Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences

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Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences 2002; 24; 114

DOI: 10.1177/0739986302024002002

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Moving Beyond Linear Trajectories of Language Shift and Bilingual Language Socialization

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Demographers and sociologists conducting large-scale surveys of the language choices and preferences of different immigrant groups residing in the United States have contributed to the widespread characterization of language shift as following a single trajectory and of bilingualism as a transitory phenomenon. However, researchers studying bilingualism and bilingual language socialization among Latino populations have found variations in the trajectories language shift follows for these groups. Drawing on sociocultural perspectives of language and learning, this article describes the language socialization experiences of Mexican-descent families living in a California community in order to understand how these experiences are implicated in the development and evolution of their bilingualism. In working toward this goal, the findings reported here contribute to a dynamic and multifaceted portrayal of bilingualism.

Although the United States is home to speakers of more than 300 languages other than English, subtractive bilingualism is the most pervasive pattern cited by many language demographers, sociologists, and others describing the collective evolutionary trajectory of the bilingual experience for many groups residing in this country (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). According to this pattern, monolingual immigrants living in the United States raise children who become bilingual in their native language and English. However, their

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AUTHOR'S NOTE: The research described in this article was supported by a major research grant awarded to the author and Kenji Hakuta by the Spencer Foundation. The author would like to thank the parents and children who participated in this study as well as Carola Cabrejos and Melisa Cahnman, who assisted in data collection and analysis. She would also like to acknowledge Kenji Hakuta for his contributions to the quantitative analysis and for the development of Figures 1 and 2. Finally, she would like to express her gratitude to Cathy Angelillo for her insightful feedback on drafts of this article. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Lucinda Pease-Alvarez, Department of Education, Crown College, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064; e-mail: brainleft@aol.com.

Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, Vol. 24 No. 2, May 2002 114-137
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children tend to establish English-speaking households where their children become monolingual English speakers and, at best, only minimally proficient in their parents' and grandparents' first language. Thus, native language loss in immigrant families is described as occurring by the third generation, and bilingualism is characterized as a temporary intergenerational bridge between monolingualisms. Such a perspective portrays the sociohistorical vitality of immigrant languages as linked to patterns of immigration and assimilation, with little regard for the complex and dynamic network of sociocultural processes that define development.

Much of what is reported about the trajectory of bilingualism among Latino populations residing in the United States seems to indicate that the same subtractive pattern of bilingualism applies to this diverse group. Large-scale studies of language shift in Mexican immigrant communities that focus on patterns of language use portray Spanish as seldom lasting beyond the second or third generation (López, 1978; Veltman, 1988). Some studies suggest that the shift to English occurs much sooner (Fillmore, 1991). Yet other research yields a view of ethnolinguistic vitality among Spanish-speaking youngsters residing in the United States, thereby questioning linear perspectives on bilingualism in which Spanish is portrayed as dying out among immigrant groups by the second or third generation. For example, ethnographic research focused on the everyday lives of Latinos in community and home settings documents ways that Spanish has endured across generations as an invaluable resource for learning, communicating, and problem solving (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Schecter & Bayley, 2002; Vásquez, Pease-Alvarez, & Shannon, 1994; Zentella, 1997). This study, which reports on patterns and variations in the bilingual language socialization experiences of youngsters and their parents living in the same Mexican-descent community, helps account for the diversity of perspectives on bilingualism among Latinos living in the United States. This research draws on sociocultural frameworks that conceive of these processes as constituted through individuals' participation in the nexus of the multiple communities and institutions that comprise their everyday experience.

Language From a Sociocultural Perspective

The theoretical perspectives on which this study is based approach topics related to learning, using, and thinking about language as a sociocultural process. Researchers and theorists who contribute to and build on this view assume that people develop and transform beliefs and practices, which include the way they use and think about language, as they engage with others

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in culturally meaningful activities of their communities. Instead of viewing language-learning outcomes, attitudes, or practices as separate entities, scholars such as Eckert (2000), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1999), Rogoff (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Wenger (1998) consider attitudes or beliefs, including the way people conceptualize language, as inseparable from the social or cultural practices that constitute the venues through which these same practices develop. As those who have articulated an ecological perspective on the social embeddedness of learning and development argue, the multifaceted ecologies in which individuals live and learn continually define and shape the cultural practices that constitute the activity of everyday life and learning (Gallimore, Goldenberg, & Weisner, 1993).

Researchers interested in cross-cultural variations in language learning have expanded our understanding of how the constitutive relationships that exist between language, learning, and culture play out in the language socialization experiences involving children from ethnic minority or non-Western communities (Heath, 1983, 1989; Ochs, 1988; Philips, 1983; Schieffelin, 1990). As these children learn language through their involvement in social interactions in which language is used, particularly within family contexts, they construct the identities, beliefs, and practices of their communities, which in many cases vary markedly with those of so-called mainstream communities. For example, Heath (1983) has argued that the verbal accommodations characteristic of middle-class Anglo-American mothers and middle-class European mothers contribute to a view of language socialization as a negotiated activity involving the active and deliberate participation of an adult who views children from an early age as a conversational partner. In contrast, parents from communities in which adults seldom accommodate their speech when addressing children have been described as holding a view of language learning as directed by children (Heath, 1983; Ochs, 1988).

When considering the case of Mexican-descent children residing in the United States, researchers relying on sociocultural frameworks have contributed to understandings about how variations in bilingual language socialization occur within the complex intertwining sociocultural ecologies of these children's everyday lives. For example, Schecter and Bayley (2002) have identified ecological variations that not only shape and define the experiences of Mexican-descent parents living in California and Texas but also help explain differences in how they pursue their common goal of making sure that their children maintain Spanish. Whereas parents from both regions viewed bilingualism in positive terms and described Spanish as playing an important role in their children's identity formation, they differed in their expectations regarding the role Spanish-language use played when marking and inculcating identity. For instance, Mexican-descent parents in California

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were oriented toward the use of Spanish in parent-child engagements as necessary for maintaining Mexican cultural tradition and ethnic identity. In contrast, English was a prominent feature of various engagements involving children in Texas households composed of family members with strong commitments to Mexican cultural affiliation on the part of parents and children.

Building on the lines of scholarship referred to above, the goal of this article is to contribute insights into the bilingual language socialization of Mexican-descent children and their parents residing in the same northern California community. Through analyses of interviews and conversations conducted with parents and children over a 7-year time span, themes highlighted in this study focus on (a) the meanings participants attached to learning, speaking, and knowing their languages; (b) variations in what constitutes appropriate language socialization practices; and (c) the transformations in individuals' thinking about these topics over time.

Method

The study investigated bilingualism and Spanish-language socialization among a group of Mexican-descent youngsters and their family members residing in Eastside (a pseudonym), California, over the course of a 7-year time span, from 1991 to 1998. To capture the way that time spent in the United States affects bilingualism across and within generations, we grouped children according to increasing strength of family ties in this country. Based on a survey distributed to all of the parents of third graders in the four Eastside elementary schools in 1990, we identified four groupings.

- Group 1: MM — Born in Mexico; parents born in Mexico.
- Group 2: MU/A — Born in the United States; parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 15 or older.
- Group 3: MU/C — Born in the United States; parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 12 or younger.
- Group 4: UU — Born in the United States; at least one parent born in the United States.

Parents and their children from these different groups participated in interviews designed to tap their perspectives on bilingualism, language proficiency, language socialization, and Spanish-language loss. Children and parents were asked about their views concerning appropriate and inappropriate bilingual language practices and socialization strategies, their opinions regarding the role parents and schools should play in Latino youngsters' language socialization, and their expectations regarding what constituted appropriate or correct language practices and ability (see the appendix for a list of

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key questions used in interviews). In the case of some questions, a Likert-type scale was used to elicit responses. For example, children and parents were asked to evaluate the importance of a view (e.g., "How important is it for you to be bilingual?") using a 5-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 0 = *not important*, 1 = *somewhat important*, 2 = *a little bit important*, 3 = *important*, 4 = *very important*). When asked to report their language choice practices in response to questions such as, "When you speak with your children, what language do you use?" children and parents used a 7-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1 = *only Spanish*, 2 = *almost only Spanish*, 3 = *more Spanish than English*, 4 = *both languages equally*, 5 = *more English than Spanish*, 6 = *almost only English*, 7 = *only English*).

Sixty-three children and their parents, which were mothers in all but three cases, participated in the first cycle of interviews (Time 1 interviews) that occurred between 1991 and 1992; 38 participated in the second cycle of interviews (Time 2 interviews) that took place between 1995 and 1998. A common set of questions was asked during both Time 1 and Time 2 interviews. In the case of Time 2 interviews, some items were added that elicited participants' perceptions of children's language ability and reasons for changes in their answers across interview sessions (i.e., across Time 1 and Time 2 interviews). The data reported in this article refer to the 38 pairs of children and parents who participated in both sets of interviews. Table 1 shows the distribution of child-parent pairs across the three immigration groups during the Time 1 and Time 2 interviews.

Means were calculated for most Likert-type items. Responses to open-ended interview questions were analyzed using themes that emerged through repeated readings and examinations of interview transcripts. Each interview was coded by one Spanish-English bilingual coder, whose coding was reviewed by the author of this article. Any disagreements in coding were resolved through discussions during which the coder and the author arrived at consensus on a coding decision.

The Community Context

Although Eastside is home to individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, people of Mexican descent are the majority. Most of the immigrant parents we interviewed worked in service-related jobs as house cleaners, janitors, gardeners, or restaurant workers (e.g., dishwashers, kitchen helpers, bus boys). Six parents told us that they or their spouse worked in factory jobs in electronics. Four mothers, all of whom had been either raised or born in the United States, worked as preschool or elementary school teachers. One

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Table 1. Participants by Immigration Groups

Immigration Group	Child-Parent Pair
M/M: Children born in Mexico; parents born in Mexico	13
MU/A: Children born in the United States; parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 15 or older	12
MU/C: Children born in the United States; parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 12 or younger	6
UU: Children born in the United States; at least one parent born in the United States	7
Total	38

mother was a paralegal. Two U.S.-born mothers told us that they worked in clerical positions. Three families owned their own businesses—a marble works, a house cleaning service, and a bakery.

Spanish is used throughout the Eastside community. It is widely used in the commercial sector by employees and patrons of stores and restaurants. Social service agencies, clinics, and some private businesses employ Spanish speakers as office and clerical workers who have the added responsibility of communicating with monolingual Spanish-speaking clients. In addition, the Catholic churches that most families attend conduct services in Spanish. During the course of the study (prior to the passage of Proposition 227), Spanish was also widely used by teachers and children in the four Eastside elementary schools, particularly in the early grades.[1] As is the case among many bilingual educators in the United States, the directors of bilingual education in the Eastside Elementary School District reasoned that their program enabled young children to establish the linguistic and academic foundation in their native language that would ultimately facilitate their acquisition of English and academic content in that language. Hence, most limited-English-proficient children enrolled in Eastside schools who were native Spanish speakers had access to native language instruction in at least kindergarten through second grade. By third grade, however, English had become the main language of the classroom.

Many European Americans who live in surrounding communities view Eastside as an enclave of monolingual Spanish speakers who are not interested in learning English or assimilating into the American mainstream. The press has repeatedly portrayed the linguistic circumstances of Eastsiders as a liability or problem. Indeed, authors of several newspaper columns and articles have attributed the low academic achievement of Eastside youngsters to their inability to speak English.

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Results

Data from our interviews reveal that children and parents hold extremely positive opinions about English, Spanish, bilingualism, and native language maintenance. In Time 1 and Time 2 interviews, parents' and children's responses ranged from *important* to *very important* with regard to children's knowledge of both Spanish and English, children's exposure to Spanish at school from teachers, and the development of children's bilingualism. Moreover, findings from open-ended questions included in our interviews reveal that parents and youngsters feel that Spanish should continue to prosper and develop along with English. Hence, the conception of bilingualism that most appear to uphold is one that emphasizes the importance of Spanish as well as English. In addition to elucidating the rationales underlying these views, findings from the interviews reported in the following sections yield important insights regarding how Eastsiders conceive of and participate in the bilingual language socialization of their youth, including how their perspectives on bilingual language socialization have transformed over time. In the following sections, pseudonyms will be used to attribute the source of quotes from interview transcripts that exemplify these insights, with parent pseudonyms expressed via formal terms of address (e.g., Ms. Suarez, Mr. Alvarez) and child pseudonyms taking the form of first and last names (e.g., Felipe Carrillo, Mariza Mendoza).

Knowing and Using Spanish is Linked to Mexican Identity

The link between Spanish language and Mexican identity was a theme that parents and children raised in many of our interviews. During Time 1 interviews, 76% (29) of parents described this connection, and 71% (27) mentioned it during Time 2 interviews. During Time 1 interviews, 40% (15) made reference to this connection, whereas 79% (30) did so during Time 2 interviews. Thus, for many parents and children, Spanish is a valued feature of their heritage that comes with being born in Mexico or having Mexican kin. Many express the connection between language and identity as synonymous, evident in their discussions of what it means to lose Spanish as they learn English. That is, when describing what is meant for Mexican-descent parents to have children who have lost their ability or desire to speak Spanish, parents told us that such a loss would imply a loss of children's Mexican identity. For example, Ms. Guarín, born in Mexico, commented,

Es una pena si pierden el español porque ya traes tus raíces en español o sea es tu idioma y perderlo, no aprovecharlo, no seguirlo, yo creo que no. Después yo

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creo que se van a lamentar. Es importante para ellos que sigan nuestras raíces, la cultura y que se sientan orgullosos de nosotros y de ellos porque ellos son Mexicanos. No son nacidos aquí. [It's a shame if they forget Spanish because you carry your roots in Spanish and it's your language and to lose it, to not take advantage of it as you grow, I think not. After I think they will regret it. It's important for them to continue our roots, the culture and that they feel proud of us and of themselves because they are Mexican. They aren't born here.]

Reflecting a similar viewpoint regarding the connections between Spanish-language ability and cultural identity, 12-year-old Mexican-born Clara Ramos told us that having a child who spoke more English than Spanish would be sad

porque luego sí habla más inglés, se olvide de quien son en realidad, de su cultura. . . . Va a ser un problema porque once you lose your language, Spanish, it's hard to bring it back. It's hard. [Because later if he or she speaks more English, he or she forgets who they are in reality, their culture. It's going to be a problem because once you lose your language, Spanish, it's hard to bring it back. It's hard.]

Through our interviews, it was clear that parents and children also define themselves and others in ways that take into account the various structural forces and conditions affecting their lives in the United States. This was most apparent in the second cycle of interviews, during which 55% (21) of the parents we interviewed spoke of discrimination that they or other Latinos were experiencing. Many referred to the passage of recent initiatives, including California's Propositions 187 and 209, as forms of discrimination directed against Latinos.

Only 6 children mentioned discriminatory acts directed at Latinos during Time 2 interviews, including 3 who recounted events at school that they interpreted to be occasions when European American (described as *Americanos* by participants) youngsters or teachers were unfair in their treatment of Mexican-descent youngsters. For example, after describing occasions when students she identified as American "jumped" Mexican-descent students at a local high school, Elidia Rosas (ER) told the interviewer that she had little interest in interacting with American students.

ER: *Nos [los americanos] discriminan mucho a los Latinos . . .*
Interviewer (I): *¿Qué piensas de los americanos?*
ER: *Tengo amigas americanas sí, pero casi no me gustan. No junto con ellas. Nada más si me hablan y todo pero yo no. No me llama la atención juntarme con ellas*.
[ER: The Americans discriminate against Latinos . . .

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I: What do you think of the Americans?
ER: I have American friends, yes, but I don't like them much. I don't engage with them. Only if they talk to me and all, but I don't talk with them. I'm not interested in being with them.]

Roberto Fuentes, a 13-year-old child whose mother immigrated to this country as a child, told us of how what he perceived to be his teacher's discriminatory treatment of Latinos had contributed to changes in his language preferences. According to Roberto, he preferred using English when he was younger. However, as he came into contact with teachers who reprimanded him and other Latino children when they used Spanish, he developed a preference for Spanish. In elaborating this viewpoint, he told us that now when he speaks with his teachers "*les hablo en español para hacerles enojar*—I speak to them in Spanish to make them mad."

Parents and children discussed how status and discrimination were implicated in Eastsiders' language choices. During Time 2 interviews, 39% (14) of the parents we interviewed told us about Mexican-descent individuals who used English to appear American. These parents reasoned that these individuals' language-choice practices were linked to a decision to abandon Mexican culture and language in order to enjoy the benefits of being perceived as an American. In the following example, U.S.-born Ms. Ochoa conveyed this viewpoint in the description of her brother.

He's a Mexican, *puro nopal* (Mexican to the core). But he's the kind of guy who drives a BMW. So he thinks he's White and he won't speak Spanish unless he has to, to his mother. You can tell he has a lot of problems with his culture. Like his name is Antonio. And you don't call him Antonio, you call him Tony or Anthony. But not Antonio.

This pattern was less prevalent among children, with only 5 reporting that Mexican-descent individuals who used English did so to appear more "American," or less Mexican, or because they had lost their connections with their Mexican heritage. For some, a child's decision to use English was attributed to his decision to fit in with "White" or "American" children. In the following example, 12-year-old César Rodríguez (CR) describes how his friend Fernando's decision to speak only English is connected to his desire to engage exclusively with Whites.

CR: I don't talk to Fernando at all anymore 'cause I hang with all kinds of people, right. But he don't hang with nobody in his race or no other kind of people. He just hangs with pure White people.
I: When did you notice that started happening?

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CR: I'm cool with White people, right? But these White people are like weird, you know. These are like stoners and stuff, skaters.
I: And he's hanging out with the ones that are weird?
CR: No, not the weird [ones], like normal skaters and normal White people, but pure White, no other people than White.
I: Wow, interesting. I wonder why he decided to do that?
CR: I don't know.
I: And so when you see Fernando?
CR: I don't do nothing. I smack him around the head or something if I, let's say I see him on the bus, and I go "Pow!"
I: Oh, really?
CR: Yeah.
I: And what language would you say you use when you're talking with him?
CR: English. I speak almost never to him, and when I speak with him, I just say, "I'm just playing around," like that.
I: So it's only English pretty much now?
CR: Yeah.

However, contrary to the views expressed above, a shift toward English language use among households headed by U.S.-born parents did not necessarily symbolize the abandonment of Mexican identity. All 7 of the U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents told us that speaking Spanish was an important aspect of being of Mexican descent. Furthermore, 6 of these children told us that it was U.S.-born parents who wanted their children to speak and/or learn Spanish, with most linking their Mexican or Mexican American heritage to this interest. For example, Ms. Suarez, a U.S.-born mother married to a man who is a fourth-generation Mexican American and a monolingual English speaker, focused on the importance of her Mexican origins when describing her views about native language maintenance and loss. Despite living in a household where family members use English almost exclusively in their dealings with one another, she feels that it is important that her children learn to speak and understand Spanish well "because that's their native origin. I think it is important that they maintain that." Yet her discussion of how her monolingual English-speaking husband considers himself to be Mexican suggests an awareness that the preservation and maintenance of ethnic identity need not be solely tied to the maintenance and continued use of Spanish.[2] Thus, Ms. Suarez's remarks, as well as those of four other U.S.-born parents of children who speak little or no Spanish, indicate that Spanish language use is considered to be an important although not essential feature of cultural identity among those who have experienced a shift to English in their language choice practices and proficiencies.

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Differing Perspectives on Language Use Norms and Language Choice Practices

When describing the linguistic aspirations they have for their children, immigrant parents and many of their children appeared to be influenced by the values and norms that are held by many monolinguals, including the desire to uphold standards of native speakers who reside in monolingual speech communities. Nearly every parent we spoke with during both interview sessions told us that they wanted their children to "speak and understand English and Spanish well." When asked to elaborate, many parents told us that they wanted their children to learn both languages perfectly or to learn the Spanish and English that is spoken by native speakers in Mexico and the United States. Comments that convey their notions about what constitutes correct Spanish are scattered throughout our interviews with immigrant parents in particular. Several parents criticized the use of *calques*, words such as *parquear* (park) and *puchar* (push), that are influenced by their English counterpart, as well as other words and grammatical features that have been widely adopted by many Spanish speakers living in the United States that are often considered by many to be incorrect or improper (e.g., the use of "*ansina*" instead of "*así*", the addition of "s" to the familiar past tense so that verbs such as "*comiste*" are pronounced "*comistes*").

Although nearly every parent we spoke to during Time 2 interviews told us that their children needed to improve some aspect of their English and Spanish, 21% (8) of the parents revealed very different expectations about the level of proficiency that they expected their children to attain in each of their languages. They did not appear to hold as high an expectation regarding children's Spanish-language proficiency as they did for their English language proficiency. When citing reasons for this discrepancy in their linguistic aspirations, parents referred to either the need for their children to learn English well so that they could participate in public life and obtain good jobs or the inadequate Spanish-language-learning milieu available to children in their homes and schools.

Parent interviews revealed a certain level of insecurity regarding their own Spanish-language ability. U.S.-born parents admitted that they had gaps in their Spanish. For example, Ms. Calderón, a bilingual parent born in Eastside, talked about how Mexican immigrants, including members of her husband's family, teased her for speaking "*un español tuerco*" (twisted). A few monolingual immigrant parents shared concerns regarding the nonstandard varieties of Spanish that they or other Eastside parents spoke. The stigma that immigrant parents brought with them from Mexico about the variety of Spanish they spoke was evident in remarks similar to the one found below.

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> *Hablamos español, pero no lo hablamos perfectamente por la sencilla razón de que no fuimos a un colegio o sea que a veces las personas que son estudiadas, las palabras de ellos son muy diferentes a las de uno que no estudia, verdad. Por eso es que le digo pues en realidad uno habla español pero no lo habla perfectamente y las personas que estudian pues lo hablan perfectamente*. [We speak Spanish but we don't speak it perfectly for the simple reason that we didn't go to school or it's that sometimes the words of educated people are very different from one who didn't go to school, you know. Because of this, I tell you that in reality, one may speak Spanish but not perfectly, and the people that went to school, well, they speak it perfectly.]

Of the children with whom we spoke during Time 2 interviews, 84% (32) told us that they felt that they needed to improve their Spanish, with most describing occasions when they felt uncomfortable using Spanish with native speakers of the language. For example, despite positive views of Spanish and its expressive power both in and out of his peer group, 14-year-old Alvaro Correa told us that his Spanish language abilities had diminished over the years. During a recent trip to Mexico, his cousins and uncles teased him for speaking *un español mocho* (broken Spanish), making him acutely aware that he cannot pass for a native speaker in Aguililla, Michoacán.

During both sets of interviews, many parents conveyed negative opinions of code switching, the use of two languages within the context of a single conversational event. Because we were not consistent in obtaining parental perspectives on this practice during Time 1 interviews, we made sure to ask each parent about this practice in our Time 2 interviews. During those interviews, 66% (25) of the parents expressed negative views of this practice, with most substantiating their opinions by telling us that bilinguals code switch because they lack proficiency in one or the other of their languages. That is, rather than being a natural feature of bilingual discourse, a view held by some parents, it is a marker of linguistic incompetence, or as Ms. Gómez puts it, "*No suena que este correcto. O sea uno o el otro porque siento que ni uno ni otro lo hablen bien* [It doesn't sound correct. Or one or the other because I feel that they don't speak one or the other well]." Parents also criticized code switching as incomprehensible, thereby conveying their view that bilinguals should accommodate monolingual interlocutors.

Interestingly, those parents who approved of code switching included a few Mexican-born parents with what they described to be only minimal abilities in English as well as U.S.-born bilingual parents. One Mexican-born mother described code switching as something "*la juventud de ahorita* [the youth of today]" does, saying that it occurs when children have a home environment that is Spanish speaking and a school environment that is English speaking. Although she says that code switches sound odd or funny, she feels

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that it is a normal language practice for bilingual youngsters who have the opportunity to draw on two different linguistic repertoires when speaking with other bilinguals. Ms. Correa, a Mexican-born parent, also shared with us a somewhat similar perspective on code switching that she feels is, at times, characteristic of her own speech.

> *Es usual se mezcla el español con el inglés o el inglés con el español. Es una costumbre . . . de toda California . . . Que está bien porque así no sabrías tan solo de un idioma, verdad? Así, si no les gusta un idioma le va el otro. Así si no entienden en uno, en alguno te entenderán. A veces yo tengo la costumbre que estoy hablando inglés y luego. . . . Es que me da ni sé que, que estoy hablando con un hispano . . . mezcleo el inglés*. [It is normal to mix Spanish with English or English with Spanish. It's a custom in all of California. It's okay because this way you don't have to know just one language, right? This way, if you don't like a language, you can go to the other one. This way, if they don't understand you, in another they will. Sometimes I have the habit that I'm going to speak English and then. . . . It's that I don't even know that I'm speaking with a Hispanic and I mix English.]

In contrast to most parents' views on code switching, findings from Time 2 interviews indicated that 63% (24) of the children considered code switching to be a positive or normal way of expressing oneself. Interestingly, only four Mexican-born children conveyed this view. In 42% (16) of the cases, parents and children from the same families had different perspectives on code switching, with 14 children of parents who had negative perspectives on code switching viewing it as something positive or normal. In contrast to this pattern, Alex Correa, the 14-year old son of Ms. Correa (quoted above), shared his mother's positive perspective on code switching as a pervasive practice among bilinguals.

> We like to mix it up. . . . It's like something that if you're bilingual or a Chicano that runs through you. It's, like, the way you talk. "*Invítame pues*, don't give me a story. *Andale pues*, you've got a car you can give me a ride." That's how it is. If there's a bilingual person, that's how you talk. It runs through everybody, all the bilingual people. It's like if you're addicted to drinking or you're a caffeine junky. When you are talking to a bilingual person, you gotta always speak English and Spanish, always. It just comes out of your mouth, you know. It's just how it is.

Beyond Spanish-Only Perspectives

During both interview sessions, parents told us that it was either important or very important that their children knew Spanish. Eighty-four percent (32) of the children we spoke with during Time 1 interviews and 92% (35) during

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Time 2 interviews told us that it was very important or important to have children who spoke Spanish. When examining the reasons underlying these views, parents and children often linked Spanish-language socialization to the maintenance of their children's Mexican identity. Yet upon closer inspection of their rationales, it appears that their reasoning also reflects their experiences participating in communities where language status is linked to social standing. When explaining this viewpoint, some parents and children made reference to their own experiences living in a societal milieu characterized by the discrimination of Mexicans or Latinos, telling us that Mexican-origin parents who have children who cannot or do not speak Spanish have turned their back on Mexican cultural traditions in their attempt to appear more American.

For most immigrant parents, Spanish-language socialization is best accomplished in the context of a home environment where children and parents use only or mostly Spanish in their everyday interactions. A few even advocated the use of Spanish only among all members of their households. In line with these perspectives on the role that Spanish should play in family life, parents' and children's self-reports on their language choice practices indicate that Spanish occupies an important role in everyday interactions involving immigrant children (i.e., children from MM, MU/A, and MU/C groups) and parents. Our measures of parents' and children's reported language choices with different interlocutors are summarized in Figures 1 and 2.

In Figure 1, parents of children in the MM, MU/A, and MU/C groups report patterns of using mostly Spanish with their spouses, with a shift toward increasing amounts of English usage in the MU/C group. In contrast, parents from the UU groups report using, on average, more English than Spanish with their spouses. They report a similar pattern in the language choices of mothers with children. A shift toward increasing amounts of English is also apparent in parental reports of their children's language choices with their mothers, with MM and MU/A children relying on mostly Spanish with their mothers. Although parents' reports indicated that there was little change in language choice patterns in children's interactions with parents across Time 1 and Time 2 interviews except for children in the MU/C group, they reported on average that their children shifted from using more Spanish than English to more English than Spanish when conversing with siblings across interview sessions. Similarly, as shown in Figure 2, Spanish prevailed in MM, MU/A, and MU/C children's descriptions of their language choice practices with parents, although they generally tended to report using more English with fathers than with mothers. Also when examining their self-reports across time, there was little change in languages used with parents across Time 1 and Time 2 interviews, whereas their use of English with siblings increased.

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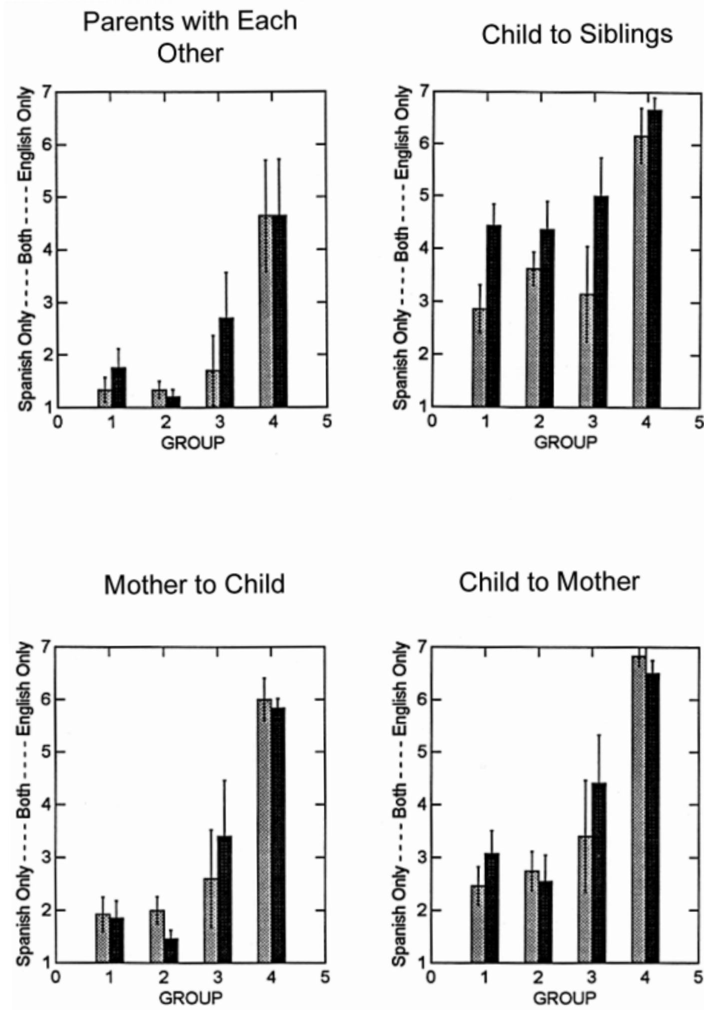

Figure 1. Longitudinal change in parent self-reports of language choices between parents, between child and siblings, and between mother and study child.

NOTE: Bar graphs indicate mean ratings across Time 1 (gray) and Time 2 (black). Data in Time 1 include only those participants who were also available for interview at Time 2. Group 1 = both child and parents born in Mexico; Group 2 = child born in the United States, parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 15 or older; Group 3 = child born in the United States, parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 12 or younger; Group 4 = child born in the United States and at least one parent born in the United States.

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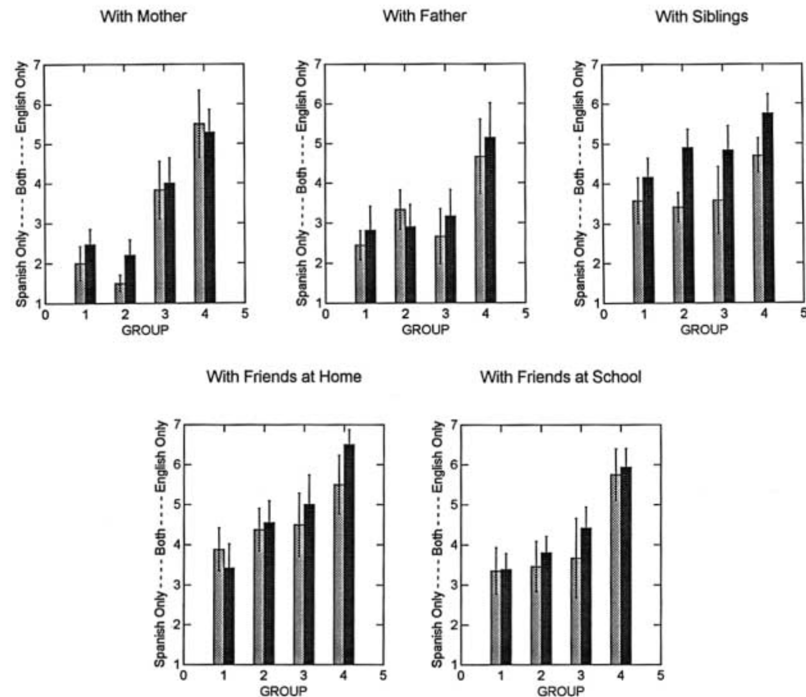

Figure 2. Longitudinal change in child self-reports of child's language choices with mother, with father, with siblings, with friends at home, and with friends at school.

NOTE: Bar graphs indicate mean ratings across Time 1 (gray) and Time 2 (black). Data in Time 1 include only those participants who were also available for interview at Time 2. Group 1 = both child and parents born in Mexico; Group 2 = child born in the United States, parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 15 or older; Group 3 = child born in the United States, parents born in Mexico, mother immigrated at age 12 or younger; Group 4 = child born in the United States and at least one parent born in the United States.

Interviews with several parents and a few children provided a different vantage point from which to consider the Spanish-only or Spanish-mostly language socialization practices of immigrant households. During our Time 2 interviews, 29% (11) of the parents discussed the difficulties associated with establishing home environments where Spanish was used between parents and children. Six mothers told us that a variety of circumstances, includ-

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ing the need to work outside the home, prevented them from being able to take the time to adequately contribute to their children's Spanish-language development. For example, in the excerpt below, Ms. Suárez, the only Spanish-speaking adult living in her household, describes how the need to work has hindered her efforts to make sure that her children learn and use Spanish.

> I think a lot of parents are working, and I don't think they have the time to get their kids. . . . It's a lot of work. And I have to say that firsthand that I wish I could sit and spend a couple of hours a day because I'm sure I could teach them as well as the school could and, you know, that's so expensive. We don't have the time. You know, we are living at such a fast-paced life. Everything is so expensive, two working parents, you are constantly going, so you basically just let it go, and they start to lose it.

Interestingly, two parents who were raised in Eastside reported on the discomfort they felt growing up in households where they were expected to use Spanish. For example, Ms. Ménez expressed resentment over her father's insistence that she and her siblings use only Spanish while at home, even in their interactions with Spanish-English bilinguals. When reflecting on this practice, she stated the following:

> There are a lot of families that want you to keep the Spanish. But you don't grow that way. I mean, you're living here and you're bound to speak English, and sometimes it hurts I think more that it helps to be obligated not to lose your culture and languages. Because then you start saying, you know, United States made me lose everything. Well, you decided to come here.

During Time 2 interviews, 42% (16) of children reported occasions when they had felt uncomfortable when they were called upon to use Spanish. In each case, they described occasions when they had used English or what they and/or others perceived to be incorrect or inappropriate Spanish words or expressions. For example, 12-year-old U.S.-born César Rodríguez, whose parents were Mexican immigrants, described an occasion when tensions arose in his home when he did not conform to his father's policy of using Spanish at home, particularly in the presence of Mexican guests. In the excerpt below, César Rodríguez reasons that his father's anger stems from concerns about social etiquette.

> CR: Well, like, my dad, he got mad at me last time, all right? Not mad, but he kind of like whispers in my ear. You know, like, there's all these, like, Latinos in my family. And I go up to my dad to tell him, and I tell him in English, right? And he goes, "Talk Spanish to me!" He goes like that to me because everybody's there, right? And you know, I guess it's not polite to, with all these Latinos there that don't understand English, to talk English with my dad and stuff.

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I: So it was just to be polite?

CR: Yeah I guess. And then, also when he introduced me to his friend from Mexico, right? And [he says] "What's your name? " And, um, people there call me Charlie, everybody calls me Charlie. Nobody calls me César, right? So I said, "I'm Charlie," right? And then after that, he [my dad] got mad because, like, uh, I was trying to say like, brag and stuff. That my name's Charlie and stuff. But that's what everybody calls me, right? And he's all, "In the next time, say César, César."

Improving or Recovering One's Spanish: The Commitment of a Next Generation

As previously mentioned, most of the children with whom we spoke told us that they thought that they needed to improve upon their Spanish-speaking abilities. When explaining their reasons, they told us that knowing Spanish would enable them to better communicate with and participate in social networks composed of Spanish speakers who lived in Eastside and/or Mexico, avoid embarrassment when communicating with native-Spanish speakers, and/or establish a stronger linkage with their culture. In the case of a few U.S.-born children, they and/or their parents were making concerted efforts to recover Spanish. For instance, 11-year-old U.S.-born Carolina Suárez, who expressed an interest in being able to talk with monolingual Spanish-speaking relatives (e.g., her grandparents, great aunts and uncles), told us of her plans to enroll in Spanish foreign language classes and then to follow her older sister's example of being a foreign exchange student in Mexico. Concerned about his experiences in Mexico where he was teased for *hablando un español mocho* (speaking broken Spanish), another U.S.-born child, 14-year-old Alvaro Correa, decided to take a Spanish foreign language class at his middle school. Interestingly, his experiences in the class alerted him to differences between the Castillian Spanish emphasized by his Spanish teacher and the variety of Mexican Spanish that he and his family members used.

In the case of three families composed of U.S.-born children of U.S.-born mothers, language recovery efforts were situated in the home and depended on mothers' and children's decision to use more Spanish in their engagements with one another. Two of these mothers told us that Spanish was the only language that they used when communicating with their children. Whereas one mother insisted that Spanish be used by children and adults alike in the home, arguing that a Spanish-only strategy was the only way to make sure her children ultimately maintained the language in the context of living in a society where English dominates, the other mother worried that obligating her children to use the language would make them dislike it.

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The third U.S.-born mother, married to a man she described as a monolingual Spanish speaker, told us that it was her responsibility to make sure that her children “got their Spanish back” despite the fact that she feels more at ease using English in her conversations with them. During her first interview, she mentioned that she was relying mostly on English in her conversations with her children. But during the second interview, she said that she was making an effort to use more Spanish with her younger children, saying that she had realized that it was up to her to change her language practices to ensure that her children would continue using and developing their Spanish. From her vantage point, her tendency to use English with her children had contributed to their loss of Spanish and to a rift in their relationship with their father, which she felt contributed to her daughter’s decision to run away from home.

> Lisa lost communications with her father, with my husband. . . . I told her to start getting Spanish in high school, she did. She started getting it back. Before, she would never talk with her father. She lost the relationship with him. We took her to counseling because she ran away from us and we had a lot of problems with her and all because she lost communication with her father. And . . . I’m scared with Ariel [her younger son]. But now I am surprised Lisa and her father sit down. They talk. Lisa understands him and Lisa talks now. Before they didn’t because Lisa couldn’t talk to her father. It got better. Though her Spanish sounds terrible, she talks to him now. Ariel’s Spanish is good, but he doesn’t think it is. He doesn’t wanna bring it out. He doesn’t think he knows enough to have a conversation with his father. . . . Lisa did the same thing and I’m scared that I’m gonna have the same lack of communication with Ariel.

Ms. Colón’s 12-year-old son, Ariel, who attends a school where instruction is provided in English only and where the majority of students are of European American backgrounds, told us during our second interview that his use of Spanish has increased at home and school, particularly in the context of conversations involving his parents and his friends. From his vantage point, this change in language choice practice was due to improvement in his Spanish-language abilities and to his interest in befriending Spanish-speaking Mexican-descent children. Similar to viewpoints conveyed by other children during our second set of interviews, Ariel told us that school was a place where Spanish was not valued, citing as evidence incidents when Mexican-descent children were chastised for using Spanish. He was also of the opinion that Spanish-speaking children of Mexican descent tended to be enrolled in special education classes at his school because they knew little or no English. Nevertheless, Ariel was firm in his commitment to use and develop further his Spanish.

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Discussion

Findings from our interviews with children and parents contribute to a view of Eastside community and family life as one that is supportive of bilingualism and Spanish-language socialization. Through these interviews, we have not only learned about practices and perspectives that are part of the everyday experiences of family members but we have also been able to understand how personal and group histories, structural forces, and economic circumstances help define these practices and perspectives. This is particularly evident in findings that reveal within- and cross-generational transformations in parents' and children's perspectives on language that accompanied changes in their own lives and the social contexts in which they live. For instance, upon their arrival to this country, immigrants draw on their past histories to interpret and construct new ways of participating in families and communities. As they experience life in U.S. communities characterized by different institutional constraints and accompanying social relationships, some may construct new dispositions toward language and learning or new rationales supporting old dispositions. In some cases, these transformations may emerge through a negotiation of past histories and ongoing experiences. For example, several parents' commitment to their Mexican heritage may be intensified through their experiences as members of subordinated groups in the United States. For some, language socialization practices that favor the continued use and maintenance of Spanish are interpreted as an appropriate response to a social milieu that they feel disparages the Spanish language and Mexican culture. Other transformations across generations may be occurring in response to what parents and children themselves experienced or are experiencing in their homes, schools, and communities. Most noteworthy are reports of tensions that may be revelatory of differences in the histories and experiences of parents and children, including discrepant values and meanings attached to code switching by parents and children, children's feelings of inadequacy regarding their Spanish-language ability, and frustrations that U.S.-born adults and children have felt living in homes where parents have attempted to enforce Spanish-only or Spanish-mostly policies.

The findings summarized here also provide insight into the way perspectives on language and identity transform over time. As immigrants experience discrimination and come into contact with Latino youngsters who speak English as well as Spanish or who are monolingual English speakers, Spanish-language socialization is interpreted as a means of countering threats to their children's Mexican identity. Yet with time, parents face pressures that make it

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difficult for them to maintain Spanish-speaking homes, as evidenced in the way some working mothers, regardless of immigration background, interpret the difficulties they face in contributing to their children's native language socialization. From their vantage point, the need to work outside the home has contributed to changes in language choice and socialization practices as well as possibly complicating and intensifying cultural expectations regarding their role in child raising. In contrast to assimilationist perspectives on bilingualism, members of the next generation, many of whom speak little or no Spanish or feel that their Spanish language ability has diminished over the years, express a commitment to learn or recover the language of their elders, neighbors, and friends.

Findings from these interviews indicate that Spanish is valued among Eastside families across immigration backgrounds, although the roles it occupies in children's and families' lives appear to transform in accordance with their circumstances and experiences. In the case of families headed by immigrant parents, it is the language spoken among adults and youth in the context of the home. Immigrant parents' perspectives regarding the importance of making sure that children use Spanish in their interactions with adults is corroborated by findings from their children's self-reports that children indeed do tend to use mostly Spanish when addressing their parents. Moreover, immigrant children, like their parents, have extremely positive views about bilingualism and Spanish-language maintenance, including a commitment to making sure that it is a language that they will continue to use with their children once they are parents. However, during the course of this study, these children also reported an increase in the amount of English they used with siblings, friends, and teachers (see Figure 2). If this tendency persists, it is likely that these youngsters, like U.S.-born children of U.S.-born parents, will become members of households where English dominates despite the generally positive beliefs about Spanish, bilingualism, and Mexican identity that parents and children hold. At the same time, there is also evidence of an interest in improving Spanish-language abilities among children across immigration groups as well as evidence of language recovery efforts on the part of second- and third-generation children and families, suggesting a pattern of language revitalization. Thus, in contrast to linear evolutionary characterizations of language shift and bilingualism among Mexican-descent populations that have tended to portray these processes as a move from monolingualism in Spanish to Spanish-English bilingualism and ultimately to English-language monolingualism, our work demonstrates the enduring as well as transforming role Spanish occupies in families' lives. In

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so doing, the work reported here provides further evidence of the need to construct and draw on sociocultural perspectives that conceive of growing up among multiple languages and cultures as multifaceted and dynamic.

Appendix

Child Interview: Sample Questions

- How important is to it be bilingual? Why?
- How important is it for you to know English well? Why?
- How important is it for you to know Spanish well? Why?
- How important is it for you that your children learn Spanish? Why?
- How important is it for you that your children learn English? Why?
- Have there been times when you have felt uncomfortable using English? When? Why?
- Have there been times when you have felt uncomfortable using Spanish? When? Why?
- Many people say Latino children are losing their Spanish. Do you think this is happening? What do you think about the loss of Spanish in Latino children?
- Do you know people who switch between Spanish and English when they speak? Who? Do you do it? Why? What do you think of this?
- Do you need to learn more English?
- Do you need to learn more Spanish?

Parent Interview: Sample Questions

- How important is it for you that your children are bilingual?
- How important is it for you that your children speak English well?
- How important is it for you that your children speak Spanish well?
- Do you think the parents of children from Spanish-speaking or Latino backgrounds should help their children learn Spanish? Why? How?
- Many people say Latino children are losing their Spanish. Do you think this is happening? What do you think about the loss of Spanish in Latino children?
- Do you think your son/daughter needs to learn more English?
- Do you think your son/daughter needs to learn more Spanish?
- Do you know people who switch between Spanish and English when they speak? Who? Do you do it? Why? What do you think of this?

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Notes

1. In the spring of 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227 by a margin of 61% to 39%. The proposition mandates that children who are deemed to be of limited English proficiency be taught in classes where their instruction is delivered "overwhelmingly in English." Under special circumstances, parents may request waivers so that languages other than English are used to instruct their children.

2. As Keefe and Padilla (1987) argued, ethnic identity among nonimmigrant Mexican-descent individuals is strongly linked to processes other than language preservation, including the strengthening of kinship networks characterized by "extending local kin networks incorporating other Mexican Americans through patterns of friendship associations and intermarriage" (p. 8). Interestingly, Mrs. Suárez was one of only a few parents who told us that she wants her daughters to marry Latinos so that they maintain their Mexican culture.

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