SALSA VI

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"Like three doors—Spanish, English, and both; I'm going to both": Language Attitudes of Early Adolescent Mexican Americans

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This exploratory study focuses on the language attitudes of 20 Mexican-American adolescents towards Spanish, English, and bilingualism, and what these attitudes reveal about language shift in a Northern California community. Interviews elicit how youths define patterns of language choice, proficiency, and attitudes. Participants struggle to resolve contradictions between the assets and deficits of bilingualism and the permanence versus mutability of one's "native language." Findings suggest a need for terms that are appropriate to the dynamic nature of bilingualism. For example, as the Mexican-American child becomes an adolescent in situations of language contact, what constitutes her "first" or "native" language? Is it the inheritance-language of the adolescent's parents and grandparents, the language in which the adolescent is "most" proficient or the language to which the adolescent feels most affiliated (e.g. the language of one's peers and/or larger community) (Rampton 1995)? Participants express conflicting understanding of language as both a permanent, primordial identity marker and as an attribute that changes according to one's social context. A dominant theme in this study, language recovery, suggests educators ought to increase the availability of inheritance-language instruction through the secondary grades.

0.   Problem

There is much concern among sociolinguists, educators, and bilinguals themselves over language shift as it implies the loss of many cognitive and social advantages associated with bilingualism (Hakuta and Diaz 1985; Moll and Greenberg 1990; Vasquez, Pease-Alvarez, and Shannon 1994) as well as disrupted patterns of family communication, depression, and poor school performance (Hernández-Chávez 1993; Matute-Bianchi 1991).

The factors that influence language maintenance and shift are multifaceted and complex, and the relationship between language and school performance is still unclear. In contemporary debates about bilingual education, the focus has typically been on the function and effectiveness of instructional practices that use varying degrees of the child's first language (Ramirez, Yuen and Ramey 1991). Missing from these debates are bilinguals' perspectives on their own lived experiences with language both within and beyond the boundaries of the classroom

and school. After all, as the child becomes an adolescent in situations of language contact what constitutes her "first" or "native" language? Is it the language of the adolescent's parents and grandparents, the language in which the adolescent is "most" proficient or the language to which the adolescent feels most affiliated (e.g. the language of one's peers and/or larger community)?

The research presented here is exploratory in nature, and its purpose has been to understand the roles Spanish, English, and bilingualism play in the construction of social and ethnic identities of young Mexican-American adolescents. The title of this study originated in the words of an exceptionally articulate participant, Alvaro Correa.[1] In reflecting upon his language practices, abilities, and attitudes, Alvaro concluded: "It's like there are three doors, you know? English, Spanish and both. I'm going to both." This study will investigate what it means to go behind these three doors by focusing on the language experiences and language attitudes of 20 young Mexican Americans. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What are the language attitudes of young, Mexican-American adolescents toward Spanish, English, and bilingualism?

2. What do these language attitudes reveal about the phenomenon of language maintenance and shift in this Northern California community?

3. How do these participants perceive the relationship between language, ethnicity and race?

1.   Language attitudes research: review

Attitudes towards language and the speakers of that language can have major influences on the phenomenon of language shift or maintenance in a bilingual community (Day 1982; Fasold 1984). Attitude refers to one's underlying belief system and suggests a predisposition to act or evaluate behavior in a certain way. Measurement of language attitudes began with experimental methodology known as the "matched guise technique" started by Gardner and Lambert (1972). Among many contributions of this research was the development of an orientation index that identified two types of motivations associated with success in foreign language study: the first, *integrative orientations*, associated with the desire to be like and interact with speakers of the target language; the second, *instrumental orientation*, includes pragmatic, utilitarian motives such as the desire to gain economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language. Cooper and Fishman (1977) identified *developmental* motivations, i.e., knowing a language for one's own personal development, exemplified by Hebrew speakers' desire to read books written in English.

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[1] All participant names and those they mention are pseudonyms.

Hofman (1977) contributed additional orientations for minority-language bilinguals learning a second, colonial language rather than a foreign language; the latter typically referring to nonnative languages learned in the environment of one's native language (e.g. Spanish speakers learning English in Spain) (Gass & Selinker 1994:4). Hofman found that bilinguals in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) identified *integrative* and *value* reasons for choosing the inherited Shona language, and *instrumental* and *communicative* orientations were given for knowing the colonial languages, English and French. Value reasons have to do with pride in one's language while communicative reasons suggest the speakers' use of the language in question to interact and communicate with others. Mejías and Anderson (1988) found that Mexican-American university students and professionals in the Rio Grande Valley rated the *communicative* orientation as the most important reason for using Spanish.

One of the major criticisms of these studies is that the definitions of motivation have been too static and prescriptive, and do not offer a means to describe the dynamic nature of language use and attitudes among bilingual, immigrant communities. In Austin, Texas, Galindo (1995) offers a unique model for conducting attitudinal research. She used mostly open-ended questions to tap the language attitudes of third-generation Chicano adolescents (ages 14-19) towards standard and non-standard varieties of English and Spanish. Her findings reveal "linguistic contradictions." On the one hand, Chicano youth expressed negative attitudes towards Spanish and its speakers as a means of distancing themselves from Mexican immigrants. However, they also favored the Spanish language as an integral part of their Mexican heritage and as a symbol of ethnic identity.

What is clear from such studies is that the emphasis upon certain orientations over others is not fixed, but changes depending on the national and local context of the language situation. The study presented here follows Galindo's (1995) model. My objective has been to use close-ended questions followed by open-ended questions to elucidate what the motivational constructs from attitude research mean according to Mexican-American adolescents in Northern California.

2.   Method

This research is part of a larger, on-going longitudinal study begun in 1991 by Lucinda Pease-Alvarez (University of California at Santa Cruz) among Mexican-American members of a community called "Eastside." The major goal of the project is to characterize the degree of shift from Spanish to English in a group of 64 Northern California youth. The larger study uses a combination of approaches to document various aspects of the shift phenomenon over time, including actual language proficiency (PPVT[2], written/oral narratives, translation

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[2] Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, a common method used in bilingual research where participants respond to pictures with the appropriate vocabulary word (if they know it) using the language in question (i.e. English and/or Spanish)

exercise) and participants' perceptions of their language proficiency, language choices and language attitudes (Pease-Alvarez 1993).

My contribution to this research has been to analyze the latest round of sociolinguistic interviews with 20 of the original 64 participants who are now 11 to 14 years of age. The participants were selected to represent four different generational groups, divided almost equally among boys and girls:

Group 1:   Born in Mexico; parents born in Mexico (M=2/F=3)
Group 2:   Born in the US; parents born in Mexico; mother immigrated at age 15 or older (M=2/F=3)
Group 3:   Born in the US; parents born in Mexico; mother immigrated at age 10 or younger (M=3/F=2)
Group 4:   Born in the US; at least one parent born in the United States (M=2/F=3)

The study presented here uses a 37 question semi-structured interview with a variety of additional prompts in order to get a rich picture of how participants themselves define their patterns of language choice, proficiency, and attitudes. Interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes and were conducted in either Spanish or English (see Appendix A for "Sample Interview Schedule"). This research was carried out in the Spring and Summer of 1997 as part of my Master's thesis at UC Santa Cruz (Cahnmann 1997).

3.   Results

Participants' responses to the sociolinguistic interview reveal the existence of bilingual as well as monolingual norms of communication. *Bilingual norms* are based upon the premise that two languages co-exist and co-function in Chicano adolescents' daily lives. In contrast, *monolingual norms* are expectations or requirements for the exclusive use of the 'standard' variety of one language at a time without interference from another language. Though typically associated with monolingual speakers, monolingual norms are often (consciously or unconsciously) held by bilingual speakers as well. In this study I found the instrumental, communicative and symbolic orientations useful for understanding how bilingual and monolingual norms operate simultaneously in these young peoples' lives. Below I have grouped the "communicative and symbolic purposes" together and yet distinguish between the two. Whereas in the above studies "communicative" has been used to refer to language use (Hofman 1997; Mejas & Anderson 1988), in this study participants may or may not actually use the language in question and still communicate symbolically through it. This distinction will be discussed further in section 1.4 below.

4.   Instrumental Purposes

Bilingual Norms: 90% of the participants indicate they and others they know use language mixing practices; that is, mixing Spanish and English at the level of words, phrases, or topic domain. Reasons for the use of both Spanish and English include a range of instrumental purposes such as access to scholarships, higher education and increased employment opportunities. Over 75% of the participants believe employers and/or colleges will choose the bilingual speaker when given the choice between a monolingual applicant and one that can speak both Spanish and English. These responses reveal the high degree of instrumental value that adolescents associate with Spanish and Spanish/English bilingualism.

Monolingual Norms: While almost all participants reveal that they do use language mixing practices, half of all participants feel that language mixing is undesirable. These negative attitudes towards language mixing may be partly explained by perceptions of the greater instrumental status of monolingual English norms at school, the workplace, and larger United States society.

Participants across all generations discussed the power, status and privilege of the English language and those that speak the English language at school. Where there are bilingual programs, participants perceive these classes to be inferior, where students are held back until they can "catch up" to the students that know English. Participants also note the differential treatment that bilingual students receive upon entering mainstream English classes as well. Three participants discussed having been punished for speaking Spanish in the school's monolingual English environment. While bilingualism is seen as a valuable attribute when applying to colleges and universities, it is considered a deficit in their primary and middle school experiences.

In addition to school, five participants identified the work force as another context that also privileges monolingual, standard English speakers. Participants express concerns about preferences for hiring those that speak a "standard" unaccented variety of English, and firing those that fail to have command of this variety. Similarly, participants also perceive the dominant status of monolingual English norms at the national and societal level. Three participants discussed the status of monolingual English norms in terms of access to government services, medical care, and emergency assistance as well to public entertainment (e.g. television).

Here, Gabriel Luna (Group 2) provides an instrumental rationale for why he feels being bilingual is not only important, but necessary:

(1)
01 G: Cuando van algún lugar, como en Los Angeles, llamas al 911 y si
02   eres como de México o no hablas inglés, tienes que esperar como
03   20 minutos para encontrar a una persona que habla tu lenguaje.

'When you go someplace, like in Los Angles, and you call 911 and you're from Mexico and you don't speak English, you have to wait like 20 minutes for them to find someone that speaks your language.'

We can see that positive attitudes towards the instrumental value of maintaining Spanish run counter to widely prevalent negative attitudes towards Spanish and Spanish-English bilingualism at school, the workplace, and wider United States society. These contradictions in the perceived instrumental values of Spanish and English might indicate that bilingualism is a transitional stage on the way to monolingual English language use and proficiency as a means to gain cultural capital and socio-economic advantage. However, research indicates that integrative motivations that stem from the use of Spanish in intimate communications with family and peers, and as symbolic markers of ethnic identity can mitigate against the instrumental forces that encourage language shift. I refer to these motivational constructs as *communicative* and *symbolic*.

5. Communicative and Symbolic Purposes

Bilingual Norms: Pragmatic bilingualism facilitates communication when one or more conversational participants encounter a gap in their linguistic abilities. For example, Areli (Group 2) says matter of factly:

(2)
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01   A:  Si no sé la palabra, depende de que idioma no la sepa, la digo en la
02       otra.
         'If I don't know a word, depending on what language I don't
         know, I say it in the other.'
```

However, language mixing does not only compensate for lack of proficiency. Bilingual norms are also skillfully and strategically used to expand one's expressive potential (Flores 1993). Participants discuss instances where whole subject domains are relegated to either Spanish, English, or language mixing. I refer to this practice as "language distribution according to domain," as participants state that in certain settings, certain topics and activities "sound better" when they are discussed or performed in one language or another. However, there is not always a one-to-one correlation between a particular language and domain as is suggested by Ferguson's (1959) term, diglossia. The relationships between language and the setting, topic, and activity are dependent on a range of social factors that guide the construction of certain language practices. Although the general trend is to use English in formal settings such as the school, there is one participant for whom this is not necessarily the case. Roberta (Group 4), who attends a public middle school with a majority Latino population, said that at home "it's more English than Spanish but at school it's more Spanish than English." Likewise, although English is generally associated with formal settings, it is also the language frequently used in play. Spanish and English cannot be located within strict boundaries; rather they act as fluid and interpenetrating resources for communication.

An important theme revealed across the interviews is the use of Spanish and English together as a symbol of Chicano ethnic identity and solidarity. Regardless of gender or generation status, regardless of proficiency, participants consider

Spanish to be an important, enduring symbol of one's ancestral heritage. Participants referred to Spanish as "who I am," "my language," and "una grapa de quien tu eres" 'The badge of who you are.' Participants also claim ownership of the Spanish language through the use of biological metaphors to the heart and blood. Alvaro (Group 2) reveals the extent to which he considers bilingualism an inherited and indelible bodily characteristic.

(3)
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01   A:  It's like something, I don't know, something I been brought up with,
02       you know? It's like something always, something that just is like, if
03       you're bilingual and all that or Chicano it like runs through you, runs
04       through my body. It's like that's how you talk, it's like, "Hórale, por
05       dónde vas? 'Hey, where are you going?' You're going to the
06       movies? Invítame, no seas(?) 'Invite me, don't be a(?)' You know,
07       "Pst, hey invítame pues, no seas un dummy 'well invite me, don't
08       be a dummy', you know. Come on take me! It's like, "No, no te
09       quiero llevar porque eres bien desmadroso" 'No I don't want to
10       take you because you're such a slob,' And its like, "Andale
         pues,
11       come on. You got a car, you know. You can give me a ride."
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For Alvaro language is constitutive of one's permanent biological make-up. The ease and fluency with which he mixes Spanish and English further demonstrate his expertise, and, hence, ownership of this linguistic form. Language becomes a salient marker of ethnic group membership because it is at once the medium for communication as well as the bodily representation of it.

Monolingual Norms: These youth also encounter an intolerance for bilingual norms in monolingual Spanish and English settings. Some cite the pragmatic necessity to act like a monolingual (i.e. without accent or mixing) in order to communicate with monolingual Spanish or English speakers.

Other participants discuss the interpersonal and social function of monolingual Spanish practices. Three quarters of the participants in this study, referred to return trips home to Mexico. While this frequent contact with monolingual, Spanish speaking communities offers young Mexican Americans numerous opportunities to practice their inherited language, these settings can also be the source of embarrassment and stigma. Participants discussed feeling uncomfortable using Spanish because of English influences, and occasions when parents and family members have gotten angry with them for using English in the presence of monolingual Spanish speakers.

Social stigma as a result of monolingual norms also occurs in the English-speaking, public domain. Five participants (25%) discussed the social stigmatization they experienced as a result of speaking Spanish or code-switching in public; they are stared at by monolingual speakers, and at times, directly told to "Speak English."

While claiming ownership of Spanish, 80% acknowledge that language shift and loss is taking place. More than half attribute Spanish language loss to English language learning, and a majority identify teachers and the school as major catalysts of subtractive bilingualism (Lambert 1978). Interestingly, several

participants spoke metaphorically about language loss in terms of color loss. For example, Alvaro (Group 2) talks about his Spanish language loss in a way that suggests that learning English has a "whitening" effect: "'Cause I just started learning, I started learning English. And I just started learning new words in English and all that. My Spanish just started kind of *fading away* [my emphasis].'" Likewise, Roberta (Group 4) describes language loss as a physical loss: "And then it (Spanish) just kind of like *fell off of me* [my emphasis]. When I was little I knew more and then I kind of fell off and then lately I've been picking up a lot more.'" Metaphors that suggest language as color or object reveal participants' recognition that language is not necessarily a permanent endowment. Rather, language, like racial identity, is acquired in social settings that are constantly shifting, and, like membership in social groups, changes over time.

85% of the participants view *language recovery* as the ideal solution to their own experiences of language loss, or those they anticipate will occur with their future children. Language recovery refers to the desire and, at times, active measures taken to regain one's Spanish fluency. Participants across all immigration groups express great enthusiasm and desire to take Spanish language classes at school. However, of the three students who mentioned taking these classes, two were severely disappointed. One participant talked about the low level at which these foreign language courses were taught with Anglo students in mind as the target audience. Another participant discussed feeling out of place in classes that taught Spanish from Spain without recognizing his family's regional varieties of Spanish from Mexico and California.

6.   Implications

These findings suggest the need for curriculum reform. In light of the recent passage of California Proposition 227, it is now more important than ever before to inform the public about the conflict bilingual youth face between their social and school worlds. On the one hand these youth experience bilingualism as the rewarding consequence of the global language contact phenomenon, one that has the potential to increase their job opportunities, advance their educational achievement, and expand their international and intercultural communication skills. However, despite the range of instrumental, communicative and symbolic functions of bilingualism, languages other than standard English (especially new and mixed varieties) are stigmatized as deviant and constantly measured against a fictional, monolingual norm.

The dominant theme found in this study, "recovery," suggests that increased emphasis ought to be placed on inheritance language instruction in the primary and secondary grades. These classes can be seen as an important resource for increasing Mexican American students' engagement in school as well as sending the message that immigrant languages are valued and bilingualism is promoted. After all, bilingual/bicultural communities, long accustomed to language-mixing and intersectionality, may prove to be the best prepared for an increasingly global economy.

All teachers, whether bilingual or monolingual, should be trained in basic sociolinguistics. Such training will enable educators to apply language variation and linguistic theory in their classrooms with all students. For example, the study of language in the social studies curriculum can develop the students' understanding of the important, modern context of bilingual abilities in a world where people from different languages, cultures, and values are increasingly brought together.

Finally, more research is needed that looks at the effects these bilingual/bicultural identities have on young, adolescent development in Mexican-American communities. Mexican Americans are not the typical second or foreign language learner, as has been investigated in many other attitude studies. The adolescents in this study are *all* inheritance speakers of Spanish, and to some degree affiliated with English, but they may not be "expert" in the "standard" variety of either language. For this reason Rampton (1995) argues that terms such as "native speaker" and "mother tongue" are inadequate to describe the nature of language use and proficiency among bilingual, bicultural youth. He suggests we disentangle the various meanings conjured up by these terms into distinct categories: "expertise," denoting one's proficiency in language, "allegiance," denoting one's identification with the speakers and culture of a language. Finally, one's allegiance can be both to one's inheritance language as well as to the language of one's affiliation (i.e. peers, and larger speech community). The concepts of expertise, inheritance, and affiliation are useful for research among bilingual populations.

It is also important to consider the role monolingual norms play in structuring language attitude studies themselves. Questionnaires that force participants to answer questions that isolate or compare one language against the other suggest that languages compete rather than complement one another.

Research and educational practice need to find ways to support students like Alvaro (Group 3), to validate and encourage their rite of passage through all three "doors": Spanish, English, and bilingualism.

(4)

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01   A:   It's like, I'm like the same with English and Spanish. Like a lot of
02        words I don't know in English, there's a lot of words I don't know in
03        Spanish. It's like there are three doors, you know? English,
04        Spanish, and both. I'm going to both.
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Appendix: Sample use interview schedule. A partial list of interview questions used with adolescents

*Note: For each question, various probes were used to encourage adolescents to explain and expand on their answers. Language Choice: 1. When you talk to your (mother, father, sibling, friend, teacher, principal) what language do you use? 1 (only Spanish) 2 (almost all Spanish) 3 (mostly Spanish) 4 (both equally) 5 (mostly English) 6 (almost all English) 7 (only English) Language Proficiency: 2. How well do you think you (speak, understand, read, write) Spanish/English? 1 (nothing) 2 (not very well) 3 (very little) 4 (more or less) 5 (very well) 6 (almost perfect) 7 (perfect) Language Attitudes: *Note: For all questions beginning "How important. . .?" the following scale was used: 0 (not important) 1 (of little importance) 2 (somewhat important) 3 (important) 4 (very important) 3. How important is it for you to be bilingual? 4. How important is it for you to be able to speak Spanish/English well? 5. Which language do you like to use more?--Spanish or English?	6. Do you think that one language is more important than the other? If so, which one? 7. Do you think everybody should know Spanish? Who doesn't need to know Spanish? 8. How important is it for you that your (teacher, mother, principal) know Spanish? 9. Do you think everybody should know English? Who doesn't need to know English? 10. How important is it for you that your (teacher, mother, principal) know English? 11. Are there any times when you feel uncomfortable/don't like using Spanish/English? When? Tell me about a time when you felt uncomfortable using Spanish/English? 12. Do you know people that mix Spanish and English when they talk? Who? Why do you think they do this? 13. Do you mix Spanish and English? When? Why? Do you think Mixing Spanish and English is a good or bad thing? Why? 14. Many people say that Mexican children are losing their Spanish. Do you think this is happening? What do you think about this? How would you feel if this happened to your children? Do you think this will be a problem for you?

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Enactment of Power and Responsibility in the NATO Discourse

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My paper is a critical analysis of a joint declaration opposing an eastward expansion of the NATO block drafted by the Parliaments of Russia, Byelorussia, Latvia, and the Ukraine. The study shows that the use of the "anti-NATO" theme could be a major asset in the construction of the political identity in countries of the former USSR. Accordingly, it is demonstrated that the deputies' declaration is in fact an enactment of political power on the home front, exercised within a pragmatic frame which ensures credibility and acceptance of messages in the declaration. The principal components of this frame include a (quasi)realistic assessment, simplicity of expression, and moderate idealism.

0.   Introduction

The period from August 1997 to March 1998 has seen increased political activities following the 1997 NATO summit in Madrid, during which the governments of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were officially invited to the NATO membership negotiations. There have been innumerable discussions, statements and declarations in which politicians, political experts, media commentators and others have aired their views on the prospective benefits as well as drawbacks of the eastward expansion of the NATO military block. The majority of voices have come from either the current member states and the USA in particular, or those states whose membership was endorsed during the Madrid conference. These discussions and arguments have largely focused on the political and financial responsibilities of the prospective members, and as such have often involved implicit negotiations of obligations between the partner countries. However, a great deal of opinions on the expansion of the new NATO have been voiced simultaneously in the countries or republics of the former Soviet bloc, including Russia, Byelorussia, Latvia, and the Ukraine.

From the Russian perspective, the moment at which the decision was made in favor of the eastward expansion of NATO indicated an end to the exertion of Russian political control over the countries of Central Europe, and was generally considered the "day of Russia's shame."[1] In the media, the feeling of shame was expressed along with the feeling of political anxiety and uncertainty about the future security of the country. Statements by Russian politicians and political experts perpetuated this mood of insecurity. The critique of the Madrid