15

On Being Called Out of One's Name

Indexical Bleaching as a Technique of Deracialization

MARY BUCHOLTZ

In a skit from the Comedy Central show *Key and Peele*, Keegan-Michael Key, a comedian of African American and European American heritage, plays Mr. Garvey, a black substitute teacher from the inner city, taking roll in a suburban high school classroom.[1] As Mr. Garvey calls the name of each of the white students in the room, however, it becomes clear that what is at issue is more than a matter of simply taking attendance. After insisting on the pronunciation of *Jacqueline* as [ˌdʒejˈkwɛlõn] and *Blake* as [bəˈlɑˌkej], he goes on to a third student:[2]

(1) Mr. Garvey: Denise. <[ˈdiˌnajs]>
    Mr. Garvey: Is there a Denise? <[ˈdiˌnajs]>
    Mr. Garvey: <shaking head> If one of y'all, says some *silly-ass* name, this
                  whole cla:ss is gon. Feel. My. Wrath. Now. Denise. <[ˈdiˌnajs]>
    Denise: <raises hand slightly> Do you mean Denise? <[dəˈnis]>
    Mr. Garvey: Son of a bitch! <breaks clipboard in two across his knee>
    Mr. Garvey: <points to Denise> You say your name right. Right no:w.
    Denise: Denise?= <[dəˈnis]>
    Mr. Garvey: <rapidly> =Say it right.=
    Denise: =Denise.= <[dəˈnis]>
    Mr. Garvey: =Corr↓ectly.=
    Denise: =Denise.= <[dəˈnis]>

Mr. Garvey: =Right.=

Denise: =Denise.=
              <[dəˈnis]>

Mr. Garvey: =Right.

Denise: <tightens lips, shakes head> Denise. <[ˌdiˈnajs]>

Mr. Garvey: <extends arms> That's better.

<Denise sighs>

Mr. Garvey: Thank you.

<Denise rolls eyes, shakes head>

Mr. Garvey: Now. <looks at paper> Aaron! <[ˌʔejˈʔejˌrān]>

This skit brilliantly parodies an all-too-common practice in American classrooms: the renaming, denaming, and misnaming of students from linguistically marginalized and ethnoracially minoritized backgrounds. In the skit's neat reversal, it is majority students, those with "simple," "normal," "American" names, who are forced to undergo this process of public shaming and renaming. And although as comedy Key's performance remains safely in the domain of farce rather than tragedy, it calls pointed attention to an experience of identity theft that for many American schoolchildren can be both traumatizing and dehumanizing. Judith Butler calls such politicized uses of language that have the potential to harm others "injurious speech." As she states, "To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are. . . . one can be 'put in one's place' by such speech, but such a place may be no place" (1997, 4). Likewise, loss of context and social displacement are central to the African American expression from which I take my title, *to call someone out of their name*, which means to defame or insult, particularly through name calling (cf. Smitherman 1994, 75).

Scholars of language and culture have long recognized that names involve interwined issues of personhood and power (e.g., Rymes 2001; Vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006). Given the power of naming as a performative act of interpellation that renders the bearer culturally recognizable as a social subject (Butler 1997), such research abundantly demonstrates that names are not merely referential forms that pick out specific individuals, as has often been discussed in the philosophy of language. Rather, they are also, and more importantly, indexical forms, with social meanings that are intimately tied to the contexts of their use. Hence a particular name may simultaneously index such sociocultural positionalities as gender, generation, ethnicity, religion, region, class, kinship, and more.

Because indexical meanings are contextual, they are constantly subject to change. Sociocultural linguists have begun to investigate the processes that lead indexical forms to acquire new levels and ranges of social meaning over time (Eckert 2008; Johnstone et al. 2006; Silverstein 2003). However, the converse phenomenon, whereby an index sheds part of its social meaning, is less well understood. Lauren Squires (2012) has proposed the concept of *indexical bleaching*—on analogy with the linguistic concept of semantic bleaching—to characterize this process in the circulation of a media catchphrase. In this chapter, I argue that indexical bleaching may also be used as a technique of deracialization, or the stripping of contextually marked ethnoracial meaning from an indexical form. The deracializing potential of indexical bleaching enables white teenagers to appropriate black youth slang without claiming an affiliation with black youth culture (Bucholtz 2011). And this same technique allows the literal reshaping of ethnoracially marked names—phonologically, orthographically, and even lexically—in ways that reduce their ethnoracial specificity. As the *Key and Peele* parody that opens this chapter demonstrates, the indexical bleaching of a marked name is often imposed by a cultural outsider. At other times, however, renaming may be a more or less agentive choice on the part of the name's bearer; as Butler argues, despite the capacity of language to harm, language is itself vulnerable to challenge and redefinition, so its power is not total.

This chapter examines the interplay of structural power and individual agency as Latina youth in California confront the politics of renaming in their lives. Focusing on the everyday, institutional, and political responses of bilingual Chicana teenagers whose names have been subject to indexical bleaching, the analysis demonstrates the agentive capacity of sociolinguistically subordinated young people to critically reflect on and challenge the hegemonic language ideology that denies them the right to their own names.

"Names That Make Us Strangers to Ourselves"

It is particularly at the borders where ethnoracialized groups come into contact that names become sites of negotiation and struggle over cultural difference, linguistic autonomy, and the right to self-definition. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that racialized processes of renaming have received a great deal of attention among professionals concerned with teaching English to immigrants and international students, where this issue arises daily (Edwards 2006; Taylor-Mendes 2003). To be sure, individuals may take the opportunity to assert their complex cultural identities by selecting a new and often highly creative or personally meaningful name (Heffernan 2010; Kim 2007; McPherron 2009). But as can be seen in governmental renaming projects around the world, within institutional contexts individuals' names must be "legible" to the state and are therefore subject to its authority (Scott et al. 2002). In the context of U.S. schooling,

institutional legibility typically requires that a personal name be recognizable, or at least pronounceable or adaptable to a form more familiar to institutional representatives.

The phenomenon of being positioned by educational institutions as having a "funny name" is so widespread in the United States that it is a common trope in the now-substantial literary genre of immigrant memoirs. Such narratives are replete with accounts of the mispronunciation or displacement of a given name that is "too hard" or "too foreign." For a handful of immigrants, the acceptance of an "Americanized" name may be experienced as an opportunity to seize the American dream: Chicano author Richard Rodriguez, for example, declares in his pro-assimilationist autobiography *Hunger of Memory*, "The social and political advantages I enjoy as a man result from the day that I came to believe that my name, indeed, is *Rich-heard Road-ree-guess*" (1982, 27). Nevertheless, the vast majority of authors recount feelings of personal loss, not gain, associated with the indexical bleaching of their names; as Eva Hoffman, a Jewish immigrant from Poland to Canada, writes, these imposed renamings are "names that make us strangers to ourselves" (1989, 105). For Rodriguez and Hoffman, renaming was largely a matter of anglicization, but more ethnoracially marked names may be subject to extreme linguistic violence in the form of phonological mutilation or wholesale erasure. Thus Iranian American author Firoozeh Dumas (2003, 66–67) recalls being addressed as "Fritzi Dumbass" at the doctor's office as an adult, and as a child being dismissively referred to by a friend's mother as merely "the F-word." Little wonder that Dumas elected to be known as Julie until her college years.

Debates over naming rights have even entered the public sphere, as when President Barack Obama, himself no stranger to the complex racial politics of names, nominated federal judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court.[3] In response, conservative commentator Mark Krikorian (2009) asserted that Americans should not be expected to try to pronounce her name correctly, as [sotomaˈjor]:

> Deferring to people's own pronunciation of their names should obviously be our first inclination, but there ought to be limits. Putting the emphasis on the final syllable of Sotomayor is unnatural in English. . . . [O]ne of the areas where conformity is appropriate is how your new countrymen say your name, since that's not something the rest of us can just ignore, unlike what church you go to or what you eat for lunch. And there are basically two options—the newcomer adapts to us, or we adapt to him. And multiculturalism means there's a lot more of the latter going on than there should be.

Never mind the fact that Sotomayor is by no means a "newcomer" to the United States, having been born and raised in the Bronx; for observers like Krikorian,

the pronunciation of her name marks her as permanently different from "the rest of us" and hence must be replaced with a deracialized version.

Such views, however, have not gone unchallenged. In a 2005 decision, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Mamdouh El-Hakem's claim of racial discrimination in the workplace, on the basis of the fact that his employer insisted on calling him "Manny" over his repeated objections. In its ruling, the court noted, "Defendants argue that they could not be held liable for intentionally discriminating on the basis of race . . ., because the name 'Manny' is not a racial epithet. We disagree with Defendants' premise. . . . A group's ethnic characteristics encompass more than its members' skin color and physical traits. Names are often a proxy for race and ethnicity" (*El-Hakem v. BJY, Inc.* 2005).

The exertion of hegemonic power upon one's name is an experience by no means unique to immigrants and their descendants. African Americans and Native Americans were forcibly stripped of their names as part of historical processes of racial subjugation (Benson 2006; Stuckey and Murphy 2001). Under colonialism, both groups were literally christened with European names, and even well into the twentieth century European Americans retained what Maya Angelou calls the "racist habit" (1969, 43) of renaming African Americans, as illustrated by her white employer's insistence on calling her "Mary." African Americans from Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglass to Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali have pushed back against this form of political subordination, rejecting names imposed through a history of slavery and adopting new names— or symbolically marking a lost African name with the Nation of Islam X (Lincoln 1994)—as a form of public self-definition. Meanwhile, Native Americans may use anglicized personal and/or surnames in institutional settings while preserving the names given to them by their families for ingroup cultural contexts (e.g., Kroskrity 1993).

But if naming is a political issue, is it truly a racial issue? After all, the practice of adapting new lexical items, including names, to native phonology has long been recognized as a general cross-linguistic phenomenon (Weinreich [1953] 1970). In the context of the white West, however, this process is also closely bound up with race. Jane Hill (1993) notes that the hyperanglicized pronunciation of words seen as other-than-English is a fundamental strategy of white racial dominance through language, as she demonstrates with respect to Mock Spanish, a jocular Anglo version of Spanish. Anticipating part of Hill's argument nearly two decades earlier, John Lipski (1976) suggests that the hyperanglicized pronunciation not only of ethnoracially marked names but also of ethnic and national labels, such as *Italian* as [ˌajˈtʰælʲɔ̄n], *Arab* as [ˈejˌræb], and *Vietnam* as [ˌvijəʔˈnǣm], is peculiar to outgroup members with negative attitudes toward the groups in question (see also Hall-Lew et al. 2010). Despite white speakers' protestations that their use of Mock Spanish is not racist but simply fun-loving, Hill persuasively argues that pronunciation strategies that trivialize nondominant

languages indexically reproduce racial hegemony. Indeed, simply uttering a name may invoke boundaries of ingroup and outgroup, with mispronunciation signaling nonmembership in an ethnic category, and correction of such mispronunciations displaying ethnic membership (Markaki et al. 2010, 1529).

To be sure, many white people also have "funny names." I have a notoriously unpronounceable name of my own, which led me to propose as a freshman in high school that my entire family change its name to "Beechwood"—a German speaker had informed me that this was the most likely translation of my questionably spelled surname. But while my German and Polish immigrant ancestors no doubt faced confusion and even mockery for their names, their ethnic otherness quickly abated as they were incorporated into the racial structures of working-class whiteness. Meanwhile, for members of groups that continue to be ethnicized and racialized, naming remains a focal point for indexical bleaching, whereby acts of linguistic racism and violence are perpetrated on a daily basis, often without redress or consequence.

Notwithstanding analyses that frame the primary issue as the linguistic "problem" or "difficulty" facing the native speaker who is forced to deal with a "foreign" name (Rosenhouse 2000), it is clear that it is the bearer of a name who carries the heaviest responsibility for the "public management of name pronunciation" (Wolf et al. 1996, 415). Those with linguistically problematized names must develop a set of strategies for dealing with this situation, from clarifying their name through spelling or rhyming terms to altering the pronunciation toward the hegemonic phonological system to selecting a different name altogether, yielding what Riki Thompson (2006) terms a "binominal identity." Regardless of an individual's solution to the problem of misnaming, however, none of these strategies should be seen as either simple linguistic accommodation or coerced cultural assimilation. Rather, all such strategies are acts of ethnoracial agency that claim the right to name oneself as one sees fit in a given context.

In the remainder of this chapter I illustrate this point by examining the issue of Anglo mispronunciation of Spanish-heritage names, drawing on data from a multisited program fostering community engagement and social, linguistic, and educational justice. Based on students' own discussions of names and naming, I argue that personal names are critical sites for reproducing, managing, and undoing the ethnoracial regimes enforced by indexical bleaching.

"That's Not My Name": Youth Negotiations of Naming Rights

The data analyzed below are taken from a research and academic outreach program created in 2009 by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates

at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in collaboration with students, faculty, and other personnel at public high schools in Santa Barbara County, which serve majority working-class Latina/o students. The program, known as SKILLS (School Kids Investigating Language in Life and Society), guides high school students to conduct original research on language use in their friendship groups, families, and local communities and to raise their own and others' awareness of both linguistic diversity and linguistic racism. Because SKILLS is founded on a commitment to sociolinguistic justice (Bucholtz et al. 2014), the student researchers receive mentoring and academic preparation toward college as well as ample opportunities to critically examine and evaluate the politics of language in everyday life. Throughout the program, the question of names has repeatedly emerged as an important issue for the student participants, not simply as an academic topic but as a deeply felt personal matter. The following analysis examines three different instances at two different school sites in which SKILLS students, unprompted by adult researchers and instructors, engaged with the politics of names and naming in their lives.

The following examples illustrate the different positionalities and actions that students may take toward the issue of renaming, from recognition to critique to social activism. The first example is taken from audio data of youth interaction collected in 2011 by two SKILLS student researchers, Edith Reyes and Melinda Sánchez, for their study of slang use at Carpinteria High School, a small, rural high school. The recording involves a schoolyard conversation among a group of junior girls, including Edith, Melinda, their friend Liliana, and a fourth girl who preferred not to have her data included in this study; her speech has been omitted from the transcript, but these gaps do not substantively affect the analysis. In addition, Liliana's name has been changed in the transcript, but the student researchers' names have not, in order to recognize their scholarly contribution. The example opens immediately after Edith jokingly uses an insult term in both English and Spanish phonology, apparently prompting her to reflect on the differences between the two languages.

(2) Carpinteria High School, schoolyard interaction (January 19, 2011)

1 Edith: You know what's funny?
2   Like when you call-
3   Like when you-
4   You know how we ha-
5   when we have a substitute?
6   (0.5)

7   They like,
8   want,
9   they like,
10   ta:king ro:ll,
11   and they say your na:me,
12   and they pronounce it,
13   i:n,
14   a different way?
15   (1.4)
16 <3.4 sec. omitted in accordance with human subjects agreement.>
17 Liliana: They always do that to me.
18   They always pronounce my name wrong.
19   (0.8)
20 Melinda: They ↑do:?
21 Edith: I don't get what's the difference of English and Spanish though.
22   Like for my name?
23 <4.4 sec. omitted in accordance with human subjects agreement; girls try out
    English and Spanish pronunciations of omitted participant's name>
24 Melinda: Sounds the ↑same somehow.
25 Liliana: Edith <[ˈidɪθ]>,
26   [and E]dith <[ˌeˈdi̪t̪]>.
27 Edith: [Edith.] <[ˌeˈdi̪t̪]>.
28 Liliana: Okay,
29   that's different.
30 Melinda: Edith <[ˌeˈdi̪t̪]>.
31   Edith <[ˈidɪθ]>.
32 Liliana: Liliana <[ˌlɪɬijˈæːnə]>.
33   Liliana <[li̪l iˈan̪a]>.
34   Liliana <[ˌlɪɬijˈæːnə]>.=
35 Edith: =Liliana <[ˌli̪l iˈan̪a]>. =
36 Melinda: =@Liliana <[ˌlɪɬijˈæːnə]> #
37 (6.5; sounds of disposing of trash, zipping up backpacks)
38 Edith: ↑Pretty much the same.
39   It's just,
40   different i:n,
41   some sort of way.

Edith, who raises the topic of substitute teachers' pronunciation of students' names, takes up a stance of curiosity toward the phenomenon, assessing it as "funny" (line 1), and Liliana implicitly aligns with her (lines 17–18). Liliana, however, takes an upgraded stance: where Edith characterized substitute teachers' pronunciations as merely "different" (line 14), Liliana frames these acts as linguistically injurious to her (line 17: *They always do that to me*) and flatly states that variant pronunciations are "wrong" (line 18). The stance differential that emerges between the two girls is not pursued for the remainder of the exchange, however, as the group begins to try out different pronunciations of their own and one another's names. In this example, Edith adopts the linguistic sensibility fostered by SKILLS by framing the difference between Spanish and English pronunciations as a matter of phonological variation (only Edith and Melinda are participants in the program). Liliana, moreover, goes even further, displaying her own critical language awareness (Alim 2005) as she evaluates some pronunciations of her name as correct and others as incorrect.

In example (2) above, the focus is on others' pronunciation of students' names; in the following example, the converse situation is addressed: how students must adjust the pronunciation of their names in order to be understood by outgroup members. The example is taken from classroom interaction recorded in the 2012 SKILLS program at Santa Barbara High School, a large urban school. Led by two graduate teaching fellows, Eva Wheeler and Meghan Corella Morales, who are both bilingual in Spanish and English, the group has been discussing several feature film clips illustrating the same speaker's use of different accents in different settings. The issue of names only comes up when it is proposed as an example by one of the students in response to a question from Eva. It is clear that this suggestion is unexpected given Eva's surprised response.

(3) Santa Barbara High School, classroom interaction (April 5, 2012)

1 Eva: <off camera> Do *you* ever:,
2   do you ever find yourself,
3   changing your accent [when you're]=
4 Estefania: [@@ I do.   ]= <nods>
5 Eva: = speaking with someone?
6 <Raquel nods>
7 ?:   Yeah.
8 <Reyna nods>
9 Eva: To be understoo:d,
10   or for other reasons?
11   W-

12		H*ow* do you do that?
13	Reyna:	What do you mean,
14		how do you *do* it?
15	Eva:	Yea::h.
16		Like if somebody—
17		Ill-
18		In-
19		Do you have an example of like something that you s:*ay*:,
20	<Estefania raises her hand>	
21	Eva:	that you have to:,
22	Raquel:	[Your name?]
23	Eva:	[change your accent] for?
24		Oh-
25		Your ↑n*a*me?
26	Raquel:	<smiling> Yeah.=
27	Girl:	<off camera> =Oh [yeah.]
28	Estefania:	<lowers hand> [like] my l*a*st [name?]
29	Reyna:	[Oh] yeah.
30	Estefania:	They like,
31		won't understand it unless [####]
32	Meghan:	<off camera> [Who won't?] Who won't under[stand it?]
33	Estefania:	<turning toward Meghan> [Like,]
34		in the *office* or something?=
35	Eva:	=[A:h!]
36	Estefania:	=[(Or the)] teachers?=
37	Eva:	=At schoo:l.
38	Estefania:	I have to say,
39		Gutierrez <[gutiˈjɛɹɛz]>,
40		but,=
41	Eva:	=Guti[errez] <[gutiˈjɛɹɛz]>?
42	Estefania:	<touches chest> [I:] say Gutierrez <[guˈtjeres]>,
43		because that's how it's supposed to be?
44		But then they won't understand it so I have to change it.
45	Eva:	Guti[errez] <[gutiˈjɛɹɛs]>?
46	(Meghan:	[O:h,
47		wow.])
48	Raquel:	<nods> [It's like the same thing] with me.
49	Mirián?:	<off camera> Your last na:me,
50		[##]
51	Eva:	[Last name?]
52	<Raquel nods>	
53	Eva:	Last name?
54	<Reyna nods; Raquel continues to nod>	
55	Reyna:	Yeah.
56	Eva:	And is it the same for you?
57	Reyna:	Yeah.
58	Eva:	Reyna?
59	<Reyna nods>	
60	Eva:	A:h!

When Eva asks the students whether they have varied their accent based on their interlocutor, several students immediately respond in the affirmative (lines 4–8). When she asks for an example, before she has even finished her question Estefania raises her hand (line 20) and Raquel proposes, "Your name?" (line 22). Eva displays surprise at this response, but other students immediately align with Raquel, and Estefania goes on to offer an elaboration, followed by further alignment from Raquel and Reyna. Here young people are forced to claim for themselves names that are not their own; in order to be quite literally "culturally intelligible" in Butler's (1990, 167) sense, they must do linguistic violence to their own names.

Although at this point the instructors returned the discussion to the broader topic of accent and setting, they took note of this issue, and several weeks later, when the students were developing project ideas for their public awareness campaign, they encouraged Estefania, Raquel, and two other students, Diana and Melissa, to pursue the topic of name pronunciation. The video produced by these four student researchers was sparked by the initial discussion in example 3 several weeks earlier.

In the video, as each girl displays a card with the orthographic spelling of her name, she pronounces it in American English phonology; this sequence is then repeated with alternative and increasingly incorrect English pronunciations. When the fourth girl, Estefania, displays her name card for the second time (Figure 15.1a), she simply says dismissively, "I can't pronounce it" in an unmistakable "Valley Girl" accent, which is often ideologically racialized as white in the California context. Estefania's embodied performance exemplifies what
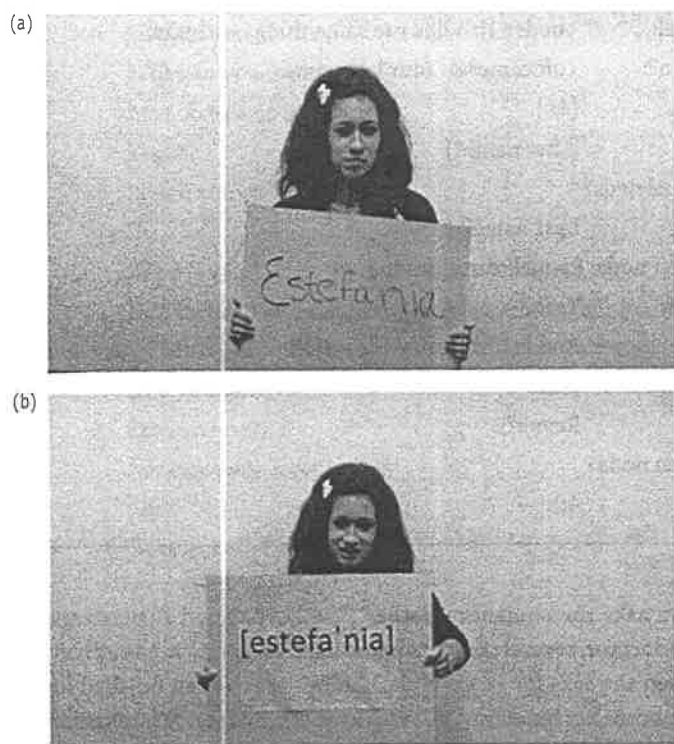
Figure 15.1 a. Estefania mispronounces her name in "la voz gringa." b. Estefania displays the correct pronunciation of her name, transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Lauren Mason Carris (2011) calls "la voz gringa," a counterform of mock language that she argues serves to "disrupt the dominant sociolinguistic order and elevated status of white Mainstream English with respect to Latina/o language practices; and . . . challenge racial/ethnic power dynamics between whites and Latina/os" (2011, 476). A further reversal of the relative political positionality of English and Spanish phonology is evident in the third sequence of the video, as the four girls flip their name cards to reveal the correct Spanish pronunciation of their names in the International Phonetic Alphabet, authoritatively invoking a technical notation system in order to reject hegemonic anglicized pronunciations (Figure 15.1b).

Besides its impact on the student researcher-activists and their classmates, the video has reached an audience well beyond the students' classroom: It was played for UC Santa Barbara faculty and students as well as local community members at a formal academic conference where students presented the results of their work at the end of the SKILLS program, and it is also permanently

available via the SKILLS website (http://www.skills.ucsb.edu). Thus, not only did the videomakers succeed in publicly challenging indexical bleaching by voicing their own pronunciations of their names, but they did so using the academic resources of an educational system that has all too often worked to erase their names and identities.

In these examples, Latina youth engaged with their peers in various forms of sociopolitical critique of the hegemonic language ideologies of their schools and societies. In yielding mangled and unfamiliar versions of their names through the deracializing technique of indexical bleaching, these ideologies strike youth at the very heart of their identities. While the process of phonologically whitening names viewed by the dominant culture as racially and culturally Other continues to be commonplace within the United States, these young people's linguistic acts of self-naming negotiate, interrogate, and at times quite literally overturn this process.

Conclusion: Taking Names

This chapter has taken as its starting point a simple historical fact: As members of politically and linguistically subordinated groups—including indigenous peoples, immigrants, and enslaved Africans and their descendants—have entered into the U.S. ethnoracial system, they have frequently endured the degrading experience of being renamed against their will, whether through processes of mispronunciation, deliberate anglicization, or the outright imposition of a new name. This process indexically bleaches the original name of its ethnoracial specificity and renders it safely deracialized and normative. At the same time, however, many groups and individuals have claimed the right to name themselves, whether by developing ethnoracially distinctive naming practices, maintaining multiple pronunciations and spellings of their name, rejecting an old name or choosing a new name as a political statement, or establishing situationally specific names. Thus the institutional power that imposes a deracialized version of a name is met and at times overmatched by the sociolinguistic agency of those whose names are vulnerable to indexical bleaching. As Butler notes, "The terms by which we are hailed are rarely the ones we choose (and even when we try to impose protocols on how we are to be named, they usually fail); but these terms we never really choose are the occasion for something we might still call agency, the repetition of an originary subordination for another purpose, one whose future is partially open" (1997, 38). Indeed, given the evidence presented in this chapter, we might state the situation even more hopefully: Being called out of one's name creates the opportunity to publicly re-call one's own name, to reassert one's identity in the face of its potential erasure.

The foregoing analysis has demonstrated that often what is at stake in naming rights is a political contest between competing lexical, orthographic, and especially phonological systems. The phonological inventory of a language is intimately tied to the body and hence to the self. It has been widely noted that acquiring a new phonology is the most difficult aspect of second language learning, both because of our embodied habits of language use (Bourdieu 1977) and because of the deep connection of speech sounds to one's sense of self. Thus it may seem that I am unfairly demanding that all speakers must master an entire set of unfamiliar phonemes from the world's languages. On the contrary: As a university professor (of linguistics!) who often stumbles over my students' names, I understand all too well the difficulties facing speakers who are unable to produce or even approximate the acoustic and articulatory shapes of other languages.

The fundamental issue, however, is not a speaker's language abilities but her or his language ideologies. In light of the ethnoracial hierarchy that continues to govern linguistic practice in the United States, ethnoracial misnaming cannot be dismissed as a simple linguistic process of phonological nativization or an inevitable social process of cultural assimilation. Rather, it must be recognized and challenged as a deracializing and often dehumanizing act of indexical bleaching. And although I have focused primarily on how misnaming is wielded by whites against other racialized groups, this act can be perpetrated by anyone who benefits from structural power on the basis of race, class, language, and/or citizenship—that is, members of most groups at one point or another. The responsibility of those in such situations is therefore not to master all possible names but to avoid symbolically dominating others through misnaming.

To conclude, then, I offer a few tips on how to avoid "calling people out of their names." Though aimed at anyone who struggles with names they view as unfamiliar, in the U.S. context these suggestions are especially important for those of us who are white, affluent, English-dominant, and U.S.-born and who therefore have the least to lose in the raciolinguistic politics of misnaming—and who therefore have the greatest responsibility not to misname others. The recommendations below are especially relevant when speaking with new or distant acquaintances, but it is wise to exercise caution even when talking with friends about their names, since names are an intimate part of selfhood.

(1) Don't remark on the unusualness of a name or its spelling. Don't ask about the origin of a name (or worse, blurt, "What is *that*?"). Avoid treating some names as normative and others as nonnormative.

(2) Ask people how they prefer that you address them, and always address them that way. Don't object if the name they prefer that you use toward them is different from that used by others (e.g., family members, close friends). Never use a nickname or otherwise adapt or change someone's name without their explicit indication that this new name is welcome.

(3) Make the effort to correct your ignorance; don't expect the bearer of the name to do the work for you. It can be useful to ask other acquaintances how to pronounce someone's name, but don't assume that what they tell you is correct. The Internet is also a helpful resource for this purpose, but keep in mind that people may not pronounce their names in line with prescriptive guidelines.

(4) Finally, if you remain in doubt about what to call someone or about how to spell or pronounce their name, simply ask—politely and apologetically. Never blame someone for their name.

(And for the record, it's [ˈbʌkˌholts].)

Notes

   Key and Peele, "Substitute Teacher," October 17, 2012, Comedy Central, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd7FixvoKBw. Accessed June 28, 2013.
2. Transcription conventions follow Bucholtz (2011), xiii
3. During the run-up to the 2008 election, President Obama was known among some African American voters as "the brotha with the funny name" (Alim and Smitherman 2012, 3). Contrasting with this affectionate characterization is the disturbing tendency for journalists and politicians to confuse the names of Barack Obama and terrorist Osama bin Laden. The most widely discussed of such "gaffes" was made in 2007 by Presidential candidate Mitt Romney during the Republican primary (Silverstein 2011).

References

Alim, H. Samy. 2005. Critical language awareness in the United States: Revisiting issues and revisiting pedagogies in a resegregated society. *Educational Researcher* 34: 24–31.

Alim, H. S., and G. Smitherman. 2012. *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in the U.S.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Angelou, Maya. 1969. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House.

Benson, Susan. 2006. Injurious names: Naming, disavowal, and recuperation in contexts of slavery and emancipation. In Gabrielle Vom Bruck and Barbara Bodenhorn, eds., *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 177–99.

Bucholtz, Mary. 2011. *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bucholtz, Mary, Audrey Lopez, Allina Mojarro, Elena Skapoulli, Christopher VanderStouwe, and Shawn Warner-Garcia. 2014. Sociolinguistic justice in the schools: Student researchers as linguistic experts. *Language and Linguistic Compass* 8(4): 144–57.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1997. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge.

Dumas, Firoozeh. 2003. *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America*. New York: Random House.

Eckert, Penelope. 2008. Variation and the indexical field. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12(4): 453–76.

Edwards, Rachel. 2006. What's in a name?: Chinese learners and the practice of adopting "English" names. *Language, Culture, and Curriculum* 19(1): 90–103.

El-Hakem v. BJY, Inc., 415 F.3d 1068 (9th Cir. 2005). http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-9th-circuit/1150161.html. Accessed December 18, 2012.

Hall-Lew, Lauren, Elizabeth Coppock, and Rebecca L. Starr. 2010. Indexing political persuasion: Variation in the *Iraq* vowel. *American Speech* 85(1): 91–102.

Heffernan, Kevin. 2010. English name use by East Asians in Canada: Linguistic pragmatics or cultural identity? *Names* 58(1): 24–36.

Hill, Jane H. 1993. Hasta la vista, baby: Anglo Spanish in the American Southwest. *Critique of Anthropology* 13(2): 145–76.

Hoffman, Eva. 1989. *Lost in Translation: A Life in a New Language*. New York: Penguin.

Johnstone, Barbara, Jennifer Andrus, and Andrew E. Danielson. (2006. Mobility, indexicality, and the enregisterment of "Pittsburghese." *Journal of English Linguistics* 34(2): 77–104.

Kim, Tae-Young. 2007. The dynamics of ethnic name maintenance and change: Cases of Korean ESL immigrants in Toronto. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 28(2):117–133.

Krikorian, Mark 2009. It sticks in my craw. National Review Online, May 29. http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/182354/it-sticks-my-craw-mark-krikorian. Accessed June 1, 2016.

Kroskrity, Paul V. 1993. *Language, History, and Identity: Ethnolinguistic Studies of the Arizona Tewa*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Lincoln, C. Eric. 1994. *The Black Muslims in America*. 3rd ed. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Lipski, John M. 1976. Prejudice and pronunciation. *American Speech* 51(1/2): 109–18.

Markaki, Vassiliki, Sara Merlino, Lorenza Mondada, and Florence Oloff. 2010. Laughter in professional meetings: The organization of an emergent ethnic joke. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 1526–42.

Mason Carris, Lauren. 2011. La voz gringa: Latino stylization of linguistic (in)authenticity as social critique. *Discourse and Society* 22(4): 474–90.

McPherron, Paul. 2009. "My name is Money": Name choices and global identifications at a South-Chinese university. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 29(4): 521–36.

Rodriguez, Richard. 1982. *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. New York: Bantam.

Rosenhouse, Judith. 2000. Native speakers' pronunciation of foreign names: The case of names of French origin in (American) English. *Babel* 46(3): 245–57.

Rymes, Betsy. 2001. Names. In Alessandro Duranti, ed., *Key Terms in Language and Culture*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 158–61.

Scott, James C., John Tehranian and Jeremey Mathias. 2002. The production of legal identities proper to states: The case of the permanent family surname. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44(1): 4–44.

Silverstein, Michael. 2003. Indexical order and the dialectics of sociolinguistic life. *Language and Communication* 23(3–4): 193–229.

Silverstein, Michael. 2011. Presidential ethno-blooperology: Performance misfires in the business of "message"-ing. *Anthropological Quarterly* 84(1): 165–86.

Smitherman, Geneva. 1994. *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Squires, Lauren. 2012. The lady pond beyond "the lady pond": Variation in circulation, from TV to Twitter. Paper presented at the 41st Conference on New Ways of Analyzing Variation, Bloomington, IN, October. http://prezi.com/ykwflvcbqenv/nwav-2012/.

Stuckey, Mary E., and John M. Murphy. 2001. By any other name: Rhetorical colonialism in North America. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 25(4): 73–98.

Taylor-Mendes, Cosette. 2003. Our names. *TESL Canada Journal* 21(1): 97–101.

Thompson, Riki. 2006. Bilingual, bicultural, and binominal identities: Personal name investment and the imagination in the lives of Korean Americans. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* 5(3): 179–208.

Vom Bruck, Gabrielle, and Barbara Bodenhorn, eds. 2006. *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Weinreich, Uriel. [1953] 1970. *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*. The Hague: Mouton.

Wolf, George, Michèle Bocquillon, Debbie de la Houssaye, Phyllis Krzyzek, Clifton Meynard, and Lisbeth Philip. 1996. Pronouncing French names in New Orleans. *Language in Society* 25: 407–26.