by their cultural and linguistic background, yet each has a unique immigration, language, and educational history. Second, many of the chapters in this section emphasize the need for mother tongue maintenance as a basis for ethnic identity and a means for promoting communication among family and community members. This suggests the importance of second language educators' support for the development of bilingualism, in which new immigrants achieve full proficiency in English but not at the cost of losing ethnic and family ties. These chapters also clearly demonstrate the widespread use of code switching within immigrant communities – not as a sign of linguistic inadequacy but rather as an indication of a rich linguistic repertoire. This fact may lead second language educators to reflect on their own classroom policies regarding the use of the mother tongue. Finally, these chapters illustrate the fact that many immigrants come to the U.S. classroom with expectations regarding the role of the teacher and learner as well as learning methods. To the extent that their expectations do not match what happens in U.S. classrooms, the learners may be frustrated, resulting in setbacks in language learning. Hence, it is important for second language educators to be aware of differing classroom expectations and allow for a variety of learning styles and strategies. In sum, these chapters illustrate the complexity of teaching English language learners, particularly those within the new immigrant population, in which diversity on many levels is a central factor.

3 Bilingualism and language use among Mexican Americans

Guadalupe Valdés

Mexican Americans in the United States: An overview

Terminology and group Identification

The term *Mexican American* is used to refer to persons of Mexican ancestry who reside in the United States. Segments of this population, however, refer to themselves using a variety of other terms, including *Mexican, mexicano, Chicano, Latino, Hispanic,* and *Spanish American*. Moreover, some segments of this population (e.g., some original residents of northern New Mexico) may claim to have no Mexican (i.e., mixed Indian and Spanish or *mestizo*) ancestry. In this chapter, the term *Mexican American* includes all persons who are of Mexican ancestry and all persons of Spanish origin whose ancestors settled in Mexican-owned territories before 1846.[1]

The heterogeneity of Mexican Americans

Popular stereotypes of Mexican Americans invariably obscure the fact that no one list of qualities and characteristics can be applied to the many different kinds of individuals that the term can refer to. This population includes both recent immigrants and long-term residents; light- and dark-skinned people; educated and uneducated individuals; rural and urban residents; members of single-parent units, nuclear families, and extended families; Catholics and non-Catholics; working-class and middle-class persons; and monolingual Spanish speakers, bilingual speakers of English, and monolingual Spanish and monolingual English speakers. There are Mexican Americans residing in many different U.S. states and working as skilled laborers, university professors, janitors, and engineers; and there are Mexican Americans picking chili and cotton in the fields of the Southwest and enrolled in prestigious universities such as Stanford and Harvard.

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1 I use the term *Hispanic* when giving population figures because it is used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Elsewhere, I use the term *Latino*.

The Mexican-origin presence in the United States

The presence of Mexican-origin people in the United States began at a very early point in the history of the European settlement of North America. New Spain, that is, the territory that is now the five southwestern states of New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Texas, and California, was first settled during the seventeenth century (1610) and claimed in the name of the King of Spain. In 1821, when Mexico obtained its independence from Spain, the residents of New Spain became residents and citizens of the nation of Mexico.

The Mexican presence, then, predates the settlement of the five southwestern states by European American pioneer families who settled in the Mexican territories. According to a number of scholars who have examined the early history of the Mexican-origin presence in the United States (e.g., McWilliams, 1949; Moore & Pachon, 1985), in the 1820s, when European American settlers began their move westward, Mexican settlements extended over 2,000 miles along the northern border of what is now Mexico. Moore and Pachon (p. 18) estimate that there were approximately 5,000 Mexicans in Texas, 60,000 in New Mexico, 1,000 or fewer in Arizona, and 7,500 in California. In 1848, at the close of the war between Mexico and the United States that resulted in the ceding of all Mexican territories to the United States, the rights of Mexican citizens living in these territories were guaranteed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Mexican-origin persons, then, unlike other minority groups in the United States, have come to occupy a subordinate position as a result of both the early military conquest of their territories by the United States and the relatively more recent process of immigration.

As might be expected, the presence of Mexican settlements along the border created an unusual situation in that so-called Mexican immigrants moved to an area that formerly belonged to Mexico. Because of these circumstances, Portes and Bach (1985) argue that, in studying early immigration from Mexico to the United States, some scholars confuse "actual population movements with the administrative enforcement of a political border" (p. 76). Portes and Bach point out that until the beginning of the twentieth century, labor flows simply drifted northward, and traffic across the border was commonplace. They further argue that the supposed upsurge of Mexican immigrants in 1910 simply reflects "the imposition of administrative controls on a preexisting inflow" (p. 77).

What appears to be generally clear is that both economic "push" and economic "pull" factors have played a role in the process of immigration. Mexican immigrants to the United States have been primarily what Portes and Rumbaut (1990) have termed *labor migrants* as opposed to *professional immigrants* or *entrepreneurial immigrants*. Politi-

cal instability in Mexico and low wages have combined with labor demand and higher wages in the United States to attract large numbers of workers to the United States. During certain periods, American growers, the railroad industry, and the mining industry directly recruited labor in Mexico. During other periods, Mexicans have been blamed for domestic unemployment.

Examined over the twentieth century, then, immigration from Mexico to the United States has occurred in what Vernez and Ronfeldt (1991) have called three different phases. The first phase began in the early 1900s. By the 1920s, Mexican-origin individuals made up 11% of all legal immigrants. The second phase occurred after a temporary slowdown during the Depression in the 1930s and led to the importation of large numbers of contract agricultural workers, or *braceros*. Vernez and Ronfeldt estimate that by the end of this period more than 4.5 million Mexicans had come to the United States as temporary workers, a figure that exceeded the number of permanent legal residents eightfold. The third phase, ongoing in the late 1990s, began with the passage of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, which placed the first ceiling on immigration from the Western Hemisphere. Until the 1970s, however, permanent Mexican legal immigration to the United States grew more rapidly than total legal immigration did. Vernez and Ronfeldt point out that after the 1976 amendment to the 1965 act, which established a quota of 20,000 persons – excluding immediate relatives of U.S. citizens – legal immigration from Mexico stabilized at a yearly average of 66,000. Vernez and Ronfeldt further argue that Mexican immigration has changed in character and that cyclical migration has given way to permanence. Table 1 presents figures on the Mexican-origin population in 1997.

Characteristics of the languages used by Mexican Americans: A description

Mexican American communities

Mexican Americans have settled in both rural and urban areas, among other Latino groups, among other minority groups, and even among

TABLE I. MEXICAN-ORIGIN AND HISPANIC POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1995

U.S. population	Hispanic-origin population	Mexican-origin population
259,753,000	26,646,000	17,090,000

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1995).

mainstream European Americans. Indeed, in many areas of the country, even those with large numbers of Mexican Americans, there appear to be no neighborhoods or city sections that one would identify as Mexican American exclusively or predominantly. In those areas, then, one might not be able to speak of a Mexican American community; that is, a community primarily settled by Mexican-origin people who have clustered together in much the same way that other immigrant groups have done upon arriving in the United States. In other areas of the country, however, Mexican American communities are alive and well and are growing. In some cases they are made up exclusively of Mexican-origin people, and in other cases they are made up predominantly of Mexican Americans but include other Latinos as well. These Mexican-origin communities are found both in large cities and in small towns in many parts of the United States, and although there are differences among them, they are similar enough that one can generalize about their characteristics and about the use of language among the Mexican Americans who live there. The communities described here, then, are representative of many Mexican American communities, both large and small.

Mexican American bilinguals

Mexican American bilinguals are essentially natural or circumstantial bilinguals as opposed to elite or elective bilinguals. As circumstantial bilinguals, they have acquired their second language in a natural context by having to interact with monolingual and bilingual speakers of English in the work, school, or neighborhood domain. As might be expected, there are many different types of bilinguals in Mexican American communities. Some individuals are clearly Spanish dominant, whereas others are English dominant. Some individuals are biliterate whereas others read and write in only one of their languages. Some individuals are active bilinguals who speak both languages with some ease, whereas other bilinguals are passive in one of their languages and can understand but not speak their "weak" language.

So varied indeed are the different types of English-Spanish bilinguals found in Mexican American communities that it is impossible to conjecture about language strengths or weaknesses based on generation, age, schooling, period of residence in the United States, or any other such criteria. Many first-generation Mexican immigrants acquire English very rapidly, but many do not. Many third- and fourth-generation Mexican Americans are very fluent in Spanish, but many such Mexican Americans no longer even understand their original ethnic language.

Contrary to what is generally put forward by English-only advocates, the Mexican-origin population *is* learning English. Several scholars (e.g., Veltman, 1983, 1988; see also Chapter 2) have clearly established

that present-day immigrants to the United States are acquiring English and shifting away from the use of their ethnic languages. In the case of Latinos, Solé (1990) demonstrated that ongoing language shift toward English is unequivocal. One third of the youngest Latinos, for example, have no skills in the ethnic language, and monolingualism in Spanish among Hispanics is weak, encompassing only 16.0% of Puerto Ricans, 12.0% of Mexican Americans, and 1.6% of Cuban Americans.

Similarly, in a careful comparison of the English language skills of the Spanish-speaking foreign-born population in 1980 with the English language skills of the German-speaking foreign-born in 1900, Jasso and Rosenzweig (1990) found that children of the Spanish-speaking population were no less likely to attain English language proficiency than were the children of the German-speaking population.

What emerges clearly from these data, then, is that Spanish-speaking immigrants, like other waves of immigrants before them, are acquiring English and slowly abandoning their mother tongue. What is also clear is that because of the continued influx of new immigrants and because of the spatial concentration of persons speaking the same language especially in border areas, retention of Spanish in Latino communities is often greater than retention of the ethnic language has been among other immigrant groups. The greatest number of Latinos in this country, however, are bilingual; that is, they can function to some degree in both English and Spanish. Table 2 presents data from the 1990 census on the English language ability of Mexican-origin persons. Table 3 presents data derived from Table 2 on the bilingual abilities of this population.

TABLE 2. ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH, U.S. MEXICAN-ORIGIN POPULATION, AGED 5 YEARS AND OLDER, 1990

Ability and age group	No.
Speak a language other than English	
5–17 years	9,054,572
18–64 years	2,342,725
65–74 years	6,248,832
75 years and over	299,843
	163,172
Do not speak English very well	
5–17 years	4,605,389
18–64 years	988,238
65–74 years	3,324,798
75 years and over	178,856
Total	113,497
	11,826,999

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1994, Table 115).

TABLE 3. BILINGUAL ABILITIES OF MEXICAN-ORIGIN POPULATION AGED
5 YEARS AND OVER, UNITED STATES, 1990

Ability	No.	%
Speak a language other than English	9,054,572	77
Speak a language other than English but do not speak English very well	4,605,389	39
Speak a language other than English and speak English very well	4,449,183	38
Speak only English	2,772,427	23
Are English monolingual or speak English very well	7,221,610	61
Total	11,826,999	

Note: Persons who reported speaking a language other than English in
Question 15 of the 1990 census were asked to indicate their ability to speak
English based on the categories *very well, not well,* and *not at all.* The
categories *not at all* and *not well* are combined in this table.
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (1994, Table 115).

Language use in Mexican American communities

Given the presence of English and Spanish monolinguals as well as
bilinguals in Mexican American communities, if one were to walk down
the street of a typical community and listen closely as people talked to
one another, one could come away with several different impressions
about language and its use among Mexican Americans. If, for example,
one overheard talk among young people as they walked home after
school, one might be convinced that English was the primary language
of the community. On the other hand, if one eavesdropped on two old-
er women, their use of Spanish might persuade one that Spanish clearly
predominated. A different impression might be obtained if one over-
heard the conversation of second- or third-generation Mexican Ameri-
cans in their mid-twenties and found that they seemed to use both En-
glish and Spanish together, somehow alternating between the two
languages every few words. In that case, one might reach one of two
conclusions: that members of the community speak *both* English and
Spanish, or that members of the community speak *neither* English nor
Spanish (in other words, a hybrid language.)

In fact, the first three of those impressions would be accurate. For
some residents of the community, English would clearly be the domi-
nant and primary language. For other residents of the community,
Spanish would still be the primary means of communication. And for
still others, both English and Spanish would be perceived as necessary
for everyday interaction in the community.

What would soon be apparent to a more trained observer is that, like

many other immigrant communities, Mexican American communities
are *diglossic.* What this means is that English and Spanish have taken
on specialized functions and are associated with certain domains of ac-
tivity or subject matter. English is the "high" language of prestige; it is
the language identified with success and with power. Not only is it the
language of the wider surrounding community, but it is also the lan-
guage of many important domains; banking, the political process, and
all the official institutions that affect the lives of the members of the
community. Spanish, on the other hand, is the "low" language of inti-
macy, the language in which casual, unofficial interactions of the home
and the in-group are conducted. In some communities, it is also the lan-
guage of the church and of the surrounding neighborhood stores. In
others, English has established itself firmly in every domain outside the
home.

The effects of this diglossic relationship can be seen clearly in the
ways in which individuals acquire and develop proficiency in each of
their two languages. As in monolingual communities, different speakers
use different *registers* (language varieties associated with particular con-
texts) in different situations. According to Biber (1994), registers in-
clude very high level varieties of language such as those used in univer-
sity lectures, the writing of academic articles, and the presentation of
evidence before a panel of judges. They also include midlevel varieties
such as those used in newspaper reports, popular novels, and interviews
as well as low-level registers used in intimate and casual conversation.
What is different in bilingual communities, however, is that the high
registers of English are used to carry out all formal or high exchanges,
whereas Spanish, along with the informal registers of English, is used as
the low variety, appropriate primarily for casual or informal interac-
tions.

In addition to being characterized by diglossia and bilingualism,
bilingual communities also reflect the social class origins of their resi-
dents. In the case of Mexican-origin immigrants, evidence suggests that
a large majority of persons who emigrate to the United States do not
come from the groups that have obtained high levels of education.[2]

2 Generalizing about the class origins of both early and recent Mexican immigrants gives
rise to problems. According to Portes, (1978), McLeod, and Parker Portes and Bach
(1985), Jasso and Rosenzweig (1990), and Bean and Tienda (1987), Mexican-origin
immigrants are poor and have low levels of educational attainment. However, Durand
and Massey (1992) have argued that generalizations about Mexican migration to the
United States are inconsistent and contradictory. They maintain that case studies (e.g.,
Cornelius, 1976a, 1976b, 1978; Mines, 1981, 1984; Dinerman, 1982; Mines &
Massey, 1985; Massey, Alarcon, Durand, & Gonzdlez, 1987; Reichert & Massey,
1979, 1980) of Mexican *sending* communities (communities from which large num-
bers of Mexican nationals have emigrated) have yielded very different views about a
number of questions. Among other topics, these studies present contradictory evidence

What is clear is that Mexican immigrants are generally ordinary Mexicans, that is, members of the nonelite strata. The term *ordinary* (following Selby, Murphy, & Lorenzen, 1990, p. 207) excludes the middle and upper sectors, which represent only 10% of the Mexican population, and avoids the use of *working class* or *middle class* and the connotations these terms have for American and European readers.

Some researchers (e.g., Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, in press) conjecture that the linguistic repertoires of most ordinary Mexicans who emigrate to the United States are generally made up of the middle to low registers of Spanish. This is important in understanding the Spanish spoken by young Mexican Americans, for it is these registers that serve as models of language as they acquire Spanish in their families and communities.

A further complication in the study of the Spanish spoken in bilingual communities by first-, second-, third-, and fourth-generation Mexicans and Mexican Americans is the fact that over time this minority language – isolated as it is from the broad variety of contexts and situations in which it is used in Mexico – is at risk of undergoing a number of significant changes that do not occur in the same way in nonminority communities. Some researchers (e.g., de Bot & Weltens, 1991; Maher, 1991; Olshtain & Barzilay, 1991; Seliger & Vago, 1991) maintain that the language of immigrants undergoes attrition and structural loss. This attrition, then, results in the transferring by immigrants of their mother tongue in a "mutilated" form (de Bot & Weltens, p. 42) to the next generation of speakers. Even though many researchers would argue with de Bot and Wellen's use of the term *mutilated*, work carried out on tense-mood-aspect simplification by Silva-Corvalán (1994) among Mexican Americans in Los Angeles generally supports the position that patterns of simplification and loss among different generations of bilingual speakers of Spanish do not necessarily reflect the direct influence of English.

In sum, the Spanish that is spoken in bilingual communities in the United States and that is acquired by young bilinguals reflects the class origins of its first-generation speakers. Because in Mexico these speakers did not have access to the range of situations and contexts in which formal high varieties of Spanish are used, their language is characterized by a somewhat narrower range of lexical and syntactic alternatives than is the language of upper-middle-class speakers. More important, perhaps, because in these communities the use of Spanish is restricted to largely low-level functions and private-sphere interactions, over time –

about the class composition of U.S. migration. Durand and Massey (1992) argue that a few community factors, including the age of the migration stream; the geographic, political, and economic position of the community within Mexico; and the distribution and quality of agricultural land affect the class composition of migration. In short, the authors stress the difficulties surrounding attempts at generalization.
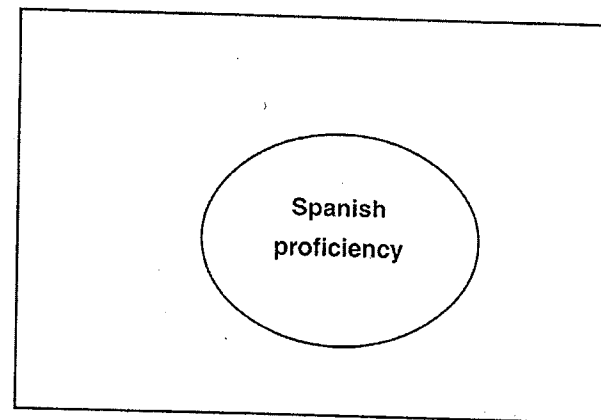
Figure 1   Native speaker of Spanish who acquired Spanish in a monolingual context.

as Huffines (1991) points out – "the immigrant language falls into disuse" (p. 125). As a result, many young people in bilingual communities may not acquire a full mastery of the registers and styles characteristic of even ordinary Mexican monolinguals.

The Spanish language competencies of monolingual and bilingual speakers of Spanish[3]

In addition to the general inventory of registers and levels of language, there are other differences between persons who have acquired their first language in a monolingual context and persons who have acquired it in a community where two languages are spoken. I illustrate this graphically by comparing representations of the Spanish language competencies of these two types of speakers. Figure 1 illustrates the Spanish language proficiency of a native speaker who acquired her first language in a largely monolingual context. Figure 2, on the other hand, illustrates the Spanish proficiency of several native speakers of Spanish who acquired their first language in a bilingual environment. The proficiency of the speakers depicted in Figure 2, who acquire and use Spanish in a bilingual context (e.g., Catalonia, the United States, Puerto Rico, Paraguay) is not identical to that of native speakers who have acquired and used their Spanish in settings in which only Spanish is used for all interactions. Speakers who acquire their Spanish in bilingual contexts possess what I represent here as a *smaller* Spanish language proficiency.

3 This section summarizes a perspective initially presented in Valdés (1995).
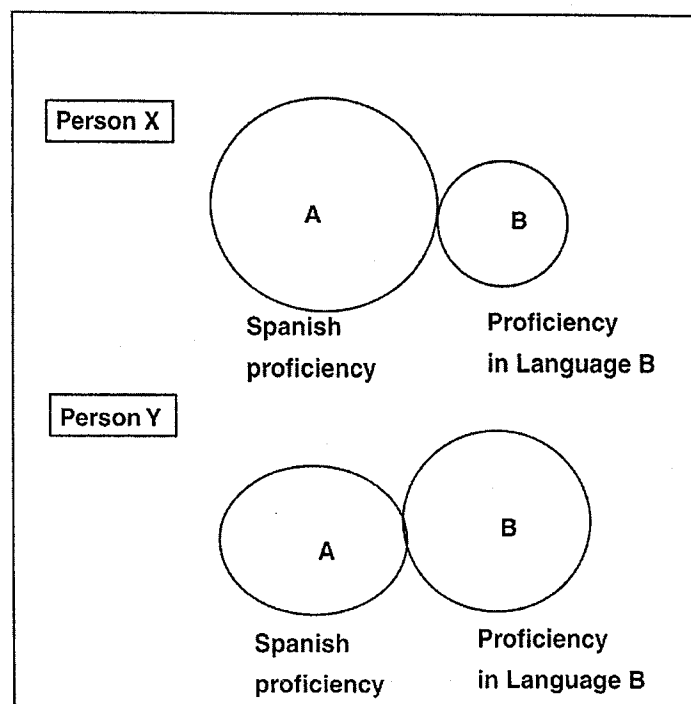
Figure 2   Native speakers of Spanish who acquired Spanish language competence in a bilingual context.

Indeed, several researchers (e.g., Lavandera, 1978) have argued that for bilingual speakers (individuals who acquire and use two languages in their everyday lives) their two linguistic codes together form a unitary whole. The totality of their proficiency and linguistic abilities can be described only by examining the sum of their proficiencies and abilities in the two languages.

Of note also in Figure 2 is that the representations of the proficiencies of different bilingual speakers are different. Person X is represented here as Spanish dominant. This person's ability in Language B is not as great as his or her proficiency in Spanish. Person Y, on the other hand, is dominant in Language B. This person's Spanish, although acquired first, is not his or her strongest language.

According to Bachman (1990), language competence includes a number of different, interacting components, such as grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence. Such competence not only includes the control of vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and phonology but also includes the ability to manipulate interactions; express ideas; and create and imagine when using the language while being sensitive to differences in social and geographical varieties of the language, register differences, naturalness, and cultural references.

Speakers who have acquired their native language in a monolingual context certainly vary in their control and abilities in a number of these areas. Some individuals, for example, claim to be notoriously deaf to differences in style. Nevertheless, all native speakers of a language who have acquired their first language in a monolingual context have developed the competencies necessary in that single language to carry out all of their communicative needs.

The situation is quite different for speakers who acquire their first language in a community in which two language are used. In such cases, speakers may develop very different strengths in each of their languages depending on their opportunities to use each in their everyday lives. It is not unusual to find bilingual individuals with very limited textual competence in one of their two languages because they have not been exposed to reading and writing in that language. Indeed, the language competence of bilingual speakers can be conceptualized as being spread over two languages. Such a conceptualization makes clear that speakers develop different strengths in different components of their language competence. Thus a bilingual individual may have a limited vocabulary in the first language and at the same time have greater sociolinguistic competence in this same language. Bilingual speakers may find themselves groping for terms to discuss school or professional topics in Spanish, for example, while being capable of interpreting every single cultural reference made by fluent monolingual speakers whom they overhear engaged in a heated discussion.

The situation is actually much more complicated. The fact is that even within a single component of competence (grammatical, textual, illocutionary, or sociolinguistic), most bilingual speakers display a great deal of variation in their strengths and limitations. What is important to emphasize is that Mexican American bilingual speakers are not simply imperfect speakers of Spanish who have fallen short of the monolingual norm. They are, rather, complex individuals who are fundamentally different from monolinguals. As opposed to monolingual speakers of Spanish who grow up in societies where Spanish is the sole or primarily societal language, bilingual Mexican Americans are members of communities in which a single language (either English or Spanish) does not suffice to meet all of their communicative needs.

The specific competencies of these speakers are especially difficult to assess and measure because these competencies cannot be easily compared with those of either monolingual English or monolingual Spanish

speakers. Indeed, the competence of bilinguals who function on an everyday basis in two languages can perhaps be best understood through the use of the construct of *bilingual range*.

BILINGUAL RANGE DEFINED

In my attempt to describe functioning bilinguals, I define *bilingual range* as the continuum of linguistic abilities and communicative strategies that an individual may access in one or the other of two languages at a specific moment, for a particular purpose, in a particular setting, with particular interlocutors. From this perspective, at a given moment of interaction, a bilingual is considered to have a particular range in Language A, a particular range in Language B, and a particular range when the languages are used together.

When arguing with a sibling about money, for example, one bilingual's total range might be characterized as follows:

Language A	Language B

This would indicate that the bilingual's momentarily preferred language would be Language B rather than Language A. At a different moment, for other purposes, with other interlocutors, and in a different setting, this same bilingual's range might be characterized as exhibiting greater strengths in Language A than in Language B:

Language A	Language B

Bilingual range encompasses different kinds of competencies in two languages, including, of course, what Bachman (1990) has termed grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence. A bilingual's shifting communicative abilities in different types of interactions and in different settings with both monolingual and bilingual interlocutors are seen to result from the (often momentary) varying availability of these various competencies to the individual.

Currently, much remains to be learned about bilingual range and about why and how communicative abilities and other language competencies in bilinguals appear to shift in unpredictable ways. Even less is known about how to strengthen these abilities and competencies.

The Spanish spoken in Mexican American communities

The Spanish spoken by Mexican Americans in the United States can be classified as a *microvariety* or *microdialect* of Mexican Spanish. This means that Mexican American Spanish is most like the Spanish spoken in Mexico, as opposed to, say, the Spanish spoken in Argentina, in Bo-

livia, in Guatemala, or in Puerto Rico. It is also a variety of the Spanish spoken in the Americas rather than a variety of the Spanish spoken in Spain. However, just as the English spoken in Texas or Boston is mutually comprehensible with the English spoken in Georgia, Nova Scotia, South Africa, New Zealand, and London, Mexican American Spanish is mutually comprehensible with every other variety of Spanish spoken in both the Americas and the Spanish peninsula.

Since the mid-1970s, linguists and especially sociolinguists have paid a great deal of attention to the study and description of Mexican American Spanish. Early studies (e.g., Elias-Olivares, 1976; Hernández-Chavez, 1975; Peñalosa, 1980; Sanchez, 1982, 1983) focused on describing the characteristics of the Spanish-English bilingual communities and the ways in which Mexican American or Chicano Spanish was different from the Spanish spoken in the rest of the Spanish-speaking world. More recent studies (e.g., Chaston, 1991; Garcia, 1995; Gutierrez, 1996; Gutierrez & Silva-Corvalán, 1993; Jaramillo, 1990; Klee, 1987; Lope-Blanch, 1990; Lozano, 1994; Ocampo, 1990; Silva-Corvalán, 1991, 1994) offer a more sophisticated and refined view of language use patterns as well as of changes that are the result of language contact. These studies have confirmed that, whereas Mexican American Spanish is indeed very similar to Mexican Spanish, it is also different in several key ways. As pointed out, one of the most important differences has to do with the number of social varieties heard in Mexico in contrast to the number heard in Mexican American communities in the United States. Another important difference has to do with the features of Mexican American Spanish that are a result of its contact with English.

I emphasize, however, that when one excludes features that are the product of the influence of English, the similarities between Mexican and Mexican American Spanish are greater than the differences between the two varieties. This perspective is an important one because in writing their descriptions of *Chicano* or Mexican American Spanish, some scholars have not pointed out that the examples they cite (those that reflect no English influence) reflect phenomena also found in the rest of the Hispanic world. This omission has led to many misinterpretations of the nature of Mexican American Spanish. Thus, although reviewing lists of *Chicano* features, such as those found in Peñalosa (1980, p. 99), may be useful, it is important to recall that each of the morphological features and characteristics generally mentioned on the lists is also typical of, at the very least, rural or informal Mexican Spanish.

In each of the cases in Table 4, for example, the items identified as Mexican American are also typical of rural or working-class speakers in many areas of the Spanish-speaking world. The use of archaisms such as

TABLE 4. EXAMPLES OF ITEMS LISTED IN DESCRIPTIONS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN SPANISH

Item labeled Mexican American	"Standard" Spanish equivalent
vivemos	vivimos
hablates	hablaste
puedemos	podemos
truje	traje
asina	asi
caiba	caía
escrebir	escribir
jeu	fue
pos	pues
haiga	haya

truje, asina, caiba, and *haiga,* for example, has been documented by many Spanish dialectologists (for example, Zamora Vicente, 1970). Variations in verb morphology (*puedemos, vivemos, estábanos, hablates*) are also well documented (Escobar, 1978; Oroz, 1966) as typical of rural speech in many countries.

English influence on Mexican American Spanish may take several forms, some obvious, some subtle. Briefly, contact with English modifies Spanish in three ways: semantic extension, borrowing, and code switching. I emphasize, however, that to say that Mexican American Spanish is influenced by English does not imply that the language in question has ceased to be Spanish.

SEMANTIC EXTENSION

The first type of English influence on Spanish, which I call semantic extension, is rather subtle. Since all the words are in Spanish, there seems at first glance to have been no influence from another language.

1. *Voy a llevar a la niñera a su casa.* (I'm going to take the baby-sitter home.)
2. *A los perros callejeros se los llevan a la perrera.* (Stray dogs are taken to the dog pound.)

However, upon closer examination, it is clear that the Spanish words for *baby-sitter* and *dog pound* have undergone a semantic transformation. Their original meanings were limited to what is normally found in monolingual Spanish-speaking countries. Thus, *niñera* really refers to a

servant who lives (or works full-time) in a household and takes care of children, not to a young person of middle-class background who "sits" with children and charges by the hour. *Perrera* refers to a doghouse or even to a female person who takes care of dogs, but not to a dog pound. Few Hispanic countries have such an institution.

BORROWING

A more readily detected form of English influence on Mexican American Spanish is borrowing, which is typical of what happens when speakers of a language come into contact with concepts that are new to them and for which they have no available vocabulary. In the following examples of Mexican American Spanish, new words appear to have been created using English base forms and Spanish inflections: Nouns are given gender, and verbs are conjugated using the complex Spanish morphological system. English borrowings are known as *anglicismos* in the Spanish-speaking world.

3. *Ay te wacho.* [from *watch*] (I'll be seeing you.)
4. *Tengo que taipear esto para la clase.* (I'll have to type this for the class.)
5. *Se está liqueando el rufo.* (The roof is leaking.)

Borrowing is a common result of language contact. For centuries languages have borrowed from one another and have integrated borrowings into their lexical inventory, treating them as if they were native items. For example, English uses terms such as *menu, restaurant,* and *patio* whereas Spanish uses *acequia, film, almohada,* and *canoa.* These examples are all taken from other languages, integrated into the language, and used as if they were originally English or Spanish; in the case of Spanish, the borrowed words listed are accepted by the Real Academia Española. No one suggests that these borrowings distort or seriously threaten either English or Spanish.

CODE SWITCHING

The third way in which English influence on Mexican American Spanish is manifested is code switching, which can be defined as the alternating use of two languages at the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level. In the following examples, stretches of unmodified Spanish alternate with stretches of unmodified English:

6. *Dijo mi mamá que I have to study.* (My mother said that I have to study.)
7. *Tengo la waist twenty-nine, tengo que reduce.* (I have a twenty-nine [-inch] waist, I have to reduce.)

Code switching is different from borrowing in that the elements from the other language are used in their original form. No attempt is made to adapt them or to integrate them into the system being used. In other words, each switch into Spanish or English consists of unchanged Spanish or English words pronounced by the speakers as a native speaker of that language would pronounce them. There is ordinarily a clean break between the two phonemic systems. Code switching has been studied extensively by many scholars and found to occur commonly between bilingual speakers in many different pairs of languages and in many different parts of the world. Several books on this phenomenon as well as collections of studies have examined this process (e.g., Auer, 1984; Heller, 1988; Jacobson, 1990; Milroy & Muysken, 1995; Myers-Scotton, 1993b).

Both early and more recent work on code switching by English-Spanish bilinguals (Fantini, 1985; Huerta-Macias, 1981; Johnson, 1996; Lavandera, 1981; McClure, 1981; Poplack, 1980, 1981; Valdés, 1976, 1981, 1982; Valdés-Fallis, 1978; Zentella, 1981, 1982, 1997) has made clear that in many ways English and Spanish *together* make up the linguistic repertoire of these speakers. Bilinguals, for example, often switch between languages at the word, phrase, clause, and sentence levels to express a series of different types of meanings. A switch into Spanish, for example, by a Mexican American bilingual who is speaking English to another bilingual of the same background, may signal greater solidarity or a reference to values associated with the ethnic language. A switch might also serve, however, as a simple metaphorical device by means of which a speaker gives emphasis to a particular segment of the utterance (Huerta-Macias, 1981; Valdés-Fallis, 1978; Zentella, 1982). What is important is that the use of two languages by Mexican American bilinguals in many informal interactions results in the fact that most members of the community develop the ability to comprehend spoken Spanish.

The following examples show the contrast between borrowing (8), in which the English element is incorporated into the Spanish system, and code switching (9), in which the English element is used in its original form:

8. *Estábamos jenguiando allí en la esquina.* (We were hanging out there at the corner.)
9. *No tengo tiempo ni para estar hanging out con los amigos.* (I don't even have time to be hanging out with friends.)

Unfortunately, to monolingual speakers of either English or Spanish, code switching suggests that its speakers speak neither language. Nothing, in fact, is further from the truth. As is the case with borrowing, misunderstandings about how language works in bilingual communities

have led to unfair judgments about the language strengths of speakers who use their two languages in this manner. Research on bilinguals and bilingual communities has demonstrated, however, that rather than reflecting weakness, complex code switching requires that speakers be very proficient in the two languages used.

The future of Spanish and English in Mexican American communities

Controversies surrounding issues of language maintenance among U.S. Latinos

According to Fishman (1964), immigrant bilingualism in the United States follows a specific pattern that is common to all immigrant groups and that leads to monolingualism by the fourth generation. This pattern can be illustrated as follows:

1. *Initial stage.* Immigrants learn English through their mother tongue. English is used only in those domains (such as work) in which the mother tongue cannot be used.
2. *Second stage.* Immigrants learn more English and can speak to each other in this language or in the immigrant language, although they still depend on the mother tongue.
3. *Third stage.* Speakers function in both languages. English appears to be dominant in more and more domains.
4. *Fourth stage.* English has displaced the mother tongue in all except for the most intimate or private domains. This stage is the exact reverse of the initial stage.

In the case of Mexican Americans, this pattern of transitional bilingualism leading to language shift is often masked by the continuing arrival of new, monolingual Spanish-speaking immigrants into bilingual communities. As I point out in the following paragraphs, however, in spite of the influx of monolinguals into Mexican American communities, the shift toward English among Mexican Americans is unequivocal.

Unfortunately, in the 1990s confusion about the English language proficiency of U.S. Latino populations has been engendered because of the activities of several groups and organizations. Two of these groups, U.S. English and English First, have aggressively promoted the passage of legislation that would establish English as the official language of the United States and prohibit the use of non-English languages in a variety of public and official contexts.

According to the misinformation campaign carried out by U.S. English and English First, Latinos in the United States, as a group, are re-

TABLE 5. OVERALL LANGUAGE ABILITY OF U.S. LATINOS, BY NATIONAL ORIGIN

| | National origin | | | | | |
| | Mexican | | Puerto Rican | | Cuban | |
Overall language ability	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Only Spanish	6	0.6	43	7.3	17	5.3
Better in Spanish	98	11.1	198	33.7	118	37.7
No difference	225	25.9	146	24.9	88	28.2
Better in English	482	54.9	183	31.2	83	26.6
Only English	65	7.4	16	2.8	7	2.2
Total	887	100.0	587	100.0	312	100.0

Source: De la Garza et al. (1992, Table 4.8).

TABLE 6. HOME LANGUAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY NATIONAL ORIGIN

| | National origin | | | | | |
| | Mexican | | Puerto Rican | | Cuban | |
Overall language ability	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Only Spanish	46	5.2	124	21.1	117	37.7
More Spanish than English	84	9.6	136	23.2	73	23.3
Both languages	234	26.7	175	29.9	78	25.0
More English than Spanish	275	31.3	90	15.3	27	8.6
Only English	238	27.1	61	10.5	17	5.5
Total	878	100.0	586	100.0	312	100.0

Source: De la Garza et al. (1992, Table 4.9).

fusing to learn English. Members and supporters of these two organizations claim that Latinos, unlike immigrants in the past, are rejecting the English language and are insisting instead that they deserve special language services, such as bilingual education and bilingual ballots. Concerned about the status of English in this country, English First and U.S. English have mobilized resources to bring about the passage of an English language amendment in each of the fifty states. They have been moderately successful, managing to convince a number of Americans that Congress must pass language legislation that transmits a clear message to the Spanish-speaking population about the importance of English for its citizens.[4]

Reality is quite different. A survey of Latinos carried out by de la Garza, DeSipio, Garcia, Garcia, and Falcon (1992),[5] for example, revealed that the majority of 1,546 Mexican, 589 Puerto Rican, and 682 Cuban respondents polled prefer to be called *American*. Moreover, no more than 10% of respondents from any of the three groups considered themselves monolingual in Spanish or English. This finding is especially noteworthy given that 13% of the Mexican respondents, 66% of the Puerto Rican respondents, and 71% of the Cuban respondents were foreign born.

Tables 5 and 6 summarize data on language ability and home lan-

4 For a thorough discussion of these issues, the reader is referred to Crawford (1992a, 1992b).
5 The Latino National Political Survey was designed to collect basic data describing Latino political values, attitudes, and behavior. Supported by the Ford, Spencer, Rockefeller, and Tinker foundations, the survey was conducted between 1989 and 1990 in forty standard metropolitan statistical areas and involved a sample representative of 91% of the Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban populations of the United States.

guage use as presented by de la Garza et al. As the tables show, 772 Mexican American respondents considered themselves to have the same ability in English as in Spanish or to be better in English. At home, 747 of 878 respondents claimed to speak both languages, more English than Spanish, or only English. A small minority, 130 respondents, claimed to speak only Spanish or more Spanish than English at home. These data confirm the information obtained in the 1990 census and presented in Table 2: that 7.2 million of 11.8 million Mexican Americans over 5 years old reported being either monolingual (nearly 2.8 million) or able to speak English very well (over 4.4 million).

Other work on language maintenance and language shift carried out in Mexican American communities (e.g., Bills, 1989; Bills, Hernandez-Chavez, & Hudson, 1995; Hart-Gonzalez & Feingold 1990) coupled with sociolinguistic work carried out among first-, second-, and third-generation speakers of Spanish (e.g., Gutierrez, 1996; Lope Blanch, 1990; Silva-Corvalán, 1994) also provides strong support for the position that Mexican American communities are shifting to English. Hart-Gonzalez and Feingold, for example, in examining the November 1979 Current Population Survey, conclude that there is "a clear overall tendency toward home language shift" (p. 28). Bills, examining the use of Spanish in the Southwest based on the 1980 census, concludes that

there is no evidence in the present study that the Spanish language is being strongly maintained in the United States Southwest. On the contrary, it appears that the Spanish-origin population in the last half of the 20th century is behaving like a "normal" segment of United States society; it seems to be giving up the ethnic language and shifting to English as it becomes exposed to the mainstream of American life. The principal exceptions to this language shift appear to be where there is either isolation from the mainstream or a considerable influx of Spanish speakers from Mexico. (pp. 26–27)

More recently, Bills et al. (1995) examined whether indeed Spanish is maintained better along the U.S.-Mexican border. They concluded that distance from the border contributes to the process of language maintenance and shift in an important, though secondary, way. Locations closer to the border favor maintenance, whereas distance from the border favors shift. However, the authors conclude that

The Spanish origin persons in the SW most likely to speak Spanish in the home are those born in Mexico and, consequently, among the young, it is their children who are most likely to be SHL [Spanish home language] claimants. Though cities closer to the border tend to have greater Mexican nativity among the Spanish origin population, the retention variable seems to be susceptible to the individual immigrant as a language transmitter and not the community support that Dist [distance] seems to reflect. (p. 26)

Even in cities close to the border, the highest predictor of language shift is education. Only when education is partialed out does distance from the border emerge as a nontrivial, second-order predictor of language loyalty.

Other work carried out in Mexican American communities on the Spanish language itself also supports the position that Spanish is the nondominant language of most third-generation speakers. Research carried out, for example, by Silva-Corvalán (1994) led to the conclusion that, although Spanish is being maintained at the societal level because of the influx of new immigrants, at the individual and family level there is a clear shift to English. In Los Angeles, where Silva-Corvalán carried out her work, speakers of Spanish could be located at very different ends of a continuum of proficiency ranging from fully fluent speakers of Mexican Spanish to users of emblematic Spanish. Silva-Corvalán found clear differences between Group 1 (Los Angeles speakers who were born in Mexico and immigrated to the United States after the age of 11), Group 2 (Los Angeles speakers who were born in the United States or came to the United States before the age of 6) and Groups 2 (Los Angeles speakers born in the United States who had one parent fitting the definition of Group 2). Members of Groups 1 and 2 could converse in Spanish with ease. Speakers in Group 3, however, spoke Spanish with difficulty. More important, however, in the Spanish of Group 3 Silva-Corvalán found clear evidence of simplification of grammatical categories, overgeneralization of forms, and direct and indirect transfer from English. Other, similar work (e.g, Gutierrez, 1996, Lope Blanch, 1990), moreover, supports the position that the Spanish spoken in Mexican American communities is characterized by lexical limitations and morphological insecurities.

For many speakers of Spanish who are concerned about the future of Spanish in the United States, such linguistic changes might be seen as ev-

idence of language shift in progress and impending loss. According to Woolard (1992), commentators have used disease metaphors for the loss of minority languages over time, and many have equated so-called language corruption with eventual demise. What is not clear, as Woolard further argues, is whether linguistic conservatism is a predictor of language maintenance or whether the survival of a language in a minority-majority context requires the acceptance of "interference" phenomena by its speakers. Silva-Corvalán (1994) herself argues that strategies such as simplification, overgeneralization, and regularization "facilitate the maintenance of the less used language, they converge towards rendering communication more efficient" (p. 207). Be that as it may, work on linguistic change undergone by Spanish in Mexican American communities makes it clear that English is very much present there. Indeed, one could argue that for many Mexican Americans, English appears to be dominant in more and more domains. For others, English has displaced the mother tongue in all except for the most intimate or private domains.

In sum, the language situation in Mexican American communities is more or less encouraging depending on one's views about language. Those who worry about Mexican Americans' being left out of the American dream will find it comforting to discover that Mexican Americans *are* learning English and that it is rapidly displacing Spanish. On the other hand, supporters of Spanish language maintenance can also take comfort in the fact that Spanish is still alive although – in the eyes of many – it is not well. Its young speakers, in particular, speak a Spanish that many teachers of Spanish consider unacceptable and incorrect. Like teachers of English, such teachers of Spanish find it difficult to accept the contact variety of Spanish that students bring with them to the classroom. Elaborate debates have taken place concerning how best to "undo the damage that has been done at home." The teaching of the standard language still preoccupies most individuals concerned with designing programs for native speakers.[6] It is unclear whether direct instruction in Spanish can reverse the process of linguistic change, nor is it clear, as Woolard (1992) has argued, that conservatism will lead to language maintenance.

What is encouraging for those who consider immigrant languages to be valuable resources is the fact that Spanish-speaking monolinguals are still present in Mexican American communities. According to data from the 1990 U.S. census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994, Table 115), for example, there are 813,291 *linguistically isolated* households in the United States – those in which no person age 14 years or over speaks only English and no person age 14 or over who speaks a language other

6 For a discussion of the teaching of Spanish to Latino bilinguals, see Valdés (1995).

than English speaks English very well. Of the 11,567,198 persons in all households in the United States, 2,743,198 live in linguistically isolated households. These persons, then, have personal relationships with individuals with whom they must communicate primarily in Spanish. This is encouraging, because as Woolard (1992) points out,

It is when not just functions, but *personal relationships* order the bilingual repertoire and mandate the use of a particular language that we find evidence of more resistance to language shift. . . . (p. 360)

English in Mexican American communities

In comparison to the research carried out on Spanish as it is used in Mexican American communities, very little work has been undertaken on English as it is spoken among Mexican Americans. Indeed, very little research has been carried out even on the varieties of English spoken among monolingual European Americans in those areas of the country in which there are large numbers of Mexican Americans. Nevertheless, one can safely say that the English spoken in Mexican American communities is a microvariety of American English as opposed to, for example, British English or Australian English. It is more difficult, however, to generalize about the specific regional varieties of American English spoken in these communities and even more difficult to determine to what extent the English spoken by Mexican Americans is truly influenced by Spanish. Put another way, the question is, if one were to walk down the street of a Mexican community in Houston, Texas, for example, would one hear the same Houston, Texas, accent that one hears among European Americans, or would one hear a more general American speech? Would the Houston, Texas, accent be influenced by Spanish? Would the more general American speech also show traces of this influence? To what degree would there be differences among speakers? Would some speak accented English and others not? What would be the difference between individuals who are merely acquiring English and those that are monolingual speakers of the language?

Unfortunately, there are few answers to these questions. The handful of studies that have focused on Mexican American or Chicano English have primarily investigated the speech of young children rather than that of adult Mexican Americans. It is thus difficult to reach conclusions about adult language. In essence, what most existing studies have provided are lists of Spanish-influenced features found in the speech of young Mexican Americans. Metcalf (1979) describes a number of these studies and includes several listings of usually identified "errors" in the areas of pronunciation, intonation, syntax, and vocabulary. Indeed, there appears to be a fascination with what Fishman (1968) has called

laundry lists, long presentations of instances where Spanish has "rubbed off" on English.

To some degree, these lists of so-called errors can be useful. For example, some linguists have used them to demonstrate that certain features found in the speech of Mexican Americans are, in fact, not products of Spanish interference or transfer but a direct reflection of the nonstandard local variety of English in use in the surrounding community. These lists are not useful, however, if all or most Mexican Americans are assumed to exhibit these features in their speech. The fact is that the English spoken by some Mexican Americans is indeed a learner's variety and is characterized by many instances of direct transfer from Spanish. The English spoken by other Mexican Americans, however, may be very different indeed. It may show no traces of Spanish influence, a few traces when the speaker is under stress, or even consistent traces at all times.

Not all Mexican Americans can be said to speak English with a Spanish accent, with Spanish intonation, or with elements of Spanish syntax. Indeed, as Gingras (1972) found, Mexican Americans can be classified as belonging to one of four groups: (1) those whose English is indistinguishable from that of monolingual European Americans in the community; (2) those whose speech has slight divergences from the local European American variety, which are probably not detectable by the average person on first contact; (3) those whose speech has moderate divergences from the local variety, all of which are readily apparent to most people; and (4) those whose speech shows clear transfer from the Spanish system and who seem to be in the process of acquiring English. Moreover, members of the first three groups may be monolingual speakers of English, that is, persons whose first language was English and who have never spoken Spanish.

Clearly, the kind of English spoken by different individuals within the same Mexican American community is directly related to the types and kinds of English they are in contact with. If they have contact with the local European variety and American opportunities to interact with a peer group of such speakers, Mexican American children will quickly acquire this variety. If, on the other hand, there is little contact between groups and there are no opportunities to interact with monolingual European American speakers, the result may be quite different. Only other Mexican Americans, who may themselves speak Spanish-influenced varieties of English, will serve as models for those individuals who are acquiring English. It is no wonder, then, that even individuals whose only language is English will speak a variety of this language that seems to suggest they are transferring features from Spanish. No such transfer is occurring, of course, but the impression left with a monolingual European American who hears it is that somehow there is something foreign about Mexican American English.

The fact that large numbers of monolingual English-speaking Mexican Americans live in many communities has led some scholars (e.g., Metcalf, 1979) to suggest that there is a legitimate variety of English that can be called *Chicano English*. For Metcalf, Chicano English is a variety of English identical to the local European American variety, except that it has added a "Spanish accent." He states that it is spoken not by learners of the language but by "people whose native language is a special variety of English with a Spanish sound to it" (p. 1).

Other scholars disagree with this classification entirely. Some would argue that Mexican Americans do not have enough contact with European Americans and therefore do not acquire the local variety of English. Thus, they would maintain that, if anything, Chicano English is a type of general American or Northern Standard English with a Spanish flavor. Other scholars (e.g., Sawyer, 1975) reject the entire concept of the existence of a Mexican American variety of English. They argue that the English spoken by Mexican American bilinguals is an imperfect state in the mastery of English and that it will become more expert from generation to generation.

Until there is more research on the English spoken in Mexican American communities, it will be difficult to defend any of the above positions exclusively. Many unanswered questions remain. For example, to describe Mexican American English or even to decide if it exists requires an understanding how English was acquired by speakers whose English appears to be indistinguishable from that of monolingual Anglos. Did they interact with European Americans? How soon? How frequently? Did this contact continue over a lifetime? Did Mexican American learners make a conscious effort to sound like their European American models? What were the results? Is the English variety spoken by these Mexican Americans truly indistinguishable from European American English in all contexts? Are there limitations? What are these, and where do they appear?

The same types of questions must then be asked about the other three groups of speakers: those whose divergences from European American English are not generally noticeable to lay people, those whose divergences are clearly noticeable, and those whose English is obviously colored by transfers from Spanish. For example, what are the differences between the first two groups? What is the role of English language models in the acquisition process in each case? Are the slight divergences similar in persons of the same social class, educational background, etc.? What other factors appear to influence the acquisition or use of a Spanish-sounding variety?

Clearly, the questions are many and complex. It will take many years before the answers are forthcoming. In the meantime, however, the information available suggests strongly (1) that Mexican Americans from

the same community speak different kinds of English, (2) that many Mexican Americans are native speakers of English and are not bilingual, (3) that Mexican Americans can be classified according to the degree to which their English speech diverges from the local European American norm, and (4) that the presence of Spanish language elements in a speaker's English does not indicate that the individual is in the process of learning English.

The question of broken English

As pointed out, for those concerned about the so-called refusal of Mexican-origin people to learn English, the data presented here may be encouraging. The majority of Mexican Americans are bilingual in English and Spanish, and most claim to speak English very well. What the data do not say, however, is that mainstream individuals perceive Mexican Americans as speaking good or adequate English. As recent work on discrimination against bilinguals (Lippi-Green, 1994, 1997; Piatt, 1992; Valdés, 1997) makes clear, the English of non-English-background individuals is always suspect. In schools, as Valdés (1992) points out mainstream teachers often send fluent, functional bilinguals back to the English as a second language (ESL) track if their speech or writing is characterized to any degree by nonnative features. In the workplace, as Lippi-Green (1994, 1997) and Piatt (1992) demonstrate, bilingual speakers are frequently subjected to accent discrimination.

As is the case with the other Englishes around the world (cf. Kachru, 1992), Mexican American or Chicano English is not valued by mainstream speakers of American English. Many see Chicano English as faulty or broken English as opposed to a legitimate variety of the language. As Strevens (1992) argues about nonnative varieties of English,

many native speakers – perhaps the majority – even among teachers of English – overtly or unconsciously despise these varieties. . . . The basic reasons for these native speakers' attitudes is ignorance – a total lack of awareness of the existence of flourishing, effective, functional, sometimes elegant and literary non-native varieties of English. Most NS [native speakers], including teachers of EF/ESL, have not experienced NNS [nonnative speaker] varieties of English in the circumstances of their origins. . . . Consequently, they wrongly equate variations from NS norms with classroom errors and mistakes, or regard NNS varieties as some kind of interlanguage on the path to NS English. (p. 37)

Although the issues surrounding these perceptions are complex in the case of national as opposed to international nonnative varieties of English, it may be worthwhile to hope that in the twenty-first century, more Americans – especially more teachers of English – will be guided

by Pennycook's (1994) view that teaching is never neutral. Arguing that to teach is to be caught up in an array of questions concerning power, legitimacy, ownership, inequality, and knowledge, he suggests that speakers of nonnative English should be encouraged to find their own voices in their own varieties of English:

Thus we need to encourage, what MacCabe (1988) calls, in a positive sense, "broken English," where "breaking" is an attempt to dislodge the central language norms and to recreate other possibilities. . . . I am not, therefore, advocating a *laissez-faire* approach to language forms that encourages students to do as they like, as if English language classrooms existed in some social, cultural and political vacuum. Rather, I am suggesting that first, we need to make sure that students have access to those standard forms of the language linked to social and economic prestige; second, we need a good understanding of the stages and possibilities presented by different standards; third, we need to focus on those parts of language that are significant in particular discourses; fourth, students need to be aware that those forms represent only one set of particular possibilities; and finally, students need to be encouraged to find ways of using the language they feel are expressive of their own needs and desires . . . so that they can start to claim and negotiate a voice in English. (p. 317)

Implications for teachers of English

Language use in Mexican American communities is a complex and fascinating topic. From the study of these communities, much can be learned about the nature of immigrant bilingualism, second language acquisition, and language maintenance and language shift. Much can be learned also about the politics of language, power relationships between communities, and the ways in which perspectives on language can determine access to both political power and economic resources. What does the nature of language use in Mexican American communities mean for English teachers? Clearly, the answer depends on what kind of English teachers they are. In this section, I present a number of suggestions for two different groups of teachers: teachers of English language arts to fluent bilingual or monolingual Mexican Americans and teachers of ESL.

TEACHING FLUENT ENGLISH SPEAKERS WHO ARE MEXICAN AMERICAN

For teachers who are involved in teaching language arts to supposedly fluent English speakers, the most important task is to learn how to differentiate between actual language limitations and superficial, foreign-sounding features. As noted, Mexican American speakers often have heavy accents in English. Teachers must not confuse pronunciation er-

rors with lack of control of the language and lack of fluency of expression. The fact that speakers have an accent does not imply that their English is imperfectly learned. Teachers must learn to evaluate overall ability to express ideas in English instead of focusing primarily on pronunciation. They must also recall that students bring with them what some scholars have described as a legitimate variety of English, a variety that may have a Spanish flavor but that is as valid as any other. Pronunciation, then, should not be corrected unless the pronunciation of speakers of English from other geographical areas is also being corrected. Pronunciation differences will not interfere with learning to read and write. Teachers do students a grave injustice if they assume that they must correct pronunciation before they can begin instruction in content.

Creating a positive and rich language environment in the classroom is most important. Teachers must be aware that English learners need to hear English from native speakers and interact with European American English-speaking peers. If classes include both European and Mexican Americans, teaching strategies that involve group work and discussion can be most valuable. Teachers should assume that students will profit from being exposed to a large variety of styles and levels of language.

TEACHING ESL

As noted, English is the language of prestige in all Mexican American communities. Clearly, English is considered important, and every child is expected to become an English speaker. The expectations for adults, on the other hand, are not as clear cut. What normally happens is that those individuals who happen to come into contact with English speakers tend to learn at least some English. Those who do not can spend years in the community without learning much English. They depend on other members of the family to interpret or translate for them. This is particularly true of older immigrant women in Mexican American communities.

ESL teachers must remember that Mexican Americans do not lack interest in learning English. Thus older people who after many years decide to take an English class did not refuse to learn English before, but rather for many complex reasons studying English formally may not have been possible or feasible for them. When such older learners enroll in a class, teachers need to be aware that for some of them a formal class setting is a foreign environment. They may have many fears about their own abilities to learn, which may have to do with their ideas about school, the experiences of others in the community in English classes, their children's success or lack of it in both Mexican and American schools, and the like. Moreover, because there are so many myths in the

community about what it is to know a language and how languages are learned, these older learners may be afraid that they cannot learn or that they will never be able to speak. Many of these learners probably have attempted at some point to say something in English, but they might have met with ridicule from family members – even their own children, who, like the surrounding majority community, find heavy accents laughable. For this reason, they probably sell themselves short. They do not realize, for example, that the ability to understand is also a valuable skill and part of knowing a language.

The process of teaching such learners clearly begins with sensitivity to fears and scars. If students apparently have very low literacy skills in Spanish, teaching classes in which there is a heavy reliance on written materials makes little sense. It is perhaps important for such students to learn how to read and write well in their own language and in English, but the role of the ESL teacher is to teach these students English, especially oral English. Oral skills will permit students to function in the surrounding European American community. The challenge, then, for the ESL teacher faced with learners who are afraid, who have low literacy skills in their own language, and who may have insecurities about their capacity to learn English is to develop an approach to teaching English that will set students at ease, focus on oral language, and depend minimally on written material.

On the positive side, because English is spoken so widely in Mexican American communities, students are unlikely to have zero familiarity with the language. At the very least they will have learned some phrases (which they may repeat shyly), and they may also have developed some listening comprehension skills. The teacher can build on these to boost students' self-confidence. Of the many approaches and methodologies currently in use for the teaching of English, teachers should choose those that are most appropriate for developing the kinds of skills students need. Therefore, in some cases a heavy grammatical and analytical approach should not be adopted, especially if, when questioned, students state that their goal in learning English is to get a specific job or to communicate in a specific context. As far as possible, instruction should be tailored to students' needs. A topical or notional-functional syllabus may be most effective because it focuses on specific domains and contexts. By teaching phrases to answer the telephone with, for example, and by teaching comprehension of commonly heard telephone talk (e.g., "Is Mary home?" "Is this 555-9879?"), students will quickly be able to use and show off their new skills. This will not be the case if the class has focused on the conjugation of the verb to be and has practiced a series of unconnected sentences that cannot be used to say anything real. To keep such learners

in class, the teacher must make them feel comfortable, they must sense that the teacher believes that they can learn, and they must feel that they are making some progress.

Not all adult learners in the community will fit this description. Many adult learners from the same community will demand much from the teacher and will feel very comfortable in a class setting. Indeed, they may have selected the class setting because they believe it to be the fastest way of learning English. They will be impatient and will want to progress much faster than is really possible. Teachers can help these students by identifying contexts in the community in which such students can interact with local European Americans and other English speakers. Often such students must be persuaded to set their books aside and attempt to communicate in the real world.

Younger learners present a different picture from that of adult learners. Not only must they acquire English in order to use it in their everyday lives, but they must also acquire the type of school language that will permit them to succeed in an academic setting. I cannot emphasize enough that such learners need to use English for real communication and at the same time be exposed to large amounts of academic language. Fortunately, much is already known about the kinds of English language proficiencies that students must develop to succeed in school. A number of researchers have examined the language demands of all-English classrooms and the effect of particular language teaching practices on academic achievement. Wong Fillmore (1982), for example, found that in order to participate in the life and work of schools and learn academic subject matter, immigrant students must develop two fundamental skills in English: (1) They must be able to comprehend the spoken language of their teachers as they explain and present instruction; and (2) they must comprehend the language of the textbooks from which they are expected to learn.

English language instruction, then, must build on existing research and on current thinking within the ESL profession about what immigrant students need. *ESL Standards for Pre-K–12 Students* (TESOL, 1997), for example, directly addresses the confusion surrounding the goals of English language study by delineating progress indicators of English language development for ESL teachers and administrators. These standards specify the language skills English language learners need in order to have "unrestricted access to grade-appropriate instruction in challenging academic subjects" (pp. 1–2) and stress that learners need to develop English proficiency in order to participate in social interactions as well as to achieve academically in all content areas. Specifically, the three goals of English language learning involve (1) using English to communicate in social settings, (2) using English to achieve

academically in all content areas, and (3) using English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. The standards stress that English language learners must develop abilities to request and provide information, paraphrase a teacher's directions, work successfully with partners, negotiate and reach consensus, compare and contrast information, read and get meaning from texts, gather evidence, prepare and participate in debates, and edit and revise written assignments. Moreover, they must be able to choose the language variety, register, and genre as appropriate to the interaction, interlocutors, and setting. They must respond to humor, express anger, make polite requests, engage in small talk, and recognize and use idiomatic speech.

The politics of teaching English[7]

Setting out an unambiguous set of learning objectives for English language learners is an important first step. However, there is much more to consider in implementing programs designed to teach the English language to immigrant students. For example, a number of scholar-practitioners who are part of the ESL and EFL professions (e.g., Bhatt & Martin-Jones, 1992; Corson, 1997; Fairclough, 1989; Kaplan, 1997; Pennycook, 1994; Tollefson, 1991; Wallace, 1992) have attempted to point out to their colleagues around the world that the teaching of English is not neutral. They have argued strongly that the key doctrine of the discourse of ESL teaching – that it is possible to just teach language – is untenable because it is impossible to separate English from its many contexts.

Working within the framework of critical pedagogy and critical language awareness, a number of individuals (e.g., Fairclough, 1992; Pennycook, 1994) have argued that in both English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries, English is one of the "most powerful means of inclusion into or exclusion from further education, employment or social position" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 14). Critiquing the notion of language acquisition as a predominantly psycholinguistic phenomenon, Pennycook (1994), for example, argues that language, rather than being isolated from social, cultural, and educational contexts, is at the center of questions concerning education and inequality. Unfortunately, as Tollefson (1995) has pointed out, most teacher education programs in ESL have focused on second language acquisition, teaching methods, and linguistics without placing these fields in their social, political, and economic contexts. For many scholars (e.g., Tollefson, 1995) applied linguistics and language teaching must undergo a critical

7 This section draws extensively from Valdés (1998).

self-examination. These scholars argue that central concepts in applied linguistics reflect a particular ideological perspective about power relationships. As a result, English language educators adopt uncritical positions about the value of English and about the place of ESL teaching in the schooling of language minority students. They often view language as a formal system for study rather than as something that is located in social action. They do not see that language is always situated within larger discursive frameworks and, as Pennycook (1994) put it, is "part of the cultural and political moments of the day" (p. 34).

From the perspective of theorists working from a critical perspective, ESL classrooms – like all classrooms – are sites of struggle. Auerbach (1995), for example, maintains that if classrooms are seen through an ideological lens, the "dynamics of power and inequality show up in every aspect of classroom life, from physical setting to needs assessment, participant structures, curriculum development, lesson content, materials, instructional processes, discourse patterns, language use and evaluation" (p. 12). Textbooks, for example, often become the curriculum itself, and the teacher's goal is to cover the material, not to uncover what students want to say or what is important to them. Problems are seen to reside in students and not in text materials or in the the teacher's decision to focus on rehearsing correct forms as opposed to generating new meaning and sharing information, opinions, and experiences. Much classroom activity is limited to a focus on the basics, i.e., pronunciation of isolated forms, memorization of vocabulary items, and practice of grammatical structures. The mastery of basics is seen as a prerequisite to creative communication, and there is no acknowledgment that forms and expressions rehearsed in class actually inculcate norms and social relations.

ESL teachers who wish to become effective teachers of Mexican-origin students cannot hope for easy answers. Teaching these students will ideally involve not merely helping students succeed but rather trying to change the ways students understand their lives and the possibilities with which they are presented. As Pennycook (1994) points out, ESL teachers must ask themselves "what sort of vision of society" (p. 209) they are teaching toward. He argues that a critical practice of English language teaching must begin by critically examining and exploring students' knowledges, histories, and cultures in ways that are both affirming and supportive. Teachers must work to help students develop their own voices – not what has been termed the *babble* of communicative language teaching – but voices that are tied to a vision of possibilities. In sum, they must help students to find and create insurgent voices – voices that question the reality that surrounds them.

Suggestions for further reading

The works of Sánchez (1983), Hernández-Chavez (1975), Peñalosa (1975), and Silva-Corvalán (1994) are fundamental to the understanding of Mexican American Spanish. Although slightly dated, the Peñalosa and Hernández-Chavez volumes identify key issues and controversies that continue to arise in discussions about language in Mexican American communities. Sánchez's work is considered a foundational text in the study of Chicano Spanish and presents many examples as well as analyses of Chicano speech. Silva-Corvalán's work with three generations of Mexican-origin immigrants in Los Angeles is considered the most complete study of language change conducted to date.

Several books of readings allow readers to examine Mexican American Spanish in comparison to other Spanish language varieties spoken in the United States and in other areas of the Spanish-speaking world. These volumes include Amastae and Elías-Olivares (1982), Bergen (1990), Klee and Ramos-García (1991), Morgan, Lee, and VanPatten (1987), and Durán (1981). Bergen's volume is one of the several proceedings of the yearly "Español en los Estados Unidos" conferences that have taken place since 1983. Durán's volume is a collection of the papers presented on Latino discourse and communicative behavior and contains a number of seminal papers on English-Spanish code switching. Klee's and Morgan's volumes include a number of articles on Mexican American Spanish as well as on other varieties of Spanish and exemplify more recent concerns in the study of contact varieties of language.

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4 Puerto Ricans in the United States

Confronting the linguistic repercussions of colonialism

Ana Celia Zentella

In 1998 Puerto Rico, an island in the Caribbean that is about the size of Connecticut and has a population of 3.8 million, completed a century of belonging to the United States. Uninterrupted U.S. jurisdiction in their homeland since 1898 distinguishes Puerto Ricans from immigrants in unique ways, with significant repercussions for the educational and socioeconomic progress of Puerto Ricans in general and for the development of their English, Spanish, and bilingualism in particular. Puerto Rico had been a colony of Spain for more than 400 years until the invasion by General Miles on July 25, 1898. The Spanish language, religion, racial makeup, and way of life of Puerto Ricans today were influenced first by the indigenous Taino people – who were virtually extinguished in 60 years – and then by the thousands of enslaved Africans who were brought to the island for more than two centuries. As a colony of the United States from 1898 until 1952 and since then as a commonwealth, Puerto Ricans have been subject to intense Americanization via U.S. laws that are the ultimate arbiters of their nationality and of the official language(s) of their legal and educational systems.

Under U.S. governors appointed in Washington, DC, English was imposed on the island's legal and educational system for the first half of the twentieth century. The Americanization of the school system and the displacement of Puerto Rican teachers, clergy, business leaders, and politicians produced an alarming number of dropouts instead of fluent English speakers (Negrón de Montilla, 1970). When the nationalist movement opposed U.S. rule in favor of independence, it was systematically devastated by the incarceration or murder of its leaders, and by policies and practices that solidified Puerto Rican dependency on the United States. These measures included making Puerto Ricans citizens of the United States, drafting Puerto Rican males into the U.S. armed services (many into the Black battalions until the army was desegregated), experimenting with high-estrogen contraceptives on Puerto Rican women, promoting sterilization for birth control, and recruiting hundreds of thousands of immigrants to work in the United States (Maldonado-Denis, 1972). At the turn of the twenty first century, Puerto Ricans constitute the second largest group of Latinos in the United States (approximately two million), and in many northeastern school districts – where they were the first mixed racial immigrants that com-