

English: Professor says fears of alienation not new

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to Germanize us, instead of our Anglifying them," Franklin said.

European and Jewish immigrants of the early 1900s were often perceived as isolating themselves, too, said Jaret, who specializes in immigration and ethnic relations. "The stores all had Yiddish signs and all that sort of thing," he said. "People took their sweet time learning English."

Jaret said he considers declarations of English as an official language — something Georgia and 27 other states have done — unnecessary. "It's almost like having a state bird and state flower," he said. "It doesn't mean that other birds and flowers are illegal. It's symbolic."

If so, Cherokee's ordinance is doubly symbolic. The county already has a decade-old resolution on the books declaring English the official language. But Commissioner Karen Mahurin said she wanted to make clear once again that the business of Cherokee County should be done in English.

The new ordinance stipulates that no one has a right to translations of official county actions, except as required by state or federal law. As it turns out, those exceptions are many. The ordinance exempts major government functions such as education, courts and health care.

Even so, Mahurin said the county will save printing costs by not offering forms and pamphlets in other languages unnecessarily. And immigrants will benefit in the long run, too, she said. "It's a crutch for people," she said.

Mahurin, the daughter of a German immigrant, said her father didn't expect any hand-holding when he arrived in the United States at the age of 18. And he sure didn't receive any. Once, some friends gave him a package of "chocolate" that turned out to be Ex-Lax. He was left, she said, with plenty of time to sit and ponder an important lesson: Learn English.

Mahurin said the commissioners have received hundreds of calls and e-mails in support of the English-only ordinance and a separate, more controversial, one that would punish landlords who rent to illegal immigrants. Mahurin said her father, who struggles with some words but has largely mastered English, is among the fans of the rules. "He said 'I did it and anybody can do it if they want,'" she said.

Not all immigrants are so supportive, however.

South Korea native Hyun Dong Park, who owns the New York Baden sports bar in Duluth, said he understands the need for a common language so everyone can communicate. But the 40-year-old Park, who still struggles with English after 16 years in the United States, said he's suspicious of Cherokee's motivations. "It's not white and black," said Park, who learned most of his English as a cashier at a New York deli. "But I don't think Cherokee County likes immigrants."

Jamie Hernan, an attorney with offices in Cherokee and Mexico, said he plans to challenge the county's rental ordinance in court but not the rule declaring English the official language. Hernan said he and other immigration attorneys will, however, be watching to make sure Cherokee residents aren't denied interpreters in violation of federal law when seeking health care or appearing in court.

Between long work hours and the demands of raising children, many first-generation immigrants simply don't have time to learn English, he said. "And when you tell them English is the official language, it's just one more stab in the gut for these people," he said.

Roughly nine out of ten Georgians speak only English at home, according to Census figures. One in 20 state residents speak English less than "very well." But those who struggle with the language are sometimes concentrated in specific areas. More than 15 percent of Gwinnett and Hall county residents speak English less than "very well," according to 2005 Census estimates. The figure is about 9 percent in Cobb and DeKalb counties. The Census Bureau doesn't have an up-to-date estimate for smaller counties such as Cherokee, where nearly 10 percent of the 183,000 residents are foreign-born.

Northrup, the B&B owner,

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JAMIE HERNAN,
An attorney with offices
in Cherokee and Mexico

said every immigrant must make time to learn English rather than make excuses not to. She's pleased with the progress of her 29-year-old landscaper, Pedro Mateo Perez, who arrived here from Guatemala four years ago. He watches instructional videos and has taken a five-month class at a church near his Chamblee home. "I know about 40 percent," Mateo Perez said in Spanish from another landscaping job last week. "English is so important. It's useful for everything you do here."

Mateo Perez said he was thrilled when Northrup took him to Borders bookstore and bought the Spanish-English dictionary of his choice. "I told him if he learns English, he can own his own business," Northrup said. "If not, he'll just work for me."

Northrup's housekeeper, who asked not to be identified for this article, opened her Christmas present Thursday. She nodded as the orange dictionary peeked out of the Hanukkah wrapping paper. "I know," she said, struggling for the right words as she hugged Northrup. "It's good."

Northrup allowed her housekeeper to break the no-Spanish rule for a few moments so a reporter could understand more of her background. The Norcross resident said a demanding home life has made it difficult to learn English during her decade in the United States.



Bed and breakfast owner **Adele Northrup** said she thinks learning English will help her employees get ahead.

She's the sole caretaker for her 30-year-old son, who is blind and has cerebral palsy.

Cooking for him, dress-

ing him and administering his medicine leaves little time for cleaning houses, let alone English classes, she said. "I don't

like to leave him alone very long," she said.

The native of Michoacán, Mexico, purchased instruction videos called "Ingles Sin Barreras" or "English Without Barriers," two years ago. But when life slows down enough for her to watch one, she's often exhausted and falls asleep.

Northrup, upon learning of the son's condition for the first time, said she sympathizes with her cleaning lady's challenge. But it's not insurmountable, she said, considering what's at stake.

Northrup opened the dictionary and read from the inscription inside. "Thank you for all the help at the bed & breakfast," she said out loud. "I believe the more English you speak, the more work you will get."

The two women then smiled at each other, both struggling to understand.

THERE'S ONLY ONE HONEST THING ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEW BOOK. THE CRITICISM.

'OFFENSIVE AND WRONG'

That's what senior House Democrat and Civil Rights Leader John Conyers calls President Carter's *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. Rep. Conyers says the ex-president's use of apartheid "does not serve the cause of peace" and is "against the Jewish people in particular."

Conyers is not alone.

Leading Democrats like Speaker of the House-elect Nancy Pelosi and DNC Chairman Howard Dean have ignored party ties and denounced Mr. Carter's screed.

Even the former Executive Director of The Carter Center, Dr. Kenneth W. Stein, dismisses the book as a "one-sided" rant, fraught with "factual errors," "invented segments" and "glaring omissions."

The mistruths and distortions are overwhelming. Mr. Carter disregards Israel's offer of a Palestinian state at the 2000 Camp David Summit. He ignores the parliamentary election of Hamas — a terrorist organization sworn to destroy Israel. He even blames the Middle East crisis on myths like Jewish control of the government and media.

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