



Erasing Racism from the Spanish Language: A Campaign from Montevideo, Uruguay

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1.0 What is racism? How is it incorporated into language, and how does language reflect and contribute to its manifestation?

Van Dijk (1984; 1987; 1991; 1993; 2000, and 2005) defines racism as a social system of power abuse or domination that is reproduced through both social practices of discrimination and prejudiced attitudes and ideologies. He advocates that discourse is at once a main source of the acquisition of racist attitudes and ideologies and one of the major social practices involved in reproducing racism. In a discussion on Racism in Spain, Van Dijk (2005 2) proposes two common misconceptions that White Europeans and their diaspora have of racism: 1) that racism only takes the form of violence, overt discrimination, and/or blatantly prejudiced discourse, and 2) that racism is a practice and ideology confined to the uneducated and /or to the socioeconomically lower classes. To counter point one, Van Dijk (2005 2) argues that, "... most contemporary racism, is actually indirect, implicit, and subtle, as is the case for many contemporary social - isms." In response to point two, Van Dijk claims racism exists within all socioeconomic classes, including the elite. Recognizing racism within elite groups is crucial when one factors power into the equation and considers the access and control powerful individuals have in shaping public policy and practices. Kroskrity (2000) regards language ideology as the link that joins the way speakers perceive, form and use language (language microculture) with the social structures of the community in which the speakers practice their language (language macroculture). Woolard (2) states that language ideologies are found within language practices themselves, in explicit metalinguistic discourse and in implicit metapragmatic strategies that solidify social relations and the types of talk participants employ. According to Woolard (3), Language

ideologies are not only linguistic in nature, but rather they contribute to a broader understanding of the roles, values, functionality and quality of a given language variety. As Eagleton (19) argues, ideology is not merely a metanarrative construct that describes the practice of language users: "...it creates and acts in a social world."

Espósito Guevara (55) explains that racism is (verbally) constructed with words that people say, hear, repeat and obey. Therefore, language transmits, receives and reproduces racist information, as well as facilitates the performance of racist actions. According to Mamani (63), language is the best way to humanly manifest racism and discrimination for it "...has the power to name everything upon its existence". Van Dijk(2005 2) summarizes that racism manifests itself at two interrelated levels: 1) social practices of violence, exclusion and discrimination, and 2) ideologies, attitudes, prejudices and beliefs that legitimize and sustain racist practices. Van Dijk (2005 2) maintains that discourse is the social practice that connects these two levels of manifestation by allowing speakers the means by which to formulate, reproduce and diffuse racist beliefs that in turn yield racist practices. It bears mention here that prejudices and racism are not innate. They are socially constructed and learned behaviors resulting from individuals valuing and imitating dominant White in-group practices and values. The prestige allotted dominant discourses consequently allows these discourses to permeate and to define institutions such as politics, the media, research and education. Appel and Muysken(29) add that languages are not objective or socially neutral instruments that transmit meaning: they encode social / ethnic identities and have consequences for the social evaluation of languages and the attitudes they provoke. Appel and Muysken (29) further relate the ideas of linguistic imperialism and linguistic prestige to language attitudes. The prestige of a language is determined in part by the attitudes individuals have towards it and its speakers (Henry and Taylor, 2002; Wodak and Van Dijk, 2000). Additionally, this position influences attitudes towards institutions and cultural models that one associates with the group or groups in question. If discourse is indeed a catalyst for the reproduction of racism in society as researchers convincingly suggest, we scholars must examine its most basic linguistic components before we can begin to understand its functions in the formation of racist attitudes and ideologies.



2.0 Linguistic imperialism of the Spanish-Speaking New World: Origins in Brief

Beginning with their arrival in the Americas, European colonizers donned racist and discriminatory attitudes and practices toward African slaves they imported and the indigenous peoples they conquered. It is a well-known fact that most Spanish colonizers did not value native languages of the Americas and languages of the other in general, and their linguistic, cultural, social, and political practices of the Colonial era clearly reflect this ideology (Todorov, 1984; Zamora, 1993). It was common practice for colonizers to attempt to linguistically dominate the New World, by sending native peoples back to Spain to learn Spanish. Throughout history, Castilian Spanish has emerged as an instrument to achieve sociocultural and political hegemony on the Iberian Peninsula and throughout the Americas. However, the end of Spanish rule in the Americas did not result in a reversal of Spanish colonial ideologies. The formation of individual republics within the Americas was based on principals of exclusion that further solidified the New World us-them division: it was Whites on one side and Blacks, Indigenous peoples and savages on the other; it was the civilized cities of good practices vs. the backwardness and barbarity of the countryside; and it was the educated and cultured versus the illiterate (CPMGA18). As an instrument of human communication, language reflects existing attitudes, practices, and hierarchies, and codifies, legitimizes and disperses their existence. Therefore, it is not surprising to find languages riddled with racist lexical items and discourse level expressions that have flourished in both natural speech and the language of literary works. In fact, many individuals are unaware of the discriminatory origins and undertones of many common words and expressions. It is precisely this metalinguistic ignorance that speaks to a much deeper concern: namely, that racial and ethnic inequality are so completely ingrained in social practices that the battle actually begins with recognizing their very existence.

3.0 Discussion of the Campaign *Borremos el racismo del lenguaje* (Let's erase racism from language): Goals, Objectives, and the Afro-Uruguayan Target Population

Borremos el racismo del lenguaje is the result of La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya's initiative to mount a national multimedia campaign of sensitivity towards racism. The Ministry of Education and Culture's National Plan of Opportunities and Rights for African Descendants (Plan Nacional de Oportunidades y Derechos para los Afrodescendientes del Ministerio de Educación y Cultura) sponsors it, and the Spanish Cooperation Agency for Development (Agencia de Cooperación Española para el Desarrollo, AECID) finances it.

The general goals of the campaign are: 1) to contribute to the sensitivity of the causes, consequences and diverse manifestations of racial discrimination; 2) to promote non-discriminatory patterns of conduct between people, regardless of their physical characteristics; 3) to promote the development of mutually democratic values that respect everyone's rights, and 4) to promote the conceptualization of diversity as one of society's riches. The specific goals of *Borremos el Racismo del Lenguaje* are: 1) to objectively and clearly make visible current racist practices in society, the consequences of said practices, and to revise these elements in a positive and critical manner; 2) to identify the existence of prejudices or stereotypes associated with the population of black Afro-descendants and the consequences of said attitudes, and to re-conceptualize them in a positive way; 3) to educate Uruguayans and promote inclusive non-discriminatory practices and discourses within society; 4) to spread the individual and collective presence of Afro-Uruguayans by promoting their worth and success in overcoming negative stereotypes, and 5) to designate the Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya as an institution and work space for the promotion of these objectives.

The population of Afro descendants in Uruguay is approximately 8% of the total population. According to the 2011 Census, 8.1% of Uruguay considers itself of African descent. While experts consider census data to be valid quantifiable population

measurements, it is important to consider that the way in which census questions are worded and the categories used, as well as the way in which information is gathered, greatly influence the self-reports used in its collection. A study carried out in Montevideo using the same group of informants found the percentage of Afro-descendants varied between 5% and 30 % of the total population, depending on the applied criterion of self-identification (Canella, Nathan and Tenenbaum16). The 2011 Census calculates that 9.0% of Montevideo's population is of Afro-decent (Cabella, Nathan and Tenenbaum18). Statistics show that this group is significantly poorer than the general population and lags behind other groups in levels of employment, education, and measurements of standards of living such as housing, electricity and sanitation (www.casadeculturaafrouuguay.org). According to the 2011 Census, 27.2% of Afro-Uruguayans live in poverty, while the poverty rate for the total population of Uruguay is 12.4 (Cabella, Nathan and Tenenbaum60). When one considers basic necessities such as housing, fresh water and sanitation, 51.3% of Afro-Uruguayans is living in substandard conditions in two or more areas, while 32.2% of the general Uruguayan population does so (Cabella, Nathan, and Tenenbaum61). This inequality positively correlates with racial discrimination in Uruguayan society and a significant portion of the general population manifests discrimination consciously and unconsciously, both in terms of practices towards Afro-Uruguayans and in the assimilation of concepts that assign a negative or subordinate value to persons with darker skin (www.casadeculturaafrouuguay.org).

Within this mentality, dark colored skin is a demerit, a motive for discrimination and even a cause for insult. In the following section, I briefly describe the Real Academia Española (Spanish Royal Academy), the widely recognized premier authority on the Spanish Language and to whom Borremos el Racismo del Lenguaje addressed a letter asking that the phrase "trabajar como un negro" "work like a Black slave" be stricken from the Real Academia Española's Dictionary.

4.0 Language Policies and Language Planning: The Mission and Role of La Real Academia Española and the Role of the Dictionary

The Spanish Royal Academy (La Real Academia Española-RAE) was created in 1713 on the basis of an initiative from Juan Manuel Fernandez Pacheco, Marques de Villena, who subsequently served as its first director. La Real Academia Española was based on the model of Cardinal Richelieu's Academie Francaise of 1635, and its primary objective was the compellation of the most complete Spanish dictionary of the times. The official website states that, since its initiation, La Real Academia Española has adapted itself to the demands and needs of its current society. From 1993-1995, the Real Academia Española made changes and additions to its Statutes and Rules. In 1995, the Royal Spanish (Language) Academy revisited Article 1 of its Statues and Rules:

Artículo 1, Real Académia Española. (La Academia) es una institución con personalidad jurídica propia que tiene misión principal velar porque los cambios que experimente la Lengua Española en su constante adaptación a las necesidades de sus hablantes no quiebran la esencial unidad que mantiene en todo el ámbito hispánico.

The Academy is an institution with its own judicial status whose main mission is to ensure that the essential unity of the Spanish language maintained throughout the Hispanic world is not fractured by the changes the language experiences in its constant adaptation to the needs of its speakers (translation mine).

The Academy added the fifth statue in 1993 and it states (translation mine):

1993. Aprobados por el rey Juan Carlos I, su innovación básica es reconocer como misión principal de la Academia la defensa de la unidad de la lengua española. «velar por que la lengua española, en su continua adaptación a las necesidades de los hablantes, no quiebre su esencial unidad».

1993. Passed by King Juan Carlos I, its (the Real Academia Española's) basic innovation is to recognize as the Academy's



principal mission the defense of unity of the Spanish Language and to assure that its essential unity is not broken in its continuous adaptation to the necessities of its speakers.

Este compromiso se ha plasmado en la denominada *política lingüística panhispánica*, compartida con las otras veintiuna corporaciones que forman parte de la Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (ASALE), creada en México en 1951.

This agreement also has resulted in the so called pan Hispanic linguistic policy shared with the other 21 corporations that form part of the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language (Asociación de Academies of the Spanish Language - ASALE) founded in Mexico in 1951.

According to the description the Real Academia Española (RAE) offers on its website, the Academy's mission and activity are inseparable from the political, social and cultural evolution of Spanish life and have been fused into five chronologically listed statutes incorporated throughout its history.

4.1 Racially Charged Words and Racial Slurs: The Role of a Dictionary

Borremos el Racismo del Lenguaje is not the first, nor will it likely be the last campaign targeting dictionaries and the inclusion of racist entries. In 1998, Merriam-Webster came under attack for the way it defined the word "nigger" as "black person" and "...member of any dark-skinned race." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) forcefully objected to this entry on the grounds that it was a racist entry. The problem was the dictionary's synonymous equation of the word "nigger" with "black person" and thus, making the implication that all black people are 'niggers.' In addressing this implication, the NAACP demanded that Merriam-Webster redefine the word 'nigger' so as to explicitly acknowledge its use as a derogatory term to oppress black people. In response to these claims, Merriam-Webster spokesperson Alicia di Leo stated "...the dictionary is a reference tool and a reflection of our society." Merriam-Webster President John Morse further added:

Because the definition is a faithful reflection of language in use, these efforts would be better directed toward fighting the actual use of the word and the causes of racial hatred. The struggle against racial hatred is an important political struggle; however, the dictionary is a reference tool, not a political tool...In the case of the work "nigger" most Americans would be happier if this word were not in use, but changing the dictionary is not going to change the situation.

In Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, the term 'nigger' is entered in the following way:

1

usually offensive; see usage paragraph below : a black person

2

usually offensive; see usage paragraph below : a member of any dark-skinned race

3

a member of a socially disadvantaged class of persons<it's time for somebody to lead all of America's *niggers* ... all the people who feel left out of the political process — Ron Dellums>

Usage Discussion of NIGGER

Nigger in senses 1 and 2 can be found in the works of such writers of the past as Joseph Conrad, Mark Twain, and Charles Dickens, but it now ranks as perhaps the most offensive and inflammatory racial slur in the English Language. Its use by and among blacks is not always intended or perceived as offensive. However, with the exception of the sense conveyed above in 3, it is otherwise a word expressing racial hatred and bigotry.

Origin of NIGGER

alteration of earlier *neger*, from Middle French *negre*, from Spanish or Portuguese *negro*, from *negro* black, from Latin *niger*
First Known Use: 1574

The verbal responses of these two Merriam-Webster officials support the position is that a dictionary has the descriptive function of accurately reporting language use. In other words, merely documenting the ways in which others use the word does not itself constitute the act of using the word, as context is required to establish the word as a racist slur. What Merriam-Webster's spokes person fails to recognize is that their



definition, as it appears in print, implicitly endorses a racist proposition in the way it defines the word: A = B / black person = nigger. Himma (519) argues that the definition of a slur should either explicitly state the objectionable view that equates value to the relevant characteristic, or indicate its use as a means of racist oppression. While the NAACP called for Merriam-Webster to redefine 'nigger' to explicitly acknowledge its use as a derogatory term to oppress black people, still others felt the word should be removed entirely. For example, Kathryn Williams, Curator of the Museum of Afrikan American History in Flint, Michigan established a letter writing campaign urging Merriam-Webster to remove racist terms from its dictionaries. Thus, while many experts maintain that Merriam-Webster's stance on including racist terms without further explanation is unacceptable, they differ in their proposed course of action regarding these entries.

Let us turn our attention to *Borremos el racismo del lenguaje* and to the Real Academia Española's inclusion of the expression "trabajar como un negro" (to work like a Black slave) and a discussion of the descriptive versus prescriptive role of the dictionary:

Even if one agrees that the function of a dictionary is descriptive in nature, and a dictionary's purpose is to report language use and not to serve as a moral compass for evaluating such use, one must recognize that the institutional power dictionaries enjoy is undeniable. Dictionaries do not only reflect language use: they legitimize it and reinforce it. Hence, one may argue that a racist entry wields power by virtue of its codification within a widely utilized reference tool, regardless of the semantic content of its definition, or how it is qualified and recognized as an instrument of oppression within the text. It is precisely this view of the dictionary as a powerful tool that has supporters of *Borremos el Racismo* calling for the removal of the racial slur 'trabajar como un negro' 'to work like a Black slave', from the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (DRAE) / Spanish Royal (Language) Academy Dictionary.

5.0 Borremos el Racismo del Lenguaje

In March 2013, La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya wrote an open letter to the Real Academia Española expressing their concern about the racist phrase *trabajar como un negro*>(ENG) *to work like a Blackslave* and asked the Academy to consider removing it from the Real Academia Española's Dictionary (DRAE).

Montevideo 2013

Carta abierta a la Real Academia Española

Señores de la Real Academia Española:

De nuestra mayor consideración

En nuestro lenguaje cotidiano existen expresiones que pueden tener un uso discriminatorio-una de ellas aparece en el Diccionario "trabajar como un negro".

Esta evoca un pasado de sometimiento que no debería repetirse para ningún ser humano.

Le solicitamos revisar la permanencia de esta expresión en el Diccionario. Nosotros, a su vez, nos comprometemos a borrar toda expresión discriminatoria de nuestras plazas, canchas, escuelas y-sobre todo- de nuestras casas.

Atentamente,

Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya

Montevideo 2013

Open letter to the Real Academia Española

Dear members of the Real Academia.

With our utmost respect.

In our daily language, expressions exist that can be used discriminatorily, one of which appears in the Dictionary: SPAN-*trabajar como un negro*> Eng.-work like a Black (slave).

This evokes a past of submission that should not be repeated for any human being.

We ask that you consider removing the remains of this expression from the Dictionary. At the same time, we are committed to erasing every discriminatory expression from our town squares, fields, schools-and above all-from our homes.



Yours truly,
Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya
(Translation Mine)

The Real Academia Española (RAE) did not respond directly to La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya's letter. Instead, Silvia María Fernández Alonso, head of Interactive Unity, the RAE group responsible for studying, revising and replying to external inquiries about the Dictionary, sent a reply to the Uruguayan newspaper, *El País*. In response to the Casa de Cultura Uruguay's request to exclude the expression *trabajar como un negro*, "...the DRAE (Diccionario de la Real Academia Española) (Spanish Royal (Language) Academy's Dictionary) is a mere record of the language and if an expression is documented in enough written sources, it must be reflected in its repertoire," said Fernández Alonso. She attached a series of (18) textual excerpts with her response to *El País*, apparently to document the history of the use of this phrase in literary works and to support the Interactive Unity's claim that the role of the Dictionary is to record legitimate uses of the language, not to prescriptively police derogatory or racist uses of a word or phrase. The first of these texts dates from 1769 and belongs to the zarzuela *La Masonerilla* by Ramón de la Cruz:

Pues, ¿qué vergüenza es esta? ¿Y que yo esté como un negro
remando
mientras usted se está aquí divirtiéndose?

Well, isn't this a shame? And I'm like a Black slave, rowing, while
you are here
having a good time? (Translation mine.)

From 1960, Fernández Alonso quotes a sentence from Mario Benedetti's novel *La Tregua*:

Recibí los metales en el apartamento y trabajé como un negro. Quedó bien. Nada rabiósamente moderno. No me gustan esas sillas funcionales.

I received the metals at the apartment and worked like a black slave. It turned out well. Nothing terribly modern. I don't like those functional chairs. (Translation mine).

The last of the excerpts Fernández Alonso includes in her response is a quote from Javier Martínez Reverte's 2010 novel *Barrio Cero*:

"Todo el día trabajando como un negro y en tu casa casi ni te dirigen la palabra".

Working like a black all day long and then at home they don't even speak to you.

In addition to these literary excerpts documenting written examples of uses of the phrase *trabajar como un negro*, Fernández Alonso includes language from The Prologue of the last edition of the Dictionary of the Real Academia Española (DRAE) (2001) in defense of the Academy's positive approaches to eliminating discriminatory language practices:

Con frecuencia se solicita, y a veces de manera apremiante, que sean borrados del Diccionario términos o acepciones que resultan hirientes para la sensibilidad social de nuestro tiempo. La Academia ha procurado eliminar, en efecto, referencias inoportunas a raza y sexo, pero sin ocultar arbitrariamente los usos reales de la lengua.

The Academy is frequently asked and sometimes urged to erase terms and excerpts that are harmful given the social sensitivity of our times. The Academy has attempted to eliminate inopportune references to race and gender, without arbitrarily hiding real language use. " (Translation mine.)

In an apparent attempt to further defend the (RAE)'s policies regarding the inclusion, exclusion and subsequent removal of words and phrases from the (DRAE), Fernández Alonso states that in the forthcoming 2014 version of the Dictionary, the use of the alternative meaning for the term "gallego" as a synonym for "stupid" or "foolish" will be removed. A *gallego* is a native of Galicia, a region in Northwest Spain, who is often the brunt of stereotypes portraying him as less than intelligent. In the River Plate region of the Americas "gallego" refers to a Spaniard, regardless of region of origin.

La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya's spokesperson Marín Nierez, told El País, that the Real Academia Española had not responded to their letter directly. Nierez further expressed that the reasons Fernández Alonso gave for not removing the phrase were contradictory, for while the RAE clearly perceived the discriminatory nature of the term

'gallego' as a synonym for 'stupid', they failed to recognize the obvious reference to oppression embodied in the phrase *trabajar como un negro*.

In the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, versión electrónica 2002, 'trabajar como un negro' is found as an expression under the entry 'negro/negra':

trabajar más que un ~, o como un ~.

1. locs. verbs. coloqs. Trabajar mucho.

Unlike the entry for 'nigger' contained in Merriam-Webster's Eleventh Edition Online Dictionary, the entry 'trabajar como un negro' does not provide any additional context or information that shows that this expression has origins in slavery and / or that it may be used in a racially derogatory way in contemporary society.

6.0 Popular Opinion: What do Uruguayans think about the *Borremos el Racismo* campaign?

While an empirical study on the attitudes of Uruguayans towards the campaign *Borremos el Racismo* has not been undertaken, an online article published on January 30, 2013 in the society section of *Espectador.com* contains comments members of the public have submitted in response to its message. As one would expect, these comments reflect a wide range of views on the campaign *Borremos el Racismo* and on racial discrimination in general. However, a qualitative, content analysis reveals that online respondents offered overwhelmingly negative views of the campaign's legitimacy, motivations, its right to demand changes from the Real Academia Española, and its general effectiveness. First, some contributors deny that racism is a problem in Uruguay:

En Uruguay no hay racismo, los negros se auto discriminan. Que ganen el 70 por ciento por igual tarea es mentira.

In Uruguay there is no racism, Blacks discriminate against themselves. That they make 70 percent for equal work is a lie.

No somos Estados Unidos donde se han masacrado a los negros. Por ejemplo, en la NBA, hasta 1950 no jugaban negros, mientras que aquí teníamos al Negro Jefe. Carlos.
We are not the United States where they have massacred Blacks. For example, in the NBA, until 1950 Blacks didn't play, while here we had Negro Jefe. Carlos.

In other opinions, contributors recognize that racism does exist in Uruguay, yet doubt the effectiveness of the campaign:

Sí, somos racistas y esta campaña no cambia nada. Alejandro de Colón.

Yes, we are racist and this campaign doesn't change anything. Alejandro de Colón

Puedes sacar la palabra pero no las actitudes, que es lo esencial. María.

You can take out the word, but not (change) the attitudes, which is essential. María.

Other contributors recognize that racism exists, and call out others who insist they are not racist by questioning their social practices:

¿Cuántos negros trabajan en tu agencia, Pibe? Adriana.

How many Blacks work in your agency, Pibe? Adriana

Hago una pregunta simple, ¿quién está dispuesto a que su hija o hijo se case con un negro?

I'll ask a simple question: who is willing to let his /her son / daughter marry a Black?

Additional respondents accuse Black Uruguayans of racism against Whites:

Yo soy rubia y de ojos verdes y mi suegra era de color y te aseguro que ella me discriminaba a mí. Decía que los blancos éramos ordinarios.

I'm blond / fair-skinned with green eyes and my mother-in-law was black and I assure you that she discriminated against me. She said that we Whites were no thing special.

Esta campaña muestra la estupidez y que los negros son los primeros en discriminar.
Tienen un complejo. Alejandro.

This campaign shows stupidity and that Blacks are the first to discriminate.
They have a complex. Alejandro.

On another note, several comments accuse the campaign and its founders of being politically and /or economically motivated:

Esta movida anti racismo es meramente electoral. Los negros politizados lo saben.
This anti-racist movement is merely electoral. The politicized Blacks know it.

Puro doble discurso. ¡Basta!
Pure double talk. Enough!

Tengo amigos negros retintos y les encanta ser negros. Es para ganar dinero un invento para llamar la atención. Sabiendo que hacen falta otras cosas esenciales, se siente mal.
María.

I have really dark-skinned friends and they love being black. It is to make money-an invention to seek attention. Knowing that other essential things are needed, one feels badly.
María.

As for the role and response of the Real Academia Española, these commentators affirmed their belief that the purpose of the Academy was descriptive and not prescriptive.

Es a la inversa: cuando dejemos de usar la expresión, la Real Academia dirá que en Uruguay cayó en desuso y dirá en qué países continua su uso. La Academia solo informa decisiones de la práctica del idioma en los pueblos. Vero.

It is the inverse: when we stop using the expression, the Real Academia will say that in Uruguay, it is no longer used and will say where it continues to be used. The Academy only informs on the practice of language use in society. Vero.



Hola, la Real Academia RECOGE los usos del lenguaje, no reglamenta el uso. Como el entrevistado dijo, esta es una frase que se usa mucho en Uruguay, no se debería sacar del diccionario sino hasta que se deje de emplear. Así como se plantea en la pieza de propaganda, da la sensación que la culpa la tuviera la Real Academia. No parece razonable que todas las palabras ofensivas las saquemos del diccionario, suena a algo incoherente que invierte el sentido de las responsabilidades entre el que las expresa y usa (y piensa y actúa) y quien las registra. Daniel.

Hello, the Real Academia COLLECTS language uses, it doesn't regulate its use. Like the interviewed person said, this is a phrase that it used a lot in Uruguay, it shouldn't be removed from the Dictionary until it is no longer used. As the propaganda proposes, it seems to be the Real Academia's fault. It is not reasonable that all offensive words be removed from the Dictionary, it sounds incoherent to invert the responsibility from those that use them, think them and act on them and those that record them. Daniel.

La Academia se limita a recibir aceptaciones que la sociedad genera. ¿Quieren que se oculte?

The Academia limits itself to receiving accepted terms that society generates. Do you want them to hide it?

7.0 Conclusions: What does the future hold for *Borremos el Racismo*?

One may argue that the open letter the La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya sent to the Real Academia Española (RAE) was a conservative approach to ending linguistic racism in that it specifically asked the RAE to consider removing a single racist expression from the DRAE: *trabajar como un negro*. La Casa de Cultura did not specifically ask the Academy to consider any other linguistic expressions in which the black race is referred to in a pejorative or racist way: e.g., *hay un amanonegro*, *la músicanegroide*, *undía negro*, *me puse negro/a*, etc. In its response, the Real Academia Española (RAE) essentially claimed to be an institute of descriptive linguistics and not a



prescriptive or moral authority. The response the (RAE) sent to El País specifically explains the Academy's role as one of documenting actual Spanish language use, while sometimes removing a word or an expression at its discretion, should it deem its use discriminatory. Marín Nierez, spokesperson for La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya told El País that despite the RAE's negation of their request to remove *trabajar como un negro* from the DRAE, their policy for allowing a racist or discriminatory term to remain in the Dictionary was clearly contradictory, and assured readers that La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya was not backing down. In fact, Nierez states that La Casa de Cultura Afrouruguaya would mount an additional campaign to "eliminate racist expressions" from the Dictionary.

The Real Academia Española (RAE) is a prestigious and powerful institution whose policies on language use serve as the principal prescriptive and descriptive authority on Modern Spanish. As an elite policy maker, the RAE wields the kind of influence that shapes ideologies and language attitudes throughout the Spanish-speaking world. Without its support, anti-racist campaigns such as *Borremos el Racismo del Lenguaje* are forced to rely on local support for their campaign: Uruguayan Spanish-speakers must become aware of if, when, and how they use language discriminately, and to make conscious changes in their daily discourse. Without the prescriptive implementation of anti-racist practices in language use at the institutional level, this type of change will be slow and inconsistent at best.

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