

LOOKING LIKE A LANGUAGE, SOUNDING LIKE A RACE: INEQUALITY AND INGENUITY IN THE LEARNING OF LATINX IDENTITIES



JONATHAN ROSA, PH.D.

Assistant Professor of Education and,
by courtesy, of Linguistics and of Anthropology

Drawing on ethnographic research conducted in a Chicago public high school and its surrounding communities, this presentation examines borders delimiting Latinx and American identities on the one hand, and co-naturalizations of language and race on the other. My analysis of these dynamics in relation to racialized anxieties regarding the implications of an increasing U.S. Latinx population attends to the construction of language as a sign of Americanness, and especially of its potential undoing. I argue that these “raciolinguistic” phenomena are emblematic of broader global processes that result in the profound social fact that populations come to look like a language and sound like a race across societal contexts.

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