recruitment was on the rise and the island economy flourished. These numbers, however, contrast sharply with the numbers reported in the next decade where a total of 617,779 students enrolled in the 1999-2000 school year. The data published for this school year provided more important details, such as the graduation rate, which was between 92-96%. It also presented the number of students who left the island public school and transferred to the U.S., as well as the return-migration students. These were 6,865 and 3,608, respectively, making a net loss of 3,257 students in that school year.
These returning students would have an impact on society, a point to be discussed in the next chapter.

Fast forwarding to the 2005-2006 academic year, there were 563,278 students (54,501 less than in 2000) versus 526,145 in the 2007-2008 year. This is a net loss of 91,634 students. This steady descent in the number of students reflects what was happening in society at the time. Puerto Rico began to experience a decline in the population after 2004 when it was at its highest at 3,826,878. The U.S. Census reports that the birth rate between the years 2000 and 2012 was down 34.5%. The number of children 15 and younger decreased in 19.1% during the course of these years. This, coupled with a net migration of 288,000 and a drop in the percentage of children in public schools (64%), paved the way for the recent reforms undertaken in the public-school system.

In 2014, a larger scale plan authored by then Secretary of Education Rafael Román Meléndez, called for the closing and consolidation of schools. Given the island’s precarious fiscal situation, Román Meléndez was given the task of decreasing the Department of Education’s expenses. His most noteworthy project to comply with this task was to evaluate the number of schools which were then in operation and to close those which proved to be too much of an expense to keep open, moving their students to nearby schools. This plan was met with much resistance from all sectors: teachers, school officials, parents, and the community in general. Despite the protests, a total of 76 schools were closed, followed by another 63 in 2015 and 19 in 2016. These changes went hand in hand with a new school level policy. Beginning in 2015, Roman Melendez began phasing in a new grade level system to resemble the system used in the United States.
Until then there were three possibilities; elementary school from grades K-6th, middle school from grades 7th-9th and high school from the 10th-12th grades. The plan was to gradually phase out middle school and only have two levels; primary- K-8th and secondary- 9th-12th.

Unfortunately, this was easier said than done. Although it was a fact that student enrollment was steadily declining on a yearly basis, it was also a fact that many schools did not have the necessary facilities to absorb the new grades in which they were to receive students. This ultimately meant that in some cases, three levels were maintained.

So, between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, schools were gradually adjusted into one of the four possibilities which are in effect today. These are: primary- K-5th, middle school- 6th-8th, a rural school option of grades K-8th, and high school- 9th-12th.

The result of these changes was that in 2016-2017, the Department of Education (DE) of Puerto Rico had a total of 1,272 schools open (data taken from the DE website (http://az-schoolreportcard-web.azurewebsites.net/)). According to the document “School Report Card”, during the school year 2016-2017 (current year data is not yet available), a total of 365,057 students were enrolled. This number reflected a decrease in number in comparison with the previous two years where the numbers were 394,478 and 373,137 respectively, justifying the school closures and reductions implemented.

However, just as recently as at the beginning of this 2018 academic year, Governor Ricardo Rosselló announced that due to the migration which occurred immediately after Hurricane Maria, the Department of Education had estimated a new decrease in enrollment and a loss of more than 27,000 students for the 2018-2019 school year. Currently, in the 2018-2019 academic year, there are 856 open. In addition, it is
estimated that in the next five years the total number of students enrolled in public schools will be 292,000, while an increase in private school enrollment is expected. This will also provoke a decrease in the number of public-school teachers from the current 32,119 to 24,776 in this period. Sadly enough, another 305 schools are set to close in the next 4 years according to the DE’s plan if the population numbers do not change dramatically. We have yet to see how these proposed changes will impact the teaching of English, specifically, in our public schools.

2.4 Standardized testing of English in the Department of Education (1990s-present)

Standardized testing in Puerto Rico is an area of conflict. It is widely known amongst teachers, students and the public, that the tests are a Federal funding requisite and must be administered and reported annually for continuity of these moneys. It is also a fact that for years teachers have openly protested these tests, claiming they do not measure the academic reality of Puerto Rico. In addition, the failure to count the test results as part of the students’ evaluation has been a decisive factor when it comes to the students answering the tests consciously. Teachers report that students do not focus on answering them to the best of their knowledge since they know there will be no repercussion for doing poorly. There are, however, benefits for obtaining above average results. The DE offers an annual bonificación or bonus to those students who score Proficient or Advanced in the three main content areas. Starting at the 2017-18 school year, the DE began to utilize the results of these tests as part of teacher evaluations by assigning a portion of the possible evaluation points to the results obtained by the students of the schools they work at, affecting the overall evaluation score of all the teachers indiscriminately of whether they are their students or not.
Data provided by the Department of Education (School Report Card, 2017) demonstrates that the level of English as a Second Language (ESL) proficiency of the students enrolled in the public-school system as measured by the standardized tests taken yearly from grades three to eight and then in grade eleven fluctuates between 41-42%.

The Department of Education assigns annual objectives for each subject. In the case of ESL, the expectation is a low 34%, which means that students meet and surpass the goal. Although these numbers vary by subgroup as shown in the diagram below, with exception of special needs students, goals are being met.

Table

Data corresponding to the 2017-2018 school year is not yet available, but the tendency points to a similar result.
Chapter 3

Socio-historical context for changing attitudes toward English in Puerto Rico

3.0 Introduction

Language and politics go hand in hand in Puerto Rico as I pointed out in the previous chapter. This has been the case from the beginning of the onset of the presence of the United States in 1998. In this chapter, I begin with the early uses of the language for trade and commerce in 19th century, and then proceed to show how English was imposed on the population after the United States invaded Puerto Rico in 1898. As the U.S. Americans settled onto the island, they brought with them their customs, language, government, and educational system. Imposing these changes on the residents of the island proved to be a daunting task, because of considerable popular resistance. The U.S. authorities did not understand the degree to which Puerto Ricans maintained their strong sense of cultural identity related to their own language identity. Despite the troubled historical relationship of the Puerto Ricans with the English language, there is growing evidence that attests to changing attitudes toward English on the island. These changes have occurred mostly in the past thirty years with the arrival of technology and globalization.

3.1 Socio-historical events and socio-cultural changes that defined the first period of U.S. occupation (1900-1950), the second phase (1951-1989) and (1990-2018)

Phase 1: 1900-1950

Puerto Ricans had already come in contact with the English language prior to the arrival of the U.S. Americans in the late 19th century. This had been mostly through trade
up to 1898. For the first two years Puerto Rico was a “department” under the jurisdiction of the War Department. During this brief transitional period of military rule, the foundations for a radical and sustained transformation of Puerto Rico’s political institutions, legal codes, and educational system were firmly established. Victor Clark, who directed island education during the military regime, asserted that the islanders were easily malleable due to a weak sense of language and culture. Obviously, Clark knew nothing about dialect variation and even less about Puerto Rico’s robust literature and strong cultural identity. This was the time of highly distinguished writers and thinkers such as Eugenio María de Hostos, Ramón Emeterio Betances, José Gautier Benítez, José G. Padilla, and Luis Muñoz Rivera. Tied to Puerto Rican identity was their language. This was nonnegotiable. However, U.S. officials aspired to convert PR into a commercial bridge to Latin America and its people, therefore, needed to be ambassadors for the interests of the colonizers. The need of the loyalty of the people of Puerto Rico was indisputably necessary in order to secure the commercial and military aspirations of the U.S. Therefore, the English language, which had been an important element in previous successful conquests around the world, was an important element which needed to be addressed immediately. The efforts made through language policies have been explained in the previous chapter, so the principal focus here will be political agendas, the first of which began as early as 1900.

On May 1, 1900, The Foraker Act established a civil colonial administration in Puerto Rico. This act was the first stage of the colonizing mission by means of the implantation of government and judicial institutions patterned on those of the United States. The most prominent of the features of this administration was the Executive
Council. This Council was to be responsible for overhauling the Island’s political and judicial institutions, installing an insular constabulary, modernizing the infrastructure and installing a system of public education.

The appointed eleven-man Executive Council was an unusual institution in U.S. territorial history in that it had both the executive and legislative functions. It was and thus served as the cabinet of the presidentially appointed governor and the upper chamber of the legislature. All of its members were male; six were United States born citizens, who were each assigned a cabinet post. The remaining five were Puerto Rican, although for more than a decade, none of these had been assigned to lead any of the insular departments. This composition ensured that the Americanization effort of the island would by closely directed by the central government while prohibiting the interference and participation of the symbolically appointed Puerto Rican members. William Willoughby, who served as council president, wrote "The greatest freedom was given to the newly constituted government to work out practically every question requiring the exercise of governmental authority". He wrote that the council constituted "the center or keystone to the whole system" of government (as cited in Cabán, p.121). This ambition to reconstruct Puerto Rico’s institutions and people, while sustaining the operations of the colonial administration was overwhelmingly financed with proceeds from internal sources.

The Foraker Act, in addition, set up a commission appointed by the President to compile and revise Puerto Rico’s laws. By 1902, the Spanish penal code and laws of civil and criminal procedures had been replaced with exact duplicates of the California and Montana codes. The Louisiana Civil Code was used as the basis for the new commercial
codes and the codes of civil and criminal procedures were replaced with those from other states. Governor William Hunt observed, "There is no more ready or more practical method of Americanizing our new possessions than by the enactment and enforcement of American laws, and the introduction and practice of American jurisprudence" (as cited in Cabán, p.123).

The extension of the U.S. federal district court system to Puerto Rico was one of the most controversial of the reforms. An important institution of socializing the people in the norms of the U.S. jurisprudence was the court system, since all of the proceedings were to be conducted in English by U.S. judges appointed by the president. Puerto Rican political leaders emphatically opposed the district court claiming they were not fairly represented. United States officials denied the claims of unfair representation, claiming to receive support from Puerto Rican political groups. The members of the Puerto Rican Republican Party were loyal supporters of the colonial regime and were in complete control of the lower house of the legislature. A decade after the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Willoughby announced that "in no other regard have institutions of Porto Rico existing under Spanish rule undergone so complete a change at the hands of the Americans as in respect to judicial organization and procedure". Instead, Puerto Rico had "a complete system of practice in the courts, similar in its main features to that existing in the code states of the United States" (as cited in Cabán, p.123).

In order to attract U.S. corporations to do business in Puerto Rico, a favorable climate had to be established and legal reform was a crucial element. In the task of Americanizing the island, according to the U.S., the presence of businessmen would be beneficial. To further entice them, generous corporate tax laws were passed modeled after
those used in industrial states. Federal legal protection also extended to the U.S. firms operating on the island. During his term, Governor Allen informed potential investors of the benefits they would have upon investing, which redounded in almost no economic risk. Throughout the duration of the Executive Council (1900-1917), almost a quarter of the insular budget was employed on these efforts. In fact, one of the most rapidly increasing budgets was that of the penal institutions. The rate of arrests increased alarmingly over thirteen times what had been the normal rate between 1899 and 1905. By 1916 it had slightly decreased and an estimated 4.5% of the population was incarcerated.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the educational system was another extremely important element utilized in the Americanization process under the Foraker Act. The United States had attained an important position in the world of industrialization. They also had the necessity for laborers to carry out their agenda however, they had to ensure that these workers would be educated in and follow the ways of the U.S. Americans in order to safeguard their loyalty. This was one of the reasons the U.S. believed that it was of utmost importance that education be available not only to a small percentage of the elite, but to all the population at no cost. Educators were becoming aware of how, by means of public education, a sense of national identity among European populations, could be achieved. The educational system could be an effective tool for political socialization. School authorities experimented with curricula that not only provided vocational training, but included English-language instruction, civic education, patriotic exercises, and the transmission of values and beliefs through the study of U.S. history. This idea would be implemented in Puerto Rico, as one of the former Spanish colonies.
The Department of Education was created in order to transform the Spanish-speaking people whom had a four-hundred-year history and distinct culture in patriotic subjects. Puerto Ricans would become familiar with the political views and language of the colonizers, as well as be trained in the fields the U.S. deemed of importance at the time. The department's mandate was extensive: (1) imparting English-language skills, (2) instilling civic values, patriotism, and adherence to the colonial regime, (3) training Puerto Ricans for managerial, supervisory, and technical positions in government and industry, (4) installing a gender-based educational programs in which women were socialized and trained to perform tasks that would preserve the traditional male-centered family, (5) providing job-related skills in manual and industrial trades for the boys and needlework and domestic service for the girls, (6) preparing a select group of Puerto Ricans to assume high-level administrative positions in the government, and (7) conducting physical education and hygiene instruction (Cabán, 2002, p. 126).

It was the opinion of the U.S. officials that by providing public education, a sense of loyalty to the U.S. would be instilled, since by means of education, employment would increase. Providing these people with a means of supporting themselves and their dependents through education would in turn according to one education commissioner, "convert our rural people into citizens capable of maintaining the sovereignty of the state (quoted in Negron de Montilla, 1975). School officials had the task of educating an elite group of the local population to be at the service of the colonial government. Part of their plan consisted in providing scholarships to men and women to schools on the mainland where they would go to “assimilate the credo of Americanization” (Cabán, p.127) and upon returning, become ambassadors which served the colonizer. It was thought that
since Puerto Ricans lacked the innate cerebral capabilities for abstract thought, they could be adequately trained to mimic the colonizer and perhaps learn to appreciate its higher moral character. Suffice to say, the U.S. colonizers did not see the Puerto Ricans as having the intellectual capacity to govern themselves, due to their lack of education and Spanish cultural background. Although one of the objectives of the public education system was to prepare the island for self-government, the fact that most of the population seldom studied further than the sixth grade, demonstrating this ability would be an uphill battle. In addition, the privilege of participating in elections would be reserved for the limited amount of the male population who had the opportunity to be educated, was literate, and demonstrated the capability of understanding the voting process. Education Commissioner Clark, during his term, went as far as to entertain the idea of converting the island into a bilingual community with the intention of converting the island into a “liaison point between English speaking and Spanish speaking America” (Clark 1930, p.90).

The Department of Education’s budget was over a third of the insular budget. This immense budget was not enough to produce the results expected by the U.S. The Department of Education was not able to produce enough both literate and patriotic citizens on the island. Many factors influenced in this demise, but the two most salient were the consistent rejection of the Puerto Ricans and the serious socio-economic problems plaguing them. The insensitivity with which the islanders were treated only served to make their efforts to reject the Americanization even more. The U.S. underestimated the strong cultural identity the people of Puerto Rico had. Therefore, the curriculum focused on teaching rudimentary skills and turn out an obedient labor force to
push forward the sugar, tobacco and needlework economy of the time. When the Americans came to the island, there was already a thriving sugar and tobacco industry yet, the colonizers believed that given the superabundance of labor on the island, with the right guidance, the industry would be even more bountiful. Their dreams of exploiting these laborers were short-lived, since it quickly became evident that 90% of the population was afflicted with hookworm. These health and sanitary conditions needed to be tended urgently. Accordingly, the government initiated a campaign to "stamp out the disease" in order to succeed in the "rehabilitation of the physique of the Puerto Rico laboring people" (as cited in Cabán, p.129). The school system was the means selected to provide instruction on personal hygiene, sanitation and nutrition. Despite the efforts, the epidemic lasted until the 1940s.

The situation for the unemployed Puerto Ricans was dismal. The Department of Education’s efforts had not succeeded in producing employable citizens. In fact, in 1915, when the island was transitioning to an export-oriented economy, there were between two to three hundred thousand more workers available than jobs. Evidently, the school system had failed to educate a self-reliant population with marketable skills for new labor markets. Making healthy and reliable workers was an important component of the colonizing mission however, with the transition to corporate-dominated export agriculture, new issues needed to be dealt with. Upon arrival in 1898, the U.S. quickly realized that Puerto Rico’s physical infrastructure was rudimentary and unreliable. In order to modernize it, the council granted exclusive franchises to U.S. firms to build and maintain the roads, as well as transportation, communication and other related facilities essential for economic development. In order to finance this ambitious project, the
colonial state issued bonds to generate millions of dollars in loans during its seventeen-year life.

The future of Puerto Rico’s commercial development depended on connecting the fertile interior of the country and making it accessible in order to exploit it agriculturally. Great importance was given to the construction of permanent roads. By 1910, there had been approximately a thousand kilometers of first-class roads built. This was almost four times more than what had been previously built by the Spanish. However, this project proved to be more expensive than expected, consuming more than half of the budget of the Department of the Interior and about one tenth of the total funds expended by the insular government. During this period of road construction, the unemployment rate had dropped; however, there were still not enough jobs. In fact, the 30 cents which were being paid to the workers was being considered excessive in comparison to the expenses of the build. In 1903, because of this, they resorted to employing convicts, who were paid just 5 cents a day, less than one fourth of the pay of the regular worker. When the governor realized how cost-effective it was to employ prisoners, he instructed the Interior Department to use them for road construction whenever possible. Further efforts to control wages were put in place for common laborers hired by state agencies. The cap was set at 45 cents a day, in an effort to protect the coffee and sugar industries from losing labor to better paid government positions.

The sugar industry was another integral part of the U.S. colonizing mission. The government had already invested in building permanent roads, which were important for effective transportation; however, in order to maximize the sugarcane cultivation in the southern coastal plains, a more important obstacle had to be overcome. Despite being a
tropical island, Puerto Rico has a varying topography. The southern region is a dry one which lacked adequate rainfall and natural water supplies. Therefore, in 1908, the legislature authorized construction of an extensive irrigation system. Justifying the investment was the fact that the United States depended heavily on Puerto Rico for their sugar supply. This investment paid off for the sugar corporations, since their revenues soared, provoking an increase in the land value in Guayama. The average price of an acre of cane land in 1907 was $99, but by 1917, that same land was being sold at $350 to $400 an acre (Cabán, 2002). This profit did not pass down to the smaller sugar producers, due to many factors including higher property taxes and most importantly the monopolization of the railroad transit system. Guayama was booming, but as will be discussed later, the economy suffered greatly during the second half of the twentieth century.

As early as 1911, the insular and municipal governments had accrued a total of $5.3 million of debt due to having sold bonds to finance the construction of roads and irrigation systems. This debt had duplicated by 1918 to $10.8 million. This debt financing would prove to have serious consequences for long-term development. In order to counteract this lack of income, in 1918, Governor Yager proposed the only viable solution: to raise property taxes. The vast majority of the island’s land was owned by nonresidents who did not contribute to the insular government yet garnered the benefits of the increase in value of their land due to the investment made by the government to the infrastructure of the island. The legislature approved the new tax increases, but the property owners delayed or refused to pay and long legal battles between them ensued. This early pattern of direct colonial state financing of infrastructure development is one of the permanent features of capitalist development under colonial management.
The U.S. Army and the American Federation of Labor (AFL) were other important institutions actively engaged in the Americanization process. In March of 1899 an army battalion of Puerto Rican volunteers was formed under the command of U.S. army officers. The Puerto Rican Regiment was, according to U.S. officials, an important force since serving a flag stimulates loyalty to it. Governor William Hunt said that “its existence has stimulated patriotism and aroused a pride in the honor of the flag” (U.S. Department of State, 1903, p. 15). As for the AFL, by 1900 they were involved in the Puerto Rican labor scene. In collaboration with the Federación Libre de Trabajadores de Puerto Rico (FLT), the AFL was able to shift the workers’ demands to those related to the economic and material conditions within the industrial and political order imposed by the United States. Maintaining a cordial alliance between these two labor groups was pivotal to the Americanization process, since the workers’ focus was not on political status, but rather on their working conditions.

In 1917, after almost two decades of rule under the problematic Executive Council created by the Foraker Act, Puerto Ricans awoke to a new regime. Congress voted into law a second organic act. In the eve of World War I, the Jones Act was the United States answer to a need for loyalty from the people of the island. The dominant political party of the time was promoting the opposition of the colonial regime while a growing appeal for independence was spreading. The United States believed that the Jones Act would pacify these disgruntled voices without losing their imperial dominance over the island and its people. This act centralized the power in the office of the governor yet kept the appointment of the commissioner of education and the attorney general by the president. It was portrayed as a measure that significantly liberalized the colonial
regime by eliminating the Executive Council and establishing a popularly elected upper house. It also signaled the end of the aggressive Americanization campaign and shifted the goals to maintaining its important position as a key sugar producer, but also an even more crucial geo strategic asset during World War I. As a consequence of the war, there was a worldwide sugar shortage. Unexpectedly, the sugar producing insular possessions of the United States became extraordinarily important to the growing international economy of the U.S. Puerto Rico became an extremely lucrative investment site.

However, the Jones Act was best known for conferring collective U.S. citizenship on the people of Puerto Rico. The purpose of granting citizenship to Puerto Ricans was to make it clear that that the island would remain permanently connected to the United States. Remarkably, despite the extreme intents up to this moment of imposing the English language on the people of the island, with this new act, citizenship was granted without requiring literacy or fluency in the language. This did not change the language policies at the moment, for English instruction continued to be intense in schools to promote civic education. By the early to mid-1920s, the fervor of the Americanization campaign had diminished greatly.

Corporate profits may have increased during and after World War I, but Puerto Rico’s economy degenerated into a chaotic level of poverty which demonstrated the failure of the U.S. to protect its colony. Disease, malnutrition, unemployment and landlessness, sunk Puerto Rico into a depression. There was a rate of 60% of unemployment and more than 600,000 people malnourished. Those who were able to find a job were paid such low wages compared to the high cost of living, that even meeting their minimal needs was an uphill battle. Governor Roosevelt observed that the "death
rate in this disease (tuberculosis) was higher than that of any other place in the Western Hemisphere, and four and one-half times the death rate in the continental United States" (Cabán, 2002). These precarious conditions might have been avoidable had the plan for the education system worked.

After all, massive amounts of funds had been invested in the Department of Education with the intention of eradicating illiteracy and providing marketable skills for the students. However, many variables had not been factored in the plan. For one, in 1931, less than half of the almost half-a million school-aged children were enrolled in the public schools. Of those enrolled, 83% of rural school children dropped out before completing the fourth grade. Only a small percentage of students received vocational training since this started after the sixth grade. The collaboration between the industrial and the school system, which had been deemed to be a critical function of public education, collapsed by the end of the 1920s. Confronted with the economic crisis of the 1930s, priorities were reexamined, and the school system focused on educating the young people in basic life skills. Carpentry, cooking, sewing, cultivation and other employable skills were taught. This was thought to be an important tool for improving their substandard living conditions. Curriculums were gender based, dividing the offerings. Carpentry, agriculture and shoe repair for the boys while the girls were instructed in home economics, as well as needlepoint. These skills were taught in hope that they could employ and maintain themselves. Each curriculum had a specific purpose in society. For example, the shoemaking course was directly related to the effort to protect the “jíbaro” (term typically used to refer to a native from the countryside) from hookworm, since the disease was contracted through the foot. Girls were offered the home economics
curriculum with emphasis in cooking and sewing with the intention of teaching them to take pride in their home life. The agricultural curriculum strived to make them self-sufficient and able to grow their own crops in order to eradicate hunger. Needlework proved to be the most successful of all the programs. The industry had a healthy demand, therefore, training in this area was carried island wide to public and private schools where girls were trained, then employed (although poorly paid) to work in the industria de la aguja.”

These efforts of educating the population were unable to eradicate the deeply rooted problems of poverty and hunger. In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the executive order which created The Puerto Rican Emergency Relief Administration (PRERA), and the PRRA (Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration) in 1935. These agencies aimed at combating unemployment, improve health conditions, better education and housing, and electric lighting in rural areas and suburbs. Food was also distributed and preventive measures against malaria were put in place. Both agencies addressed immediate necessities, but they did not have the reach to transform the sociopolitical structures responsible for maintaining indigence. The federal government tried to compensate for the tremendous slowdown in private investment in Puerto Rico as a consequence of the Great Depression, but it was not enough. In a parallel way, development in the political sphere was taking place. Despite being a time of severe hardship on the Island, it was also a period in which the common people achieved full political rights. Women were granted the right to vote in 1929, and by 1936, the total number of registered voters more than duplicated to almost three quarters of a million.
During the following decade or so, prominent political figures emerged with distinct views of what they believed should be the path to be taken by Puerto Ricans to better their situation. Language, education and political status were at the forefront of the discussion. Conflicting views on whether Puerto Rico should push for independence from the United States or strengthen the ties to the mainland, while delimitating a new relationship between the two were the main agendas. Language policies had already been changing so that now Spanish was the main language used in school and English was relinquished to a subject. This was not enough for those who wanted to be done with the influence and control the United States had over the island. The rise of a strong anti-American movement was becoming evident. The leader of the Nationalist Party, Pedro Albizu Campos rejected the colonialism that was responsible for the impoverishment of his people. By the early 1930s, a nationalist vision of identity was forming amongst a group of Puerto Ricans. Opposition to the colonial order intensified. However, there were other political figures which appealed for just the opposite.

Luis Muñoz Marín, a senator for the Liberal party and Carlos E. Chardón, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico were two such figures. Both had advocated in the past for the restructuring of the sugar cane industry. They belonged to a generation of young people educated in U.S. universities. Muñoz and Chardón had actively participated in the programs launched by the PRERA and the PRRA. As a result, they familiarized themselves with the governmental federal programs and saw the urgent necessity to change the structures that kept the island in a constant state of poverty and dependency. In 1938, Muñoz Marín, unhappy with the political parties of the moment, decided to form a new party, to be named *Partido Popular Democrático* or the Popular Democratic Party.
whose slogan was *pan, tierra y libertad* (bread, land and freedom) and whose distinctive emblem was the *pava del jíbaro*, or the jibaro's straw hat. From 1938 to 1940, Muñoz Marín took to the mountains, talking to the people and asking them to lend him their vote, earning their trust. Given the difficult economic conditions of the time, the people trusted Muñoz Marín for his ability to serve as a middle man between the federal government in Washington and the insular government.

The federal government had been feeling pressured by the political parties of the island to resolve the political status. The two options presented at the time, independence or statehood were problematic. Independence would surely push the island into a social and economic crisis far worse than what had been experienced, while statehood was not even considered due to the lack of success in the Americanization process. What remained was a third option proposed by Muñoz Marín, where Puerto Rico would have full internal autonomy but would continue under U.S. sovereignty. In 1947, the United States Congress approved an amendment to the Jones Act, allowing Puerto Ricans to elect, for the first time, their own governor who also had the authority to select his own executive cabinet members. In the 1948 election, Luis Muñoz Marín became the island’s first locally elected governor. A number of important economic development programs were implanted. These provoked deep changes on the island.

This first phase of an attempted process of Americanization started with vigorous reforms of every aspect of the Puerto Rican lifestyle. The United States was focused on a complete overhaul, which did not factor in the social conditions of the population. During the first phase, changes in the social structure of the island, imposed by the United States, forced the population into serious poverty and harsh living conditions. Having very little
control over the job market, Puerto Ricans were at the mercy of the new employers. They went from working the land to producing their own sustenance, to working the land of the foreigners who bought up large parcels for agricultural exportation purposes. The scarcity of work and poor living conditions provoked the migration of Puerto Ricans to the mainland after the signing of the Jones Act between 1917 and 1930. Despite the establishment of various political parties on the island, their focus was mostly on the colonial status (for or against) and the rights of the people, not necessarily the language issue. This movement gained intensity in the 1940s.

In Elise DuBord’s paper entitled *La mancha de plátano* (2007), she summarizes three important events which marked the struggles of Puerto Ricans for an official - Spanish as the language of instruction- policy of the 1940’s. These events solidified the relationship between language and culture, which had been crucial to the people of Puerto Rico. DuBord points out that this decade was an important transitional one since Puerto Ricans gained greater political autonomy than in the previous decades and there was also more awareness of the importance of defending the heritage language. This notion of a relationship between language, culture and identity was one which was promoted strongly at this time. The first of the events was a 1940 open forum held by the *Ateneo Puertorriqueño*, an institution known for promoting the advancement and dissemination of the Puerto Rican culture. Important Puerto Rican intellectuals were invited to express their opinion on what the organization considered a cultural crisis and its effect on religion, education, the arts and the economy. The discussion revolved around how much of American identity should Puerto Rico assimilate and how much of a distinct Puerto
Rican identity should define the nation. It was agreed that the Spanish language was a crucial component of national identity to Puerto Ricans and therefore had to be defended.

The second event discussed was the Chavez Committee in 1943. The hearings held here on the island by the Committee, composed of U.S. senators, focused on the teaching of English in public schools. Educators were invited to participate and voice their opinions which contrasted sharply with that of the Committee, which favored the use of English as the medium of instruction. One of these was José Gallardo, the Commissioner of Education who argued that it would be impossible for the public-school system to meet the goals of the Committee due to the obstacles it faced. Gallardo explained how only half of the school-aged population had access to schools, many only received a half a day of classes and the average level of grade attained was fourth. In addition, and even more important, was the fact that in order to foster a bilingual population, social contexts in which to use the language were necessary, and almost non-existent on the island at the time. Others presented their views on the topic of language instruction. One of these was Louis C. Richardson, whose name today identifies the Seminar Room of the Department of English of the College of Humanities in the Río Piedras Campus of the University of Puerto Rico. Speaking on behalf of the Asociación de Maestros, he argued that public-school education suffered because of the enormous amount of time and resources spent on the teaching of English when the most crucial issue was the lack of access to education. Furthermore, he stated that as long as the Puerto Rican population was of Spanish heritage, Spanish should be the language of instruction and that the teaching of English not in English needed to be intensified. The Committee responded to these testimonies saying that they were disappointed. Chavez
himself stated “I believe in statehood for Puerto Rico, as long as all the ideals, all of the traditions and everything that Uncle Sam represents, is understood by Puerto Ricans” (DuBord, 2007). Suffice to say, Puerto Ricans would not let the issue go.

In 1945, the Puerto Rican legislature passed Law Number 51, originally authored by Puerto Rican Senator Rafael Arjona Siaca and known as the Proyecto de Idioma or the Language Project, designating Spanish as the language of instruction in public schools. It was later amended to include English as a subject from the fifth grade forward. The law was sent to President Harry Truman, who vetoed the law. President Truman stated that the issue of Puerto Rico’s political status went over and above the locally mandated language policy. The reaction to Truman’s veto came in the form of organized protest and public debate, criticizing the President’s disregard for the advice from educators as well as local legislative authority. This also sparked outrage from the students of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR), and they began to organize an island-wide strike. The fact that the president of the University did not support them was seen as a political move on his behalf. On November 8, 1946 the main strike was held at the Rio Piedras campus of the UPR with the participation of over 100,000 university students, faculty members, and local politicians, as well as high school students and university students in several towns around the island (DuBord, 2007).

The support of the peaceful protest came from numerous sectors. The mayor of Rio Piedras, Agosto Alvarez gave a speech stating that Spanish was the soul of the people of Puerto Rico and criticized the failed attempts of the Department of Education’s English language policies. The Asociación de Mujeres Graduadas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico supported the student strike with a letter to a local newspaper, asserting that
Puerto Ricans had the right to receive an education in their vernacular and not in a foreign language (DuBord, 2007). This labelling of English as a foreign, not second language served to politically and culturally separate Puerto Rico from the United States. Although there was strong opposition to teaching in English, there was also an acceptance of English as a necessary instrument in the right scenarios. Muñoz Marín, as we mentioned previously, kept his campaign promise and named Mariano Villaronga as Commissioner of Education, who in turn established Spanish as the medium of instruction in 1949, putting the issue to rest for the moment.

**Phase 2: 1951-1989**

The industrial plan of the late 1940s was for there to be *una industrialización criolla* or a locally-based industrialization. This led to the creation of local enterprises to foster local production. It was also an attempt to put the land back into the hands of the Puerto Ricans. These plans reflected, generally, the policies of the Popular Democratic Party, then in power, since they emphasized growth and efficiency as well as social justice. The strategy of promoting ‘criollo’ industrialization through the creation of state enterprises in the cement, bottling, brick and shoe industries was not successful, particularly when faced with the competition from U.S. imports after the end of the war.

In 1947, the United States signed the Puerto Rican Industrial Incentives Act. Commonly known as Operation Bootstrap (OB), this strategy was promoted by then Governor Luis Muñoz Marín as an effort to develop and modernize Puerto Rico’s economy (Ruiz Toro, 1992). A number of economic initiatives for investors served as motivation for foreign investment. Teodoro Moscoso, who had close ties to the Muñoz Marín administration, as the head of Compañía de Fomento (the island’s development agency), was directly
involved in the formulation of the strategy and in the supervision of its implementation. One of the main purposes of Operation Bootstrap was to emphasize industrialization as the development strategy most likely to create jobs as quickly and as effectively as was needed to significantly impact the economic conditions of the people. Operation Bootstrap advocated shifting toward an export-based economy in which the majority of the island’s production was aimed at the American market instead of the smaller, local market. In order to modernize Puerto Rico’s economy, foreign investment was the key. To attract this foreign investment, the Puerto Rican corporate tax was eliminated (initially for period of 10 years, which was later extended to 25 years) for American corporations who set up shop in Puerto Rico. These corporations were in addition, able to capitalize on the lower costs of labor on the island, further improving their bottom line and making doing business in P.R. more attractive. Industrial growth on the island after 1947 suggests that the tax exemption program was successful. In 1949, the United States Department of Commerce estimated that the 1,998 manufacturing establishments in Puerto Rico employed 55,000 Puerto Ricans, with an average workforce of 27.6 persons per establishment (Torres González, p. 165).

Muñoz Marín’s administration had a leading role in the economic expansion of the island’s economy at the time. Among the most significant changes was the increase in Puerto Rican migration to the United States. The era of change began primarily as the result of efforts to eradicate the island’s rampant poverty, which had been aggravated for decades by excessive dependence on agriculture. In a short 16 years, the administration of Munoz had successfully transformed the island’s economic infrastructure and thus began Puerto Rico’s modern era. Political changes were also one of the consequences of
the industrialization strategy. The Popular Democratic Party abandoned its initial ideal of independence and accepted autonomy as the solution to the political status of the island. This, of course, affected the view of this governor by those whose political ideology was one of independence for the Island. He is largely blamed for the present loss of identity among young Puerto Ricans and the economic and social ills that affect most Islanders today (personal communication from Prof. Simounet who lived through these times and commented on them on January 27, 2019).

In 1952, under his governorship, Luis Muñoz Marín signed an agreement with the U.S. government giving Puerto Rico the status of *Estado Libre Asociado* or (ELA) ‘Free Associated State’, which in other words, continued to maintain the Island’s colonial status but provided it with the new “Commonwealth” title. In reality, the word commonwealth is an oxymoron, since many independence supporters would argue that the benefits are one sided in favor of the U.S. Defenders of the ELA would agree that it is a win-win situation, since we can both benefit from this relationship. The U.S. helps the Island economically, and we, in turn benefit from the privileges extended to us as U.S. citizens (federal laws, educational opportunities, ability to enlist in the army, travel to and from the U.S. freely, etc.). This, of course, is seen differently when it is viewed from a different perspective. But there is a harsh reality. No matter how each individual views this relationship, there are limitations. We are citizens but do not have the right to vote for the President or any other elective official on the mainland like states do. We are also limited by the trade laws imposed by the U.S. government, among others. This newly established relationship back in the 1950’s was received with mixed feelings, but Puerto Ricans did take advantage of the newly provided benefits.
Operation Bootstrap’s industrialization process took place in two stages. Stage one lasted from 1947-1965. This was characterized by the ability to attract companies that were highly labor intensive and came to Puerto Rico to take advantage of the low wages in comparison with the U.S. For example, in 1950, the daily wage in Puerto Rico was 28 percent of that in the U.S. The textile, clothing and leather goods industries were the most invested in. However, the promises of jobs for all did not pan out that way. The size of the labor force declined consistently during the life of the program. From a level of 53.1 percent in 1950, it fell to 45.4 percent in 1960 and remained stable until the mid-1970s. That is, in the midst of a period of growth that was unprecedented in our history, fewer people were in the labor force. Another important point that adds a great deal to the social profile of the period was the large wave of immigration spurred by the PDP, which resulted in a million Puerto Ricans leaving the island between 1945 and 1970. The new jobs created in manufacturing did not adequately compensate the loss of jobs in agriculture due to the decline of sugar, coffee, and tobacco.

The second stage of development started in the early 1960s. A new Industrial Incentives Act was passed in 1963 increasing the period of exemptions to 17 years for companies that located in areas considered to be industrially underdeveloped. A promising attempt to creating new jobs came along when in 1967 the petrochemical plant was built in Guayama by the Phillips Corporation. They were received with bombas and platillos by the locals with the promise of employing thousands of workers. In reality, once the smoke cleared, only a few hundred obtained jobs, since many were outsourced to professionals from the U.S. The innovative notion was that these industries would provide higher wages which in turn, would stimulate the creation of secondary industries.
This objective was never achieved because the companies that came to Puerto Rico were subsidiaries of multinationals with established networks of companies that supplied them and handled distribution for them. This ironically is a concept which still carries on into present day, for many of the foreign industries present on the island have this structure. They do not produce secondary jobs, since all is handled through corporate offices in the states (or other countries’ headquarters). Puerto Rico became an important center for the petrochemical and pharmaceutical industries. It grew 27.2 percent per year from 1959 to 1974, and at the beginning of the decade of the 1970s provided 27 percent of Puerto Rico’s net manufacturing income (Torres González, 2002). However, the people of Guayama lost their faith in the promises of the U.S. and many were forced to live off food stamps. As presented in the video Operación manos a la obra, interviews with people who lived through those tough times tell how they survived by either accepting these aids or leaving their families and homes behind and going to the U.S. to find better opportunities. Unfortunately, migrating did not solve their problems completely because in the states they were faced with new situations. Discrimination was rampant, hourly wages were lower for these immigrants and the availability of jobs was usually in the agricultural area. Their “American Dream” turned out to be more of a nightmare. They went from what Puerto Ricans say guate-mala to guata-peor or from bad to worse. However, it was this wave of migration that is important to this study because it ‘earmarks’ the beginning of a change in attitude towards English.

Those thousands of Puerto Ricans who decided to seek a better life in the states broadened their vision of what it meant to be Puerto Rican. They were able to see that moving to a different land and speaking a different language does not imply a loss of
cultural identity, for many of these Puerto Ricans maintained their cultural traditions on the mainland and were able to find a balance between the two. In fact, when the return migration brought them back to the island, they brought back with them the language and customs they had learned from their parents and grand-parents in their time in the states. This migration brought its own problems too, but it will not be discussed here because it not the objective of this dissertation. Also, these return migrants left behind the negativity that characterized learning the English language, for they saw how it added to, not subtracted from their lives, a very important issue.

Despite all of the negative effects I have mentioned about the Industrialization era, there were some positive effects also. For one, the mortality rate decreased. Life expectancy increased from 46 y/o in 1940 to 73 y/o in 1980. The literary rate of the population also increased from 68% in 1940 to 91% in 1970. The government purchased and gave land to the people to work on, in an effort to control the wave of migration and allow them to build and own their own homes. Also reflecting the economic prosperity of the two previous decades, 80 percent of Puerto Rican families owned their own homes in the mid-1970s.

Today’s economy is still based on the principles of Operation Bootstrap. After the incentives ran out and industries began to leave, La Compañía de Fomento, continued to promote outside investments with tax incentives. La Compañía de Fomento played a major role in Operation Bootstrap while it was led by Teodoro Moscoso (also interviewed in the 1983 video Operación manos a la obra). This agency, however, was recently eliminated due to the current economic crisis on the island. To be successful in attracting this investment, the island needed a replacement for OB and so in 1976,
Congress signed the new tax incentives law: Section 936. This was an effort to spur the Puerto Rican economy and reduce its dependence on federal funds. Much like the previous tax laws, it aimed at allowing subsidiaries of U.S. corporations to establish operations on the island and repatriate their profits to the parent company without paying federal taxes. This created an incentive for these corporations to keep their earnings within the U.S. economy and not in European banks to avoid paying federal taxes.

This time, the government of Puerto Rico sought to go beyond the limits of the model of exporting to the United States and make the island a financial center that would offer fiscal benefits attracting transnational corporations that could attribute a high percentage of their profits to local subsidiaries. Puerto Rico experienced a massive growth in the banking industry. New financial banking entities such as Chase, Citibank and Santander entered and dominated the local scene in terms of finances. The local banks that survived were consolidated in a merger between Banco Popular and Banco de Ponce.

**Phase 3: 1990-2018—Socio-historical events**

After the major events which occurred in the first half of the century, the political scene has not seen drastic changes in policy. There have, nevertheless, been a total of five plebiscites in Puerto Rico, in an attempt to resolve the current commonwealth status. The ballot options have varied, but they mainly include statehood, independence and often a “commonwealth” option. On July 23, 1967, the first one was held. The results reflect the strong national patriotism of the time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth with some national government powers</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statehood</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As expected, the “commonwealth” option received 60.4% of the vote, a clear majority. At that time, many people still believed that “commonwealth” would evolve into some special legal status which would be different from territorial status. In the years following, the status situation was left as is until the 1990s. On March 9, 1990 the topic was brought up again and hearings were conducted in San Juan by The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs for the Plebiscite of PR. The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture prepared a statement entitled “In Defense of our Culture and Language”, presented by Dr. Francisco O’Neill Susoni on behalf of the board of the Institute. Its purpose was to argue against statehood for Puerto Rico on the basis of what a great loss it would be culturally. Dr. O’Neill began by summarizing the history of the people of Puerto Rico, from the establishments of the first towns, older than those in the U.S., to the abolition of slavery, which was obtained without shedding blood. In addition, he explained how, before the arrival of the U.S. Americans to Puerto Rico, the population reached close to a million with a clearly defined culture. There were poets, orators, painters, musicians and intellectuals as well as medical researchers on the island. He also pointed out how even after more than ninety years of the arrival of the United States, the 3.5 million residents still share the same homogeneity in language and culture. O’Neill also made note of the ever-present threat the Puerto Ricans had to live with, for the fear of their language and culture being taken from them could be materialized at any point, as history had proven. After explaining all the contributions made by Puerto Ricans in many different facets (science, arts, sports, etc.), he pointed out the status of English in Puerto Rico, although
he did accept that English had its place in our society, and he condemned the politicization of the educational system.

The presentation was very well documented, for the evidence presented by other territories which had been incorporated as states proved his point. He used Louisiana and New Mexico as examples of areas, which before becoming a state, maintained their strong cultural traditions and language (French and Spanish respectively). Moreover, Oklahoma and Hawaii lost their Native American tongues upon reaching statehood. The argument was made that who could assure the Puerto Ricans that the same would not happen to them if statehood was the goal. He claimed that statehood would only serve to divide the people of Puerto Rico and create an atmosphere of turmoil. O’Neill ended his delivery by imploring Congress to make it very clear to the people of the island what the conditions and consequences of this vote meant and to act only if the supermajority of the votes were in favor of statehood.

After all the hearings and discussions conducted under Governor Rafael Hernández Colón’s term pre-referendum, it did not materialize until after the next general elections. Consequently, on November 14, 1993, under Governor Pedro Rosselló González, a second plebiscite used a modified commonwealth option.

48.6% Commonwealth with autonomy from federal tax laws, and greater tax, trade, and social programs benefits

46.3% Statehood

4.4% Independence

Taken from: http://www.pr51st.com/the-5-puerto-rico-plebiscits/
With these results in hand, the Puerto Rico Legislative Assembly petitioned Congress to either: (1) implement the commonwealth status option as defined on the 1993 ballot, or (2) adopt a federal measure to clarify the specific status alternatives Congress is willing to consider. Congress replied that the proposal as it stood and made by the Puerto Rican government could not be implemented for constitutional and policy reasons and because it had not been supported by a majority vote.

Having not been able to convince Congress to consider their petition, a third referendum was held on December 13, 1998, where the majority of the votes were obtained by the “none of the above” option. This option was added at the last minute, and yet it appeared to have won.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current territory status</td>
<td>.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free association</td>
<td>.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statehood</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above (supported by voters who supported Enhanced Commonwealth, free association, and independence)</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result, President Clinton established a task force to more clearly define Puerto Rico’s options and to advise on proposals for a process for a Puerto Rican status choice. In December of 2005, the President’s Task Force on Puerto Rico’s Status – which was by then under the direction of President George W. Bush – announced its recommendations:
• Congress should provide for periodic plebiscites to provide Puerto Ricans with a choice between the current territory status and a status other than territory.

• If a majority opts to pursue status other than territory, Congress should provide for a plebiscite among statehood, independence and, if Congress chooses, nationhood in free association with the U.S.

• Congress should implement statehood or a nationhood status if chosen.

These recommendations clearly state what was always known; that the federal government has the final word when it comes to deciding the political future of the island. No plebiscite celebrated on the island, even one with 100% support for any of the given options, can be enforced without the approval of the U.S. This harsh colonial reality is difficult to accept by supporters of any political parties, however, indisputable. Therefore, the topic of status was put on the back burner for another seven years until 2012. This referendum was problematic because of the wording used and options given because apart from the three typical status options, an additional point was added at the beginning of the options.

54% Voters rejected the current status as a U.S. commonwealth

61% Statehood

33% Semi-autonomous “sovereign free association”

6% Independence


What did this mean for Puerto Rico? Well, unfortunately, not much. These results were met with skepticism by many political and social leaders on the island. The fact that a large number of ballots -- one-third of all votes cast -- were left blank on the question of
preferred alternative status, the results of the remaining options could have varied greatly. In addition, the second question eliminated the Commonwealth status as an option for voters, opening up the door for multiple interpretations of the outcome of the vote. For these reasons, Puerto Ricans did not obtain the favor of the federal government on status matters.

The most recent plebiscite plan to be held in June of 2017 was signed into law by Governor Ricardo Rosselló. In order to assure that the ballot complied with the requirements that the federal government needed to consider it valid, the proposed ballot was sent to the Justice Department. After evaluation, two important recommendations were made in order to gain approval. One was that an option to the ballot for the island’s current territorial status be added and second that the Free Association option on the ballot needed to make clear that “a vote for ‘Free Association’ is a vote for complete and unencumbered independence.” On June 11, 2017 the referendum took place. The number of voters who participated, however were less than 25% of those registered. The results were as follows:

97.13%  Statehood
1.52 %  Free Association/Independence
1.35%  Current territorial status


The Governor certified the results on August 17th of the same year and despite the low percentage of voter participation, petitioned for an immediate transition into proclamation of Statehood. This process was detained due to the impact of Hurricane Maria in September of 2017 which put all other political matters on hold.
Apart from the futile plebiscites, no major political changes have marked this period. Economically, by the early 1990s, the provision of the Section 936 tax law faced growing opposition from critics who attacked the tax break as a form of corporate welfare. Although these tax breaks benefitted foreign investment and had been questioned early on by the pro-Statehood Party, it unfairly burdened domestic Puerto Rican companies. In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the law that would phase out Section 936 over ten years. What followed during that span of time was the loss of jobs and closing of manufacturing plants across the island. Migration was, as it has been historically in Puerto Rico, a way to escape the rising numbers in unemployment, and the only solution for thousands of displaced workers. Left with a declining tax base, the Puerto Rican government borrowed heavily to replace the lost revenue. Consequently, the island was faced with an increased rate of unemployment (2.5 times the US average), a rising poverty rate and a nearly insolvent pension system.
The current recession was primarily brought on as a consequence of poor fiscal administration by the government. Due to their inability to produce a balanced budget which included paying off the debt, the intervention of the Federal government in 2016 was “required” (depending on which political party you ask). The Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico (Junta de Control Fiscal-JCF) was created under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (Ley PROMESA). The Board consists of seven members appointed by the President of the United States and one member designated by the Governor of Puerto Rico. In order to eliminate the board, there must be confirmation that the government of Puerto Rico has attained four consecutive balanced budgets. That is to say, it would virtually remain in force at least for the next five years (starting with the 2017-2018 fiscal year-budget).
The Arrival of the JCF was met with great opposition and disappointment. First of all, the people of the island had to accept that the public debt problem was not created by any one administration, but by the accumulation of the past inadequate administrations throughout decades. The tradition of borrowing money from one place to pay for another had come to an end. It was then that the general population came to know, among other things, that the government had been fleecing the pension funds from its employees, leaving them with insufficient funds to comply. Drastic measures had to be taken immediately. One of these was to reduce the size of the government. Being a government employee meant, back in the trusting days, that you would have a permanent position, steady paycheck and were assured a pension at the end of your career. This, however, became a burden to the government who did not plan ahead. When the retirement systems were originally set up, they were meant for a smaller number of employees and a shorter life expectancy rate. With the passing of the years, insufficient adjustments were made to assure funds for the future retirees. The result was a billion-dollar deficit which had to be dealt with. Opportunities for early retirement were offered in an effort to shrink the size of the workforce. Those who chose to stay on the island, unfortunately were faced with a new, harsh reality. A new retirement law was introduced in April of 2013 (Law 3). One of the major changes was a reduction in the pension to be received from 65%-75% of the salary down to 40% for the existing employees and an automatic enrollment in a 401k plan for those hired from then on. In addition, an increase in retirement age from 55 to 62 applied to all employees. However, since more austerity was required from the JCF, other benefits were also cut or reduced, such as Christmas bonuses, medical coverage, vacation and sick days, to name a few. The local government
was able to continue giving its employees their Christmas bonus despite the opposition from the JCF.

The people had two choices: prepare for difficult times to come or pick up and leave the island in search of better opportunities. In the midst of implementation of these drastic measures, the island was hit with the most devastating hurricane in its history. Although Puerto Rico is in the path of hurricanes, and had warning of the impact, nothing could have prepared the residents for the difficult weeks and months that followed. On September 20, 2017 Hurricane Maria made landfall. The impact of Maria on the island was indescribable. There was an island-wide blackout which lasted for weeks for some to months for many more. Houses, businesses and roads were destroyed. All communication systems were down meaning there was no radio, television nor cell phone service. A state of emergency was declared by President Trump with a promise to send the help needed. Given the geographic location of Puerto Rico, any help would take days to weeks. Ports were inoperable as well as airports during the first few days, delaying the much-needed aid even more. This tragedy served to worsen the economic crisis of the island.

As soon as commercial flights were resumed, airports were swamped. Thousands of residents paid exorbitant prices for any available ticket out. Suffice to say that the sheer possibility of purchasing a ticket was a feat in itself since there was no cell phone reception or internet at the time. Despite the challenges, thousands fled the island. Those that remained had difficult months ahead. Due to the lack of open roads and communication, many businesses were forced to shut down temporarily. Banks opened certain branches around the island and limited the amount of cash withdrawals in order to serve more people. Supermarkets also were forced to ration food and discard most of the
fruit and vegetables. Open gas stations were few and far between. It wasn’t unusual to see lines of people waiting from eighteen to twenty-four hours, only to be allowed a ten to twenty-dollar purchase.

Schools were forcibly closed for weeks for multiple reasons. Many served as shelters to thousands of displaced residents. Others suffered considerable damage and were reconditioned by the community, since the government aid was insufficient. The most notable of the reasons for the delay was the humanitarian crisis. It was impossible to transport children from unreachable communities where they were still struggling to find food and clean water to survive. Power was being brought back up for hospitals and businesses first. The first schools to open were in late October, but in December there were still many unable to receive students. In fact, I remember that the school I work at opened in December for the students, despite the fact that all the teachers had been there since September 27th, cutting trees and removing debris. Electricity wasn’t restored at our school until June 3rd, 2018. Shockingly enough, we had to work with no power on an adjusted schedule of 7:30am for the remainder of the school year. Migration, given the grim panorama, was justifiable.

Currently, the island is still in the process of recuperation a year later. Thousands left the island, only to return after life got back to a more normalized state. The exact numbers will be discussed below, but the movement of the population has been felt both here on the island, as well as the states they have settled in. As a matter of looking at the facts, it has been published in the news that President Trump gave Florida and other states with natural disasters much more federal funding than it gave to Puerto Rico for the loss experienced as a result of the passing of Hurricane María, a storm that almost
completely devastated the Island. This was the sole point under consideration by the Clinton Initiative Group which visited Puerto Rico on January 29, 2019.

Language policy disputes were mostly uneventful during the past almost thirty years. As discussed in Chapter 2, no major changes have affected how English is taught in public schools. The changes experimented in society during these decades is what has sparked the shift in attitude towards the English language. The arrival of cable television and internet were two important factors which contributed to that shift. This event, along with other events such as the wave of migration and return migration that occurred on the Island, have influenced how Puerto Ricans use English. Consciously or not, there has been a more notable presence in recent times.

3.2 Census data: 1970s-2010s

The size of the population of any given geographical location changes as a result of several factors, for example, the numbers of births and deaths of that region. Migration is another aspect that affects the size of a population. Historically in Puerto Rico the most influential factor of population change has been migration, basically to the States. Since the arrival of the U.S. Americans over a hundred years ago, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have left the island in a series of waves, while thousands more return. The question of what promoted this movement of the population has numerous answers. Initially, it was theorized that the overpopulation caused by the improved medical care on the island accelerated the need for movement of the population. Others hypothesized that migration responds to economic changes which trigger a surplus of displaced workers. What is clearly accurate is the fact that there were four major waves during the first century. The first occurred during the 1920s in the intra war period, followed by the post
war Great Migration wave which lasted through the 1950s. A third wave took place in the early 1980s, tailed by that of the 1990s. The most recent massive wave of outbound migration occurred in 2017 as a side effect of the impact of Hurricane Maria on the island, when thousands fled the island, nevertheless, thousands more later returned. These data highlight the fact that the migratory movement of Puerto Ricans is not unidirectional—it never was— but rather a dynamic process with a return migration component.

The waves of emigration from and return migration to Puerto Rico have been framed by the economic and political conditions of both the island and the United States. Decennial censuses can track migration to and from the island by determining where a person (5 years of age and older) lived 5 years prior to the population count. It was not until the end of the 1950s that a marked number of Puerto Ricans were returning to the island from the States. The 1970 census showed that around 75,000 people who had migrated before 1965 returned to PR between 1965 and 1970. It also showed that another 116,000 who had left during that same time frame (1965-1970) and had lived in the U.S. for six months or more, returned to Puerto Rico before the 1970 census. In this return migration group there were thousands of children who had been born in the U.S. and are currently residing on the island.

Given the size of this group, a marked impact on Puerto Rican society was noted. The term *Nuyorican* was coined to describe them, although, as we now understand, not all of them necessarily came here from New York. The total number of Puerto Ricans born abroad but residing on the island in 1970 was 128,341. They were particularly noticeable due to their high concentration in urban and metropolitan areas. Of the 70% which resided in urban areas of Puerto Rico, 53% lived in the metro area with 41% in San
Juan alone. As stated previously, most of the immigrants of Puerto Rican descent (64%) were less than 15 years old. This group contrasted sharply with the rest of the population of the island. At the time, the median age of the population born abroad was 12, while for the overall population it was 22. This had quite an impact on the Puerto Rican school system at the time. Considerable pressure was put on the school system due to the high concentration of migrants between the ages of 4 to 14 in the elementary and intermediate schools. Approximately 90 percent of the immigrant children of Puerto Rican origin from 5 to 19 years of age were enrolled in public schools.

Another important fact was the level of education of these migrants in comparison to the Puerto Rican population. On average, migrants had a two-year advantage over the Puerto Rican population as to years of schooling. The median number of school years completed by migrants was 8.9 in 1970, contrasting with 6.9 for the population of Puerto Rico. Close to 15,000 migrants of Puerto Rican descent were employed on the island at the time. They were distributed into three major groups. The service sector employed the largest number (60%), followed by those in industry (35%) and a smaller group in agriculture (5%). Men stood out in the public administration and business sectors, while one out of every three women was employed in professional services. These numbers contrast with those from the rest of the island, where 39 percent of the general population had white collar jobs while 50% of the migrants were employed in the same sector.

The third wave of migration was also marked by the return of thousands of Puerto Ricans. By this account, 242,973 people who resided in Puerto Rico in 1995 were, by the year 2000, living in the United States. Conversely, 112,788 people who lived in the United States in 1995 were living in Puerto Rico in 2000. These figures represent a net
loss of population for Puerto Rico of 130,185. By way of contrast, there were 128,558 people living in the United States in 1985 that were residing in Puerto Rico in 1990. Then again, there were 213,886 people who lived in Puerto Rico in 1985 and were residing in the U.S. in 1990, for a net emigration of 85,328 from Puerto Rico. These numbers display a greater movement of people in both directions between Puerto Rico and the United States during the 1990s than during the 1980s. While relatively more people returned to Puerto Rico during the 1980s (128,500) than in the 1990s (112,700), more people left Puerto Rico for the United States during the 1990s (242,900), than during the 1980s. Apparently, Puerto Rico was a less desirable place of residence in the 1990s than during the 1980s. The table below was taken from the U.S. Census Bureau which displays this movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Population in Puerto Rico</th>
<th>Population in the US</th>
<th>Net Migration from Puerto Rico</th>
<th>Absolute number of migrants between decades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>213886</td>
<td>128558</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>128558</td>
<td>213886</td>
<td>-85328</td>
<td>342444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>242973</td>
<td>112788</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>112788</td>
<td>242973</td>
<td>-130185</td>
<td>355761</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The decision to leave the island for the mainland is one which responds to various reasons. Although many leave for better job opportunities, others decide to leave in order to have a better quality of life for their families and yet another group leaves for health reasons. Whichever is the motivation, the destination of these people has changed dramatically from the 1980s until now. The majority of the people who left Puerto Rico during the 1980s (56%) settled mainly in the northeast, as has been historically. The state
which received the largest number of Puerto Ricans was New York with a total of 41,794. Other popular states were Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. In 1990, an additional 30% of the people living in the States settled in the south. Florida was the state that received the most Puerto Ricans, followed by Texas. The Midwest accounted for 9% of movers from Puerto Rico, with Illinois and Ohio leading the states of the area. The following table summarizes these figures.

During the 1990s, although the northeast continued to be a popular region of the United States to which many Puerto Ricans migrated, the south quickly became the epicenter of migration. Florida was the state that received the largest number of people who had moved from the island (61,179) in the 1990s, not only in relation to other states, but also in comparison to the previous decade. As is presented in the 2000 census, Florida received over 20,000 more people from Puerto Rico than the next receiving state (New York). This difference was ten times larger than the numbers reflected in the 1990 census where Florida exceeded New York by only 2,000 people. Florida is not alone in this increment of Puerto Rican migrants. Texas has climbed in the ranks, demonstrating a clear trend. The south of the United States has become an attractive region to settle for
Puerto Rican migrants. In addition, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia also saw increases in their numbers. However, not all migration was outbound.

The northeast of the United States saw a wave of migration to Puerto Rico in the 1980s. The 1990 census shows that 72% of the 128,558 people who were in Puerto Rico in 1990 but had resided in the United States in 1985 were living in the northeast. Only 13% of the people had lived in the five years prior in the southern states, followed by a 10% from the Midwest and only 4% from the west. This tendency carried over in the following census. Approximately 56% of people who migrated from the United States came from the northeast. The south followed with 26%. This proportion represents a doubling of the proportion when compared to the previous decade. The following table summarizes the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>Persons 5 years and over in US in 1985 and in PR in 1990</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Persons 5 years and over in US in 1995 and in PR in 2000</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>128,558</td>
<td>72.33</td>
<td>63,155</td>
<td>55.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>13,215</td>
<td>10.28</td>
<td>12,219</td>
<td>10.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>5,652</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>7,955</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upon examining the inbound migration trend since 1960, it is evident that in that year the proportion of residents of PR that was residing in the United States five years prior was 2.8% (55,652). It almost doubled proportionately, to 5.04% (120,654 people), in 1970, when the island witnessed a great wave of Puerto Rican return migrants. But it decreased
somewhat in 1980, to 4.8% (though it peaked in absolute numerical terms with 137,474 people) and then to 4% (128,558 people) in 1990.

There is another segment of the population which is important to identify for the purpose of return migration and the penetration of the English language in Puerto Rico: the descendants of Puerto Rican migrants. These Puerto Ricans born in the United States have been accounted for since the 1910 census when data in birthplace was required. However, it was not until the 1980 and 1990 censuses that the Bureau reported whether people born in the United States had one or both parents who were born in Puerto Rico. In 1980, 5.5% of the population reported to have been born in the U.S. to at least one parent born in Puerto Rico. The rate increased in 1990 to 5.8%. Across the island more than half (51%) of the municipalities reported more than 5.5% of people born in the U.S. to Puerto Rican parents in the 1980 survey. This only increased in 1990 to 58%. The regions where this representation was most evident were once again the northwest, east, central, northeast and north (coincidentally, where my family settled upon returning to the island). By the 2000 census, the rate was down to 4.95%, indicating that the return migration had contracted, but not ceased. A clearer picture of this data is seen below.
The start of the new millennium has signified changes in the Puerto Rican population as expected. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the size of the population of Puerto Rico began to decrease after 2004, when it was determined that the island had reached its largest population in history. After having reached 3,826,878 inhabitants in 2004, the population began to decrease at a rate of between 0.14% and 1.0% per year. During the 2010 census, the population of Puerto Rico had decreased to 3,725,789 inhabitants. One important aspect which contributes to the decrease in population is the reduction in the birthrate. Births decreased by 29% between the year 2000 and the year 2010. This pattern has been maintained according to preliminary published data, with an additional reduction of 5.4% between 2010 and 2012. However, the main reason for the reduction of inhabitants was migration to the U.S. It was estimated that the net migratory balance for Puerto Rico between 2000 and 2010 was approximately -288,000 people. According to estimates, the year of greatest net migration was in 2006 with approximately 36,603 people. The Institute of Statistics of Puerto Rico estimated that in
just two years (2011-2012), migration increased even more. In that short lapse of time, the island experienced net migration of approximately -55,000 people.

In addition, the tendency of those who migrated to the U.S. from Puerto Rico during the period of 2005 to 2015 continued being the southern region of the United States. The states with the highest percentage are Florida and Texas which showed a migration of approximately 28,000 and 10,000 respectively. Similarly, the percentage of people who migrated to the northeast region decreased from 32% to 29% between 2014 and 2015. As far as those who migrated from the U.S. mainland to Puerto Rico, the 2015 Community Survey reported that the median age of those who came to the island dropped twelve years. Between 2014 and 2015 it went from 42 to 30 years old. During 2015, those who migrated to the island belonged mainly to the sales and office occupational group with 35% of the workforce in this sector. This in turn is proportionally the highest level reached by an occupational group among migrants during the period between 2005 and 2015. In absolute terms, this represented around 4,000 migrants. The second highest proportion by occupational area was in production, transportation and movement of materials with 22%. On the other hand, the proportion of migrants in the occupational area of services decreased by 19 percentage points from 2014 (29%) to 2015 (10%).

Lastly, with respect to the birthplace of the island residents, upon comparing two sources of data, the Puerto Rico Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2006 and the decennial census of 2010, it can be concluded that most of the population continued to be overwhelmingly Puerto Ricans who were born on the island: 91% in 2006 vs 95% in 2010. In other words, the majority of the residents continued to be Puerto Rican. Recent surveys, however, reflected a sharp decrease in the birth and death rate and
migration which continues to be a problem presently. An alarming 530,000 people have left the island since 2010.

In the past year, however, the most marked migration in Puerto Rico’s history has taken place. Not since the Great Migration of the first half of the 20th century, has the island experimented such a massive loss of residents in such as short amount of time. Historically, the reasons for abandoning the island have been mostly for work, health or better lifestyle purposes. Upon deciding to leave the island, residents did so for one of those reasons, but that all changed. In 2017, all of these came together to provoke the largest wave of migration. That fateful September 20th wreaked havoc on more than three million Puerto Ricans in all corners of the island. More than 80% of the island was in the dark after the collapse of the power grid as a consequence of the 175 mph winds from the devastating hurricane. Consequently, an alarming lack of shelter, clean water, refrigeration, safe food and medical supplies arose. Different data sources have yielded various estimates on just how many Puerto Ricans left the island since the hurricane.

CNN conducted a study in order to map out where the Puerto Ricans settled upon leaving the island after the hurricane. The data gathered came from two principal sources (obtained under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act): application data from the Federal Emergency Management System's Individuals and Households Program (FEMA), which provides housing and financial assistance to eligible disaster victims, and change-of-address orders placed with the U.S. Postal Service. Data showed that Puerto Ricans appear to have migrated to all 50 U.S. states in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Data suggests that between September 20th and November 11th, a total of 10.6 thousand applications for FEMA were filed for disaster assistance from zip codes in 50 states and
Washington. The applications may represent households, not individual people. The average Puerto Rican household is made up of about three people, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. On the other hand, between October 1st and December 31st, the U.S. Postal Service received just over 6.5 thousand applications for a change of address from Puerto Rico to the United States. Another 2,900 requests for changes in address from one place on the island to another suggest that while some people left the island, others moved within Puerto Rico due to the effects of the storm. Alexis Santos, a Penn State University demographer who grew up in Puerto Rico states that “people in Puerto Rico are disinclined to use change-of-address forms -- even in normal circumstances” (https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/21/us/puerto-rico-migration-data-invs/index.html, CNN Investigates, 2018). Furthermore, he finds it especially unlikely that everyone who moved in the frantic aftermath of Hurricane Maria took the time to file those requests.

Other numbers presented in their report were the net amount of airline passengers who fled the island between September and November of 2017 which was 179,000. These numbers refer specifically to passengers travelling to any one of the 50 states. Additionally, data shows where these Puerto Ricans settled. Although all 50 states received new residents, the impact was felt on some more than others. The following map shows the concentration per state.
It is clear that the highest concentration was on the eastern coast of the U.S., especially in the south. This is not surprising, since there had already been a growing percentage of Puerto Ricans establishing residence in Florida due to its proximity to Puerto Rico. In fact, more than half (52%) of households that filed claims with FEMA from the states did so from Florida. Central Florida received an estimated 12,000 Puerto Ricans between December 2017 and February 2018, with a 12% increase in students enrolled in public schools (according to Florida Department of Education).

As has been noted, this exodus has affected the island’s educational system. The effect on the local economy has yet to be effectively studied and published. Puerto Rico also reflects a declining population trend, with a total of 3,246,906 people, 90,271 fewer citizens than there were in 2017 (3,337,177). New data from the Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics shows that a net total of 150,000 people left the island in fiscal year 2018. That’s about twice the average migration from the previous two years, when roughly
90,000 Puerto Ricans left, mostly to escape Puerto Rico’s economic crisis. At this rate it is anticipated that, in 2019, there will be less than 20,000 births with a higher pattern of deaths. This picture is the same or similar to that of 1901, when there were 19,930 live births and 29,811 deaths on the island, for a natural negative growth of 9,881 (difference between deaths and births). Lyman Stone, an economist working with the Puerto Rican Financial Oversight and Management Board to develop population projections, said that if the current trend continues and the island does not recuperate financially, "in 10 years, Puerto Rico will have less than 3 million people and still be headed quickly towards 2.5 million or lower," he said. "Once below that level, I don't think it will come back above 2.5 million -- effectively ever." (https://edition.cnn.com/2018/02/21/us/puerto-rico-migration-data-invs/index.html, CNN Investigates, 2018).
3.3 English use in government entities: federal and local courts, municipal government

The federal government has had its place in Puerto Rico since the arrival of U.S. ships at the Bay of Guánica in 1898. In other contexts, this is also referred to as the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico. The United States Provisional Court for Puerto Rico was established soon after to deal with federal, interstate and international matters, as well as local civil actions involving more than $50.00. At the time, all court officials were U.S. Americans, as were many of the plaintiffs, while most of the defendants were Puerto Rican. Proceedings were conducted in English, and those Puerto Rican lawyers who were not knowledgeable in the language, had the option of applying for an interpreter during proceedings. This Provisional Court was replaced by the U.S. District Court in 1900 for the “District Court of Porto Rico” when Congress established a civil government on the island. This federal court dealt with matters of federal rights, constitutional concerns, bankruptcy, U.S. criminal law, and maritime law, among others. In contrast with other federal district courts, the judges and attorneys, appointed by the President of the United States to four-year terms did not have to be residents of the jurisdiction in which they served. In addition, federal court expenses and salaries were to be covered with funds from the Puerto Rican Treasury; however, any revenues obtained as a result of proceedings would stay on the island. The language to be used in all court proceedings had to be English (Pousada, 2008).

The Puerto Rican legal establishments protested the creation of this court for the limitations it presented. For one, Puerto Ricans were not permitted to become judges, despite having the knowledge of local laws better than those appointed by the U.S.
Another reason was the fact that attorneys from P.R. had difficulty complying with the language requirement, since it called for a minimum of 300 qualified citizens to form part of the jury pool. Repeatedly, exceptions had to be made for failure to find enough jurors. The Jones Act of 1917 gave Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship and local autonomy in the administration of internal affairs, but it did not eliminate the Federal Court’s power to judge:

…all controversies where all of the parties on either side of the controversy are citizens or subjects of a foreign State or States, or citizens of a State, Territory, or District of the United States not domiciled in Puerto Rico, wherein the matter in dispute exceeds, exclusive of interest or cost, the sum or value of $3,000. (Jones Act of 1917, Ch. 145, Sec. 41, 126–7)

At the time, however, the use of the English language was not addressed, and all proceedings continued to be in English. In 1950 the U.S. Congress approved the Puerto Rico Federal Relations Act (Public Law #600) which authorized, in Section 2, the people of the island to draw up a constitution for local self-government. Equally important was that with this law, Congress converted the Puerto Rico U.S. District Court into a constitutionally based Article III Court, granting life tenure to judges while allowing the appointment of Puerto Ricans to the bench. When the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Constitución del Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico was ratified in 1952, President Truman appointed Clemente Ruiz Nazario as the first Puerto Rican Federal District Court Judge. The new Commonwealth status questioned the applicability of the federal laws in Puerto Rico. However, to this day and unless the status of the island
changes, or the 1902 Language Law, they remain enforceable. The true purpose of the law was to protect the non-Puerto Rican U.S. Americans living on the island at the time. It stated that all government departments, courts and public offices could use English and Spanish indistinctly, but if one of the parties involved requested the translation, it would be provided. Despite this provision, courts continued to require English translations for purposes of record, challenging the basis of the law. It wasn’t until 1965, when the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico ruled in Pueblo vs. Tribunal Superior that:

Spanish being the language of the Puerto Ricans, the judicial proceedings in our courts must be conducted in Spanish, but the judges will take the necessary measures which may be necessary, in the protection of the rights of any accused who does not sufficiently understand our language, so that he as well as his lawyer, an integral part of an effective defense--be informed, through translators or any other means, of everything that transpires during the proceedings, and the record shall so reveal it. (Pousada, 2008, p.8)

However, this ruling only applied to local courts. Federal court proceedings continue to be in English, which to this day, creates division amongst lawyers. Those who are not fluent in English avoid litigating in the Federal Court and vice-versa. Law schools in Puerto Rico teach their classes in Spanish, with the exception of texts regarding federal statutes. Lawyers are not required to be bilingual, unless they wish to argue a case in the federal level. This is understandable, since bar examinations cover only the local laws. In 1965, the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, once and for all cleared up the language issue of
local courts. In the *Pueblo vs Tribunal Superior*, the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico ruled that:

‘It is a fact, not subject to historical rectification, that the vehicle of expression, the language of the Puerto Rican people an integral part of our origin and our Hispanic culture—has been and continues to be Spanish...’ The determining factor as to the language to be used in judicial proceedings in Commonwealth [of Puerto Rico] courts does not arise from the [language] law of February 21, 1902... It arises from the fact that the means of expression of our people is Spanish and that is a reality that cannot be changed by any law. (Muñíz Argüelles 1989)

In other areas of the government, Spanish is most widely used. As far as the Legislative bodies, the same law that made English mandatory in the Federal District Court stated that members of these bodies must be fluent in *either* English or Spanish. Theoretically, this would allow for someone to sit in those chambers not knowing a word of the local language. Even more surprisingly, the 1947 law which allows Puerto Ricans to elect their governor also establishes that he (at the time, women were not contemplated as possible governors) must be fluent in English. This seems ironic, since all elected governors have been fluent in Spanish, being their native language, but not in English. One recent example was Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla, who was notoriously mocked by statehood supporters for his poor English language skills. They claimed he shamed the island whenever he spoke to Congress or the media. Independence and commonwealth supporters defended the Governor, stating that he was the representative
of a territory where Spanish was the language of the people and therefore had the obligation of being understood by his constituents. Ultimately, I believe that all politics aside, being bilingual is an advantage for any elected official for it allows them the opportunity to interact not only with U.S. officials, but also with other heads of state on official business meetings.

As far as official government documents, these may be found translated into both languages. One example would be tax forms. Although income taxes are a local obligation, W2 forms as well as income tax return forms are available in both languages. On the government’s official website (www.2.pr.gov), all of the online forms are available in English and Spanish. Another example is the Veterans’ Administration Offices and Services. Despite being a federal entity, where one would expect knowledge of English to be more widespread, business is usually conducted in Spanish due to the population it serves. At federally run Park Service sites, namely El Morro and El Yunque, employees are required to speak both languages mostly due to the number of tourists which visit these sites. Municipal government offices have the autonomy to decide the language in which to conduct business. Spanish continues to be the language used in official documents and service to the public. Nevertheless, some instances have been seen where elected mayors have tried to push a more Americanized agenda for their town and have replaced Spanish signs for English. Examples of this are the municipalities of San Juan and Guaynabo, where the previous mayors substituted certain signage around the town from Spanish to English. Below are examples:
3.4 Arrival of Cable TV in the 1970s and subsequent satellite service

Television is a reflection of society and culture. It is produced for a mass audience, which makes it part of ‘popular culture’. It is an agent of socialization and the vehicle for the transmission of a dominant ideology. Since the birth of communication,
media has been used to convey information to those willing to absorb it. Television has been made to be accessible to people in every aspect of their daily lives, and with such a strong hold on modern society, that media has been able to shape popular culture and public opinion. It has changed the people’s lifestyles and has had a major influence on our culture. With careful programming, television can be an important vehicle for either building national identity or destroying it. Ideally, public television stations should focus on educating the population and promoting the language and culture of the people. Undoubtedly, television has changed Puerto Rican society since its beginnings.

At the end of the 1940’s, a group of businessmen specializing in communications requested the necessary licenses to launch the first Puerto Rican television broadcast. Shortly after, the federal agency in charge of regulating communications, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), had frozen the granting of licenses in all federal jurisdictions while problems of interference, assignment of channels and other technical issues were resolved.

As a territory of the U.S., Puerto Rico is regulated by the FCC and therefore, had to put their plans on hold until mid-1952 when they resumed issuing licenses. On 24 July 1952, the FCC granted the first permit for the construction of a commercial television station in a U.S. territory (Cuba was already transmitting television) to Angel Ramos for El Mundo Broadcasting Company. The first station to receive the FCC license to transmit was Telemundo, and on March 28, 1954, it went on the air with regular programming. The second permit for the construction of a commercial television station was granted in 1952 to Ramon Quiñones, owner of WAPA (a Spanish acronym of the Association of Sugar Producers) radio and by May 1, 1954 had obtained the license and
transmitted regularly (https://enciclopediapr.org/en/encyclopedia/television-in-puerto rico/#1463492689874-dd12c211-136e). Programming at both television stations extended from 4:30pm to 10:30pm and included varied genres such as live comedy and drama, variety shows, women’s programs (cooking), news programs and films (mostly Mexican). These two stations were the pioneers and were always fierce competitors. They have alternated in their success at being the first to offer videotape technology (1966), color television (1968) and satellite broadcasting (1968). These stations were pivotal in the dissemination of information and contributing to the creation of a mass culture.

In the early 1950s, the Department of Education, headed by Commissioner Mariano Villaronga, petitioned for the establishment of public broadcasting. The Puerto Rican Legislature approved Joint Resolution Number 94 on June 25, 1954, authorizing and assigning funds for the creation of the Public Radio and Television Service and the installation and operation of public television and radio stations. The FCC approved the transmission over channel 6, WIPR-TV, and on January 6, 1958, under the administration of Governor Luis Munoz Marin, it became the first educational station in Latin America. WIPR was unique in its times, since it was the only government- broadcast channel which did not run commercials. It initially only transmitted from 3:30pm to 9:00pm on weekdays and three hours on weekends, offering educational and cultural programming unavailable in commercial broadcasting at the time. By 1979 it joined the Public Broadcasting Service, further increasing its offerings and bringing English language programs, such as PBS Kids, from the United States. English language programming was now available for the general public over a local television channel.
Cable television made its first appearance in the mid-1960s. Puerto Rico Cablevision, a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph, was made available to major San Juan hotels. The first franchise for residential service for the area or San Juan was granted in 1970 to the Cable Television Company of Puerto Rico. This was an important step in the introduction of American channels on the island despite the limited availability. By 1977, the company had gone bankrupt and Cable TV of Greater San Juan took over the franchise. Within three years of acquiring it, there were 35,000 subscribers, a number which increased to 127,400 by 1985 and 218,900 in 1990. By the mid-1990s, there was a total of ten cable television operators on the island servicing 90% of the island and reaching over 272,000 subscribers. The widespread availability of cable television in the 1990s changed how Puerto Ricans viewed the world.

In a study conducted by Rolando Soong in 1996, a total of 450 Puerto Ricans between the ages of 12 and 64 were surveyed about their language preferences when viewing television. They were asked how often they watched English or Spanish language television on a scale from 1 which means ‘never’ to 5 which means ‘frequently’. The results below reflect those who responded ‘frequently’.

<p>| Percentages of Persons 12-64 who watch English- and Spanish-language programs 'frequently' by Cable and Non-Cable homes |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in Cable Homes</th>
<th>Persons in Non-Cable Homes</th>
<th>All Persons</th>
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As we can see, within non-cable homes, the people received mostly Spanish-speaking programs (either original or dubbed), and therefore the frequency of watching English-language programming is a very low 7%, due to lack of opportunity. This contrasts with those who have cable television and who spend more than half of their time watching English-language programming. This implies that not only is there an impact created by the language but also the culture which is transmitted. Another question posed in this study concerned their interests in television programs produced in the United States, Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries. Again, a five-point scale was used where five meant ‘very interested’ and one ‘not interested. These were the results.

**Percentages of Persons 12-64 who are 'Very Interested'**

in programs from different countries by cable and non-cable homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Persons in Cable Homes</th>
<th>Persons in Non-Cable Homes</th>
<th>All Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Made in Puerto Rico</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made in USA</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Latin-American programs were the least appealing to those surveyed. While the interest in programs made in the USA received more than 50% for cable subscribers and 34% for those non-cable viewers, which is an indication that although dubbed into Spanish, many U.S. American programs were being watched at the time. Ten years after the arrival of cable television to the island, its success was unequivocal. As with many other aspects of the Puerto Rican identity, television was also viewed as political. Opponents of statehood, in particular, feared that cable television was an agent of cultural displacement, which could be true, as reflected in intercultural communication textbooks which address the issue of cultural imperialism. Concerns about the influence of cable television at times intertwined with the fear of displacement of the Spanish language. These concerns, however, were not strong enough to impede the penetration of paid television.

By the early 2000s, there were three major providers: OneLink Communications, Liberty Cable and Choice Cable TV. By now, they were offering much more advanced features, unavailable on local television stations such as VOD (Video on Demand), DVR (Digital Video Recorder), and Pay per View. These companies were subsidiaries of North American communication and entertainment groups and had reached more than half a million subscribers by 2005. Parallel to the expansion of cable television, another option became available on the island, satellite television. Between the 1990s and early 2000s, three companies entered the Puerto Rican market, namely DIRECTV, Dish Network and
Digital TV One, all home based in the United States as well. The only cable television provider now with over 750,000 subscribers, is Liberty Cable Television, after buying out the other remaining companies in 2015. Presently, satellite television providers continue to be Dish Network and DIRECTV (recently bought out by AT&T).

In her book *Puerto Rico: Culture, Politics and Identity*, Nancy Morris presents the results of her study carried out with university students, citizens of Puerto Rico, mostly those with political ties. In chapter 6, *The Challenge to Puerto Rican Identity*, she presents how cable television has influenced Puerto Ricans. The availability of U.S. American television programs, movies and the like have impacted cultural traditions. One commonwealth party leader (those interviewed openly expressed their political preferences) stated similar concerns about the influence of United States-produced mass media products:

> Puerto Rican television, mass media, are in the hands of very conservative people, of people who live the illusion of Americanization. And unfortunately, also the communications media have been regulated by the federal government for all these years and there’s an American policy against Puerto Rican self-esteem and in favor of Americanization and the glorification of the ideal of American life… The communications media devalue the Puerto Rican self-image and accelerate the process of cultural dependence and assimilation (p. 141).

Among those interviewed, some independence and commonwealth supporters singled out cable television as the most threatening of media sources to Puerto Rican culture. Cable was viewed as a carrier of unwanted cultural influence from the United
States. Broadcast television, however, was not generally perceived as a threat to Puerto Rican identity. This is mainly due to the language issue. Local television channels broadcast mainly in Spanish, with the exception of CBS Puerto Rico, which carries English language programs, mostly from the U.S., with the exception of short capsules of local weather. Those who do subscribe to cable television are more susceptible. An independence party official interviewed by Morris attributed to the idealized images of U.S. consumer culture on television the power to change Puerto Ricans’ political status preferences. He believed that cable television was capable of creating more statehood supporters than all of the speeches of Carlos Romero Barceló (former governor and statehood party supporter) together. The youth might be the most affected sector of the population. Viewing programs from the U.S. familiarizes them with the culture and language and it is feared that Puerto Rican customs will be supplanted by these just as Santa Claus seems to slowly be displacing the Three Kings. This form of imitation is seen as a threat, yet as the years pass, the assimilation is only growing.

In my experience, I have come across dozens of Puerto Ricans who attribute their knowledge of English to cable television. This is especially true of those who are exposed to English language programs from an early age. Children as young as three or four who watch Disney Channel or Nick Jr. just to name a couple of examples, fine tune their ear early and acquire an accent that is closer to the native one and learn a greater amount of vocabulary than those who solely rely on what is taught in school. Adults also benefit from this type of cable service by being exposed to more spoken English, thus improving their skill at understanding the spoken language. It is clear that cable television has
changed how Puerto Ricans view not only American culture, as it is referred to but also the language.

3.5 Arrival of internet and cell phones in the 1990s

In a 1926 interview with John B. Kennedy, a Massachusetts’ politician, legendary scientist and inventor Nikola Tesla described a piece of technology that would revolutionize the lives of its users. He said:

> When wireless is perfectly applied the whole earth will be converted into a huge rain, which in fact it is, all things being particles of a real and rhythmic whole. We shall be able to communicate with one another instantly, irrespective of distance. Not only this, but through television and telephony we shall see and hear one another as perfectly as though we were face to face, despite intervening distances of thousands of miles; and the instruments through which we shall be able to do this will be amazingly simple compared with our present telephone. A man will be able to carry one in his vest pocket.


Although Tesla did not mention the word ‘smartphone’, his foresight was spot on. This phone of the future did not appear overnight. Here on the island, we have seen many technological advances, and the arrival of the mobile phone in 1986 wasn’t the exception. It is important to clarify the ‘mobile’ part of it because cellular phones were already being used but they were static: only for use in cars. The first cell phone call on record was made by then Governor Rafael Hernández Colón from a phone that was a far cry
from those we have today. It was a big and bulky twelve-pound red phone model TR5E800-8C (“Attaché”) fabricated in Japan by NEC.


That 26th of August, Puerto Rico became the first Caribbean country and Spanish-American community to have such a system. The instructions Governor Hernández Colón gave to Pedro Galarza, President of the Puerto Rico Telephone Company (PRTC, today’s Claro) was (as cited by Vargas, 2016) “to invest in the infrastructure of the islands’ communications system, so that with the cellular system, we can provide telephone service to those remote rural areas where conventional service would be
prohibitive " and so it was done. The PRTC invested ten million dollars in the first phase, with which they took the service to 30 municipalities located in the area between Manatí, Fajardo and Cayey. Seven million dollars later, the cellular network of the PRTC, later known as Celulares Telefónica (CT) would cover the entire island, according to historical documents. The monopoly the PRTC had over cell phone service on the island was short lived. In 1992, Cellular One made its debut on the island and shortly after in 1996, Centennial. By 1997, the number of subscribers of Celulares Telefónica and Cellular One oscillated between 160,000 and 170,000.

Puerto Rico was fertile land for eager cell phone providers. Shortly after the first companies broke the ice and entered the market, others followed. In 1999, SunCom (now
T-Mobile, Movistar (now Open Mobile) and Sprint PCS arrived to compete. Cellular phones became so popular, that by 2001 available telephone number combinations were running out. Until then, telephone numbers were only seven digits long. This sudden boom precipitated the introduction of two area codes to be used for local and long-distance calls (787 and 939). At the time, portability of existing numbers was not common, so upon opening a new line with another company, the consumer was forced to obtain a new number. Despite this apparent boom, cell phones were not in the hands of the majority of the residents. Owning a phone was still expensive and plans were not unlimited like now. Back in those days, you needed to select a plan with a set number of free minutes and text messages, which also usually included free nights and weekends, but not long distance or roaming as is expected today. In addition, phones had very few features and internet connection. Surprisingly enough, due to the simplicity of phone technology and limited features, use of cell phones was far from what it is today. The superfluous use of cell phones came later with the arrival of the internet first, then the upgrade to smartphone. In addition, the impact of phones on the presence of English in Puerto Rico was not substantial mostly due to the ease of communication with family members or friends who spoke the language until the arrival or smartphones at the start of the new millennium.

The internet has definitely changed our technological lives and revolutionized the world in many ways. Once we had access to this amazing tool, the use of computers and smartphones soared. Prior to the internet, personal computers were used primarily as word processors or required special programs (disks) to obtain information from various sources. Cell phones, as presented above, were used for communication but had their
limits in time and functions. This began to change in 1995 when the availability of an instantaneous connection to the rest of the world was made possible. At first, an internet connection for use with computers was possible through a standard landline, which made connecting slow and unstable. Internet connections tied up the phone line and when being used, regular phone calls were not possible. Modems followed providing a steadier connection and freeing the landline. Technology moved fast and within the next few years, wireless connections (through modems) were peaking. Cell phones, cable and satellite television companies, all capitalized on this new technology. The widespread availability made it much more affordable to the average person. Currently, internet connectivity is more than a luxury; it is a necessity. All industries rely on the internet. Whether it is by means of a computer or smartphone, being connected is an important part of today’s society. Free wireless connections are available throughout the island at schools, libraries, coffee shops and restaurants, among others. There is a plethora of places to get connected. These, however, are mostly used when the internet connection on your phone or home modem are unstable. We are connected to the world and the world is connected to us. So, how has this changed how English is used and viewed on the island? For starters, it is important to point out that availability does not lead to good use. That is, a wealth of information is out there on the internet, but for our purposes, the focus will be on how it impacts the use and presence of English on the island.

3.6 Current use of new technologies by Puerto Ricans

More than 2 million people in Puerto Rico interact daily on a social network through their cell phone, computer or tablet. In the Digital and Mobile Behavioral Study 2016 presented by the Sales and Management Executives Association (SME) Digital
Forum, how Puerto Ricans spend their time on the internet was revealed. First, it establishes that 70% of residents 12 and older have access to internet. The group with the largest representation was between ages 18 and 24 with 98%. The summary of distribution of use by age group was as follows:

- 12 a 17-- 96%
- 18 a 24 -- 98.3%
- 25 a 39 -- 92.9%
- 40 a 54 -- 75.6%
- 55 a 64 -- 52.8%
- 65+-- 15.7%

Another variable was gender. Females were found to use the internet more than males (75.3% to 64.4%), while there was a 100% use in those with a yearly income greater than $50,000. The remaining income brackets also showed a widespread use ranging between 61.8% (less than $14,999) and 83.9% ($30,000-$49,999). Along the same line, 9 out of 10 Puerto Ricans own a cell phone while 62% said they owned a smartphone. In addition, 94.7% connect to the internet by means of their cell phone while 34.2% and 19.0% use a computer or tablet respectively. Other connectivity options are gaming consoles (2.8%), smart televisions (1.8%), MP3 players (1.3%) and hand-held gaming devices (0.5%).

Android operating systems were preferred over Apple iOS (69% to 24%), while users reported downloading at least one application (app) a month. The types of apps downloaded were:
- social 90.2%
- messaging 88.3%
- photos 83.6%
- video 80.7%
- music 64%

The study clearly established the preference for global media over domestic. The e-newspaper ENDI (El Nuevo Día) ranked the highest (55%) in the local digital media category. As far as international pages these were the most frequently visited.

- Twitter 22%
- Netflix 30%
- Amazon 30%
- Yahoo 31%
- eBay 36%
- Pandora 38%
- Instagram 41%
- YouTube 78%
- Facebook 88%
- Google 88%
Users reported a 93% of presence on social media. The most popular social network amongst Puerto Ricans was Facebook, with 87.7% reporting to have an account. Other popular social networks appear below:
The distribution of social networks by gender was as follows:

![Social Network Distribution Chart]

In 2017, a follow up study was conducted to corroborate the tendencies and fluctuations in numbers. The methodology and design of the 2017 Digital & Mobile Behavioral Study stayed the same as the previous year where it comprised an island-wide sample, with random selection of sampling units. This is based on two phases with 750 interviews of people 12 years of age or more, at island level, representative of the population of Puerto Rico by age, gender, income level and region. The maximum sampling error is +/- 4.3%. The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire of open and closed questions, which was validated through a pilot test by Technical Studies. The questionnaire was provided through in home personal interviews, using a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) system.

Results show that the use of internet in general remained almost the same with a slight 1% increase (71%), representing a total of 2,184,889 users 12 and older island-wide. Smartphones remained the most popular method of connecting to the
internet with 93.2%, followed by computers with 29.5% and tablets at 19.3%. User content remained the same but in terms of the incidence by age, a significant increase was observed in the group of 65 years or older. In 2016, the rate of this group was 15.7%, while in 2017 it increased to 29%. Online shopping also increased with an important element: 9 out of 10 Puerto Rican shoppers preferred the global market, over local retailers. A rapidly growing use for social networks is for following “influencers”. These are people who post regularly on social media and are followed by users (“followers”). Many of these influencers are just everyday people who write or upload videos about themselves, whether it is the activities they carry out or a special talent or craft they have, and they gain popularity. Although Puerto Rico has a number of these popular figures, most are from the United States and are native English speakers. The statistics reported in 2017 of followers was 47.8%.

In general terms, both studies reveal the growing number of both users and uses for smartphones and the internet in Puerto Rico. It also shows and reiterates that the younger generations are the most prominent users of technology, thus corroborating what was said earlier about how the island has changed in the past 20+ years due to the introduction of these technological advances, namely cell phones and internet. This would definitely entail a broader use of the English language which is necessary for many of the applications being used. From business networking, to shopping platforms to gaming, island residents have broadened their use and acceptance of the English language. This has changed the perspective of Puerto Ricans, now becoming global citizens. To further understand this
phenomenon and put it into perspective, a closer look at those that have caused the most impact amongst the youth, is necessary.

A distinction must be made from here on with reference to the age groups being spoken of. Those whom we refer to as Millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996 (years may vary slightly depending on opinion, but this is the consensus), are the young, working class of today. Those born after, from 1997 forward, who are referred to as either Postmillennial or Gen Z, are today’s school age students. Today’s generation has quite a different lifestyle than those raised in the 1980s and 1990s. They have reaped the fruit of the rapid advances in technology in Puerto Rico, for they know nothing different, but in some ways, the island has fallen short. One example is the public-school system. Unfortunately, public schools in Puerto Rico are lacking the funds and infrastructure necessary to bring such tools to the classroom efficiently. The infrastructure situation is probably more problematic than the lack of money. Most schools were built over 30 years ago, when technology was not considered a priority. Buying computers, tablets, smart boards, and projectors can prove to be onerous. Schools are not equipped with an adequate number of outlets or wiring and lack the ability to handle the electrical load that these would produce. This limits how much technology teachers have readily available for use. If we add to this the fact that the Department of Education’s student handbook prohibits the use of any electronic devices during school hours, there are few possibilities available. Teachers can, however, project from a computer and share the media with the students. School, then, may not be the most feasible venue for students to access electronic media and thus strengthen their English.
Television and movie viewing options

Fortunately, at home, most families have various technological options. One is cable or satellite television. The companies currently operating in Puerto Rico are Direct TV, Dish Network, and Liberty Cablevision. By means of these options, dozens of English-speaking channels are available for both educational and leisurely purposes. Broadcast television is popular, but so are movies. In addition, if an internet connection is available, various other possibilities exist. Smart TVs are on the rise on the island for their capability of streaming hundreds of channels, both free and with required payment from the internet. These channels vary in their origin. Although most are from the United States, channels from dozens of other countries are readily obtainable. Moreover, movies and TV shows can be watched and/or downloaded from apps such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, PlayStation Vue, and Sling (these are pay for use apps). If a smart TV is not available, individuals can always use a tablet, iPad, Nintendo Wii or their cell phones to do the same via Wi-Fi.

This “on request” availability has allowed for this generation to watch a myriad of movies and television shows that would otherwise not be available to them on Spanish speaking local TV. Almost all of these shows are in the English language, with limited subtitle options, offering them more opportunities to hear the spoken language than just the one daily class period that is allotted in schools or any limited social interaction.

According to The digital and mobile behavioral study, Puerto Ricans use Netflix more than any other paid streaming service. It is popular with various age groups for the convenience of use and price and widely promoted on the island. Netflix, a California based company, launched in the late 1990’s with currently over 58.46 million viewers in
the U.S. only. With one subscription of $10.99 a month, up to four different profiles may be added with unlimited access to their streaming library of almost 5,000 movies as well as over 1,100 television shows and documentaries and exceedingly popular original series. In 2018, the most popular shows on Netflix for the 12 to 17 to age group were Stranger Things, Riverdale, Glee, and The Vampire Diaries. While in the 18-24 millennial circle, Making a Murderer, Master of None, F is for Family, and Jessica Jones were the most popular. All of these programs are recorded in the United States in English. Although Netflix offers the option of changing audio language, those who want to focus on bettering their English mostly opt for Spanish subtitles instead.

Another popular application which is also available for access to movies and videos is Hulu. The basic difference between Hulu and Netflix is that Hulu acquires content at a faster rate than Netflix, which has a larger library. In other words, Hulu will have content available in many cases (for television series, for example) the next day after they are aired. There are some other websites dedicated to movies and television series, like Amazon Prime, but these are not as popular with the Puerto Rican audience. Some other free options which have gained popularity because of availability for phones at no cost are apps and webpages where torrents can be downloaded or streamed. It is also important to state that movie theaters are widely popular on the island. Caribbean Cinemas is the local franchise which serves the island. Movies are released in Puerto Rico, for the most part, simultaneously with those in the United States. With very few exceptions (mostly for children’s animated movies), they are presented in their original language (English), with Spanish subtitles. Watching English-language movies is a great way to learn new vocabulary words and listening skills in an informal setting. They also
allow you to learn about other cultures and gain exposure to different varieties of English such as formal, informal, relaxed, conversational, slang, New York, Chicago, British, Australian and many others.

The popularity of social media

It has been stated that most of the population connects to these and other services using mainly their smartphones (over computers and smart televisions). Smartphones are the technological device most commonly used nowadays, not only in Puerto Rico, but also in the United States, according to the 2018 data published by the Pew Research Center of Internet and Technology website (retrieved in January of 2019). Smartphones can create documents and presentations, substituting a computer. In addition, they can stream movies and videos, making the need for a television obsolete. What most millennials and postmillennials use their smart phones for, however, is social media. The social media apps available to them are countless. Some are much more popular than others. The fact that they are constantly online throughout the day proves that this can be a powerful tool for entertainment and educational purposes.

The 2018 Pew Research Center of Internet and Technology study also affirms that Facebook is currently widely popular. Opening an account serves as a launching pad to connect you to many other apps such as Instagram and Spotify. Introduced in 2004 to connect with friends and family, this platform is usually today’s teenagers’ first introduction to social media. Widely used by all age groups, it has declined in popularity with the younger crowd, but still proves useful for staying up to date with friends, family and social or educational group pages. Local schools and
businesses have Spanish-language Facebook pages to which users can subscribe to keep up to date and receive important notifications of events. Many more of the pages are not local, for example, many English language magazines and newspapers have Facebook pages. There are also English-language pages dedicated to shopping, cooking, sports, movies, artists, influencers, etc. According to the Social Baker website (socialbaker.com), if we take a sample of the most popular Facebook pages for Puerto Ricans, of the top 6 pages for electronics and beauty, only one is local:
# Facebook Pages Stats in Puerto Rico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Local Fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Samsung</td>
<td>147,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PlayStation</td>
<td>115,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>City Refrigeration Puerto Rico</td>
<td>103,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>NutriBullet</td>
<td>73,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sony América Latina</td>
<td>71,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Xbox</td>
<td>69,099</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Facebook Pages Stats in Puerto Rico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Local Fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bakers Puerto Rico</td>
<td>209,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Victoria's Secret</td>
<td>174,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aeropostale</td>
<td>133,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Totto</td>
<td>116,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Victoria's Secret PINK</td>
<td>112,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pandora</td>
<td>112,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the area of professional organizations and sports pages categories, of the top 6, only two are Spanish language.

### Facebook Pages Stats in Puerto Rico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Page Name</th>
<th>Local Fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>World Surf League</td>
<td>43,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>American Kennel Club</td>
<td>12,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Asociación de Bancos de Puerto Rico</td>
<td>4,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MI TRABAJO ES SOCIAL</td>
<td>4,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>American Heart Association</td>
<td>3,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>American Psychological Association</td>
<td>3,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Facebook Pages Stats in Puerto Rico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Page Name</th>
<th>Local Fans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>NBA UNITED STATES</td>
<td>223,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comité Olímpico de Puerto Rico</td>
<td>171,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Baloncesto Superior Nacional</td>
<td>142,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>New York Yankees</td>
<td>139,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Miami Heat UNITED STATES</td>
<td>134,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Los Angeles Lakers UNITED STATES</td>
<td>114,317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are only a few examples of how Puerto Ricans are employing their time on Facebook. Although for some categories, such as politics and news, the preference is for
local pages due to the nature of the content, there are important contributions being made by pages solely in English on this app. Although, like Netflix, Facebook settings allow you to adjust the language, much vocabulary has been unconsciously learned by means of the app and made its way into informal conversation. Some examples which are commonly used are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>login</th>
<th>like</th>
<th>settings</th>
<th>friend</th>
<th>request</th>
<th>cover</th>
<th>profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>link</td>
<td>story</td>
<td>post</td>
<td>live</td>
<td>share</td>
<td>app</td>
<td>chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow</td>
<td>tag</td>
<td>trending</td>
<td>fan</td>
<td>check-in</td>
<td>user</td>
<td>timeline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nonetheless, studies show that the page has lost ground in the past few years to newer apps. One of these is Instagram. Instagram is a widely used platform in this age range with over 500 million users worldwide. Bought by Facebook in 2012 for a $1 billion when there were only 30 million users, Instagram is a place for “visual storytellers”. By sharing pictures and short videos, Instagram allows people, and businesses to “follow” others in all parts of the world and optionally be followed. The goal of all ‘Instagrammers’ is to have a large community of followers that see their posts. Using hashtags (#) to make their photos available for other users to see is an important way to reach an unlimited number of people. Puerto Ricans use Instagram to communicate with their peers and also follow their preferred artists, sports figures and current influencers. Statistics show that the highest percentage of users in the U.S., in October 2018, are in the 18-34 age range (Pew Research Center Internet and Technology).
In Puerto Rico, another app which has quickly gained ground among teenagers over Facebook and Instagram is Snapchat. Introduced in 2011 as an image and video messaging application, it has rapidly reached 186 million active users and 7 billion daily video views. The majority of Snapchat users are 18-34 years old, with roughly 71% of Snapchat users being under the age of 34. The secret to Snapchat is that it broke all previous social platform norms, gaining popularity among youth rapidly. Up until then, it was a standard of the internet age to create platforms in which everything was saved digitally. Snapchat went the opposite direction, trying to recreate our reality where moments are temporary. With this app, what is shared disappears after 24 hours. Limited to a maximum of 10 seconds, “snaps” or “stories” shared can only be viewed twice by each person who opens them. There is also a chat option available, but messages are also regulated by a 24-hour time limit. This is an excellent source for advertising and a source of communication for influencers, whom as we mentioned, are from all parts of the world, but mainly the U.S., providing another opportunity for hearing and interacting in English. Snapchat is predicted to continue to rise in popularity as seen below.
In 2006, an individual by the name of Jack Dorsey fleshed out his idea for Twitter, which was originally an SMS (Short Message Service) meant to serve as a mode of communication which limited the number of characters to 140, allowing for short status updates between friends. Unfortunately, back in the time it was created, messaging options for cell phones were not unlimited and that created excessive charges for its users. It was then that the Twitter team decided to take it to the web. The 140-character limit, although tedious, allowed for the “tweeters” to limit their creativity to a condensed message. Despite its marked success, in 2017 the character limit was increased to 280. Adolescents love Twitter since it is geared towards a younger crowd, which means that mom and dad will less likely have an account. Currently with over 261 million “tweeters” subscribed, it is safe to say that it has a solid place on the social media platform. Recent statistics demonstrate that 40 percent of Americans aged 18 to 29 years old use Twitter,
more than any other age group. Usage drops as age increases, with 27 percent of those aged 30 to 49 using the service; however, these continue to be the age groups which are most influential. Thousands of “followers” (users) “follow” other users. A wide range of people have Twitter accounts and post, like they do on Facebook and Instagram, text and videos of their everyday life activities, as well as news, diet tips, crafts, how-to tutorials. Businesses use Twitter for product marketing, promotions and news. Local Tweets, as with other social platforms, are mostly in Spanish, unless it is a U.S. based business or Tweeter. However, the platform reaches a much broader English-speaking audience, and therefore, offers greater opportunities for acquiring vocabulary. According to the data presented in the following graph, Twitter is not in first place, but still a strong influence among youth and the current (2019) president of the United States.

**Social media sites as pathways to news**

% of U.S. adults who get news on each social media site

- Facebook: 43%
- YouTube: 21%
- Twitter: 12%
- Instagram: 8%
- LinkedIn: 6%
- Reddit: 5%
- Snapchat: 5%
- WhatsApp: 2%
- Tumblr: 1%

Innovative reading and writing app

There is another, less well-known space currently being used, Wattpad. This is an online community for readers and writers created in 2006, currently with 60 million users. This is an app I learned about from my students one day when I saw one of them particularly enthralled by what she was looking at on her phone. Judging by her level of concentration, I immediately knew it could not be any of the usual social media webpages. Effectively, I was correct. Upon closer examination, I realized that she was reading a story written by one of her peers. I started to look up information about this tool and its effectiveness in learning English.

It turns out that this app is an excellent opportunity to help writers get their stories out into the world. The magic is in its ability to bypass the traditional publishing process. The website has continuous contests where writers can have their stories selected for traditional hard copy publishing. Book covers can also be designed by the author or they may compete (on the website) to have one professionally designed. There is something for everyone on Wattpad. Ranging from classics to short stories, horror to romance, with teen fiction being high on the list, it appeals to a wide variety of audiences.

Wattpad can be considered the writing equivalent of YouTube. Captivating readers is a task well developed by its writers since the option of uploading books by chapters is very popular. Readers can also interact with the writer, offering their opinions and dialoguing with other readers in the community. The only downside for writers is that they are giving their work away for free. If you feel comfortable with that, then you will have opportunity of having your work read by millions of users worldwide. This tool can prove to be extremely effective in the ESL classroom for developing both reading
and writing skills. The following graph shows what age groups use Wattpad most. It is clear that the majority falls in the under 30 category.

**Video and music channels**

The current generation has grown up watching YouTube. By the end of its first year (2005), users were sending 8 terabytes of data flickering across the Internet every
day — the equivalent of the entire contents of a Blockbuster store (only older generations
will remember this movie rental chain). This website got a slow start, but it has now
reached 1.9 billion users worldwide. The massive library of material available includes
video clips, TV show clips, music videos, short and documentary films, audio recordings,
movie trailers, live streams, and other content such as video blogging, short original
videos, and educational videos. Over 300 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every
minute, with over 30 million visitors per day. It is safe to say that it has surpassed all
expectations in its content offerings and although there may be a lot of excellent material
out there, there is also much which can be used for negative purposes. We have all heard
about how bombs have been made at home, thus homemade bombs, by viewing YouTube
videos, and although they have strict content controls made to filter out any illegal
content, if you look hard enough you can find it.

This one caveat aside, YouTube is an excellent educational resource. Countless
language learning videos are posted in many languages. As far as English goes, numerous
channels exist where you can subscribe to and watch a complete lesson on line. Real life
situational practice for ESL students is a great advantage via YouTube. Teachers use
YouTube constantly to enrich their course content. However, this website has so much
more to offer than just educational videos. Tutorials are one of the most viewed options.
From how-to apply makeup to how to fix a car, it is out there. In addition, due to the
worldwide content upload, the range of English accents, slang and mannerisms can be
studied. The following bar graph provides the evidence of the wide use of YouTube
3.7 The effects on ethnolinguistic identity

Ethnolinguistic identity is a consequence of a dynamic socialization process that includes childhood social and psychological events (taken from Dominguez, 2015). If we apply this definition to the reality of modern-day Puerto Rico, the evolution which has taken place in the past twenty to thirty years has facilitated the movement towards a new Puerto Rican identity. The social, political and economic changes on the island have enabled the acceptance of the English language. The tendency is slowly but surely gaining ground on the island. Preliminary research in the area demonstrates this change in attitude. As stated by Brenda Dominguez both in her dissertation *Language and identity: The study of a possible ongoing change in attitudes towards American English and Puerto Rican Spanish in Puerto Rico* and her book *The Unlinking of language and Puerto Rican identity: New trends in sight*, the view that Puerto Ricans had of the link between language and identity is changing. According to her three-generational research, what
was once viewed as an essential element of Puerto Rican identity, the Spanish language, is quickly losing ground. Dominguez recounts her life experiences, which evidently prove that Puerto Ricans are evolving in their socio-cultural views. She explains how she felt as a teenager arriving on the island in 1984 with no knowledge of Spanish and viewed at the time by her peers as a Nuyorican or Gringa. I can attest to this also, having been born to Puerto Rican parents but raised in New York. At the time I came to the island, coincidentally the same year as Dominguez, I was also viewed as a Gringa, despite the fact that I could speak Spanish. I was stigmatized because of my place of birth and ability to speak English. The 1980s were evidently still a time where the “politicalness” or politics of English in Puerto Rico was still an issue. This, at the time reflected the strong relationship Puerto Ricans placed on the Spanish language and being Puerto Rican. Those who were not born on the island were not considered Puerto Rican.

To further document this change, in her June 22, 2017 talk at the Library of Congress Hispanic Division’s webcast, where she presented her new book, Dominguez discussed the results of her study on language and its link to Puerto Rican identity. Her findings suggest that a change in the link between language and identity is currently ongoing in Puerto Rico. She mentions several salient findings:

- That speaking Puerto Rican Spanish is not an essential requirement for Puerto Rican identity.
• To be able to claim Puerto Rican identity does not require you to be born on the island or even reside on the island.

• The use of technology has been instrumental in the change of attitude—attitude towards American English, and that includes social media and film and TV.

• Native fluency in English or being multilingual does not appear to affect Puerto Rican identity.

• A new culture with American and Puerto Rican components may be in the process of formation.

Her findings solidify what has been presented thus far. Due to the ease of access to the U.S. market, English has been evolving in its acceptance. The arrival of cable and satellite television was the first step in introducing Puerto Ricans to a more extensive use of the English language outside the narrowness of the classroom setting. The ability to experience another culture through these devices, helped broaden the view of the U.S. American culture (mostly, over other English-speaking countries). More recently, the
arrival of the internet only served to accelerate the presence of English on the island. The introduction of U.S. chain stores and businesses have also allowed for this phenomenon. Even online shopping, something adopted from the U.S. culture, has promoted learning and using English. As evidenced by previous studies, Puerto Rican views are changing as a result of a greater presence of English on the island.
Chapter 4

Most salient findings, implications, recommendations and conclusions

Introduction

This socio-historical study of the rising presence of English in Puerto Rico was motivated by the observations I have made as an English teacher during my more than twenty years of experience. The imposition of the English language at the beginning of the 20th century had been viewed negatively due to the social, historical and political factors presented in previous chapters. This negative attitude, however, slowly began to change since the 1980s, mostly due to globalization. The arrival of new technologies, namely cable television and the internet has facilitated this new vision. The work conducted by Dr. Brenda Dominguez in her dissertation proves the existence of this phenomenon. Based on the data gathered, final conclusions, implications and recommendations will be presented in this chapter.

4.1 Summary of most salient findings

The evidence presented solidifies my research objectives, therefore, in this section, the most salient findings will be discussed. They are organized according to the order in which they were initially presented.

4.1a--- The strategies used by the US to introduce English to the island were unsuccessful partially due to the harsh implementation of multiple language policies based on hegemonic ideologies of power over such a brief period

The arrival of the U.S. Americans on the island in 1898 changed radically the way of life of the Puerto Ricans. For more than 300 years, under the rule of the Spaniards, Puerto Rico had developed a unique cultural identity which relied heavily on language. The
strong ties which existed between language and identity were underestimated by those in charge of the overhaul of the island. As Morris (1995) stated with respect to the strength of identity of the Puerto Ricans, “such resilience demonstrates that identity, while malleable, is also durable”. Since the turn of the 20th century, numerous language policies brought about by the U.S. appointed Commissioners of Education were implemented. These U.S. American-born Commissioners were appointed by the U.S. government with the intention of facilitating the immersion of the English language in the public-school system. They believed that by replacing the existing educational system, this goal would be facilitated. However, upon studying the strengths and weaknesses of this strategy, we can note major flaws.

Under the Spanish rule, formal public education was not widely available to the general population, nor was it rigorously structured. In fact, those who desired to attend school had to pay for their education. Teachers were paid by the families of their students, not the government, thus limiting the number of children who may perhaps go to school to those who had the financial means to do so. In addition, this education was only available in primary grades, forcing those who could afford to continue studying to leave the island. The U.S. Americans, in turn provided free education to all children. Teachers were paid by the government and schools were built to provide the spaces necessary for these purposes. Curriculum was based upon the educational system of the United States, down to the language. English language immersion was a key component. In addition to teaching the basic subjects (language, history, reading), the U.S. Americans introduced health and hygiene and physical education in an effort to eradicate diseases and preventable illnesses which at the time were the cause of early death amongst the
population. The initial scarcity of well-prepared teachers on the island forced the importation of mainland professionals. However, as early as 1903, the shortage of teachers was so serious, the government built and opened the University of Puerto Rico to educate local women interested in teaching. Despite these efforts, the U.S. failed in their attempts due to various factors.

1. U.S. appointed Commissioners were not familiar with the culture of the Puerto Ricans. Holding political positions, they owed their loyalty to the president in office at the time of their term, therefore their objective was to follow orders, not to look out for the well-being of the islanders. The initial language policy called for complete immersion in the English language for all public-school students. This entailed creating a curriculum which promoted this objective, while creating the infrastructure needed to implement it. Schools were built around the island in order to facilitate the attendance of the school-aged children. This was the first step.

2. The shortage of well-prepared English-speaking teachers on the island seriously hindered the endeavor. The initial plan of bringing U.S. born teachers was insufficient and the crash courses offered to those Puerto Rican born failed.

3. The lack of solid knowledge of the English language by part of the Puerto Rican teachers served more to obstruct than to promote the use of the language on the island. As presented in previous chapters, it was rumored that these teachers secretly taught in Spanish when not being supervised.
4. The lack of social situations in which English was necessary in everyday life on the island was another important factor. Children were immersed in the language in school, but then the majority of them went back to homes where Spanish was spoken. The parents of these children had regrettably been overlooked. In their attempt to Americanize the Puerto Ricans, the U.S. Americans focused on the children rather than the parents. This was a major flaw since these children had no one and nowhere to practice. Adults who lived and worked in the “campo” (country-side) had no use for English, providing little reinforcement at home.

5. Required formal education went only up to what we now consider elementary school (5th grade). Those interested in continuing their education, had the option of secondary or “normal” schools, however, as pointed out, most discontinued their education after the first years to stay home and work the land, fish, etc., occupations which did not require the use of the English language. Thus, what was learned in those first years was mostly lost during their adult lives.

6. Subsequent language policies, as presented in previous chapters, allowed for the use of Spanish in the classroom. This flexibility came about after the failure to successfully Americanize the population. This changed the role of the English-language in the public education systems, relegating it to a subject rather than the means of educating in an effort to better the educational system.
7. The appointment of Puerto Rican born Commissioners of Education was seen as an achievement by the people of the island; however, the most important accomplishment was the change of the language policy in 1948 by Commissioner Mario Villaronga, making Spanish the official language of instruction on the island. This proved the failure of the U.S. government in their intention to Americanize the people of Puerto Rico.

4.1b--- The socio-historical events which have occurred since the occupation of the U.S. have affected the presence of the English language on the island.

Puerto Rico has gone through major transformations since the U.S. took possession of the island. As noted previously, the initial effort to Americanize the Puerto Ricans during the first period (1900-1950) was unsuccessful. This was due largely to the resistance with which they were met. The initial idea that Puerto Ricans were easily malleable was disproved. Despite not having a formal educational system set up, Puerto Ricans were a strong society culturally speaking and specifically in terms of their ethnic identity and their sense of belonging to a group that clearly did not identify with the invading troops. A society which was distinct from that of the Spaniards; a melting pot of the Taino, African and Spanish influences.

The first fifty years were ruled mainly by the political and cultural influences the U.S. futilely imposed on the people of the island. Despite the overhaul of the political and educational system, the strong cultural identity of the Puerto Ricans made it possible to maintain their identity and resist the imposition. These years were difficult ones as a result of the changes in economy, both on the island and in the U.S. due to war times. Puerto Rico went from an agricultural economy for local use to an export based one,
where the workers were not reaping the fruits of their labor. As a consequence, poverty increased, the lands lost fertility and the island was becoming less attractive to the U.S. By the end of this period, the United States had conceded to allow the people of Puerto Rico to elect their own government officials. That first locally elected Puerto Rican governor, Luis Munoz Marin, had the daunting task of finding ways of improving Puerto Rico’s economy, which was in precarious conditions. The movement from an agricultural to an industrial economy, brought on a new set of problems for the Puerto Ricans during the second phase of occupation (1950s-1990s).

It was during this phase, that with the introduction of Operation Bootstrap, Puerto Rico saw one of the largest waves of migration, second only to that provoked by Hurricane Maria in 2017. The arrival of the industrial era brought an influx of U.S. American companies to the island with the intention of improving the economy of the island. Operation Bootstrap promised much, but ultimately enriched the foreign corporations. Despite creating jobs for the working class, these never reached the amount needed to move the Puerto Rican society out of the extreme poverty it was engrossed in. Attempts to help eradicate the problem, for example la PRERA (explained in previous chapters), were not sufficient and thousands of Puerto Ricans fled to the continental U.S. in search of jobs and a better quality of life. This migration, however, did not meet the expectations of thousands, suffering racial discrimination and lower wages, amongst others. This led to a wave of return migration, beginning in the 80s and 90s, impacting Puerto Rican society in more than one way.

Puerto Ricans returning to the island after living in the U.S. brought about a covert impact on the local society unconsciously. Having been in contact with another culture
and language, these became part of their new reality. Puerto Ricans who had lived on the mainland could use their previous contact with the English language to their advantage. At this time, Puerto Rico’s economy flourished as a result of the 936 Tax Exemption law which attracted many pharmaceutical companies to the island. Many job positions on the island required the candidate to be bilingual and these migrants had the upper hand. In addition, the children of these migrants possessed the same (or better) English skills than their parents and were able to use them to their advantage in school and in future career endeavors. In addition to a better grasp of the English language, the previous negative view of the use of English had changed as well. As demonstrated in Brenda Dominguez’ multigenerational study, English is becoming more accepted by Puerto Ricans of all ages. At present, it seems that the focus is moving away from a traditionally politically driven view towards a more practical one of the English language on the island.

The current period, which began in the 1990s, has clearly been distinguished by the openness and acceptance of a more U.S. American cultural way of life. Puerto Ricans are far from being bilingual but are conscious of the importance of the English language and the opportunities which can be obtained by being able to communicate effectively in the language. Many more U.S. American based companies have branches on the island which prefer to even require bilingual employees. As a university professor, I can attest to the growing number of adults who decide to go back to school to complete their education and improve their English-speaking skills in hopes of obtaining a better position at their current employer, or in some cases, relocate to the mainland in search of a better lifestyle for them and their families. The importance of speaking a second language, mainly English, has grown exponentially.
4.1c--- The changes made to the educational system in the last thirty years as far as the teaching of English have not been major.

Unfortunately, my research has proven that the educational system has not been effective in promoting the learning of the English language. The fact that the positions (namely the Secretary of Education) at the Department of Education are highly politicized has hindered any real attempt at furthering the English curriculum. As was presented, attempts at creating bilingual public schools have been futile, since these projects are put on the backburner after each election period. The English curriculum has not seen any major changes either. We continue to face many of the same problems which were faced since the beginning of the 20th century. English continues to be a subject imposed on students starting in kindergarten with mixed results if we look at standardized test scores. These show an increase in mastery of the language (College Board, 2017) in the public-school system. As far as the private school system, English test results have remained steady. The reasons for this increase in public-school test results may not lie in the teaching of the language in itself, but rather in the increased presence of the language in Puerto Rican society and the availability of technology.

4.1d--- Changes in the population of the island have impacted the role and presence of English in Puerto Rico.

Data presented demonstrates how the population of Puerto Rico has fluctuated in the past three decades. The island has been steadily decreasing in numbers since its highest peak in population in the 1990s. The decrease is a result of the multiple hardships the island has suffered. The loss of the 936 Tax Exemption was one of them, but in more recent times, the financial hardships (bankruptcy filed by the government) and the
devastating Hurricane Maria (2017) have triggered massive migration, mostly to the continental U.S. The movement, although largely outward bound, is also one which is characterized by those who return after having tried their luck off the island. These return migrants, mostly in the “working” age as discussed previously, produce a solid impact on the island culturally, politically and economically because of their broader views. Thousands who left immediately to work on the mainland after the impact of the hurricane, returned months later. Their short stay in the U.S. served to transform their negative attitude towards the language of the colonizer. These modern Puerto Ricans use English to their advantage and promote the use of the language to those around them, contributing to the change in attitude which has been observed. The early return migrants who originally created such a negative attitude in the local population in the 1970s, began to be gradually seen under a different light. At first, they would not be considered Puerto Ricans because they spoke English too well. However, as time went by, very, very slowly, as the local population had more exposure to these early return migrants, it began to be OK to speak both English and Spanish well and to be considered ethnically a ‘Boricua’. Therefore, although it may seem that the population of the island is shrinking, this change in numbers is necessary and beneficial for the job to resident ratio.

4.1e--- English has not had a major impact on government agencies which mainly carry out their business in Spanish.

Government agencies, according to the research carried out, have not been greatly impacted by English in the past decades. Despite the initial impact of the language on the government at the time of colonization, with the change of status in the 1950s to the “Estado Libre Asociado”, the government has gained more autonomy, allowing for the
use of Spanish in general. Although isolated attempts as introducing English in local government, such as the example of Guaynabo presented in this work, business is conducted in the native language. However, English-speaking residents are able to obtain forms and applications for government services in English online. The only exception to the Spanish-speaking rule is the Federal government. As presented by Pousada (quoted in previous chapters), the Federal government still conducts its business in English (courts and military bases). This has been unchanged due to its direct ties to the U.S. government, and those interested in conducting their business in these establishments understand the need to speak the language. In the case of the federal court, attempts to change the language policy as to the exclusive use of English were made a decade or two ago, but they were met with resistance on the part of the U.S. government.

4.1f--- Upon the arrival of cable television, cell phones, the internet and social media, English quickly became more prominently heard and used amongst Puerto Ricans.

These recent changes have had the most impact on English in Puerto Rico. Of these, cable television was the first to impact the island. With its arrival in the late 1970s, cable television, in a matter of a few years, became available to thousands of residents. The English language programming it has offered throughout the years has allowed for those who have had little contact with the language to experience not only the language, but also the culture through this medium. Cable television has become more popular than local broadcast television. Evidence of this is the limited quantity of channels currently on air, which is fewer than ten. In fact, as mentioned previously, there is one local English-speaking channel, proving the importance of the language. However, the ability
to access hundreds of cable TV channels instantly puts the English language at the reach of thousands of residents. Nonetheless, it was with the arrival of internet and cell phones that the number of residents with access to English grew sharply.

Since their introduction at the beginning of the 21st century, the use of cell phones, mostly for accessing the internet, has changed the way people interact. Smart phones have become available for people from all walks of society, thus providing endless opportunities to interact with the language. As discussed in the previous chapter, social media has had the greatest impact. The use of these applications has opened up a new reality to users of all ages. For example, the use of YouTube for a myriad of tutorial topics allows users to hear and see the language in use. Other ‘apps’ such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat have also put Puerto Ricans in contact with the “outside” English world. Understanding the language is an advantage for those who like to “socialize” on these networks since many of the pages visited and people followed are from English speaking places (mostly the U.S.). The use of cell phones and gaming platforms (PS4, Xbox, Wii, etc.) for online video game playing, provides even more opportunities to interact since English is the neutral language to use while playing.

4.2 Implications of the study

The findings and conclusions mentioned in the present study are the result of a limited amount of available data. Despite presenting a comprehensive account of the historical presence of English on the island, the availability of documents and studies in certain areas of this research is still scarce. Due to this, the findings are limited to the analysis of the data available. Despite these limitations, I believe that a change in the presence of the English language in Puerto Rico is proven. This change has been
occurring more prominently in the past three decades. The reasons point mostly towards the arrival technology in combination with the circular migration phenomenon.

The current situation of the island is fertile land for this change in language to become more deeply rooted. Puerto Rico is in the process of a massive reconstruction. It is a reconstruction with multiple facets, of which one of the most important ones is that which deals with economics. At present, faced with a governmental bankruptcy, the island is at its lowest point of financial security of the last 50 years. This is a time where the United States has stepped in to help reorganize the debt and help straighten out the finances. The exact length of time the Junta de Control Fiscal will oversee the island’s financial situation is unknown, although the consensus is somewhere between 5-7 fiscal years. In the meantime, Puerto Ricans must decide whether they wish to continue living on the island or try their luck on the mainland in search of better jobs. Those who leave may repeat history and return with a broader view, or choose to stay in the U.S.

The islanders who remain face multiple changes. As noted, the educational system is shrinking, due to declining population. Many schools have been closed, and demographers predict that the numbers will continue to fall, forcing more closures in the years to come. These changes in the educational system have mixed views. Some believe that the current funds will be better used for changes in the curriculum, while others predict a decline in the number of students who attend public school and an increase in private school enrollment (which has not shown an increase in recent years). At the moment of this study, no new plans are in the works for further development of the English curriculum in the public-school system. Whatever the outcome, as shown,
education has not been the most salient of the factors which have impacted the presence of the English language on the island.

4.3 Recommendations for further research

The English language will always be an area of controversy in Puerto Rico. Its deep political roots will always be present when discussing its place on the island. However, as discussed, the ties between language and culture have been shifting, not only proven by current studies, but by the opinions openly discussed on television and radio. As Brenda Dominguez concluded in her study, Puerto Rican identity has evolved. What was previously seen as a crucial aspect of identity and language has changed. Now you can still be considered Puerto Rican despite the fact that you do not speak Spanish. Conversely, speaking English does not make you less of a Puerto Rican in the eyes of the people who are still with us. This change in attitude should be studied further. I propose the following recommendations for further research:

1. A study focusing on the use of the internet and social media by multiple age ranges. This in an effort to identify specifically how Puerto Ricans, according to age range, employ their time on the internet and how they use the English language.

2. Research in the private school curriculum with the purpose of investigating the differences in teaching methods employed and success rate in creating bilingual students.

3. Garner statistical data which reveal where the Puerto Ricans who return to the island after having migrated established their residences in the U.S. and why they decided to return, with a special focus on their language skills in English.
4. An apolitical language planning office where not only English but also other foreign languages are taken into serious consideration to be implemented in the public-school curriculum. This office would not respond to any political party in order to have autonomy.

5. Investigate possible revised definitions of what being Puerto Rican means in order to understand and explain this new generation of U.S. Americans born and raised on the mainland, but with blood ties to the island. It will serve to explain their influence on Puerto Ricans on the island and in turn explain their acceptance despite not complying with the traditional “Spanish language” requisite.

4.4 Conclusions

This study has served to present the information currently available. English, though an indisputable part of the Puerto Rican society, has always been a difficult subject matter due in most part to political issues. The linguistic and cultural traditions previously held, however, are evolving. English is still the language imposed in public school education, but outside of the school arena, English is becoming more widely accepted and necessary. It is viewed as a tool of upward mobility, making it more widely accepted, particularly by those in the younger generations. Many factors have contributed to this new view, as I have presented, but more needs to be discovered. I believe that this study is a great starting point. I personally hope to be following it up with a broader examination that encompasses many of these recommendations and others which may arise.
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