Ethnolinguistic Contact Zones:

Identity and Language among Mexican-Nuevomexicano Families in New Mexico

BY

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

Previous ethnographic research as well as research regarding language shift do not emphasize the differences within the Hispanic population of New Mexico. The present study seeks to examine these inter-Latino interactions by exploring what I term “ethnolinguistic contact zones”. I use this phrase recalling both Silverstein’s (2003) notion of ethnolinguistic identity and Mary Louise Pratt’s (1992) concept of “contact zones”. Together, these allow for exploration of the dynamic meeting places in which Nuevomexicanos and first-generation Mexicans negotiate their respective notions of linguistic and cultural sameness and difference. I propose that the mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit serves as a particularly intimate and useful ethnolinguistic contact zone from which to explore issues of language maintenance, recontact, and language ideologies from within the same family. More specifically, I ask, (1.) How do Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos in New Mexico define and view themselves and each other, and what roles do Spanish and English play in these conceptualizations? (2.) What factors, including linguistic, shape the cultural identities of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano mixed Latino subject?

Using qualitative research methods, my study documents a series of interviews with nine mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano family units from seven towns in northern New Mexico. The families consist of two parents and at least one adult child. I conducted 32 individual and 9 group interviews. My analysis of the interviews focuses on five main areas: recontact and transculturation, language shift/maintenance, language ideologies, dialect future, and theorizing the mixed identities of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects.
1. SITUATING THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND LATINIDAD IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO

1.1 Introduction

In early 2009, the immigrants’ rights group based out of Santa Fe, New Mexico Somos un Pueblo Unido launched a public information campaign entitled Somos Primos. The campaign sought to open dialogue between Hispanic New Mexicans and Mexican immigrants in order to dispel what the organization founder called “the myths that are perpetuated to divide las comunidades Nuevo Mexicanas y Mexicanas” in northern New Mexico. The 2009 campaign wished to highlight the long-term interactions, lack of knowledge, and obscured histories between New Mexican Hispanic (Nuevomexicano) communities and first and second-generation Mexican populations in New Mexico. The campaign worked particularly hard to disprove the notion that the two communities do not interact, get along, or support each other. The role of language took center stage in the public dialogues and the campaign encouraged honest questions and an open conversation about tensions surrounding Spanish, English, and language loss. A public service announcement broadcast on YouTube with multigenerational representatives from both communities explained that “Nuevomexicanos grew up not knowing the deep roots they shared with their primos on the other side. Mexican textbooks do not mention the over 60,000 Mexicans that remained in the conquered territory. What happened to those primos? Why did they lose their lands and why were they punished for speaking Spanish?” Although the campaign was short-lived, it emphasized that first and second generation Mexican communities and Nuevomexicanos have not really been studied in linguistic or cultural contexts together. As the campaign reveals, many times it is simply assumed that the populations are one in the same or that they are completely at odds. As the 2010 U.S. Census figures illuminate current Latino/a demographics throughout the U.S., the state of New Mexico
reports a 26% increase in the Latino population over the past ten years. Hispanics in the state currently outnumber Anglos, as well as every other ethnic group at 48%. Yet, these numbers do not highlight the specificities and differences within the Hispanic population of New Mexico.

A particularly productive way to interrogate these cultural and linguistic interactions is by examining the intersections of language, culture, and society. This is what Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall designate a “sociocultural linguistics perspective on identity” or an approach “that focuses on both the details of language and the workings of culture and society” (p. 586). I propose that one lens through which to explore these understudied interactions is through “ethnolinguistic contact zones”. I use this phrase recalling both Silverstein’s notion of ethnolinguistic identity and Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “contact zones”. Silverstein explains ethnolinguistic identity as “a fact of a psychosocial sort that has emerged where people ascribe a certain primordiality to language and a certain consequentiality to language difference. They consider it for one or another cultural reason to be a guide to socially meaningful differences among people and to people’s socially effective membership in groups.” (p. 532). Silverstein highlights the central roles of language and language difference in the formation of cultural identities. Mary Louise Pratt designates “contact zones” as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (p. 7). Combining the two concepts allows for exploration of the details of language and the workings of culture within the dynamic meeting places in which Nuevomexicanos and first-generation Mexicans negotiate their respective conceptualizations of linguistic and cultural sameness and difference. Indeed, a primary objective of the Somos
*Primos* campaign was to highlight these dynamic meeting places in the northern region of the state.

The setting of northern New Mexico itself serves as a sort of macro-level ethnolinguistic contact zone. The region embodies the socio-historical linguistic legacies of both Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans. The use of the Spanish language in the region extends back to approximately 250 years of Spanish colonial rule and twenty-four years of Mexican rule. This heritage established Spanish as the native language among most of New Mexico’s inhabitants (Gonzales-Berry, 2000) until the Americanization efforts in the 1930s and 1940s solidified an eventual shift to English. This history contextualizes the varying degrees of bilingualism that have survived within the Nuevomexicano population and serves as the backdrop for more recent generations of Mexicans who have experienced their own encounters with language shift. These multi-layered linguistic experiences in northern New Mexico are crucial to understanding the ethnolinguistic contact zones that I seek to explore. Specifically, I suggest that studying these meeting places from within the same New Mexican household provides a particularly useful and intimate portrait of an ethnolinguistic contact zone. Schecter and Bayley (2002) emphasize that “there is no necessary opposition between a focus on the contact zone and a focus on the home front because, in many cases, the home front, whether conceived as the immediate community or as the individual household, is also a contact zone” (p. 178-9). Through an interdisciplinary ethnographic approach, this dissertation focuses on the multiple macro and micro ethnolinguistic contact zones that emerge from the households of mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano families in northern New Mexico.

I propose that the study of these spaces of linguistic and cultural contact addresses a significant gap in research regarding the internal differences and diversity within the Hispanic
population in northern New Mexico. The study also illuminates distinct elements within the sociolinguistic landscape of the region and situates New Mexico in discussions regarding Latino/a cultural studies. Appropriately, the notion of contact in contact zone already brings to mind certain linguistic and cultural associations. For linguists, perhaps, the term “contact” activates notions of languages in contact or dialect contact. For those hailing from a cultural studies framework, maybe the idea of contact evokes images of conquest, colonialism, or immigration. My point is that the contact in ethnolinguistic contact zone functions on several conceptual and disciplinary levels and it is exactly this multi-level, multi-modal, and interdisciplinary vision that I intend for this project to embody. In particular, this study engages Latino/a cultural studies, and specifically theories of Latinidad, with sociolinguistics/sociology of language. I suggest that theories of Latinidad are useful in studying the heterogeneity among U.S. Latinas/os, particularly in the context of language use, maintenance, ideologies, attitudes, and linguistic hierarchies. Essentially, Latino/a cultural studies and Latinidad allow me to talk about identity in meaningful ways. Sociolinguistics/sociology of language allows me to talk about language in a meaningful way. Uniting these approaches and disciplines allows for language to take a more central role in Latinidad and for Latinidad to be utilized as a tool for analysis of language. And the contact in ethnolinguistic contact zones allows me to work at this intersection of disciplines and methodologies. Before outlining how I unpack the cases of ethnolinguistic contact zones in northern New Mexico, it is central to my study to understand to whom I am referring when I use the terms “Mexican” and “Nuevomexicano.” For this reason, I would like to highlight a few key points regarding identity in New Mexico.

1.2 Are New Mexicans Really Mexican? Some Notes on Identity in New Mexico
In an extensive study of the history of Chicano families in the Southwest from 1848 to the present-day, Griswold del Castillo (1991) notes that “in the nineteenth century a third-generation Mexican-heritage population hardly existed, except among the Hispanos of New Mexico, a group which did not consider itself of Mexican nationality or culture” (p. 122). This group of Hispanos in New Mexico was comprised of more than half (60,000) of the 100,000 inhabitants of the Mexican territory ceded to the U.S. in 1848. According to Gutiérrez (2004), “Most communities of Mexican origin in the United States trace their roots to waves of immigration that have occurred throughout the twentieth century. Only a proportionally small number identify with the first group of Mexican-Americans” (Gutiérrez, p. 44). Yet, a majority of the Hispanic population in New Mexico does, in fact, identify with this first group of Mexican-Americans. And, as Griswold del Castillo points out, this New Mexican population does not identify with a Mexican nationality. John Nieto-Phillips elaborates on the historical context of this disassociation from a Mexican national identity: “Mexican independence from Spain in 1821 did not significantly alter the ethnic consciousness of northern New Mexicans, nor did it instill a profound and pervasive Mexican consciousness rooted in national sentiment…” (Nieto-Phillips, 2007, p. 37-8). There is no doubt that this disassociation was politically motivated in the 19th century as “both Anglo and Nuevomexicano statehood proponents made congressional approval of statehood possible by recasting New Mexico’s ‘Mexicans’ as Spanish in race, culture, and history, and American in citizenship and national loyalty.” (Nieto-Phillips, 2000, p. 99). Nieto-Phillips highlights that this Spanish identity also served as “the source of collective identification with the land and with a historical discourse of conquest, settlement, and occupation…and a source of ethnic agency as Nuevomexicanos (of various echelons) struggled to reclaim some degree of control over their political destiny and cultural assets” (Nieto-Phillips,
Gonzales-Berry and David Maciel explain their use of the term “Nuevomexicano” to describe this population instead of “Mexican” or “Mexican-American,” They state, “When all is said and done this is the label that best identifies a culture and a people whose roots reach deep into the brown earth of their homeland and across its cultural borderlands” (p. 7). Perhaps, it would seem that Gonzales-Berry and Maciel’s definition of “Nuevomexicano” perpetuates what Gómez (2007) terms “the exceptionalism thesis.” However, I do believe that the identifier “Nuevomexicano” provides a useful term that captures the deep roots and profound sense of a land-based, place-based identity among this population. This place-based identity predates Mexican rule and extends beyond the moment of U.S. annexation into the present-day (Meléndez 1997, Gonzales-Berry and Maciel, 2000; Lomelí, Sorell, and Padilla, 2002; Otero, Meléndez, Lamadrid, 2009). Take for example, Roberts’ (2001) ethnographic study of a small northern New Mexico town. Roberts examines issues of cultural identity among school age children (K-12). Her students state, “somos de la tierra” and emphasize that this connection to land is an integral part of their identity. It is this very real connection to land that motivates the deployment of a regional term such as “Nuevomexicano” and a disassociation from the term “Mexican.” This does not imply that those who identify as “Mexican” do not have a connection to land. In fact, Vila (2000) emphasizes the regional and land-based identities within Mexico. However, in the context of New Mexico, “Nuevomexicano” refers to a specific connection to a history of land possession and dispossession. Because of this particular connection, my study utilizes “Nuevomexicano” as the identifier for the native Hispanic population in northern New Mexico.
Some scholars such as Gómez (2007) and Mora (2011) discourage an isolated analysis of New Mexico that emphasizes regional identities at the expense of drawing larger cultural connections between New Mexico and Mexico. Gómez (2007) and Mora (2011) actively work to reinsert a Mexican identity into New Mexico. Although I acknowledge the importance of emphasizing these connections, I do not believe that their arguments form the basis for discrediting Hispanic New Mexican’s rejection of the term “Mexican” in favor of labels such as “Spanish,” “Hispano,” and “Nuevomexicano.” The desire among some scholars to “correct” New Mexicans’ Spanish or regional identity in favor of the “correct” Mexican identity actually erases Nuevomexicano agency and imposes an anachronistic historical and political simplicity on their cultural experience. That being said, it is worth noting that even though Nuevomexicanos may disassociate from a Mexican national identity, this does not necessarily mean that they never use the term “Mexican” to self-identify.

Similar to Pablo Vila’s 2006 study regarding the polysemy of the term “Mexican” on the El Paso/Juárez border, Gonzales’ (2005) study on the construction of identity labels indicates this fluidity in the use of the terms “Mexican” and “mexicano” in New Mexico. Gonzales finds that “all terms exist simultaneously; sometimes they are used interchangeably, others in contestation” (p. 75). Gonzales analyzes the simultaneous rejections and uses of the term “Mexican.” She documents one participant’s opinion: “Semos mexicanos, pero nunca diciamos Mexican in English because it was bad!” (p. 72). Gonzales finds that some participants reject both the English and Spanish term, however, other participants use the term in Spanish, mexicano, to describe themselves and to refer to the Spanish language. These findings are similar to Dowling’s 2005 study of ethnic labels in Texas. Dowling states, “Although U.S. born interviewees denied that they were Mexican (at times adamantly) the use of the term mexicano/a
was acceptable to them in Spanish conversation with co-ethnics in their community” (p. 61).

Both Dowling (2005) and Gonzales (2005) indicate the importance of context and interlocutors when employing the terms “Mexican” and *mexicano*. Because of these nuanced uses of the term *mexicano* among Nuevomexicanos, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will refer to the first-generation immigrant population from Mexico as “Mexicans.”

Oftentimes neglected in favor of scholarship focusing on Nuevomexicanos, there is a significant multi-generational Mexican population that does identify with an immigration history from Mexico in New Mexico. María Rosa García-Acevedo emphasizes that “…the flow of population from Mexico to the ‘Land of Enchantment’ has been constant, even when these immigrants encountered a less than welcoming border… in a state where the Spanish roots of the native Nuevomexicanos have been stressed, the historical role of the Mexican immigrants has been deemphasized and all but forgotten” (p. 217; p. 232). García-Acevedo refers to the Mexican immigrant population and their descendants as “the forgotten diaspora” in New Mexico. Many times this segment of the Hispanic population of New Mexico is conceptualized as belonging only to the southern region of the state due to its proximity to the border, while northern New Mexico has historically been associated with geographic isolation from Mexico (Gonzales-Berry and Maciel, 2000, p. 3). My dissertation complicates this geographic dichotomy by focusing on the inevitable contemporary cultural and linguistic interactions between first generation Mexican immigrants and Nuevomexicanos in northern New Mexico. Over ten years ago Gonzales-Berry and Maciel recognized that

the migratory stream from Mexico, which historically has stopped short in the southern part of the state, is currently moving to the northern section of the state. The impact of Mexican immigration is apparent in businesses, in education, in language, in the media,
in the configuration of neighborhoods, and in emerging conflicts between established
Hispano populations and recent arrivals from Mexico. (p. 4)

It is clear that such a continued history of movement and migration from Mexico to New Mexico
indicates necessary contact and long-term interactions between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos.
Yet, virtually no scholarly research has yielded detailed accounts of the differences and
distinctions between the two groups or the situations of linguistic and cultural contact between
them.

This gap in research is significant because the Mexican immigrant presence in New
Mexico has steadily increased over the past thirty years. The American Community Survey
illustrates that of the foreign-born population in New Mexico in 2008, 24.2 percent entered the
country prior to 1980, 20.0 percent between 1980 and 1989, 26.1 percent between 1990 and
1999, and 29.6 percent in 2000 or later. Because the Mexican foreign born made up 72.8 percent
of all immigrants in New Mexico in 2008 (“American Community Survey,” 2008), this increase
in an immigrant foreign-born presence points directly to Mexican immigration. Also, it is
important to note that these numbers may be undercounting the Mexican foreign-born population
in New Mexico due to inaccurate figures regarding undocumented individuals. This
dissertation’s focus on the interactions, identities, tensions, unions, and offspring between
Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos in northern New Mexico not only addresses the gap in research
regarding internal differences between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos in New Mexico, but also
inserts New Mexico into discussions regarding intra-group and inter-group relations between and
among Latinos/as that occur throughout the U.S.

1.3 **Contextualizing the Study of Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos: Difference and
Distinction Among Mexican-Origin Groups**
Without a doubt, Nuevomexicanos’ cultural conceptualizations of themselves are complicated. The historical and contemporary presence of Mexican immigrants in New Mexico adds additional layers of complexity to these identities. Because these intercultural dynamics have been understudied in New Mexico, one approach to contextualizing my project is to turn to the previous work that documents interactions between distinct generations of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in other regions of the U.S. Over the past twenty years, several ethnographic studies have highlighted the cultural and linguistic tensions, intersections, and solidarity between different generational groups of Mexican-origin and Mexican immigrant populations throughout the Southwest. These ethnographies do not explicitly focus on linguistic realities, however, they do make many important correlations between identity and language. Menchaca (1995), for example, provides an ethnographic history of Mexicans in Santa Paula, California. The residents of Santa Paula make a distinction between “native-born,” “old immigrants,” “new immigrants,” and Mexican nationals/seasonal migratory farm workers (p. 201-2). Vila (2000) also sets out to explore intra-cultural perceptions among Mexicans on both sides of the El Paso/Juárez border. Vila highlights the shift his participants experience to a system on the U.S. side of the border in which racial and ethnic identities are stronger than regional identities based on state affiliation in Mexico.

Perhaps one of the most detailed portraits of Mexican Americans’ everyday attitudes towards, and interactions with, Mexican immigrants is found in Ochoa’s 2004 ethnography of La Puente, California. Ochoa’s work highlights the experiences of Mexican American families who have a long history in the United States and focuses on community spaces of churches, schools, Ochoa introduces an extremely useful concept that she terms a “continuum of conflict and
solidarity.” By utilizing the concept of a continuum, Ochoa allows for a more complex and nuanced analysis of her participants’ attitudes towards Mexican immigrants. The continuum allows for the same participant to generate a narrative of solidarity with Mexican immigrants in one situation, and a narrative of conflict with Mexican immigrants in a different situation. Ochoa’s work reveals a variety of situational or relational identities.

The presence, repression, and promotion of the Spanish language are consistent themes throughout Ochoa’s narratives. Many of Ochoa’s respondents underscore the fact that they have “‘played by the rules’ by acquiring the English language. Thus, they criticize immigrants who are perceived not to be adopting the language, norms, and values of the dominant society. They also voice frustration with the use of Spanish and the rising number of immigrants in their local schools, churches, and other neighborhood sites (p. 99). Ochoa documents a perception among her Mexican-American informants that Mexican immigrants do not have the same pressures to acculturate as previous Mexican generations in California. In addition, many participants feel that Mexican immigrants are not aware of their history of language repression. Interestingly, some informants did express a shared connection to the Spanish language between Mexican Americans and immigrants and this connection has resulted in some cases of Spanish language revitalization.

The aforementioned ethnographic studies make limited mention of the role of the Spanish language within the intra-group cultural perceptions of Mexicans in the U.S. Mendoza-Denton (2008), however, provides an in-depth analysis of both linguistic attitudes and cultural perceptions among U.S.-born Mexicans and recently arrived Mexicans in the U.S. Like Ochoa’s work, her ethnography explores the fluid relationship between identity categories. Mendoza-Denton’s study takes place among high school girls in northern California and her findings
challenge assumptions regarding language use among first-generation participants and U.S. born participants. Mendoza-Denton makes key connections between language practices and language ideologies in her study.

Lastly, although not ethnographic, Galindo (1995) and Rivera-Mills (2000) nicely inform my project with their approach to intraethnic language attitudes in U.S. Mexican communities. Galindo analyzes the inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic language attitudes of two bilingual speech communities of adolescents in Austin, Texas. Because of the constant influx of immigrants to Austin, Galindo sets out to explore the attitudes of the more established Mexican-origin group (Chicanos) towards the immigrants (Mexicans), in particular their language variety. Galindo explains that Chicanos’ negative associations with Spanish prevent them from using it outside of the home domain. Additionally, Rivera-Mills (2000) illustrates a lack of solidarity within the Hispanic community in Fortuna, California reflected through linguistic differences. The study’s results show that when asked to describe Hispanics in Fortuna, the participants used primarily negative descriptors. The negative adjectives were expressed mostly by first-generation participants, who had resided in Fortuna for at least ten years, in reference to recent Mexican arrivals. Rivera-Mills’ study demonstrates a need among more established immigrant groups to distinguish themselves from recent arrivals, even if both groups share the same country of origin and only ten years separate the groups’ migrations.

1.4 Contextualizing the Study of Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos: Inter-Latino Studies and Mixed Latino Identities

Because of the nuanced legacy of meanings of the term “Mexican” in New Mexico, the deep-rooted place-based sense of identity, and the very real disassociation from a Mexican national identity, I contend that my project is also informed by the increasing amount of studies
that focus on inter-Latino interactions (Pérez 2003; De Genova and Ramos-Zayas 2003; Rúa and García 2007). Pérez (2003), for example, examines the interactions between Puerto Rican and Mexican women in Chicago and discovers the sites of food, music, and language as politicized activities that are many times defined against Mexican culture. Pérez explains that these activities are important for second and third generation migrants who often worry that they are not “Puerto Rican enough” (p. 113). Additionally, she argues, “Puerto Rican families—and within these families, almost exclusively women—use food and food preparation as a way to affirm the cultural integrity they feel is threatened by the forces of “Americanization” and “Mexicanization” they confront in schools, on television, and their daily round” (p. 113). Pérez further documents Puerto Ricans’ fear that Chicago is becoming “Mexicanized” in her 2004 book-length work. These are important concerns to keep in mind when I address attitudes of cultural dominance between Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans.

Although not a linguistic study, DeGenova and Ramos-Zayas (2003) generate some significant linguistic observations in their study regarding Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago. In an interview with a first-generation Mexican migrant woman, the participant comments about a U.S.-raised Mexican employed at the factory at which she works. She explains, “He says he can’t speak any Spanish, not a word, nothing! Can you imagine?!?” (p. 150). De Genova states that this informant viewed a Latino who could not speak Spanish as suspicious. De Genova and Ramos-Zayas also document the construction of hierarchies between “good” and “bad” Spanish, not only between generational groups, but also between Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. De Genova and Ramos-Zayas’ linguistic findings reveal the construction of linguistic hierarchies and discourses of linguistic difference.
Also, the increasing research regarding mixed Latino identities, and these individuals’ linguistic profiles, (Rúa 2001; Potowski and Matts 2008; Potowski 2008; Aparicio 2010; Potowski 2010; Aparicio forthcoming) provides a useful point of departure from which to examine the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit and mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano offspring. Within the last ten years a few very significant studies regarding mixed Latino/a subjects, and their cultural and linguistic identities, have begun a trend to examine this new and underexplored field of Latino studies and sociolinguistics/sociology of language. All of these studies have examined the mixed Latino/a offspring of Latino/a groups in Chicago. Rúa (2001) examines the daily identity negotiations of mixed Mexican and Puerto Rican young people in Chicago. Rúa employs the metaphor of *colar* to illustrate the ways in which her informants highlight and downplay certain aspects of their Mexican and Puerto Rican identities in different contexts in daily social practice. Additionally, Frances Aparicio (2010, 2014) explores the daily identity negotiations of 20 mixed Latino individuals (i.e. Mexican-Guatemalan, Colombian-Mexican, Mexican-Puerto Rican) through in-depth interviews with each subject. She discovers narratives about the contextual downplaying, highlighting, and accommodating of certain identities in favor of others.

Also in the Chicago context, Kim Potowski has done extensive work with mixed Mexican and Puerto Rican (MexiRican) individuals. Potowski and Matts (2008) comprehensively examines various concepts related to MexiRican ethnolinguistic identity. Departing from the findings in Rúa (2001) and even Aparicio (2010), Potowski and Matts found that their participants engaged in different labeling strategies for themselves, but never felt that they had to hide or “pass” for one identity over another. They also made no mention of tensions between their two identities. On the contrary, they exhibited pride in both cultures. Although
the participants were able to identify typical stereotypes about both Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, they made no reference to these stereotypes playing a major role in the unions of their parents. Also, the cultural practices, foods, and events that formed part of their households tended to index both Mexican and Puerto Rican identities. Potowski (2010, 2014) did find, however, that even though the participants did not tend to claim one identity over the other, twenty out of the twenty-seven cases were clearly identifiable with dialect features of either Mexican or Puerto Rican dialects. The study also documented participants’ desires to transmit Spanish to their children. However, even though many of the second-generation participants did exhibit high Spanish proficiency, general trends in language shift suggest that these individuals’ Spanish will not be passed on to subsequent generations.

1.5 **Mexicanidad or Latinidad: A Theoretical Framework for the Study of Ethnolinguistic Contact Zones in New Mexico**

Thus far we know that first generation Mexican immigrants and Nuevomexicanos have not really been studied in linguistic or cultural contexts together. We also know that past studies on Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in other regions of the U.S. can be helpful when considering potential directions for my project. Though diverse in setting and approach, the cultural and linguistic studies I have highlighted do have some similar sociocultural processes at work that are relevant to my proposed study. These processes primarily center around *association* and *disassociation* as they relate to the articulation of identities. Menchaca and Vila’s participants engage in an active categorization of different types of Mexicans. Similarly, Ochoa’s participants seem to constantly negotiate their position on the continuum of conflict and solidarity with Mexican immigrants and these positions are mediated by different degrees of distinction and disassociation. Additionally, Galindo, Rivera-Mills, and Mendoza-Denton’s
participants actively disassociate from recent arrivals and from groups that represent different regional ideologies. These examples reveal the central role of language (Spanish) in producing these (dis)associations. Yet, at the heart of these ethnolinguistic negotiations seems to be the notion of cultural authenticity along a continuum of “Mexicanness” or *Mexicanidad*. In the case of the Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos, then, am I approaching different types of Mexicans? Are their interactions best gauged through a framework of *Mexicanidad*? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to unpack the ways in which the framework of Latinidad has been theorized.

Aparicio (2003) proposes that Latinidad can be employed as an “approach that unveils the affinities between and among historical minorities such as Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans” (p. 93). This notion of Latinidad provides a space for agency and self-affirmation in which differences and similarities among Latinos are simultaneously activated and deactivated. Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez observes that this process can even result in “an increasing consciousness and affinity among U.S. Latinos/as (and other Latin Americans)” (p. 15). This idea is nicely complemented by Rúa and García (2007) as they conceptualize Latinidad as an “ethnoracial configuration and sociocultural practice in placemaking, where a shared sense of being Latino transpires within diverse social settings and associations” (Rúa and García, 2007, p. 318) while not ignoring the existence of Aparicio’s concept of “competing authenticities” (Aparicio, 1999) among Latinos. According to Aparicio, the theorizations of Latino moments of “convergence and divergence” allow for “a rethinking of the ways in which national categories of identity have limited and elided the new forms of identity formation emerging in Latino/a communities as a result of interlatino affinities, desires, and conflicts” (Aparicio, 2003, p. 93).
Ana Celia Zentella more directly links theories of Latinidad with language practices. She explains, “Understanding the crucial yet contradictory role of Spanish in Latina/o identity and its repercussions for Latina/o unity requires an anthropological linguistic perspective, incorporating socioeconomic and political realities that determine how and why Latinas/os speak as members of different groups at different times, and even at the same time, and how they evaluate those differences” (Zentella, 2007, p. 25). Zentella’s anthropolitical linguistics links the moments of convergence and divergence among Latinos to the evaluation of linguistic sameness and difference. Latinidad provides a framework for viewing placemaking, simultaneous moments of conflict and solidarity, and for conceptualizing new ways of being Latino/a that are not limited by national categories. However, national origin still functions as a point of departure in these frameworks of Latinidad.

If Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos are simply different types of Mexicans, does this preclude them from a framework of Latinidad? Would a framework of Mexicanidad, perhaps informed by Vila (2000) and Ochoa’s (2006) continuum of conflict and solidarity be a better model? Again, even though scholars such as Mora (2011) and Gómez (2007) emphasize the “Mexican” in Nuevomexicano identity, I still hesitate to group Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans under the same Mexican rubric with a common, albeit distant, national origin. My emphasis on the long-history of disidentification from a Mexican national identity (Griswold del Castillo, 1991; Nieto-Phillips, 2000; 2007), the deep attachment to place (Gonzales-Berry and Maciel, 2000), the absence of an immigration history, and the reality that New Mexico is, indeed, the homeland of Nuevomexicanos calls for another model. When theorizing about the interactions between, and the mixed-family units produced by, Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans, I believe that the theoretical framework of Latinidad holds this potential. Latinidad allows me to focus on the
lived dynamics and interactions between and among diverse Latino groups (Rúa, 2001) that then activate power differentials and “complex moments of convergence and divergence” (Rúa and García, p. 318) between the groups. Indeed, my use of the concept ethnolinguistic contact zones aligns nicely with Latinidad’s approach to unpacking power dynamics within and between Latino/a groups and, specifically, Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos. Latinidad allows me to conceptualize Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos as distinct Latino/a groups, rather than simply different generational groups of the same Mexican national origin. Because historically Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans shared a common Mexican nationality for less than 30 years, Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans are, in a sense, representing different national origins. In fact, recognizing Nuevomexicanos’ homeland as New Mexico, indexes the U.S. as an always already Latino/a homeland. This type of approach allows for a richer understanding of Mexican, Nuevomexicano, and mixed-ethnicity Mexican-Nuevomexicano identities. By simultaneously contextualizing Mexican experiences in Nuevomexicano experiences and vice versa, we gain a more nuanced understanding of identity and the sociolinguistic realities of Latinos in New Mexico. In effect, Latinidad is a useful, applicable, and underused theoretical framework for examining the linguistic and cultural realities in New Mexico.

Related to my use of the theoretical framework as a central theoretical framework in my study, I would like to clarify my use of the term “Latino” throughout this dissertation. New Mexicans have clear inclinations towards certain terms of ethnic identity. As my dissertation will demonstrate, the term “Latino” has not been one of these terms. For this reason, it is not my wish to impose the use of the term “Latino” on communities that clearly do not use it. However, I do think it is a useful term in the spirit of Aparicio (2009), not to erase historical and cultural specificities between national-origin groups, but rather to “tease out the power
differentials and the historical, social and cultural dilemmas that these terms evoke as we identify the interactions between and among peoples of various Latin American national identities” (p. 625). For this reason when I highlight the power dynamics or knowledge that is produced between the groups, I will use the term strategically throughout my study.

1.6 Some Sociolinguistic Starting Points

In this section I would like to briefly address several key sociolinguistic theories and studies with which my work is in dialogue. These works provide jumping off points for my study and allow my research the opportunity to expand the important visions proposed in these inquiries. First, related to issues of what I term “linguistic Latinidad” Zentella (2007) emphasizes the utility of applying theories of Latinidad to linguistic situations in order to highlight language ideologies and linguistic hierarchies. Another productive pairing between linguistics and Latinidad exists in a focus on authenticity. Bucholtz highlights the need to separate out authenticity as an ideology from authentication as a social practice (p. 410). Bucholtz explains the idea of “authenticating practices”:

In place of the unexamined notion of authenticity, I offer the alternative concept of authentication. Where authenticity presupposes that identity is primordial, authentication views it as the outcome of constantly negotiated social practices…Thus sociolinguists should speak not of authenticity but more accurately of authenticity effects, achieved through the authenticating practices of those who use and evaluate language. This perspective does not deny the cultural force of authenticity as an ideology but emphasizes that authenticity is always achieved rather than given in social life, although this achievement is often rendered invisible. (p. 408)
Utilizing Bucholtz’s framework of “authenticating practices” provides a complementary tool for examining the competing authenticities present within Latinidad. Authenticity, or notions of “real” Spanish or being “really” Mexican, surface within the intra-Mexican and inter-Latino studies documented in the previous section. They also circulate throughout the narratives of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families in my study. I underscore Bucholtz’s theories because I think they represent 1.) a useful analytical tool and 2.) a method for combining theoretical frameworks within Latino/a cultural studies and sociolinguistics in order to effectively explore the ethnolinguistic contact zones of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family through activating discourse of Latinidad, specifically through language.

Second, any consideration of Spanish in New Mexico and, in my case, Spanish language use and varieties within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family necessarily draws upon the foundational work of Bills in Vigil and their New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey. Representing over three years of data collection, the New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey (NMC OSS) details the speech of 357 Spanish speakers in New Mexico and southern Colorado. Bills and Vigil (2008) brings together all of the data from this comprehensive survey project and is the main source of Bills and Vigil’s research that I will be citing throughout this dissertation. Beginning in 1991, and interviewing only native-born Spanish speakers from New Mexico and parts of Colorado, Bills and Vigil explain:

the data represents a first of its kind project in multiple ways. First, while the unique characteristics of New Mexican Spanish had previously been the focus of linguistic study, much of the research was focused on particular regions or communities and findings were generally undocumented. There had previously been no comprehensive,
systematic study of New Mexican Spanish across the entire state. (Bills and Vigil, 2012, p. 3)

The NMCOSS provides a jumping off point for my study in many ways and provides a larger vision from which I can contextualize my work. Almost 20 years later, my research in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family allows me to take a microscope to Bills and Vigil’s research and flesh out many of the trends and tendencies documented in their findings as well as re-think these trends, tendencies, and findings. My work also takes Bills and Vigil’s a vision step further by incorporating frameworks of Latinidad in order to not only describe New Mexico Spanish, but also to allow Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos the space to theorize about their language use language practices, ideologies, and identities related to Spanish in New Mexico. Bills and Vigil’s research also makes important connections between documenting lexicon in New Mexico and trends in language shift and maintenance within the use of the traditional variety of New Mexico Spanish. One of the central concerns of my study is how the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families contribute to a richer understanding of language maintenance and language shift in northern New Mexico from within the same household. My work allows for reflection on the predictions made by Bills and Vigil and for the fleshing out of newer models such as the framework proposed by Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009) regarding language maintenance and shift.

A third sociolinguistic starting point is the Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009) framework. The model proposes a revision to the traditional three-generation model of language shift and this study is the subject of further analysis in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. However, I would like to call attention to how this work frames the conceptualization of my study and provides a starting point for my work to, again, flesh out and advance a vision of previous sociolinguistic work specific to Nuevomexicanos. Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009) propose a “contact generation”
that “consists of a generation monolingual in Spanish that comes into contact with English speakers after the critical period…either through its own migration or the arrival of English speakers into its territories” (p. 32). The model provides a nice framework for viewing Nuevomexicano generations in the context of Mexican immigrant generations and my work allows for the application and expansion of this under-used model.

The concept of ethnolinguistic vitality is an additional sociolinguistic starting point that is useful to my study. I frame the mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano family as a unique and productive ethnolinguistic contact zone. One element that contributes to the site’s productivity in documenting and theorizing about the cultural and linguistic interactions between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos is how it may illuminate issues of ethnolinguistic vitality. Ethnolinguistic vitality refers to “that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup relations” (Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor, 1977). Whereas low ethnolinguistic vitality contributes to greater convergence with the dominant group and leads to language shift, high ethnolinguistic vitality leads to greater divergence and contributes to language maintenance. Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) identify three structural variables in a society that determine the level of ethnolinguistic vitality among minority language communities: status, demographics, and institutional support. My dissertation fleshes out the variables of status and demographics. The narratives in my study reveal that language use among Mexicans, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican-Nuevomexicanos is consistently affected by perceived social, cultural, and linguistic status. Additionally, on a demographic level, Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor find that mixed marriages reduce the overall level of ethnolinguistic vitality in the minority language group. Theories of Latinidad and transculturation in my research reveal that majority and minority designations are not fixed categories among Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos nor
among Mexican and New Mexican Spanish. Therefore, my research complicates the notion of “mixed marriages,” allows for the viewing of the dynamic interplay of the variables of status and demographics while expanding our understanding of ethnolinguistic vitality in the mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano context.

Lastly, before providing a specific outline of the structure of my study I would like to briefly highlight a few key points about Mexican and New Mexican Spanish. Unlike the salient differences between Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish noted by Potowski (2008), Mexican and New Mexican Spanish dialects depart from each other in more subtle ways. Bills and Vigil (2008) differentiate between two varieties of New Mexican Spanish: “Border Spanish” or the Spanish generally spoken “across the southern part of New Mexico near the Mexican border, as well as in a few other areas that represent substantial immigration from Mexico during the past hundred years or so” (p. 5) and “Traditional Spanish.” This second variety dominates in “the remainder of the region, the traditional heartland of the Spanish-speaking population that traces its presence in New Mexico to the arrival of Oñate’s colonists in 1598 or de Vargas’s recolonizers at the end of the seventeenth century” (p. 5). The “Traditional Spanish” variety is generally what my participants and I refer to when using the phrase “New Mexican Spanish.” The most distinctive features of New Mexican Spanish are primarily phonological and lexical. Some of New Mexican Spanish’s most salient phonological features are the weak intervocalic /j/ such as in calle or silla [sía]; the weak intervocalic /d/ with most instances of –ado becoming –ao as in cuidao or colorao instead of cuidado or colorado; and syllable and word final /s/ is frequently aspirated to [h] as in dijan, tristeja, or ji instead of decian, tristeza, or si.

Additionally, regarding lexical features, Lipski (2008) documents that many Mexicanisms

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1 For a detailed account of Mexican Spanish, see Lipski (2008, p. 85-89). He provides a detailed analysis of Mexican Spanish’s phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features.
(usually of Nahuatl origin) are found in all varieties of New Mexican Spanish, but “most if not all appear to be early borrowings that entered New Mexico with the original settlers.”

Additionally he notes,

There are many lexical items that are completely different in New Mexican Spanish and contemporary Mexican Spanish. New Mexican who have had contact with Mexican-born Spanish speakers may use “Mexican” words, but they do so while being conscious of incorporating elements from another dialect…Thus, whereas English continues to make deep inroads into the lexicon (and grammar) of modern New Mexican Spanish, as well as rapidly displacing Spanish as a viable community and family language, modern Mexican Spanish has little or no effect on the Spanish spoken by native New Mexicans (p. 207-8).

Lipski underscores the lack of dialect contact between New Mexican Spanish and Mexican Spanish. He notes that most of the lexicon, even the archaisms, are used in other parts of the Spanish speaking world. However, they tend to be very different from contemporary Mexican Spanish.

1.7 **In the Zones: Research Questions, Participants, and Methods**

“Evidence indicates that the native New Mexican Hispanos and the Mexican immigrants seemed to be the most at odds. There was a more deeply seated prejudice between the Spanish Americans and the Old Mexicano Mexicans (immigrants) than…between Anglos and Spanish Americans.” (Griswold del Castillo, p.104)

Griswold del Castillo’s words historically situate the tensions between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos as extending back to the 19th century. Griswold del Castillo’s account provides a point of departure in considering the unique opportunity that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples provide in examining the everyday lived dynamics of negotiation within a historically
charged ethnolinguistic contact zone. Not only are we able to consider the homefront as a contact zone (Schecter and Bayley, 2002), but we are also able to explore how larger cultural, historical, and linguistic conflicts are mapped onto the romantic relationships, marriages, and Mexican-Nuevomexicano offspring within this “contact home”. In this dissertation, I conceptualize multiple zones of contact that stem from the primary ethnolinguistic contact zone of this study: the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit. Essentially, like peeling back the layers of an onion, the consideration of one ethnolinguistic contact zone reveals the presence of additional contact zones below it. In essence, the more we look, the more we see. My “looking” at these ethnolinguistic contact zones is guided by two primary research questions: (1.) How do Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos in northern New Mexico define and view themselves and each other, and what roles do Spanish and English play in these conceptualizations? (2.) What factors, including linguistic, shape the cultural identities of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano mixed Latino subject? In order to answer these questions I worked with the participants and employed the methods outlined below.

The Mexican-Nuevomexicano families consisted of one Nuevomexicano parent, one Mexican first-generation parent, and 1-2 adult or teenage Mexican-Nuevomexicano adult children. In denoting first generation, I adhere to Silva-Corvalan’s (1994) established generational distinctions in which first generation (G1) denotes an individual born abroad that came to the U.S. after the age of 12. However, as noted in Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009), and as I explore in Chapter 2, these generational designations do not match the historic sociolinguistic situation of the Nuevomexicano participants in my study. For this reason I do not refer to the Nuevomexicano participants with the first-generation (G1), second-generation (G2), or third-generation (G3) categories. I do periodically use the following shorthand to refer to the different
members of the family units: Mexican (MX), Nuevomexicano (NMX), and Mexican-Nuevomexicano (MXNMX). These acronyms also function as gentle reminders regarding who is who throughout the dissertation. The families were from 8 towns in northern New Mexico: Taos, Española, Las Vegas, Santa Fe, Leyba, Ribera, Bernalillo, and Algodones. In the last section of this chapter I provide participant portraits that include brief descriptions of these towns and families.

Using qualitative research methods and taking as a point of departure the case study approach of Schecter and Bayley (2002) and Yin (2009), the extensive work that Potowski has undertaken in gathering the Chicago MXPR interview corpus documented in Potowski and Matts (2008), Potowski (2008), Torres and Potowski (2008), and Potowski (2010), as well as the interview methods utilized in the New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey (Bills and Vigil, 2008), the core method for data collection in my study of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit consisted of semi-structured interviews. I utilized a modified version of the sociolinguistic interview used for the Chicago MXPR corpus guided by some elements in the New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey interview\(^2\). For each family unit, I interviewed every family member separately and then engaged in a follow-up group family interview. Each interview was conducted in the language preference of the participant. The interview asked questions regarding family background, language use patterns, language attitudes, family relationships, traditions, identity, and community. Every interview consisted of a minimum of two sections conducted in Spanish. One of these sections consisted of three questions about the participants’ childhood and the other section consisted of questions regarding the legend of \textit{la llorona} and asked the interviewees to retell the version of the story that they knew. At the conclusion of the interview

\(^2\) See Appendix 1 for interview questions.
the participants engaged in a short lexical elicitation activity with ten items modeled after Potowski (2008) and the NMC OSS lexical elicitation task. The participants were asked to provide the word that they used the most for the pictures of the given lexical variables. Not without its limitations\textsuperscript{3}, the inclusion of the lexical elicitation activity provided a lens through which to view potential intrafamilial dialect contact (Potowski, 2010) and to provide a contemporary portrait of the lexicon of Mexicans, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican-Nuevomexicanos as a point of comparison with the New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey.

1.8 **Position as Researcher**

I would like to note that because my research engages with minority communities that more often than not are marginalized and stigmatized, I occupy the complex space of being a simultaneous insider and outsider of these U.S. Latino/a communities. This tenuous position challenges me to be continuously aware of my culturally-mediated position as a researcher, rather than operating under illusions of objectivity or solidarity and to heed Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman’s (1997) warning to be vigilant in not reinscribing power differentials. It is important to recognize certain power differentials that might have been at play in my interactions with my participants. Most of the participants in my study knew me or were aware of the fact that I taught at New Mexico Highlands University. Two of the participants were my former students. I believe that this information may have framed me as having certain “authority” due to my academic position. I also characterize myself as an insider/outsider within this work because I am Nuevomexicana, however, I would not characterize the Spanish that I speak as distinguishable as New Mexican Spanish. Indeed, the G1 Mexican participants often commented

\textsuperscript{3} The activity is limited by the unknown amount of influence on the participants’ lexicon, due to influence from standard Spanish in formal academic settings, media, and influence of Mexican Spanish from potential interactions with Mexicans (and Mexican interactions with Nuevomexicanos who still speak Spanish).
during and after our interviews that I spoke Spanish “really well” and that I did not sound like I was from New Mexico. Yet, even though I never explicitly stated this, they all seemed to know that I was a native Nuevomexicana. In several of the interviews the participants would position me in the Nuevomexicano group with various remarks. For example, one G1 participant told me, “Si preguntas a tus abuelos se han de acordar de cómo fue que no permitieron a la gente de aquí hablar español. [If you ask your grandparents they should remember how it was when they didn’t allow people from here to speak Spanish].”\(^4\) I am not aware of all of the ways that my participants may have perceived or framed me. I am also not aware of all the ways that I may have framed or positioned them.

1.9 **Approaches to Analysis**

My corpus of data consists of 40 interviews with nine Mexican-Nuevomexicano families from 8 northern New Mexico towns. The interviews lasted in length from 40 minutes to 3 hours with the average interview lasting 90 minutes. These nine families welcomed me into their homes, kitchens, to their dining room tables, their backyards, birthday parties, places of work, and places of worship. We shared conversations over meals, church fiestas, into the late hours of the night, and even over beers. Utilizing qualitative ethnographic research methods, I was able to gather rich narratives emphasizing cultural identity, language maintenance and shift, and language ideologies.

I would like to call attention to the concept of “narratives” and the process of self-narration and self-reporting within my project. Keeping in mind that participants’ self-reports

\(^4\) All translations of interviews from Spanish to English are my own translations.
about their own attitudes, language use, and language ideologies has its limitations,\(^5\) my main objective in conducting the interviews with the families was to document the family members’ stories, voices, and experiences through their own self-narration. I wanted the participants’ to tell me about their lives in their own words. For this reason, I only loosely followed the order of interview questions and allowed stories, memories, and narratives to emerge organically without interruption. It was always preferable that the participants’ bring up a topic of interest to me on their own without prompting. This method is consistent with an approach to Latinidad that allows these Latinos/as to theorize about their daily lived experiences (Rúa, 2001) in their own words. Ann Gray (2003) explains the importance of theorizing experience. She states,

> We need to theorise ‘experience’…Experience can be understood as a discursive ‘site of articulation’ upon and through which subjectivities and identities are shaped and constructed…experience is not an authentic and original source of our being, but part of the process through which we articulate a sense of identity…Thus, attention to the lived, to how individuals account for their lives and how they position themselves in relation to their experience can produce new knowledges…This work is essential if cultural studies is to remain a dynamic field of inquiry. (p. 25)

Accordingly, giving voice to the narratives of the lived experiences of my participants, and using this experience as a basis for the production of theory, is a key element to cultural studies methodologies and, specifically, Latino/a studies methodologies. Aparicio (forthcoming) cites Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) in emphasizing that “narratives serve as a genre that offers ‘culturally developed ways of organizing experience and knowledge’” (p. 6). My methods of analysis approach this organizing of personal knowledge and experience as a space from which

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the themes for my study, and the organization of my chapters, emerge. This is consistent with Rúa’s (2012) approach to her data.

In analyzing the data, I used a grounded theory approach, the researcher actively suspending her preconceived assumptions about what the data would reveal, inductively, developing arguments and theories from material collected. This requires the researcher to rely on data as a guide to sense-making, to detect meanings and associations within the data, and to generate theory. (p. 141)

Rúa highlights two key steps in the data analysis procedures that I follow. First, I allow the different linguistic and cultural themes to emerge from the data and then I generate theory from these themes. This is the structure I follow throughout my dissertation. I present the data, describe it, connect it to previous work, and theorize about it. In the production of this theory I seek to highlight the theorizations produced by my participants while also drawing attention to the cultural processes and contradictions that surround these theorizations. Integrating a performance studies lens allows me to do this. Madrid (2009) explains, “Performance studies does not seek to describe actions so they could be faithfully reproduced later; instead, it attempts to understand what these actions do in the cultural field where they happen and what they allow people to do in their everyday life” (Madrid, 2009, para. 4). Throughout this dissertation I analyze cultural processes and ask questions about these processes that focus on what a particular cultural text or linguistic practice does rather than a solely descriptive focus on what it is. With these methods of analysis in mind, below I provide brief chapter summaries of the dissertation.

1.10 Chapter Summaries

In Chapter 2, I approach the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples as concrete cases of linguistic and cultural recontact. Taking as a point of departure Cisneros and Leone’s (1983)
proposal of “recontact,” in this chapter I explore the power dynamics present within the process of recontact and I propose some ways of measuring recontact effects within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano partnerships. Lastly, I examine the multi-directional nature of influence and the ways in which Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos mutually transculturate each other.

In Chapter 3, I primarily focus on the Mexican-Nuevomexicano offspring and how familial language use patterns reported by the Mexican-Nuevomexicano individuals contribute to a more complex understanding of Spanish language maintenance and shift both within the families and in northern New Mexico overall. Additionally, I specifically utilize the findings from the lexical elicitation activity to illuminate language shift patterns. Ultimately, I propose that through subtle acts of language maintenance, recovery, and agency the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos become “language shapers” rather than language shifters.

In Chapter 4, I examine the language ideologies that operate within in each Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit regarding lexical choice. I primarily draw from the narratives of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos in order to understand the authenticating practices of correction that activate language ideologies of authenticity regarding Mexican and New Mexican Spanish lexicon. These practices and ideologies ultimately lead to an overall affirmation of the Spanish language within these families, even as a particular variety of Spanish (New Mexican Spanish) is subordinated.

Chapter 5 serves as a partial extension of Chapter 4 in that it continues the discussion regarding language ideologies. However, in this instance I examine ideologies centered around the relationship between Spanglish and New Mexican Spanish. I also consider dialect contact in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context and postulate regarding the dialectal future of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos.
In Chapter 6, I explore familial disjunctures around discussions regarding cultural identities and I highlight the role of language in these identity-making processes. I also unpack the multiple meanings of the identity terms invoked by the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and, specifically, the resignification that occurs around the term “Hispanic.”

1.11  **Some Demographic Notes about Setting**

Before delving into the rich Mexican-Nuevomexicano family narratives that run throughout my chapters, I would like to acquaint the readers with my participants and their New Mexican hometowns. The participants in my study reside in 8 towns in northern New Mexico. For this project I am defining northern New Mexico as any town north of Albuquerque along the Río Grande Valley Río Arriba region and communities to the northeast of the Río Grande Valley along the Pecos River Valley. I am aware that the designation of northern New Mexico is somewhat contested. All of the towns included in my study are geographically situated in the northern quadrant of the state, however, many northern New Mexico residents do not consider anything south of Santa Fe to be included in northern New Mexico. Additionally, some northern New Mexico residents do not consider Santa Fe as northern New Mexico. For the purposes of my study, I do include Santa Fe as part of northern New Mexico. I also include Algodones and Bernalillo primarily because the characteristics of these small towns (population, history, linguistic history) have more in common with small towns in northern New Mexico than with Albuquerque or other central New Mexico towns. Including Algodones and Bernalillo also allowed for the inclusion of two more families as it was difficult to identify more than one Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit in each town. All of the towns have a majority Hispanic population. All of the towns have a foreign-born population of 15% or less. Below I have included the population numbers, the percent of the population that is Hispanic and the percent
of foreign born individuals. All of the figures below are taken from the 2010 U.S. Census Quick Facts.

**TABLE I**

U.S. CENSUS POPULATIONS FIGURES FOR NORTHERN NEW MEXICO TOWNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Town</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent of Population that is Hispanic</th>
<th>Percent of Population that is Foreign-born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algodones</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>No information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernalillo</td>
<td>8,356</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Española</td>
<td>10,236</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>13,855</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribera</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>No information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Pueblo</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>No information available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>69,350</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>5,689</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.12 **Participant Portraits**

The table below summarizes the names, ages, and Mexican (MX), Nuevomexicano (NMX), and Mexican-Nuevomexicano (MNMX) designations in each family. I asked the participants to choose their own pseudonyms for their first and last names. Following the table, I provide brief snapshots of each of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families.
### TABLE II
PARTICIPANT NAMES, AGES, AND TOWN OF RESIDENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Name</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Nuevomexicano/a (NMX) Parent and Age</th>
<th>Mexican (MX) Parent and Age</th>
<th>Mexican-Nuevomexicano (MNMX) Children and Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guzmán</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>Andrea, 38</td>
<td>Manuel, 39</td>
<td>Alejandro, 18, Alexa, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molina</td>
<td>Bernalillo</td>
<td>Elizabeth, 44</td>
<td>Pancho, 45</td>
<td>Alicia, 23, Antonio, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fierro</td>
<td>Algodones</td>
<td>Juanita, 56</td>
<td>Luis, 63</td>
<td>Verónica, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loredo</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>Francisco, 54</td>
<td>Pía, 45</td>
<td>Angelica, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santos</td>
<td>Gonzales Ranch/Leyba</td>
<td>Juan, 68</td>
<td>Marta, 64</td>
<td>Carolina, 43, Edna, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navarro</td>
<td>Ribera</td>
<td>Nicolás, 50</td>
<td>Gabriela, 46</td>
<td>Milagros, 18, Rosalinda, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurado</td>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>Diana, 60</td>
<td>Armando, 59</td>
<td>Rose, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quintana</td>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>Ana, 51</td>
<td>José Luis, 51</td>
<td>Rolando, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medina</td>
<td>Española</td>
<td>Penélope, 48</td>
<td>José, 60</td>
<td>Adrian, 18, Olivia, 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I first met Andrea Guzmán of the Guzmán family in Taos, NM during the summer of 2009 while she was participating in an eight day Spanish immersion program for New Mexico bilingual education teachers. I was teaching in the program and I arrived to one of our class sessions early. As I was preparing my materials, I could hear Andrea’s conversation with a classmate. With much emotion she was explaining the ways in which her Mexican sister-in-law insisted on correcting her Spanish. My radar went up as I heard her mention these corrections and her own accounts of defending northern New Mexico Spanish. Andrea seemed to have the attention of the entire class with her descriptions of her attempts to defend her way of speaking to her Mexican in-laws and we proceeded to begin class with the re-telling of these experiences. The conversation that began in the classroom that summer extended for several years as Andrea and I remained in contact. Almost three years later I was able to interview 38 year-old Andrea in
her hometown of Taos, New Mexico where she resides with her family and where she met her husband. Andrea’s husband Manuel hailed from Uriangato, Guanajuato and arrived to Taos at the age of 16. I interviewed Andrea, her first-generation Mexican husband Manuel, her son Alejandro, and her daughter Alexa. I conducted Andrea’s interview in Andrea’s kindergarten classroom in the neighboring community of Arroyo Seco and the other family member interviews in the Guzmán living room in Taos.

I also met Alicia Molina of the Molina family in Bernalillo, NM as a student in my class for bilingual teachers in Las Vegas, NM. Alicia was a student-teacher attending New Mexico Highlands University, however, she was a native to Bernalillo, NM. One of my colleagues knew Alicia from a previous class and alerted me to the fact that her father was a first-generation Mexican immigrant and her mother was a native Nuevomexicana from Placitas, New Mexico. Upon completion of the class, Alicia agreed to introduce me to her family and I conducted the interviews with Mexican-Nuevomexicana Alicia, her Mexican-Nuevomexicano brother Antonio, Nuevomexicana mother Elizabeth, and Mexican father, Pancho. Pancho arrived to Albuquerque as a teenager from his hometown of Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua.

Upon the conclusion of my interviews with the Molina family, Elizabeth and Pancho mentioned that their comadre might also be willing to participate. Alicia texted her and within days I was having a phone conversation with Verónica Fierro of the Fierro family from Algodones, New Mexico. Verónica and I met at her home in the South Valley of Albuquerque and we held the interview around her kitchen table. She called her parents and they also agreed to participate. I conducted the interview with her Nuevomexicana mother Juanita and her first-generation Mexican father, Luis Fierro. Luis was from San Francisco de Conchos, Chihuahua and moved to Albuquerque when he was 22 years-old. Within one year of moving to
Albuquerque, Luis met Juanita, eloped with her, and moved to Algodones where they have lived for the past 40 years.

Pía Loredo, of the Loredo family in Las Vegas, NM, works as an educational assistant at the dual-language elementary school in Las Vegas, NM. Pía is a first-generation Mexican immigrant from Mazatlán and through a mutual friend we connected. Pía was excited to meet with me at her home in West Las Vegas. She told me of the unlikely pairing between herself and her Nuevomexicano husband, Francisco. Pía’s story recounts a longer history between Las Vegas, New Mexico and Mexico. Because Elba’s parish priest in Mazatlán attended a Mexican seminary that was in operation outside of Las Vegas until about 50 years ago, he was very familiar with Las Vegas. This priest was also especially close with the Loredo family. Many years later the priest organized a trip of young adults from his parish in Mazatlán to visit Las Vegas. Pía took part in this trip and while visiting with the Loredo family, Pía caught Francisco’s eye. After months of long-distance phone calls, mediated through the priest, and several visits to Mazatlán by Francisco, Pía agreed to marry Francisco and relocate to Las Vegas. Francisco and Pía have one daughter, Angelica. All of our interviews took place at the family home in the living room or outside around the picnic table.

Pía and our mutual friend connected me with another educator at the dual-language elementary school in Las Vegas. I met Carolina Santos of the Santos family in Leyba, NM in her classroom at the elementary school. After explaining my interest in the interactions between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos, she eagerly agreed to tell me about her family and introduce me to her parents and sister. Carolina is a Mexican-Nuevomexicana from Leyba, New Mexico. Leyba is located approximately twenty-five miles south east of Las Vegas. Carolina invited me to her home in El Pueblo (near Leyba) and we spoke for hours in her living room. Carolina then
facilitated interviews with her Nuevomexicano father Juan and first-generation Mexican mother, Marta, which also took place in Carolina’s living room. Marta emigrated from Chihuahua to Albuquerque with her father and stepmother when she was only twelve years old. Carolina met Juan in Albuquerque when she was sixteen and after marrying they moved back to Juan’s hometown of Gonzales Ranch/Leyba. This is where they raised their family. I was also able to interview Carolina’s youngest sister, Edna. However, this interview actually took place at my parents’ house in Albuquerque. Edna lives and works full-time in Albuquerque as a dual-language teacher and part-time at Home Depot. Because of her busy schedule, she preferred to conduct the interview in Albuquerque and the location of my parents’ house was close to her workplace of Home Depot. The family interview also took place in Edna’s living room.

The community of Ribera, New Mexico is only a few miles from Leyba and El Pueblo. Because of this, most of the residents of these communities all attend the same Catholic church of San Miguel. Through this common parish, Carolina was able to connect me with another Mexican-Nuevomexicano family nearby in Ribera: the Navarro family. I attended mass together with Carolina and her family one Sunday morning and after mass she pointed out two of the daughters in this family. I approached the teenage daughter and spoke to her about my project. Her name was Rosalinda Navarro. She then introduced me to her sister, Milagros, and her mother Gabriela. Gabriela was a first-generation Mexican immigrant from Colima. I then scheduled a visit to the family house in Ribera for the following week. At that time I interviewed Nicolas, Gabriela’s Nuevomexicano husband, and Milagros. I returned the following week to interview Gabriela and Rosalinda. I then returned two weeks later to interview the entire family together.
Also because of my involvement in the community of Las Vegas, I was able to connect with an additional Mexican-Nuevomexicano family in Santa Fe: the Jurado family. I was teaching a Spanish conversation course to parents of the children attending the dual-language elementary and one of the parents mentioned that she had a friend who had a Mexican father and a Nuevomexicana mother. She called Rose Jurado and told her about the project. I then contacted Mexican-Nuevomexicana, Rose, and she enthusiastically agreed to participate. I met Rose at her workplace in Santa Fe and we conducted her interview in her classroom at the elementary school at which she taught. We conducted her parents’ interviews at their home just outside of Santa Fe in La Cienega, New Mexico. Her father, Armando, was a first-generation immigrant from Santa Bárbara, Chihuahua. Her mother was a Nuevomexicana from Santa Fe, Diana. We conducted the family interview at the parents’ home as well.

I met Rolando Quintana of the Quintana family in Santa Fe through a family connection. Rolando was very interested in participating in the project and spoke to his Nuevomexicana mother, Ana, and his first-generation Mexican father José Luis. They both agreed to participate. Rolando was living and working in Albuquerque, so we conducted the interview in a conference room in my father’s office due to its central location. I conducted his parents’ interviews at their home in Santa Fe and we also conducted the follow-up interview at the home in Santa Fe.

Penelope Medina and I had our first conversation over coffee at the McDonald’s in Española. Penelope’s brother and I had been close friends for many years, however, I had never met Penelope until that particular morning. Penelope’s brother had facilitated the meeting and before I even began my explanation of my project, Penelope exclaimed, “You know, the Mexicans are really different from us.” Penelope automatically positioned me in the “us” or

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6 Specifically, Ronaldo, a Mexican-Nuevomexicano from Santa Fe, happened to be dating my mother’s first cousin’s wife’s sister’s daughter.
Penelope was married to a first-generation Mexican, José, from Chihuahua. They had four children together, however, only two were available to participate in the interviews. Penelope was originally from Tierra Amarilla, however, she had lived in Española most of her adult life and it was in Española where she met José. Penelope, José, Adrian, and Olivia participated in the interviews. Our individual interviews took place in a conference room at Penelope’s place of employment, McCurdy High School. Our family interview took place in Penelope’s living room. It is important to note that Penelope and José were in the process of beginning divorce proceedings when I began the interviews. By the time we scheduled the group interview, Penelope and José were divorced. This is the only Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit in which a separation or divorce occurred.
2. (RE)CONTACT ZONES: GENERATIONAL COMPLICATIONS, LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION, AND TRANSCULTURATION

When I met my husband, um, I think there was some sort of a little bit of a prejudice [sic] where I didn’t realize he was Mexican until he spoke to me. And once he spoke to me then I was kind of, ah, like disappointed.

Andrea Guzmán, NMX

2.1 Introduction

On a chilly March afternoon in Andrea Guzmán’s kindergarten classroom in Taos, New Mexico, she describes her first encounter with her future husband, Manuel. Her reaction highlights the central role of language in recognizing Manuel’s Mexicanness. And it is this very Mexicanness that seems to detour Andrea from considering Manuel as a potential romantic interest. She explains, “I was like, oh, my gosh, this guy is very handsome, but he’s Mexican, so no, I was like, definitely not, I will not go out with this guy. And I don’t even know why, because I didn’t know Mexican people, but there was like something where I just didn’t feel like I liked Mexican people.” Andrea reveals her negative predisposal to Mexicans as something somewhat unexplainable to herself as she clearly acknowledges that her attitude was not based on any previous contact with Mexicans. Despite this lack of prior contact, Andrea does indeed engage in communication with Manuel. Andrea recounts this process: “…I would talk in English and I would try to communicate in Spanish, but my Spanish was not there. So it was like really, really hard…But I did understand Spanish so I was able to comm– I mean I was able to understand what he said.” Andrea’s reference to her Spanish “not being there” expose a complicated linguistic profile that emphasizes a certain level of comprehension, but downplays an ability to produce Spanish, as revealed in her self-interruption and correction of “comm--,” as
in communicate, to “understand.” Despite the minimization of her linguistic proficiency in Spanish, Andrea and Pancho do successfully communicate. In fact, their initial unfamiliar interactions transform into twenty years of long-term contact and communication. Andrea explains, “and we just like became friends and we started talking. And after that it was like we fell in love and we became best friends. And we’ve been married 19 years.” Andrea and Manuel do not simply put aside negative cultural perceptions and communication challenges for one interaction. On the contrary, the couple’s relationship is a testament to long-term cultural and linguistic negotiations that result in a sustained situation of recontact. Cisneros and Leone (1983) define recontact as

a continuing relationship between early settlers, their descendants, and recent arrivals.

Recontact demonstrates the possible influence one group may have on the other with respect to perception of community language experiences and the cultural traditions used by members of the community. (p.185)

In a sense, this entire project is about the cultural process of (re)contact and its ripple effects. Notions of influence and a “continuing relationship” are key to my research surrounding the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit. What are the circumstances surrounding the contact between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos and what contributes to long-term interactions? How do they culturally and linguistically influence each other? In this chapter, it is precisely through the lens of recontact that I unpack the linguistic and cultural dynamics within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano romantic unions. It is important to note that few detailed cases of recontact are documented in previous sociolinguistic studies of U.S. Latinos. Consequently, the nine Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples in this project provide rare and concrete case studies of this phenomenon.
Recontact is primarily referenced in studies of Spanish language shift in the U.S. as “the social phenomenon that is most vital and favorable to future maintenance of Spanish among U.S. born speakers” (Lynch 2003, p. 39). Past studies of Spanish language shift in the U.S. (Bills, 1997; Rivera-Mills, 2000; Hurtado and Vega, 2004) state that it is the continued influx of new Latino immigrant populations that will continue to keep Spanish alive and will essentially “revitalize” Spanish in the U.S. (particularly in the Southwest) and provide a cultural reinfusion. Yet, this idea of revitalization implies that there is some kind of significant contact between the more established generations of Latinos and the new arrivals. However, none of these studies prove if the process of recontact does in fact occur. With the notable exceptions of Cisneros and Leone (1983) and Lynch (2000), there are relatively few documented cases of such sustained linguistic interactions. There is, however, an abundance of documentation of negative linguistic and cultural attitudes between first-generation Mexicans and more established generational groups as in Ochoa (2004), Hurtado and Vega (2004), Hidalgo (2001), Galindo (1995), Rivera-Mills (2000), Mendoza-Denton (2008), Gorman and Potowski (2009). These studies actually provide evidence that new immigration does not lead to sustained relationships or frequent interaction and that mutual processes of disassociation occur precisely because of language difference. The Chicanos in Galindo (1995) avoid speaking Spanish because they do not want to be perceived as recently arrived “wet-backs” (Galindo, p.86) and the first-generation Mexican immigrants in Hidalgo’s study do not recognize the bilingualism of U.S. born Latinos and “are often surprised, annoyed, and even shocked to hear the abundant borrowing, interference, and inter- and intra-sentential code-switching” (p. 62).

7 Notably, Ochoa (2004) provides an in-depth examination of these interactions from a sociological perspective and Griswold del Castillo (1984) and David Gutiérrez (1995) explore these encounters from a historical perspective.
Yet, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples find a way to negotiate these negative perceptions, stereotypes, and lack of knowledge and their stories allow for the exploration of the everyday lived dynamics of recontact. These everyday lived experiences recall the “complex moments of convergence” (Rúa and García, 2007) embodied in Latinidad. Indeed, recontact and Latinidad consistently and productively inform each other throughout my exploration of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano encounters and I will highlight the utility of putting these concepts in conversation throughout this chapter. Additionally, the couples’ accounts provide a type of “laboratory” through which to explore the linguistic implications of recontact. For example, it is clear that a romantic relationship with Manuel challenges Andrea to convert her receptive knowledge of Spanish into productive knowledge and, consequently, may alter trends of intergenerational Spanish language loss by her engagement with an expanded social network of monolingual Mexican Spanish speakers. This is a fascinating possibility in and of itself. However, recontact is not simply a one-way process that solely affects the more established generational group by (re) stimulating a heritage language. As Pratt’s “contact zones” reminds us of the disparities present within contact spaces, the couples’ relationships allow us to consider the ways in which recontact impacts both partners and the spaces of unevenness and mutual transculturations that are mapped onto the shifting cultural terrain of this process. In this chapter I examine the different positionalities of the romantic partners through an interrogation of their generational groups and the dimensions it adds to the exploration of recontact. I flesh out what the Nuevomexicanos’ linguistic profiles looked like before recontact and the complexity of the Nuevomexicanos’ generational status. I also attempt to capture the tensions that reveal power differentials within the initial encounters of the couples, particularly the ways that the Nuevomexicano partners’ linguistic histories are minimized and erased. Then I examine several
indicators of the impact of recontact on the Nuevomexicanos’ language use. Lastly, I provide and in-depth analysis of the transculturative dimensions of recontact and its circulating influence on both the Mexican and Nuevomexicano partners.

Before delving into the specific data of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families, I would like to draw attention to how recontact has been referenced specifically in New Mexico in past studies. As I mentioned above, there seems to be an assumption that contact between first-generation Spanish dominant immigrants and subsequent generational groups is common in many parts of the U.S. The New Mexico studies are no exception. Two related studies Bills (1997) and Bills and Vigil (1999) examine New Mexican Spanish and Spanish dialect variation in New Mexico. In both studies the authors conclude that New Mexican Spanish is experiencing a standardization or “Mexicanization” process that is associated with “the greater exposure of the younger generations to the larger Spanish speaking world” (1999, p. 57). Additionally, Bills (1997) cites Mexican Spanish as a powerful linguistic force and states that New Mexicans view their Spanish as inferior to Mexican or standard Spanish. These conclusions regarding New Mexican Spanish imply that New Mexicans, a more established non-immigrant Latino community, experience a great deal of exposure to Mexicans and Mexican Spanish. Bills extends this implication of exposure to his study regarding language shift and distance from the border. He states:

…proximity to the border favors retention of Spanish on the part of Spanish-origin population while greater distance favors shift to English. The most straightforward interpretation of this result must be that location closer to the border increases the possibilities for contact with those who are monolingual in Spanish. (p. 25)
Research in the southwest continues to imply a relationship between established Mexican/Latino-origin communities and newer immigrant arrivals without providing evidence of this relationship. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples represent the embodiment of this possibility referenced by Bills. The fact that seven out of the nine Mexican partners immigrated to New Mexico for work purposes seems to support Bills’ claim that proximity to the border can be favorable for recontact. However, because most of the couples meet and live at least 200 miles north of the border, defining "proximity" would be key in linking the Mexican-Nuevomexicano interactions to Bills' study. Additionally, proximity to the border is not necessarily a determining factor when one immigrates for work.

2.2 Linguistic Profiling: Reframing Generation

In order to explore “a continuing relationship between early settlers, their descendants, and recent arrivals,” it is useful to (re) evaluate the notion of generation, as this is the most common method used to distinguish between the groups involved in recontact (as denoted by Cisneros and Leone, p. 185). The Mexican-Nuevomexicano context adds a distinct dimension to the model of recontact in that Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans do not necessarily see themselves as different generational members of the same group. They engage in continuous and simultaneous processes of disidentifying and identifying. Part of the disidentification lies in the fact that Nuevomexicanos do not have any recent immigration to reference in their generational histories. This begs the question: how does the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context reframe the notion of generation in a study of recontact?

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8 This analysis also naturalizes the geographic dimension of the border while erasing its social and cultural dimensions. Tatum (2000) elaborates on these multiple dimensions of “border.”
A three-generation model for language-shift to English has been widely documented among minority language communities in the U.S. Fishman (1964) concludes that, by the fourth generation, English monolingualism is the reality for most immigrant groups. Fishman (1985) and Veltman (1983) also reached these conclusions throughout the 1980s. Silva-Corvalán’s sociolinguistic conventions for denoting these generations relies on this “immigrant model.”

Recall that, according to Silva-Corvalán (1994), G1 denotes an individual born abroad that came to the U.S. after the age of 12; a G2 designation describes an individual who was born in the U.S. to two G1 parents, or who arrived in the U.S. before the age of six; a G3 individual was born to at least one G2 parent.

Because this model depends on an immigrant generation, it does not match the sociolinguistic history in northern New Mexico. Because of this, Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009) problematize the concept of Spanish as an “immigrant language” in the southwest due to the “continuous Spanish-speaking presence that has existed along the Rio Grande corridor that dates back to the arrival of settlers from Zacatecas, Mexico in 1598” (p. 28) and propose the “contact generation” as a reframing of the classic three-generation model. The contact generation provides a point from which Nuevomexicano families can trace their generational status within the context of English contact, rather than within a context of immigration. Villa and Rivera-Mills explain:

We introduce the notion of a ‘contact generation.’ This consists of a generation monolingual in Spanish that comes into contact with English speakers after the critical period…either through its own migration or the arrival of English speakers into its territories. Examples of this generation are…Spanish speakers who were born in the U.S. and grew up in closely knit Spanish-speaking communities, who also learned English as
adults, either through ESL classes or through joining the English-speaking workforce. Such individuals were typically found, for example, in rural communities throughout the state of New Mexico. (p. 32)

Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples allow for the opportunity to apply Villa and Rivera-Mills’ model in order to closely read the linguistic profiles of the Nuevomexicano partner and to flesh out the complexity and diversity within their generational status.

After identifying the contact generation, Villa and Rivera-Mills develop a maintenance/loss model based on the language and marriage patterns of the successive generations following the contact generation. Villa and Rivera-Mills trace seven generations within their model with four sub-sets within each generation (Villa and Rivera-Mills, p. 37). Notably, they divide each generation into a shift/loss category and a maintenance category. In essence, they categorize members of each designation based on whether or not they are “Spanish/English bilinguals” who tend towards maintenance or “Spanish/English receptive bilinguals” who tend towards loss/shift.

Through my participants’ narratives, specifically their answers to questions regarding who spoke Spanish in their family, I was able to deduce the contact generation. The interviews with the Nuevomexicano participants provide enough information to place many of the Nuevomexicano partners precisely within the subsets established in the model. However, many did not know enough background information of grandparents, great-grandparents, and in some cases, great-great grandparents for exact placement in the sub-categories. For my purposes, I simply want to show the distance from the contact generation and the tendency towards maintenance or shift before the Nuevomexicano partner meets the first-generation Mexican partner. It is not necessarily useful for me to attempt to make my participants fit into all of the
sub-categories in the Villa and Rivera-Mills model mainly because my sample is not large enough to lend itself to this type of application. However, my sample of Nuevomexicano participants does allow for a fleshing out of Villa and Rivera-Mills’ useful and under-applied notion of contact generation. A close-reading of my participants’ narratives of family language histories and language tendencies before meeting their partner permit the application of the contact generation framework to my project. In what follows I will highlight the generational profiles of each of the Nuevomexicano partners in relationship to the notion of contact generation. These profiles allow for a clearer understanding of the impact of recontact on the linguistic tendencies of the Nuevomexicano partners. Essentially, I address the question, what did the Nuevomexicano partners’ linguistic profiles look like before (re) contact?

Of the nine Nuevomexicano partners, the majority belong to the 3rd generation category (67-78%). This generation is separated from the contact generation by two generations. Four of the partners are clearly designatable as 3rd generation maintenance while two Nuevomexicano partners belong to the 3rd generation loss/shift category. It is difficult to categorize one of the Nuevomexicana partners. She is undoubtedly part of a maintenance designation, but because she does not speak of her grandparents, it is not easy to deduce whether she is 2nd generation maintenance or 3rd generation maintenance. She explains that her parents spoke mostly Spanish, but also frequently mixed Spanish and English. However, without the grandparents’ information it is not possible to make a clear determination. Regarding the remaining two Nuevomexicano partners, one belongs to the 2nd generation maintenance category (only one generation from the contact generation) and one belongs to the 4th generation maintenance category (a full three generations after the contact generation). These designations reveal that most of the Nuevomexicano partners come to their initial interactions with their Mexican partners with at
least one, usually two, generations separating themselves from the contact generation and with a complex and deep-rooted relationship with both Spanish and English. The table below summarizes the Nuevomexicano partners’ generational categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuevomexicano Partner</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Villa and Rivera-Mills Category</th>
<th>Distance from Contact Generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Gonzales Ranch</td>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} generation maintenance</td>
<td>One generation after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} generation maintenance</td>
<td>Two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolás</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Ribera</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} generation maintenance</td>
<td>Two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Las Vegas</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} generation maintenance</td>
<td>Two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juanita</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Algodones</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} generation maintenance</td>
<td>Two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} generation shift/loss</td>
<td>Two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Bernalillo</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} generation shift/loss</td>
<td>Two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Española</td>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} generation maintenance</td>
<td>Three generations after contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Santa Fe</td>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} generation maintenance</td>
<td>One or two generations after contact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My project’s application of the contact generation framework illuminates generational stories, experiences, and long-term relationships with Spanish. Additionally, the framework
highlights the intricate ways that each Nuevomexicano’s experiences overlap with each other and allows for the exploration of the varying degrees of Spanish language persistence within their lives. This persistence reveals pieces of the socio-historical linguistic legacy of northern New Mexico. For example, Juan (2nd generation maintenance) underscores the vitality of his Spanish despite linguistic oppression in the public school system. He explains, “Sí, donde fui yo era puro español y en la escuela nos hacían hablar en inglés pero nos forzaban a hablar porque no queríamos, todos los de aquí naiden quería…” Juan’s words hint at a resistance to learning English present among his peers. Similarly, Francisco of Las Vegas (3rd generation maintenance) underscores the effects of these punitive and oppressive linguistic policies. Francisco recounts, “The teacher used to tell us, ‘Quit talking in Spanish…Don’t talk Spanish ‘cause you’re gonna get in trouble,’ or whatever, no? And a lot of people my age don’t know any Spanish ‘cause of that I guess … I only knew Spanish. Spanish de aquí, ¿no? and a I remember that clearly. I would get in trouble for talking Spanish.” Despite this treatment in the schools, Francisco emphasizes that he has always spoken Spanish to his parents and most of his siblings. The linguistic oppression or, in the spirit of Gloria Anzaldúa, the linguistic terrorism did not detour him from maintaining his Spanish. Perhaps due to the rurality of San Pancho county, the historical numerical majority of Nuevomexicanos in this region, or because they lived in a “tightly-knit Spanish-speaking community” (as defined by Villa and Rivera-Mills), Juan and Francisco were able to exercise a certain degree of their own agency in the maintenance of Spanish. These outcomes certainly go against the assumption of an inevitable shift to English when schooling begins (Valdes, 1996; Schecter and Bayley, 2002). However, these narratives do not necessarily indicate an emergent stable bilingualism in these communities. Yet, they do reference an “intergenerational persistence of Spanish in this country not commonly found in
other non-English, non-indigenous language groups.” (Villa and Rivera-Mills, p. 40). In the case of Nicolás, he not only spoke primarily Spanish until he began school, but his mother also only spoke Spanish until beginning school. He explains, “Well, when, um, we grew up like I was telling you earlier, I grew up sorta like my mom did. We didn’t learn English until we actually started going to school…so toda la primera lengua de nosotros siempre fue español y naturalmente el español de aquí, del norte de Nuevo México.” Nicolás’s experience, also in San Miguel county, references a symmetry between generations that is not consistent with a shift, but instead an intergenerational persistence of Spanish.

One factor that seems to affect this persistence among the Nuevomexicano partners is the communicative need for Spanish with older family members from the contact generation. Nicolás often references the need to communicate in Spanish with his maternal grandmother who lived well into Nicolás’s adult life. This relationship also solidifies his tendency towards maintenance. Likewise, Juanita of Algodonnes highlights the key role of a Spanish-dominant grandparent in her life. She describes, “I spoke really good Spanish… New Mexican Spanish because like I said my grandpa lived with us and my grandpa only spoke Spanish, and he was my sitter from the time when I was like 9 until I was - until he passed away which I was about 12 or 13. So my Spanish was better than my siblings…so we communicated only in Spanish.” However, Juanita does draw attention to the fact that a relationship with an older Spanish speaking family member from the contact generation was not necessarily typical of those from her generational group. In fact, it wasn’t even typical among all siblings within the same family. This experience recalls Francisco’s reference to his schoolmates who also belonged to his same generational designation, but were impacted negatively by the punitive treatment in school for

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9 Schecter and Bayley (2002) also examine this notion of “intergenerational persistence.”
speaking Spanish. Consequently, these schoolmates shifted to English. This reality draws attention to the diversity of linguistic experience even within one category of the contact generation framework.

In light of this diversity, I would like to revisit Andrea’s words about her Spanish: “my Spanish was not there.” Where exactly is “there”? What exactly does it take for one’s Spanish to be “there”? Because the accounts of Juanita, Nicolás, and Francisco emphasize a continuity of Spanish throughout their life experiences, even before meeting their Mexican partners, does this mean that their Spanish was “there” and had always been “there”? It certainly seems that the close connection to an anciano relative from the contact generation contributed to maintenance of the language. What, then, accounted for the shift/loss tendency within this same generation? When Elizabeth of Bernalillo describes her Spanish at the beginning of her relationship with Pancho, she utters a familiar phrase: “my Spanish just was not there.” Elizabeth and Andrea belong to the same third-generation designation as Francisco, Nicolás, and Juanita, yet, their narratives emphasize a sense of lacking in their Spanish proficiency. They emphasize the receptive capacities with which they were raised rather than productive abilities. Notably, neither Elizabeth nor Andrea mention any Spanish-dominant anciano family member with whom they may have had a close relationship. Therefore, there was no presence of older family members from the contact generation that would necessitate the need to speak Spanish. Perhaps, Andrea and Elizabeth embody the communal effects of the linguistic repression referenced by Francisco and Juan. The attitudes that they describe towards their Spanish are indeed representative of generations who share a legacy of oppression, pena, shame, and a low estimation of self due to being told since childhood that their language is wrong (Anzaldúa, p. 80). Andrea describes:
And for myself, um, growing up I understood Spanish, but I never spoke it until I met my husband…and I think there was---I don’t know why I never spoke it, but I think I was embarrassed or maybe I didn’t want to speak it, so I never spoke Spanish and it was never encouraged. And I know, I remember my mom talking in Spanish and like when she didn’t want us to know something, she would talk in Spanish. Even though I could understand it, um, but because I wouldn’t speak it she just assumed I didn’t know it….But I did understand pretty much like everything in Spanish.

Andrea’s account clearly describes the meeting of her husband as a pivotal moment in the reversal of her linguistic tendencies. Andrea’s account of her language history before meeting her husband references a designation of what Oh, Jun, Knightly and Au (2003) and Montrul (2005) term “overhearsers.” Andrea emphasizes her high level of comprehension due to frequent overhearing of the Spanish spoken around her, despite the embarrassment and the lack of encouragement for speaking. In fact, more than a lack of encouragement, in Andrea’s family Spanish was used as a parental secret weapon. Yet this secret code had a flaw in that the receptive skills of Andrea were indeed present, although unacknowledged. Andrea’s linguistic history as a child connects to the importance of what De Houwer (2009) terms “impact belief.” This is the belief that how and how frequently a child is talked to has an effect on children’s language development (p. 362). This notion suggests that the nature of the input received by Andrea affected her language development and, ultimately, her lack of production and along with a self-disparaging attitude towards her perceived deficiencies. Essentially, both Andrea and her family erase the communicative value of Andrea’s receptive skills.

Elizabeth echoes a similar experience growing up with her parents in Bernalillo, over 100 miles south of Taos. She explains, “They spoke a lot between themselves, but with us, towards
the kids, there was a lot of English. But we understood everything that they were saying, but we
never spoke it…We never picked it up ourselves to speak it fluently.” Again, Elizabeth’s words
evoke a simultaneous validation and erasure of her skills in Spanish. She makes clear that
English was directed to the kids, however, she also emphasizes that this did not prevent the
development of high levels of comprehension in Spanish. Yet, with her third “but” she
underscores once more that she and her siblings did not speak the language, thus, privileging
productive skills over receptive in a move that actually conceals her complex bilingual history
and abilities. Further complicating this picture, Elizabeth later reveals that she and her siblings
would speak a limited amount of Spanish to grandparents and that her older sister “was able to
make herself a little more clear” in Spanish. This information serves to augment the layers of
complexity in Elizabeth’s linguistic profile and calls attention, again, to the diversity within one
generational category through the comparison between Elizabeth and her sister. It also
emphasizes Elizabeth’s continued minimization of her spoken Spanish skills.

Ana experiences a similar process of erasure. However, she does have a Spanish-
dominant anciano in her family to whom she spoke in Spanish. Ana reports consistently
speaking in Spanish while growing up, therefore belonging to a 3rd generation maintenance
category, yet, both her receptive and productive abilities are dismissed. Much like Nicolás and
Juanita, she evokes the key role of the older anciano relative: “I think I was fortunate that I
always spoke Spanish with my grandmother…” Yet, she describes that when her aunts and
uncles didn’t want the kids to know what they were saying, "they’d do the Spanish, even though
I did know what they were saying.” Ironically, Ana not only understood, but also spoke Spanish
at that time. Nevertheless, these abilities are not recognized. Perhaps, because other siblings or
cousins of a similar age exhibit a shift/loss tendency, she is categorized with others in her age
group. These minimizations recall Lipski’s discussion of the “transitional generation of vestigial speakers who spoke the language in question during their childhood, but who have subsequently lost much of their native ability and their standing as true transitional bilinguals” (p. 56). The invisibility or lack of recognition of certain linguistic abilities underscores the fluid social construction of a “bilingual standing.” The fact that Andrea, Elizabeth, and Ana’s receptive abilities are minimized or completely unrecognized within their families illustrates this social construct. The abilities are even downplayed by themselves as they grapple with their own history, generational status, and linguistic insecurities.

2.3 Initial Encounters: Perceiving Proficiency on Uneven Ground

Regardless of the visibility or invisibility of the Nuevomexicanos’ receptive Spanish abilities within their families, the future Mexican partners actually depended on the Nuevomexicanos’ receptive abilities. Shifting to the moment of recontact, José (Ana’s husband) explains,

_Siempre le hicimos la lucha, o sea ella le hizo la lucha de hablar español, porque yo no hablaba nada de inglés. Y fue como ella aprendió más, como fue aprendiendo más y más, pero ella tenía más posibilidad que yo, porque ella sí entendía lo que yo le decía, no podía hablar mucho, pero sí entendía lo que yo decía._

[We always made an effort, I mean she made the effort to speak Spanish, because I did not speak English. And that is how she learned more, how she began to learn more and more, but she had more of a possibility for learning than me, because she did understand what I said, she couldn’t speak much, but she understood what I said.] Through the “tenía más posibilidad que yo” phrase, José acknowledges Ana’s high levels of comprehension and the history that gave birth to this comprehension. José acknowledges that
Ana already had an advantage: her generational status within the contact generation framework. Although he recognizes and depends on her comprehension, Ana’s productive abilities remain somewhat unrecognizable to her future husband. José explains “no podía hablar mucho.” Like her family, José minimizes Ana’s productive skills. We know that Ana’s communication with her grandmother took place solely in Spanish, yet, these speaking abilities remain invisible to José.

Similarly, Elizabeth’s husband, Pancho, describes his wife’s linguistic profile. He states, “Ahora con mi esposa, cuando recién la conocí a ella, pues ella no hablaba español; yo hablaba muy poquito inglés; entonces ahí nos fuimos poco a poco, ¿no? [Now with my wife, when I first met her, well she didn’t speak Spanish; and I spoke very little English; so there we went, little by little, no?]” Pancho is clear that Elizabeth did not speak any Spanish. However, when asked about her experiences growing up, Elizabeth denotes some limited Spanish speaking to grandparents. She states, “We had to. We communicated what little we could in Spanish, but it wasn’t a lot.” Although Elizabeth clearly believes that her Spanish “was not there,” her family’s long-term relationship with Spanish allowed for the development of a set of linguistic resources in Spanish. This skill set may have been uneven, but it was present nonetheless.

Gabriela recognizes these linguistic resources in her future husband, Nicolás, when answering her family’s questions about whether or not Nicolás could speak Spanish. She remembers the conversation:

Nomás dijeron, ‘¿Y habla español? Porque si es gringo, ya estuvo de que no nos vamos a poder comunicar con él,’ y les dije, no, sí, habla español, mocho les dije pero lo habla les dije. Pues sus abuelitos hablan español y su mamá también, pero lo hablan mocho, como aquí en Nuevo México. Ya cuando lo conozcan lo van a ver.
[They just said, ‘Does he speak Spanish?’ Because if he is gringo, we won’t be able to communicate with him,’ and I told him, no, yes, he does speak Spanish, mocho, I told them, but he does speak as they speak in New Mexico. When you meet him you will see.]

Although she does acknowledge both Nicolás’s speaking skills and the intergenerational history of Spanish in his family, she qualifies his Spanish with the term “mocho.” Here we see the positioning of Nicolás and his family’s Spanish as somewhat haphazard, unsophisticated, and not completely competent.

Additionally, the comments of Gabriela, and the other Mexican partners, draw us back to the discussion of one’s Spanish being “there.” Nicolás describes his Spanish as “el español de aquí. [Spanish from here.]” In a similar vein, recall when Francisco recounts his linguistic tendencies growing up. He states, “I only knew Spanish, Spanish de aquí.” It is significant that Nicolás, Francisco, and Juanita speak of their high proficiency in Spanish, but also find it necessary to qualify the Spanish they knew well as “el español de aquí.” Juanita describes the Spanish she spoke growing up as “really good New Mexican Spanish.” Yet, when José Luis (Juanita’s husband) remembers his wife’s Spanish in their first encounter, he characterizes her language as “really bad.” It seems that even when the Nuevomexicano partners perceive their Spanish to be “there” the Mexican partners’ opinions diverge from this perception. There seems to be a moving target. Yet, returning to Gabriela’s account of her initial interactions with Nicolás she remembers that the day she met Nicolás “estuvimos platicando como unas cinco horas yo creo. [We were talking for like five hours I think.]” It is significant that despite a perception of Nicolás’s New Mexican Spanish as being mocho, the tension between “here” and “there” does not impede communication.
The deitic use of the adverbs “here” and “there” by the Nuevomexicano participants elucidate some key connections between place, proficiency, and Latinidad. “There” seems to point outside of New Mexico and New Mexican Spanish. The Nuevomexicano partners would not feel the need to distinguish their Spanish as Spanish “de aquí” if there were not some other reference point or some other Spanish for which it might be mistaken. Francisco underscores this point when he explains that upon meeting his wife he became aware that “the Spanish from over there is different ‘cause we got the lazy Spanish.” The Nuevomexicano participants use the distinction of “aquí” as a strategy to not overstate their proficiency in light of the exposure to Mexican Spanish that they have received through recontact. This strategy illustrates how recontact facilitates a process of inter-Latino knowledge construction, a key tenet of Latinidad (Aparicio, 2003). Yet, the results of this knowledge production in the context of the uses of “here” and “there” highlight an activation of the “competing authenticities” of Latinidad through Spanish. Additionally, it seems that a process of what Zentella (1995) has termed “chiquitafication” is occurring between these two Latino groups. Zentella explains that chiquitafication “diminishes the complexity of the languages and cultures of the more than 22 million Latinos who reside in the U.S., and the repercussions of that process for their linguistic security” (1995, p. 3). Zentella references this process as a dynamic occurring between dominant U.S. Anglo culture and Latinos. However, it is clear that these dynamic spaces of inter-Latino contact within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano unions add a new layer to the practice of chiquitification. That is, Mexican immigrants, like Anglo Americans, diminish the linguistic value of U.S Spanish. The Nuevomexicanos’ use of “aquí” or “here” responds to the

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10 This was the figure in the year 1995 when Zentella first presented the notion of “chiquitification.” According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2012) this figure is now over 50 million.
chiquitification of their linguistic history and proficiency as well as their own linguistic dispossession (Aparicio, 2000).

I do not present theses differing perceptions of linguistic skills between the romantic couples in order to pit one account against another. My goal is not to arrive at some absolute “truth.” However, I think it is important to draw attention to the complex generational status of the Nuevomexicano partners and to elucidate the moments of erasure, recognition, and, many times, judgment of the linguistic abilities and histories embedded within the generational profiles. Unpacking the diverse and complicated generational status of the Nuevomexicano partners provides a lens through which to view the intergenerational persistence of Spanish and this persistence serves as an important element within the continuous relationship of recontact. Through applying the Villa and Rivera-Mills model to the participants’ linguistic profiles, it is my hope that we are better equipped to move forward in the analysis of the recontact process due to a deeper understanding of the ground on which the process begins. The tensions between perceptions of linguistic ability among the Mexican and Nuevomexicano partners highlight the unevenness of this ground. Yet, the tensions actually serve as a fundamental feature of recontact illuminating struggle, power differentials, and simultaneous moments of erasure and recognition.

2.4 “I’m not losing it as much ‘cause I married a Mexican’: Gauging Recontact

When we met, I really didn’t know Spanish so how we got together I don’t know… We met, actually, through church. I always went to the church, the Presbyterian Church in Placitas and him and his family were helping to rebuild the church there. He was living with a family there in Placitas and they’d take him to church and we’d see him working on the church until one day he caught my eye because he always said, “I would look at
you and you never looked at me.” I’m sorry, but you just didn’t catch my eye. Till one day he did. It was funny because it was for an enchilada dinner and I was like, “Go tell him I want to talk to him.” I was telling it to my sister because my sister spoke more Spanish than I did so she kind of made herself a little more clear. She goes, “Okay.” There she goes and she’s all, “My sister wants to talk to you.” He was like, “Okay.” So then he comes over and with what little English he knew, “Let’s go for a walk.” Okay, let’s go for a walk. So then we went for a walk and were just very simple, basic, just barely conversating. But that’s how we got together.

Elizabeth’s retelling of the initial interactions between herself and Pancho highlight the gradual pace of recontact. Her emphasis on words such as *basic, simple,* and *barely* underscore this slow and steady process. I would like to juxtapose this account of her linguistic tendencies during her initial meeting with Pancho with the description of her present communication with Pancho’s family. Elizabeth explains,

“I couldn’t communicate very much because my Spanish just was not there and so I would just speak to them very minimal… ‘Hola. ¿Cómo estás?’ And that’s like about it….Right now, my Spanish isn’t all that great either. Still, it’s tremendous compared to where I started but it’s still not fluent. It’s gotten a lot easier for me to talk with his family, his sister, his dad, his mom, all of them. It’s gotten a lot easier for me to talk with them. Now we can have, at least, a full conversation instead of just, ‘Hola. ¿Cómo estás?’”

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11 The use of the term “conversating” reveals a transculturative effect of Spanish influence on Elizabeth’s English. “Conversating” seems to function as a loan-word from the Spanish “conversando.”
Elizabeth’s narrative clearly emphasizes the linguistic implications of recontact in her daily life. Elizabeth’s walk with Pancho evolves into a long-term relationship in which she expands her network of individuals to whom she speaks Spanish. Her increased use of Spanish allows her to improve her communication with her in-laws, despite the fact that her Spanish may not match her own notion of “great” or “fluent.” How do we describe what occurred in the space from the night of the enchilada dinner to Elizabeth’s present day interactions with Pancho and his family? José’s use of the phrase “siempre le hicimos la lucha,” Pía’s words, “gracias a Dios pues lo logramos poco a poco,” and Pancho’s description, “nos fuimos poco a poco” shed light on the daily and gradual work that characterize this space. It is in these phrases that reference patience, struggle, and achievement that we see the inner workings of the long-term process of recontact. Though it is impossible to document all of the linguistic struggles, difficulties, and achievements between the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples, in what follows, I document several indicators of current language tendencies among the Nuevomexicano participants. I report on the change in the Nuevomexicanos’ Spanish-speaking social network since beginning their relationships with their Mexican partners. I also discuss the self-reports of the percentage of Spanish used in a typical week by the Nuevomexicano partners, as well as the ratings of their own Spanish skills. I believe that these indicators of language use provide some specific ways to gauge the impact of recontact on the lives of the Nuevomexicanos.

Because the mixture of Spanish and English is a daily reality of communication among many in northern New Mexico, it was difficult to gauge with whom the Nuevomexicano partners may have interacted exclusively in Spanish before coming into contact with their Mexican partners. For this reason, I used the phrase “mostly in Spanish,” because this is the way that the
participants described their interactions with these individuals. With this in mind, the table below shows several significant trends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuevomexicano (NMX) Participant</th>
<th>Members of Monolingual Spanish-Speaking Network before meeting partner</th>
<th>Members of Monolingual Spanish-Speaking Network after meeting partner</th>
<th>% Spanish in a Typical Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>Majority of social network in Spanish</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>Parents, extended family, Mexican friends of father</td>
<td>Husband’s family, husband, son, community</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>Parents, aunts, uncles, brother</td>
<td>Wife, all of wife’s family, best friends, some people at work</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolás</td>
<td>Grandmother, mother</td>
<td>Wife and wife’s family</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juanita</td>
<td>Grandma, Mexican Jesuit seminarians</td>
<td>Husband, husband’s family, daughters until they started school, clients at work</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>No one</td>
<td>Husband’s mother, brothers in-law and sisters in-law</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>No one</td>
<td>Husband’s family, husband sometimes, son sometimes, clients at work sometimes</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>Mom, stepdad, ex-husband</td>
<td>Husband, kids, mother, stepdad, partner’s family</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout their relationship with their husbands, Elizabeth and Andrea have created an entirely new network of individuals with whom they interact solely in Spanish. No such network existed before contact with their romantic partners. Ana, Nicolás, and Juanita each had 1-2 individuals
in their Spanish-speaking network before initiating the relationship with their Mexican partners. However, some of these individuals were the older relative from the contact generation that passed away before, or soon after, meeting their spouse. As a result of the recontact process, Ana, Nicolás, and Juanita drastically expand their Spanish-speaking networks to include their husbands, their husband’s family, and individuals in their respective workplaces. Nicolás’s wife, Gabriela, notices her husband’s increased use due to having a large network of individuals with whom to speak Spanish. She explains, “Pero como te digo, él ha mejorado mucho para su manera de hablarlo…pero yo digo que es por eso, de cómo lo está practicando, y luego como convive con más gente también que habla español…[But I tell you, he has greatly improved his way of speaking Spanish, I tell you that it is because of how he practices and then he spends more time with people who speak Spanish.]” Penelope, Diana, and Francisco already had a network with whom they interacted mostly in Spanish before meeting their partners. However, the romantic relationship expanded this network to include their spouses and their spouses’ family. Notably, Francisco stated that currently his two best friends are Mexican and this is due to his wife’s influence. He interacts solely in Spanish with these best friends. The only individual who seemed to experience no change in his Spanish speaking network was Juan. Juan reports maintaining roughly the same size Spanish-speaking network throughout his entire life. If anything has changed, it has been a slight increase in his English use due to having to speak to his grandchildren in English. He explains, “Mi esposa sabía más inglés que yo12. Todo siempre en español…pero más inglés que antes con los nietos. [My wife knew more English than me.

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12 Juan and Marta’s partnership was unique in that both claimed that Marta knew more English when than Juan when they met. It appears that this is due to Marta arriving to Albuquerque as a pre-teen and attending junior high and high school in monolingual English classrooms, whereas despite efforts to eradicate Spanish from northern New Mexico schools, Spanish still dominated Juan’s interactions through high school.
Everything was always in Spanish, but now more English than before because of the grandchildren.]” Juan is also the oldest participant in this study. He is the only member of the 2nd generation maintenance category and has lived in rural areas of northern New Mexico for much of his life. These factors inevitably play a part in the stability of his Spanish use and Spanish language network throughout his life.

2.5 Reported Weekly Spanish Use

The Nuevomexicano participants’ reported use of Spanish in a typical week varies from 10% to 65%. Andrea reports the lowest percentage (10%) of Spanish use. However, if we consider that Andrea had no one with whom she spoke Spanish before meeting her husband, this is quite a change. The fact that all of the Nuevomexicano participants do, in fact, report a regular weekly use of Spanish is significant. Francisco underscores this fact when he laments the loss of Spanish around him: “I figure once a person needs to go to school to learn your own language, something is wrong, don’t you think? That’s wrong.” When I asked him if he thought he was losing Spanish he replied: “not as much because I married a Mexican but I would’ve been losing it.” Francisco’s use of “would’ve” emphasizes the role his wife has played in his language maintenance. In his estimation, those of his peer group, including his sister, have shifted to English. He continues, “Oh my sister she’s kinda lost it, I don’t know why. Se casó con un González that don’t speak no Spanish… if I call my sister now… she will just talk to me in English only.” Again, considering each Nuevomexicano participant’s complex generational status and the language shift trends that precede them, the presence of the Mexican partner in the Nuevomexicano’s life contributes to the regular use of Spanish on a weekly basis.

It is important to mention that 9 out of the 10 Nuevomexicano partners have made regular trips with his or her Mexican partner to Mexico throughout their relationship. Each of these nine
couples would visit their Mexican partner’s hometown at least once a year, with some couples making up to six trips a year. The trips would last anywhere from a weekend to two weeks. When in Mexico, the percentage of reported Spanish use was consistently 100%. This did not come without its challenges as José explains: “Ella al principio tenía un poco de problema cuando íbamos para allá, como nunca había practicado 100% el español, allá tenía que…esforzarse un poquito. [At first she had a few problems when we would go there since she had never practiced 100% Spanish, there she had to make a little bit of an effort.]” These brief periods of 100% Spanish indicate the key role of the Nuevomexicano partner’s in-laws in forming his/her network of Spanish speakers. Notably, the frequency of trips to Mexico has changed within the last five years for all of the couples due to increased violence in Mexico or due to the fact that their in-laws have moved to New Mexico.

2.6 **Rating of Skills**

Although we have no way of knowing how the Nuevomexicano participants would have rated their speaking, comprehension, reading, and writing skills before contact with their Mexican partner, the participants’ ratings of current Spanish language skills do reveal their perceived linguistic strengths and weaknesses. As may be expected due to the generational histories of the Nuevomexicano respondents, with the exception of Andrea, the participants give the highest rating to their comprehension skills. An additional, somewhat expected, finding is that both Andrea and Elizabeth report relatively low skill levels across the four areas. Recall that both Elizabeth and Andrea belong to the “third-generation loss/shift category” and that neither of them spoke of an older relative with whom they conversed in Spanish while growing up. However, some participants within the maintenance generations also report low skill levels.

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13 Five of these respondents rated comprehension and another skill with the same highest rating.
Among the nine respondents, Elizabeth assigns the lowest rating to her spoken Spanish (a rating of 3). Her husband Pancho corroborates this rating when he comments, “Y ella no habla el español bien todavía, pero sí le hace mucho más la lucha.” Nicolás, Diana, and Andrea rate their spoken Spanish with the second lowest rating among the nine of 7. Andrea belongs to a shift designation and this lower rating is not surprising in her case. However, Nicolás and Diana both belong to a maintenance designation and they also perceive their spoken Spanish at a 7. These ratings highlight the variability within self-evaluations and, as many studies of Spanish heritage learners have shown\(^\text{14}\), potentially point to an internalized sense of linguistic deficiency. Juanita and Ana both give their spoken Spanish an 8, while Juan, Penelope, and Francisco rate their Spanish with the highest number of 10. It is notable that all of the respondents who do not rate their spoken Spanish at a ten express at some point throughout the interviews that their Spanish is still “not there” or “not great,” or where they would like it to be. These respondents clearly denote that their Spanish is not at the level of their Mexican partners or in-laws. Again, we see the discussion of “here” and “there” and the manifestation of Mexican Spanish and Mexico as a reference point for New Mexican Spanish. However, it is important to note that 5 of the 9 (56%) of the Nuevomexicano respondents rate “speaking” as their highest skill. Additionally, with the exception of Diana, no one rates “speaking” as their lowest skill. Finally, 6 of the 9 (67%) Nuevomexicano respondents rate their writing and/or reading as their least proficient skill which correlates with a lack of access to formal Spanish language education and New Mexico’s legacy of Spanish language eradication from the public school system (Gonzales-Berry, 2000). These skill ratings are summarized in Table V.

\(^{14}\) See Beaudrie (2009) and Ducar (2008) to name a few. Additionally, Gloria Anzaldúa’s (1987) concept of “linguistic terrorism” may also be at work in this context.
TABLE V  
RATING OF SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaking Skills</th>
<th>Comprehension Skills</th>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
<th>Writing Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicolás</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juanita</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7 **Reacquisition and Communal Recontact**

Though perhaps momentary and localized in the grand scheme of language maintenance and loss, the Nuevomexicano partners’ recontact experience represents a potential halt in language shift. The recontact experience assigns the Nuevomexicanos to a “reacquisition generation.” According to Villa and Rivera-Mills, “This concept recognizes that individuals who had limited, dwindling or no abilities in Spanish may re-acquire it, to then pass it on to their children (or not)” (p. 32). The recontact process is the key ingredient in creating this reacquisition generation. In the cases of Elizabeth and Andrea, we most definitely see instances of limited abilities that then change shape with both women experiencing a subsequent reinfusion of Spanish into their lives. The remaining partners may never have seen a complete dwindling or fading of Spanish in their lives, yet the recontact process has allowed for a reacquisition of a regular sustained use of the language and, more importantly, a sustained communicative need to continue the maintenance of Spanish.
The presence of the Mexican partner in the respective communities in which the couples reside also creates recontact and, subsequently, reacquisition opportunities beyond the interactions of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couple. The relationship has linguistic implications for both the extended family and the surrounding community. For example, Elizabeth references the fact that her parents and Pancho “could conversate\(^\text{15}\) any time. They just ‘wedee wedee wedee.’ So him and my mom would get together and just go to town talking away.” Andrea also recounts that her mom likes to talk to her husband in Spanish. Similarly, José shares the experience that his in-laws have always enjoyed speaking to him in Spanish:

Todos me hablaban español, todos, mi suegra y los hermanos de ella…Los cuñados también hablaban español, porque sí saben poquito, pero sí me hablaban español siempre.

Pues como entonces pues yo no sabia absolutamente nada, o sea nada, nada…siempre le hicieron la lucha de hablar conmigo.

[Everyone spoke to me in Spanish, everyone, my mother-in-law and her brothers…My brothers and sisters-in-law also spoke Spanish, because they do know a little bit, but they always did speak to me in Spanish. Well, back then I knew absolutely nothing, I mean nothing, nothing…they always made the effort to speak with me.]

In this instance, the reference to “haciendo la lucha” points to Ana’s family’s desire to increase their Spanish language use and, perhaps, turn around tendencies of shift within their own linguistic profiles. It is also significant that consistently in the couples’ interviews both the Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos reference the special relationship that the Mexican partner has/had with an older parent or grandparent of the Nuevomexicano partner. Nicolás (NMX) explains his grandmother’s reaction to his wife: “Oh my grandmother, she loved her! Oh yes!

\(^\text{15}\) The use of the term “conversate” again reveals the transculturative effect of Spanish on Elizabeth’s English.
She had somebody that she could carry a full conversation in Spanish with.” The Mexican partner not only reactivates or increases the use of Spanish in the Nuevomexicano partner’s daily language patterns, but also provides opportunities for older members of the contact generation to continue their use of Spanish.

The presence of the Mexican partner in the communities in which these couples reside provides the opportunity for other Nuevomexicanos to expand their social network of Spanish speakers as well. When Gabriela and Nicolás’s daughters began school, Gabriela recalls that the teachers encouraged her to be part of the classroom. She explains, “Ya enseguida me decía la maestra: ‘Quédate un rato, unas dos o tres horas aquí para que nos enseñes español’…. Ella hablaba en español, aja no muy bien, ¿verdad?, pero sí… me podía comunicar mejor con ella.

[Right away the teacher told me: ‘Stay a while, two or three hours here so that you can teach us Spanish..She spoke Spanish, but not very well, right?, but yes, I could communicate better with her.]” The Nuevomexicana teachers in the local school viewed Gabriela as a resource to re-activate and build upon their own knowledge base of Spanish. Indeed, Valdés (2011) highlights the necessity of capitalizing on community and educational resources in maintaining a minority language past the second-generation. Similarly, Pía describes how community members in Las Vegas take advantage of the opportunity to converse with her in Spanish:

Entonces, lo que a veces nos pasa, porque te digo, me pasa a mí, uno trata de practicar su inglés, y si vas al correo o vas a la tienda, y quieres pedir algo en inglés, nuestro acento es muy marcado, ¿no?, con el inglés; te contestan en español.

[So, what happens to us sometimes, or at least it happens to me, you try to practice your English, and if you go to the post office or you go to the store, and you want to ask for...]}
something in English, our accent is very marked in English, right? They answer you in English.]

Not only do Pía’s comments demonstrate the intergenerational persistence of Spanish in the Las Vegas community, but they also illustrate how the Mexican partners put into motion a process of recontact that creates a ripple effect with an impact far beyond their own romantic relationship. One of these “ripples” even extends towards other Mexicans in the community. In re-activating the Spanish language use in their Nuevomexicano partners, the Mexican partners facilitate the Nuevomexicanos acting as a bridge between Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans in the community.

Juanita tells of an instance when she was registering her granddaughter for school. She explains, “…and the day we went to go register her, a lady came in with her son or nephew, I don’t know who he was. And she addressed the lady at the front of the counter and said, ‘alguien habla español?’ and the lady looked at her, ‘uhmmm.’ She was like, ‘un momento, let me find somebody.’ And I stood up and said, I can translate for you. And she goes, ‘that’d be awesome.’” The communal effect of recontact has the potential to be quite “awesome.” The presence of the Mexican partner in communities with an intergenerational persistence of Spanish allows for concrete opportunities for sustained recontact outside of the romantic relationship that may in turn contribute to a more widespread reacquisition generation in these locales.

2.8 **Uncovering the Transculturative Dimension of Recontact**

Up to this point I have framed the notion of recontact in terms of initial encounters, tensions, and the linguistic influence within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano relationship. My analysis has primarily focused on the linguistic implications from the perspective of the Nuevomexicano partner. Given that recontact has previously been framed in terms of language maintenance and revitalization, it has been relevant to focus on the ways in which these romantic
relationships impact the linguistic trajectories of the partners who have experienced more Spanish language shift. This led me to an in-depth analysis of the language use effects of recontact on the Nuevomexicano partners. Yet, if we are to truly consider the cultural dimensions of influence within the Cisneros and Leone (1983) definition of recontact, we must view influence as multi-directional. In other words, we have to unpack recontact in terms of mutual influence.

Instead of giving the impression that recontact is simply a one-way process, I would like to draw attention to a transculturative feature within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano partnerships that speaks to a more circular interplay of cultural influence. This interplay emphasizes cultural movement rather than fixedness in a way that allows for the viewing of mutual influence (albeit uneven). I argue that recontact is always impacting both Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos. Diana Taylor’s (1991) conceptualization of transculturation provides a useful framework for this idea. She explains that transculturation “allows the ‘minor’ culture (in the sense of positionally marginalized) an impact on the dominant one, although the interactions are not, strictly speaking, ‘dialogic’ or ‘dialectical.’ Transculturation suggests a shifting or circulating pattern of cultural transference” (p. 108). Taylor’s theory allows for the possibility that recontact’s influence exists simultaneously within and between both groups. However, the interactions of Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos in northern New Mexico problematize Taylor’s designation of “minor” and “major” cultures. In the spirit of Zentella’s (1995) notion of chiquitification and Aparicio’s (1998) examination of linguistic power differentials, both groups are positionally marginalized by dominant Anglo culture. Yet, what happens when we are exploring the dynamics between two “minor” cultures? The framework of Latinidad provides the tools to examine these inter-Latino convergences, divergences, and competing authenticities and ultimately renders any
notion of fixed “major” and “minor” positions as irrelevant. The major and minor positions continually shift as power discrepancies and inter-Latino chiquitafications and tropicalizations occur between the two “minor” culture groups. Taylor emphasizes the constant “cultural movements, shifts, and reciprocities” at work in transculturation and the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples allow for the exploration of a movement-oriented influence that dismantles fixed categories.

How exactly does this transculturative element of the recontact process play out between the Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos? Let’s consider the case of reacquisition. I mentioned earlier that the Nuevomexicano partners belong to what Villa and Rivera-Mills term a “reacquisition generation.” Nevertheless, the Nuevomexicano partners consistently articulate a sensitivity towards the specific variety of Spanish that they are (re) acquiring, reminding us that reacquisition (and recontact) do not occur outside of the disparate conditions of a contact zone. These processes are not neutral. Penelope explains, “I speak more Mexican than I do Spanish northern,16 and, like I tell you, that bothers me.” Diana also speaks of an overtaking of Mexican Spanish throughout the course of her relationship with her husband. She explains, “I’ve learned to talk the Mexican Spanish, you know, so---because I don’t use the New Mexico Spanish anymore.” In fact, 9 of the 10 Nuevomexicano partners express some type of predominance of Mexican Spanish in their present daily lives. Penelope laments this predominance. When asked which word she knows for “dress” in Spanish, Penelope responds that she knows both “túnico” (the NM variant) and “vestido.” She explains emphatically, “I don’t say túnico very much anymore…and so all of the terms are being lost, because I didn’t teach my kids those terms so that their grandparents on their dad’s side and their dad would understand and that makes me

16 Penelope is referring to northern New Mexican Spanish in this instance.
angry. It really makes me angry with myself because I see it getting more lost.” In this case of influence we see perceived power differentials, notions of dominance, and a sense of loss. In the explanation of their lexical choices, Andrea and Juanita also express a sense that New Mexico Spanish is being relegated to the past. Andrea explains that she used the word nodriza\textsuperscript{17} “pienso que cuando yo estaba joven y enfermera ahora que estoy adulta.” [I think when I was younger and enfermera now that I am an adult.]” And again with the word for dress she clarifies, “antes túnico y ahora vestido.” [before túnico and now vestido.]” Lastly, with the word for peas she states, “antes alberjón y hora chicharos…ahora uso chicharos mejor.” Andrea’s explanation for most frequent lexical use certainly locates New Mexican Spanish in her past. Similarly, Juanita clarifies that “túnico is just gone. I say vestido now.” Likewise upon seeing a photo for apricot she states, “that was albarcoques.” Like Andrea, Juanita’s words construct an oppositional relationship in which New Mexico Spanish is aligned with the past and Mexican Spanish is aligned with the present. This opposition certainly depicts Nuevomexicano culture as the positionally “minor” culture in this case.

These accounts prompt the question, does Mexican Spanish actually replace New Mexican Spanish? Is this a manifestation of what Bills (1999) refers to as a “Mexicanization” of New Mexican Spanish? Perhaps, this is a case of long-term language accommodation (Giles and Smith, 1979; Trudgill, 1986). Does the influence of the Mexican partners on northern New Mexican partners ultimately result in the acquisition of Mexican Spanish at the expense of New Mexican Spanish? Before exploring the answer to this question further, it is important to note that although my participants may refer to “Mexican Spanish” as if only one homogenous dialect of Mexican Spanish existed, regional variation in Mexico is considerable and multiple Spanish

\textsuperscript{17} Nodriza refers to “nurse” in New Mexican Spanish. However, in most other Spanish dialects it translates to “wet-nurse.”
dialects exist. Lipski notes that in order to understand the Mexican Spanish spoken in the United States, “it is necessary to take a closer look at dialect differentiation within Mexico, particularly the speech of economically distressed regions, which have contributed to the majority of Mexican immigrants to the United States in the last half century or so” (p. 84). Therefore, certain regions may contribute to the specific dialects of Mexican Spanish spoken by Mexican immigrants in the United States, however, this does not imply that dialect differentiation does not exist in Mexico. This is important to keep in mind as my participants’ use of the phrase “Mexican Spanish” may not imply this dialect diversity.

Returning to the notion of influence, I suggest that the overwhelming influence that the Nuevomexicano partners are perceiving is more complicated than simply a binary framework of Mexican Spanish vs. New Mexican Spanish in which the Mexican partners’ language and experience remains unaffected by the Nuevomexicano partner. This is clear when we consider a similar dynamic between dominance and loss occurring with Marta. She explains her struggles with using Mexican Spanish in her relationship with her Nuevomexicano husband, Juan. She remembers,

*Si habían cosas que eran duras al principio...*habían cosas que eran así que no nos entendiamos...y en veces cuando me enojaba con él y le hablaba en mexicano, en mi mexicano y luego me decía, 'si no me vas a hablar bien no me hables’...Casi no me dejó hablar mi mexicano, tenía que aprender el de él...cuando le hablaba a él en mi español, se enojaba...Porque no me entendía. Y luego me decía él, 'si no me vas a hablar bien, no me hables,’ porque yo estaba impuesta a todas las cosas en mexicano mío. [There were things that were hard at first…there were things that we did not understand…and sometimes when I got angry with him and I spoke to him in Spanish, in
my Spanish and then he would say, ‘if you’re not going to speak well to me, then don’t speak,’….He rarely let me speak my Spanish, I had to learn his….when I spoke to him in my Spanish, he would get mad…because he didn’t understand me. And then he would tell me, ‘if you’re not going to speak well to me, then don’t speak,’ because I was used to everything being in my Spanish.]

It is significant that in the course of Marta’s description she repeats Juan’s words to her twice: “If you’re not going to speak well to me, then don’t speak.” These are strong and scolding words. Juan asserts the dominance of Nuevomexicano Spanish over Marta’s Mexican Spanish as he positions Marta’s mexicano as incorrect and unacceptable. In addition to the linguistic hierarchy being established here, there also seems to be a larger gender dynamic at work that propels Juan’s attempt to regulate Marta’s Spanish18. Marta’s use of the phrase “cosas duras” and her use of possessive pronouns in denoting “mi mexicano” and “mi español” underscores a deep and personal connection to her variety of Spanish and a sense of loss as it is subordinated in her relationship with Juan. The case of Juan and Marta illustrates that roles of “major” and “minor” culture in these inter-Latino dynamics are not fixed as we see the strong influence of Nuevomexicano Spanish in Marta’s life.

With this shifting notion of influence and dominance in mind, I would like to return to the lexical choices of Andrea and Juanita. Although the Nuevomexicano partners clarify that they tend to use more, if not exclusively, Mexican Spanish in their daily lives, it is significant that when presented with the pictures in the lexical elicitation activity (to be explained in more detail in Chapter 3), the majority of the Nuevomexicano participants still offer Nuevomexicano Spanish

18 Although not the focus of this chapter, it is important to note that issues of gender and male dominance are a constant theme throughout Marta and Juan’s interview. These issues of gender were more prevalent in their interview than in any other.
variants first. Six out of nine of the Nuevomexicano participants offered the Nuevomexicano variant first for over half of the tokens. Again, this does not mean that simply because they uttered these words first that they are the words they use most frequently (Potowski, 2010: 590). However, it is noteworthy that although the speakers perceive an erasing of New Mexican Spanish, it is actually recalled when talking about the Mexican variant. Andrea and Juanita do not mention the Mexican variant without recalling the New Mexican lexical choice. This process of recall troubles the construction of an oppositional relationship between Mexican Spanish vs. New Mexican Spanish. Taylor emphasizes that “transculturation… does not lock cultures into binaries; it eschews simple oppositions…. ” Indeed, the Nuevomexicano partner may be locating the New Mexican Spanish in the past and the Mexican variant in the present, yet the distance between past and present is minimized as both are recalled almost simultaneously. When I asked Juanita about the variety of Spanish in which she feels most proficient she responds, “Yeah, I do better with the Mexican.” I then asked her if she has trouble communicating with other people from New Mexico in Spanish. She explains, “It comes back. It’s like riding a bike… it’s always there.” Juanita’s words illustrate a continuous presence and a vitality of New Mexican Spanish within her linguistic repertoire. Even amidst the lamenting of its loss, New Mexican Spanish stays present. In a sense, the use of a Mexican variant recalls the New Mexican variant, effectively inserting one in the other.

In this same vein, there is an interesting and analogous process occurring with the Mexican partners. Upon remembering initial communication with Francisco, Pía recounts the difficulties she experienced, particularly with Francisco’s vocabulary. She states, “Y fue difícil al principio, porque él hablaba un español nuevomexicano, y te digo, con palabras que yo no entendía qué era lo que me quería decir; entonces fue difícil. [It was difficult at first, because he
spoke a New Mexican Spanish, and I tell you, with words that I didn’t understand what he was trying to tell me; so it was difficult.” To Pía, Francisco’s Spanish is foreign. Yet, as Pía and Francisco’s relationship progresses, Pía tells of an important discovery. She explains, “Yo jamás había escuchado estas palabras, pero mi mamá cuando empezó a venir a visitarme me decía, ‘sí mija, mi abuelito usaba esa palabra. Yo las escuchaba en mi casa.’ Mi mamá no se sorprendía. [I had never heard these words, but my mom when she started to come and visit me would tell me, “Yes mija, my grandfather would use that word. I would hear those words at home.’ My mom was not surprised.”] The words of Pía’s mother create a temporal connection and a sense of linguistic solidarity between Mexican and New Mexican Spanish lexicon. The fact that Pía’s Nuevomexicano husband and in-laws actually speak like her own great-grandparents is actually a marker of familiarity and denotes a much older cultural flow between northern New Mexico and Mexico. When Francisco first begins to pursue Pía, Pía tells him: “¿Por qué no buscas a una muchacha pues de Las Vegas, de tu cultura, tu idioma? [Why don’t you look for a girl from Las Vegas, from your culture, your language?]”. Ironically, Francisco’s culture and language are more a part of Pía than she imagined. What Pía initially perceived as foreign and unfamiliar indexes a deep relationship of influence that recalls a larger linguistic history and linguistic dispossession that confuses any sense of one-way influence. New Mexican Spanish and Mexican Spanish are always already linked.

Pía’s discovery of a historical linguistic connection to her Nuevomexicano partner, along with the recall of Nuevomexicano lexical choices when utilizing Mexican words, draws attention to moments of linguistic Latinidad occurring within this transculturative process. These moments call to mind (post) colonial analogies (Aparicio, 2003, p. 94), similar histories, and displacements between Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans. For example, as Andrea categorizes
túnico with antes and as Juanita states that the word “túnico” is “just gone” we remember the linguistic dispossession experienced in northern New Mexico. Francisco’s and Juan’s experiences again manifest themselves and evoke Nuevomexicanos’ deterritorialization from a linguistic home. Penelope’s sense of loss is real and it references the intergenerational language loss within her linguistic history. If cultural deterritorialization “marks a transformation in the relationship between culture and territory…” (Hopper, p. 52) then this is an instance of linguistic deterritorialization that marks a transformation in the relationship between language and territory. The history of Spanish language repression in New Mexico references a deterritorialization from a linguistic home even while remaining in the same land or territory. Yet, the very presence of Mexican words and Mexican partners in the Nuevomexicanos’ lives represents a related process of deterritorialization experienced by Mexicanos from their geographic homelands through their migration to northern New Mexico. This deterritorialization also recalls simultaneous dispossessions from actual tierras: Mexico’s loss of half of its territory in 1848 and Nuevomexicanos’ continual loss of historic lands through contested land grants. These analogous post-colonial conditions (Aparicio, 2003, p. 94) position both Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos as “minor” cultures.

Yet, the knowledge production that occurs within the couples’ relationships disrupts this positioning. Consider Pancho’s (MX) sensitivity to the history of linguistic oppression in northern New Mexico. He explains, “pues la gente nacida de aquí, que aquellos años tú sabes que no los dejaban ni hablar español en las escuelas, entonces mucho menos estudiarlo.” Or think about Andrea’s impulse to “get like really defensive over Mexican people’s rights.” The Mexican and Nuevomexicano partners gain an understanding of their partner’s sociolinguistic and cultural histories thus empowering them to challenge the legacy of these segmented
histories. This construction of inter-Latino awareness and knowledge disrupts the “minor” culture category as these groups’ sociolinguistic histories are put into conversation with each other. Just as these histories co-exist and continuously contextualize each other, the lexical choices and linguistic varieties behave in a similar way.

These multi-layered histories of displacement, dispossession, and deterritorialization create a circular interplay of influences that center around language. Hopper explains an aspect of this interplay:

As migrants interact with locals there will be the possibility of mutual intercultural borrowings and the development of new cultural formations. Hence, cultural deterritorialization does not only affect those who are migrating, but it will also have an impact upon the culture or cultures of host countries. In sum, an important consequence of such movement is that cultures and cultural forms can inhabit or exist within other cultures, albeit often being indigenized in the process. (p.53)

Mexican and Nuevomexicano histories can inhabit each other almost seamlessly through a sharing of post-colonial and globalized conditions of deterritorialization. New Mexico and Mexico’s overlapping histories also add an additional layer of complexity to Hopper’s explanation because Mexicans migrate to a land that is not necessarily foreign. We see this through Pía’s linguistic discovery regarding her great-grandparents’ Spanish. Pía’s experience also points to an extension of Hopper’s theory: Not only do cultural forms exist within each other, but also linguistic forms. A Mexican word recalls a New Mexican word and makes it present. In this context, language serves as a tool to construct cultural memory. The recalling of words acts as what Deborah Paredez (2009) has termed a “memory circuit.” Paredez describes these circuits as “complex pathways through which currents of past histories often run alongside
Mexican lexical choices and New Mexican lexical choices intertwine in a circuit that recalls New Mexican words to the present and evokes intertwining Mexican and New Mexican histories. Through a discussion of lexical choices, Pía discovers a part of her Mexican linguistic history that is New Mexican as well. Pancho and Elizabeth learn about their partners’ histories and absorb them as part of their relationship, effectively creating a champion for each other’s history, culture, and language. In these cultural and linguistic intertwinings we see how the influence of recontact’s influence leads to a certain embedding or inhabiting of the Mexican in the Nuevomexicano and the Nuevomexicano in the Mexican. Pennycook presents this idea in terms of transculturation. He explains transculturation as “the constant processes of borrowing, bending and blending of cultures to the communicative practices of people interacting across different linguistic and communicative codes, borrowing, bending and blending languages into new modes of expression” (p. 47). This “bending and blending” of cultures leads to a new mode of expression embodied within the transculturated daily realities of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano relationship. Through the long-term recontact interactions, the process of blurring, blending, and bending leads to the embeddedness of linguistic varieties and histories within the experiences of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples. José Luis (Juanita’s husband) clarifies this concept. He states, “You come over from Mexico and then you, that’s a lot of culture over here, and then you kind of mix together and changes happen which is okay for me, I don’t mind. I like it.” These changes represent a multi-faceted transculturation process that culminates in this embedded mode of expression.

2.9 Concluding Thoughts: Reterritorialization through Recontact
Perhaps one of the most interesting ways that the transculturative dimension of recontact plays itself out is through cases of mistaken identity. Notably, language plays a central role in these stories of mistaken identity. Diana tells of being mistaken for Mexican. She explains, 

Yeah, but it’s funny, because I’m from here and a lot of people think I’m from Mexico…By the way I speak Spanish…And ask me, ‘What part of Mexico are you from?’ I’m, ‘No, I’m not from Mexico. I’m just from New Mexico. I was born in Santa Fe,’ I tell them. But there is a lot of people that they do think I was born in Mexico…I think maybe it’s just the way I speak, you know, because of the Spanish, you know.

It is fascinating that through Diana’s account we see an interesting transformation in the ways in which Nuevomexicanos are perceived to speak Spanish. In the initial encounters between the Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos, the Nuevomexicanos’ Spanish was often chiquitafied (Zentella, 1995) or diminished as “not there” or “really bad.” Yet, throughout the course of the relationship, the bending, blending, and blurring process of transculturation confuses the Nuevomexicano for the Mexican precisely through the way that the Nuevomexicano speaks.

Juanita references a similar experience. She states,

but my Spanish is to the point where people that are from Mexico, cause I work for H & R block, people that are from Mexico come into my office and they ask me, ‘what part of Mexico are you from?’ And I’m like, ‘I’m not Mexican. I was born and raised here. And they go, ‘but you don’t speak the Spanish like the people from here’.

After this description, Juanita’s husband, José Luis, interjects, “Because you are married to a Mexican!” It is precisely because of the long-term relationship and influence between the couple that this transculturative dimension of recontact becomes evident. José Luis’s influence over Juanita’s Spanish doesn’t necessarily lead to an erasing of the Nuevomexicano quality in favor of
the Mexican. Juanita clarifies quite emphatically that she was “born and raised here,” therefore keeping her Nuevomexicana identity present. However, recontact does lead to a confusion of perceptions regarding who is Mexican and who is Nuevomexicano precisely because of linguistic variety. Juanita continues:

   Even the girls at work…. I don’t know how the conversation came about that they asked me. And I’m like, ‘I’m not Mexican.’ And they’re like, ‘Yes, you are Mexican.’ And I’m like, ‘I’m not. I’m New Mexican.’ ‘But you use language from Mexico. You use a lot of sayings from Mexico.’ And I’m like, ‘yeah I had been married for so many years that you know you just pick up on it.’….but even Veronica’s kids and my nephew from Phoenix they came to find out the other day. They didn’t know I wasn’t Mexican and I’m like, ‘How come you didn’t know I wasn’t Mexican?’ and they would go, ‘We didn’t know, grandma.’ It was crazy.”

Juanita’s mistaken identity exists on several levels: among clients, co-workers, and family. What also becomes evident through Juanita’s retelling is the disbelief surrounding her identity. The apparent mismatch between the way she speaks Spanish and her Nuevomexicana identity reveals that recontact also results in a process of reterritorialization. Madrid explains reterritorialization as “a moment when the cultural meaning of given spaces is changed (even for a brief period of time) by their novel uses by a group of people different from those who use them normally” (Madrid, 2008, p. 22). These members of Juanita’s social network do not consider a Nuevomexicana to be one who “normally” uses Mexican Spanish or who sounds Mexican. Similarly, José Luis (Juanita’s husband) tells of one of his co-workers questioning his identity with the words, “are you from Mexico really?” José Luis explains that because he spoke
English and Spanglish\(^{19}\) so well, this co-worker had no idea that he was Mexican. José Luis also adds one last dimension to the notion of reterritorialization when he states, “Well, being here for so many years I feel more New Mexican than Mexican.” Not only is José Luis mistaken for New Mexican, but he actually feels more New Mexican. Through the transculturative influence of recontact, José Luis’s sense of self is transformed. José Luis is involved in a process of reterritorialization. If reterritorialization “constitutes a search for a sense of home or place,” (Hopper, p. 52) then José Luis’s homeplace becomes New Mexico.

Finally, Elizabeth’s account reveals a similar process of reterritorialization that takes place due to her long-term relationship with her Mexican partner. She explains,

> I’ve gotten now used to his Spanish so now his Spanish is more comfortable to me and I understand it all. It makes more sense to me, especially if I’m seeing a \textit{novela}. The \textit{novelas}, I love the \textit{novelas} too. But I’m sitting there watching my \textit{novela} and my mom’s all, “What’d they say? What’d they say?” Some of the words that they use, she doesn’t know because she doesn’t use them. I was like, “Oh, it means this, this, and this.” She’s all, “Oh, okay.” So, it’s just different things like that that are different.

Elizabeth’s words do not emphasize a sense of loss or dominance regarding her use of Mexican Spanish, but instead a sense of comfort and home. Not only does Mexican Spanish become her reterritorialized linguistic home, but she is also able to serve as a bridge between Mexican Spanish and her Nuevomexicana mother through her translations. Here we see a culmination of recontact. If before meeting her Mexican partner Elizabeth’s complex linguistic profile represented a legacy of Spanish language shift, the description of her novela watching reveals

\(^{19}\) In this example José Luis is referring to his ability to code-switch. I will engage in a more in-depth discussion regarding “Spanglish” and the contested use of the term in Chapter 4.
how the recontact process challenges the historical linguistic deterritorialization that Nuevomexicanos have experienced. Through a multi-directional mutual influence, Elizabeth’s linguistic profile is now marked with language revitalization, illustrating how the multi-dimensional process of recontact leads to reterritorialization.
3. FROM LANGUAGE SHIFT TO LANGUAGE SHAPING: SPANISH LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE IN THE MEXICAN-NUEVOMEXICANO CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

“I hope to God my kids learn Spanish…I wish THEY (points to her parents) would talk to them more in Spanish!” Rose makes this emphatic declaration as we sit gathered around the dining room table at Armando and Diana Jurado’s home just south of Santa Fe. Before Rose can continue, her Nuevomexicana mother responds, “We do, but they just don’t know what we’re talking about.” Rose replies, “Yeah, but that’s how they learn!” Then her Mexican father, Armando, chimes in, “El trabajo de nosotros era que aprendieran español (points to Rose). Y lo aprendieron. Now el trabajo de ellos es que enseñen a sus hijos español. [Our job was to make sure they learned Spanish. And they learned it. Now their job is to teach their children Spanish.]” Diana adds, “Yeah. It’s not up to us. It’s not going to be easy.” This lively exchange about the future of Spanish in their family highlights the Jurados’ perceptions regarding roles and responsibilities in the area of Spanish language maintenance. Diana’s words underscore the difficulties of maintaining a minority language in the U.S. The fact that the intergenerational transmission of Spanish to Rose’s children is not certain, but instead hoped for already points to the language shift occurring between generations in the family. Rose’s expectation that her parents be the ones to stimulate and teach Spanish to her children speaks to Rose’s belief that her parents are more capable in Spanish. This in turn reveals Rose’s own perception that her Spanish skills are inferior to that of her parents and serves as another indicator of intergenerational language shift and individual language attrition or incomplete acquisition.20

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20Otheguy (forthcoming) disputes the notion of “incomplete acquisition.” Whereas, Silvina Montrul (2008) attempts to account for “apparent incomplete L1 knowledge” (p. 164) through either attrition and incomplete
This pattern is not unique to this Mexican-Nuevomexicano family. Multiple studies regarding Spanish language maintenance among U.S. Latino populations over the past thirty years have concluded that, overall, there is a shift to English by the third generation and this conclusion is not limited to any one region of the U.S. Intergenerational language shift is evident in studies conducted in the Southwest, particularly New Mexico, as in Hudson-Edwards and Bills (1980); Bills, Hernández-Chávez, and Hudson (1995); Bills (1997); Bills and Vigil (1999); Bills, Hudson, Hernández-Chávez (2000); Bernal Enriquez (2000), Bills and Vigil (2008), and Jenkins (2009) as well as in California illustrated by Rivera-Mills (2001) and Hurtado and Vega (2004). Additionally, studies conducted outside the Southwest in Chicago (Potowski, 2004), Florida (García and Otheguy, 1988; Lynch, 2000), and New York (Zentella, 1997) also demonstrate a common three-generation model for language shift from Spanish to English. Many similarities to this immigrant three-generation model for language shift described by Fishman (1964) over fifty-years ago, and exhibited within the above-mentioned studies, seem to be at play in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano Jurado family. However, as I explored in the previous chapter, Nuevomexicanos do not fit neatly into traditional generational distinctions. The added layers of the contact generation model (Villa and Rivera-Mills, 2009), the recontact process, and the fact that Nuevomexicanos many times become part of a “reacquisition generation” (Villa and Rivera-Mills, 2009) problematize G1, G2, and G3 designations for the Nuevomexicano partners and Mexican-Nuevomexicano children. Yet, regardless of model or terminology, the Jurado family is aware of a reduction in Spanish language use and ability between the grandparents (Diana and Armando) and grandchildren (Rose’s children). However, acquisition, Otheguy critiques the proposal of incomplete acquisition in favor of an alternative view that frames the linguistic behavior of G2 bilingual U.S. Latinos not as error “as they are frequently described in the literature, but rather points of divergence, dialectal differences if you will, between their Spanish and that of the previous generation due to normal intergenerational language change accelerated by conditions of language contact” (p. 1).
simply chalking up the family’s story to one piece of a larger predictable pattern of Spanish language loss obscures the complexity of the family’s own awareness and agency. I suggest that the study of the Spanish language use practices of the Jurado family, and that of other Mexican-Nuevomexicano families, contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Spanish language maintenance and loss in New Mexico. In this chapter I underscore the complexity behind these language use patterns. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano accounts reveal that the families are keenly aware of their language practices and that they do not necessarily perceive language shift to be a one-way process. The families articulate their own conscious efforts to shape their language use. For example, Rose articulates a conscious decision to increase her Spanish use upon entering high school. Also, Rose and Verónica articulate high Spanish proficiency as a discriminating factor in choosing a romantic partner. Additionally, nearly half of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects have purposefully chosen professions that require Spanish proficiency. These factors individually may not add up to sustained intergenerational language maintenance, but they are significant in the trajectory of each family and allow for the exploration of complex acts of agency, maintenance, and recovery within larger shift patterns.

Thus, the narratives of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos effectively allow for a space from which the Mexican-Nuevomexicano offspring can be viewed as “language shapers” rather than “language shifters” and these narratives are the focus of this chapter. Schecter and Bayley (2002) emphasize that “research in bilingual and multilingual communities is now beginning to focus on the dynamic nature of language practices, particularly, in societal or situational, contexts where individuals have choice with regard to the use of the minority or the dominant language” (p. 15). The Mexican-Nuevomexicano families contribute to the exploration of the
dynamic nature of language practices and the linguistic agency associated with this dynamicity. This agency contributes to a discussion regarding the ways in which the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families theorize about their own language shift and maintenance. In what follows I will document the self-reported ratings of proficiency, a sample of the responses to the lexical elicitation activity, self-reports of weekly language use, and the narratives that reveal patterns of language socialization. Fishman (1991) emphasizes the importance of intergenerational transmission in language maintenance and these intergenerational comparisons allow me to begin a conversation about Spanish language maintenance and shift in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context as well as elucidate the families’ own theorizations about their language practices.

3.2 Language Maintenance and Shift in New Mexico

Before exploring the patterns and practices within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families, it is important to situate this study within a larger body of research regarding language maintenance and shift. I would like to briefly highlight previous key studies in New Mexico. A good number of previous studies of language shift and maintenance in New Mexico have relied on Census data from the Southwest. Bills, Hernández-Chávez, and Hudson’s 1995 study examines the 1970, 1980, and 1990 U.S. Census data regarding Spanish language maintenance and shift to English in five states of the Southwest, including New Mexico. The study utilizes the proportion of Spanish language loyalty, or those who claim Spanish language use in the home, among younger and adult generations to calculate Spanish language retention and intergenerational transmission of Spanish. The study concludes that lower education level was the best predictor of Spanish language loyalty and intergenerational transmission of the language. Utilizing the same census data, Hudson, Hernández-Chávez and Bills’ 1995 study also
concludes that the lower number of years of education completed by those of Hispanic origin in the data analyzed predicts the shift from Spanish to English. Additionally, the authors conclude that proximity to the border favors retention of Spanish and greater distance favors a shift to English (p. 25). In a later study, Bills, Hudson, and Hernández Chávez (2000) similarly claim that Spanish language use diminishes with increased education level. Additionally, the study concludes that English language proficiency is an indicator of language shift from Spanish to English. Jenkins (2009a, 2009b) extends the Bills, Hernández-Chávez, and Hudson (1995) model with the data from the U.S. Census from the year 2000. Jenkins finds similar results to the 1995 study in all but one area. He explains, “The most notable change after 20 years took place in the measures of language loyalty and retention…in 2000 both loyalty and retention showed a decreased relationship, or none at all, with socioeconomic measures of income, education and occupation among the Hispanic population” (p. 23). This is an important deviation from the 1995 study because it indicates a potential closing in the societal gap between socioeconomic status and Spanish language retention. The findings from all of these Census-based studies contribute significantly to the study of Spanish language maintenance and shift among U.S. Latinos, but they do not necessarily flesh out the individual and familial stories that accompany the shift patterns.

Several studies focusing on familiar language patterns in New Mexico do provide more detailed analysis of familial stories. An early and extensive study examining Spanish language shift in the small northern New Mexico town of Arroyo Seco by Ortíz (1975) examines to what extent the community is maintaining Spanish. The study utilizes a sample of 48 Nuevomexicano children and their respective parents and families. The study concludes that, generally, older

21 Jenkins also concludes that Spanish language loyalty has increased in towns that are a further distance from the border.
members of the families interviewed tended to use more Spanish and Spanish was used almost exclusively with parents in the household. Interestingly, Ortíz (1975) also indicates that males claimed to speak more Spanish than females. An additional New Mexican study that explores family patterns of Spanish language use is that of Hudson-Edwards and Bills (1980) in the historic neighborhood of Martineztown in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Through a series of interviews with fifty-five Hispanic families, the study concludes that the signs of language shift from Spanish to English were evident within one generation due to the discrepancy between the number of participants who claimed Spanish as their mother tongue and the number of participants who were actually fluent in the language. A shift to English among each generation of speakers in the families interviewed demonstrated an increased shift to English in the home. The study concludes that Spanish in Martineztown is still very much alive. However, because of the signs of language shift, both within one generation and from one generation to the next, the long-term maintenance of Spanish is doubtful.

Roberts’ 2001 ethnography also documents language use within the family setting in northern New Mexico. The primary focus of Roberts’ project is on issues of cultural identity among school age children (K-12) in a northern New Mexico school. However, she administered a home language survey that reveals family language patterns. She observes a generational change when comparing what language(s) parents and children use at home. Her study reports that “Although 32% of the parents speak only English to their children, 71% of the children speak only English to their parents” (p. 56). Roberts highlights that the language habits of her participants are dependent on multiple factors including place of residence, religious affiliation, the language preference of the extended family, the home language, the spouse’s first language, sibling order, gender, occupation, amount of formal Spanish instruction, and the age of
the people involved in the conversation (p. 56). Many of these same variables influence the
language use practices in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families.

Although not in New Mexico, Potowski’s study of Spanish language shift in Chicago
provides a similar model for the types of questions that I asked the Mexican-Nuevomexicano
participants about their language use and provides not only a useful model for methodology, but
also a useful point of comparison to a large Latino/a population outside of the Southwest.
Potowski (2004) documents the responses of more than 800 Latino students in Chicago about
with whom they speak Spanish regularly and their daily Spanish usage. Potowski finds that the
participants

used Spanish 75% of the time or more with their parents and other adults in the family.
However, Spanish use with siblings, friends, cousins, and their own children averaged
just 45% and was negatively correlated with length of residence in the U.S. This
combined with overall low levels of daily Spanish use point to a language shift to
English. (p. 1)

However, Potowski’s study underscores several factors that complicate the complete
displacement of Spanish to English. These factors include overall positive attitudes towards
Spanish, a preference for Spanish language musical artists, reported high-levels of proficiency,
and the possibility of recontact opportunities with recently-arrived Spanish monolingual
immigrants. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects share many of these same positive attitudes.

Lastly, Schecter and Bayley’s extensive 2002 study provides an important and relevant
model for the exploration of family language socialization patterns over time. The authors
engage in four intensive case studies of family units of Mexican descent in California and Texas.
Schecter and Bayley map out each family’s language socialization practices, thoughts about
cultural identity, language use patterns, and language attitudes. The study provides a coherent and nicely-structured analysis of families across the two regions. Specifically, the authors’ objective to “articulate a more fully developed model for the study of language socialization” (p. xv) fits nicely with the aims of the present chapter. The authors argue that “language choice and patterns of use in sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts characterized by ambiguity and flux, is both a dynamic and fluid process” (p. xv-xvi). Schecter and Bayley question the conceptualization of language socialization as a unidirectional process. They underscore that “…support for a strategy of maintenance may well ensue not from a one-time decision on the part of caregivers regarding family language practice but rather from a series of choices that constitute affirmations and reaffirmations of a commitment to the minority language…” (p. 110). These notions of dynamicity, fluidity, and multi-directionality provide a useful framework from which to view language use patterns within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context.

In this chapter I put the Mexican-Nuevomexicano self-reports of proficiency ratings and weekly Spanish use into conversation with the same information that I analyzed in the previous chapter for the Nuevomexicano partners in order to make intergenerational comparisons. Additionally, I highlight a portion of the Mexican, Nuevomexicano, and Mexican-Nuevomexicano responses from the lexical elicitation activity to make familial comparisons. Lastly, my analysis of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano answers to the question, “Who speaks what to who in your family and how has this changed over time?” provides more detailed insight into the families’ own theories regarding their language maintenance and shift. When dealing with issues of language shift, Potowski reflects on the challenges of methodology when picking apart this complex phenomenon. She explains,
…studies that interpret census data may be problematic because when respondents claim to ‘speak Spanish in the home,’ there are no details on the quantity of that Spanish use. Self-reports specifically designed for language research may be reliable indicators of bilingual usage (Fishman et. al. 1971) and may lead to more accurate interpretations than census data, but they will not produce infallible results in a given community or across communities. Interviews and long-term ethnographic observation (e.g. Zentella, 1997) are likely to provide more reliable measures of language shift, although they are more time-consuming, tend to use smaller sample sizes, and are not free from some degree of researcher bias. (p. 4)

Although I have no expectation of infallible results, it is my hope that by drawing results from self-reports contextualized within individual and family interviews, my findings in this chapter may contribute to a more nuanced and multi-layered portrait of Spanish language use and shift in northern New Mexico. Also because most studies in New Mexico, particularly the Census-based studies, have not distinguished between Nuevomexicano participants and those of a Mexican immigrant background, or the participants have simply all been identified as Nuevomexicano, this chapter allows for a more fine-grained analysis of language use patterns of children whose parents belong to different generational groups.

3.3 Gauging Spanish Language Maintenance and Shift: Proficiency

The first lens through which I will consider Mexican-Nuevomexicano family language use is through the Mexican-Nuevomexicano perceptions of proficiency. The 14 Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants were asked to rate their proficiency by assigning values of 1-10 to their speaking, comprehension, reading, and writing skills in Spanish. Table VI documents these ratings.
TABLE VI
MEXICAN-NUEVOMEXICANO SELF-RATINGS OF SPANISH SKILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaking Skills</th>
<th>Comprehension Skills</th>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
<th>Writing Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milagros</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalinda</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolando</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the Nuevomexicano parents in the previous chapter, all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects reported high comprehension skills. In fact, among those Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants who provided distinct ratings for each skill, comprehension was consistently reported as the highest ranked skill. All of the participants reported much confidence in understanding Spanish when spoken to them. Behind comprehension, reading was the second highest rated skill. However, when considering skills that require production of the language, both writing and speaking were the two lowest rated skills (see Carreira and Kagan, 2011 for similar results). This is a departure from the overall high ratings that the Nuevomexicano parents attributed to their own speaking abilities. With the exception of Antonio (one of the youngest participants), the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects assigned all of their skills a rating of 5 or
above. Potowski (2004) interprets self-reports of higher proficiency as a positive sign towards language maintenance and these mid to high ratings illustrate potential contributing factors to Spanish language maintenance.

Yet, despite the ratings assigned to the skills, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants express particularly disparaging opinions about their speaking abilities. This is consistent with the fact that most of the participants rated speaking as their lowest skill. Rosalinda Navarro calls herself a “work in progress.” Rose states, “My speaking is not perfect. I mean it’s not – it’s not bad, but it’s not where I want it to be.” Carolina adds, “I don’t think any of my Spanish is excellent…Speaking, I would never say it’s excellent…I wish it was better…but there’s so much of it that is still *mochó*. I put English and Spanish mix or I’ll say the word the improper way, or the slang, or whatever you want to call it.” This opinion is fascinating particularly due to the fact that Carolina is a dual-language teacher in an elementary classroom with a 60/40 division between Spanish and English. Additionally, when I asked Alicia about her speaking skills she describes, “I guess it’s like a 5, if that…I speak it ok. I guess I just need confidence because I know I can speak it. I know I can. It’s just the confidence thing. I need more confidence in my speaking. And it comes out broken, I know that.” Rosalinda’s remarks provide some insight into these harsh self-evaluations. She explains her rating of “10” for her speaking: “Yeah, it is good but it’s kinda sad cause I just need to work more on my Spanish and it’s like whenever I go to Colima, I like it there cause then I master it like and I hear the way people talk and I hear how they describe things and how they say it and how they use it.” Perhaps due to the fact that all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects do have consistent and regular contact with Mexican Spanish-monolingual family members both in Mexico and in New Mexico, the yardstick against which they measure their own skills is precisely that of a Spanish monolingual. In other words,
they perceive that their Spanish will never be perfect because they will always be Mexican-Nuevomexicano bilinguals born and raised in New Mexico, rather than a Spanish monolingual born and raised in Mexico. These perceptions recall the Nuevomexicano parents’ comments regarding the binary of “here” and “there” regarding their Spanish. It seems that the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not perceive their Spanish to be “there” yet. The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos also seem to have internalized the notion of an ideal bilingual as “two monolinguals joined at the neck and sharing one tongue” (Zentella, 2002a, p. 328). By measuring themselves against monolingualism, and not recognizing the value in their bilingual linguistic repertoire, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos always come up short.

As I outlined in the introduction, the interviews for this project were conducted in the language preference of the participants, however, there was a portion of the questions that I asked to all of the interviewees in Spanish in order to have a Spanish sample for future analysis. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano interviews took place mostly in English. Yet, in spite of the critical opinions of their own spoken Spanish, eleven of the fourteen Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants were able to respond in Spanish during all of these portions of the interview, while the other three participants mixed their responses with English. It is not my intent in this project to examine the grammatical structure of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano responses in Spanish. Nevertheless, it is important to note that all of the participants understood and were able to respond to the Spanish portions. My purpose in mentioning these details of the interview experiences is to call attention to the fact that despite their sometimes lower ratings and estimations of production skills, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos are still able to communicate in Spanish and, as will be discussed in subsequent sections of the present chapter, report doing so on a regular basis.
3.4 **Gauging Spanish Language Maintenance and Shift: Lexical Choice**

Before looking more in-depth at the Mexican-Nuevomexicano weekly Spanish use, I would like to examine an additional useful lens through which to gain some insight regarding patterns of maintenance and shift in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. As in Bills and Vigil’s work with the New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano responses to the lexical elicitation activity adds an additional dimension to the analysis of intergenerational language change through lexical choices. Bills and Vigil explain,

Differences between older persons and younger persons in their lexical choices may reveal the direction of linguistic change…If we divide the consultants into three age groups, we can consider those groups to represent three generations. Any consistent trends across these generations, then, may be considered probable directions of language change over time, with the younger speakers representing the direction of change in the future. (2008, p. 215)

Bills and Vigil document not only the change from Traditional New Mexican Spanish to a more standard Mexican Spanish in lexical choices, but also the shift to a preference for lexical choices based in contact features as well as a lexical gap in knowing the Spanish word for lexical items. They explain,

We examine the possibility that the inability to respond is a consequence of diminished Spanish skills. The failure to call up a particular word may amount to nothing more than simply a temporary access problem…or it may mean that your familiarity with the word is sufficiently weak that you might never independently recall it though you would understand it when used by others. Or it could be that your mental dictionary just doesn’t contain that word. Whatever the causes, the cross-generation weakening in the ability to
respond is a pattern that occurs repeatedly and appears to be a reflection of loss of
Spanish skills through time. (2008, p. 245)

The present study is not an in-depth examination of lexical choice or lexical availability.
However, a lexical elicitation activity provides a point of comparison between the Mexican-
Nuevomexicanos and their parents and some insight regarding intergenerational transmission of
the language. Additionally, this analysis provides a relevant update to the work of Bills and
Vigil. I would like to reiterate that, as Bills and Vigil emphasized, an apparent inability to
respond does not necessarily indicate that the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not have the word as
part of their mental lexicon. It simply means that at the time of the interview, they could not
produce a response. This idea becomes quite clear when we examine the Mexican parents’
responses to the lexical elicitation activity. Because all of the Mexican participants are G1s, it
would be expected that they would produce Spanish variants for all of the lexical items.
However, only five Mexican participants (56%) were able to provide a Spanish variant for all ten
of the lexical items. One Mexican participant (11%) produced a response for nine of the ten
lexical items and three (33%) produced a response for eight of the ten lexical items. These
results highlight the fact that lexical elicitation activities do not necessarily accurately reflect
lexical knowledge. The items that did no elicit an answer from at least one Mexican participant
were “dress,” “green beans,” “peas,” and “apricot.” However, the comparison between the
Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and their parents can provide some insight into intergenerational
language change and lexical familiarity. Below are the tables with the pictures of the variables
and the variants as well as the responses from the participants. As stated in the Chapter 1, this
lexical elicitation activity takes as a point of departure Zentella (1990), Potowski (2008) and the
New Mexico Colorado Spanish Survey (NMCROSS). These lexical items are known to vary lexically among northern New Mexican versus Mexican Spanish (Bills and Vigil, 2008).
## TABLE VII
**LEXICAL ITEMS FOR LEXICAL ELICITATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>NMX Variant</th>
<th>MX Variant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry</td>
<td>mora</td>
<td>fresa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>nodriza</td>
<td>Enfermera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postage stamps</td>
<td>estampas</td>
<td>Estampillas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>túnico</td>
<td>Vestido</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peas</td>
<td>alverjón</td>
<td>Chicharo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green beans</td>
<td>frijoles verdes</td>
<td>Ejotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apricot</td>
<td>albarcoque</td>
<td>Chavacán</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turkey</td>
<td>ganso/cocóno/torque</td>
<td>guajalote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bat</td>
<td>ratón volador</td>
<td>murciélago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>light bulb</td>
<td>globo</td>
<td>foco</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although the focus of this chapter is on the Mexican-Nuevomexicano offspring, in order to contextualize their language use and language maintenance with that of their parents, briefly examining the results of the parents’ responses proves helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strawberry</th>
<th>nurse</th>
<th>stamp</th>
<th>dress</th>
<th>peas</th>
<th>green beans</th>
<th>Apricot</th>
<th>turkey</th>
<th>bat</th>
<th>Light bulb</th>
<th>Total MX</th>
<th>Total NMX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>José Luis</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td></td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armando</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td></td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pía</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriela</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manuel</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>José</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancho</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total NMX</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, with the exception of José Luis, every Mexican participant offered at least one NMX variant. Also, consistent with Pía’s linguistic discovery regarding the commonalities between her Mexican family’s Spanish and New Mexican Spanish, Pía exhibits knowledge of both variants consistently. However, she clearly stated that the first variant she would use is the Mexican variant.
Among the Nuevomexicano participants we see either an English use or a lack of response in at least one case in seven out of the nine NMX participants (78%). Among the Nuevomexicano parents, all participants produced a Spanish variant for at least 7 of the 10 lexical items. Two (22%) produced variants for seven of the ten items. Three Nuevomexicanos (33%) produced variants for eight of the ten items. Two Nuevomexicanos (22%) produced variants for nine of the ten items and two Nuevomexicanos produced variants for all ten items. Also consistent with the Nuevomexicano narratives from the previous chapter, the Nuevomexicano results reveal that all Nuevomexicanos offer a Mexican lexical item at least 30% of the time. However, no Nuevomexicano offers a Mexican lexical item first for 100% of the elicitations. The participant with the highest frequency of offering a Mexican variant is Andrea with 60% of her responses representing the MX variant. However, even when Nuevomexicano participants offer a MX variant, they oftentimes offer NMX variant as well.

### TABLE IX

NUEVOMEXICANO RESPONSES TO LEXICAL ELICITATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strawberry</th>
<th>nurse</th>
<th>stamp</th>
<th>dress</th>
<th>Peas</th>
<th>green beans</th>
<th>Apricot</th>
<th>turkey</th>
<th>Bat</th>
<th>Light bulb</th>
<th>Total MX</th>
<th>Total NMX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>MX MX</td>
<td>MX NMX</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>MX MX</td>
<td>MX MX</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>English MX MX</td>
<td>MX MX</td>
<td>English NMX</td>
<td>MX MX</td>
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<td>NMX MX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea</td>
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<td>MX MX</td>
<td>MX NMX</td>
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<td>MX MX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>MX MX</td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<td>-------</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
</tr>
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<td>MX MX</td>
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<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>English NMX</td>
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<td>MX English NMX</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Juanita</td>
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<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>English NMX</td>
<td>NMX NMX</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Juan</td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>NMX NMX</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>MX NMX MX</td>
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<td>NMX MX</td>
<td>MX NMX</td>
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<td>NMX MX English MX</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Note:**

- **strawberry:** NMX
- **nurse:** NMX
- **stamp:** NMX
- **dress:** MX
- **Peas:** MX
- **green beans:** MX
- **Apricot:** NMX
- **turkey:** MX
- **Bat:** MX
- **Light bulb:** MX
- **Total MX:** 44
- **Total NMX:** 39
With a clearer understanding of the Mexican and Nuevomexicano parents’ lexical response the question remains: How do these results compare to the responses of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and what does this reveal about language use patterns and maintenance?

Thirteen of the fourteen Mexican-Nuevomexicanos (93%) produced a Spanish variant for at least five of the ten lexical items. Two Mexican-Nuevomexicanos (14%) produced a variant for five of the ten items. Four Mexican-Nuevomexicanos (29%) produced a variant for 6 of the ten items. Three participants (21%) produced a variant for 7 of the ten items. Two participants (14%) produced variants for eight of the ten items and two Mexican-Nuevomexicanos also produced variants for nine of the ten items. However, there was not a single Mexican-Nuevomexicano participant who was able to produce a Spanish variant for all ten lexical items. One participant (7%) was only able to produce Spanish variants for 3 of the ten lexical items. These numbers are quite different from the results of the Nuevomexicano parents. It is clear that the Nuevomexicanos’ lexical familiarity, as well as the Mexican partners’ lexical familiarity, at the time of the activity is much higher than that of their children. In fact, the response for “bat” is an ideal example of these differences. One hundred percent of the Mexican parents produced the Spanish word for “bat” and responded with the Mexican variant. Forty-four percent of the Nuevomexicanos produced the word for “bat” with two responding with the Mexican variant and two with the New Mexican variant. However, there were no Mexican-Nuevomexicanos who could provide a response for the lexical item of “bat.” Bills and Vigil found that among their younger consultants, 22% could provide no response for “bat” (p. 245). My sample group of Mexican-Nuevomexicanos does not span the age range of the Bills and Vigil designation for “younger group,” yet the increase from 22% to 100% is noteworthy.
It is important to note that only six (43%) of the MNMX produced one or more NMX variants. One MXNMX produced three NMX variants and one MXNMX produced two NMX variants. The remaining four participants produced one NMX variant each. This does advance Bills and Vigil’s conclusion that “in most cases, it is the typically Traditional Spanish that is found to be in decline” (2008, p. 218). The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’s limited responses involving Nuevomexicanos variants may be explained by the fact that both of their parents also produced more Mexican variants than Nuevomexicanos variants. Only four of the Mexican participants produced Nuevomexicanos variants. Each of these four individuals produced one Nuevomexicanos variant among the ten lexical items. All Nuevomexicanos partners produced at least two Nuevomexicanos variants for the ten lexical items. However no Nuevomexicanos participant produced more than five Nuevomexicanos variants. Two Nuevomexicanos participants (22%) produced five Nuevomexicanos variants. One Nuevomexicana participant (11%) produced four Nuevomexicanos variants. Two Nuevomexicanos participants (22%) produced three Nuevomexicanos variants and three Nuevomexicanos participants (33%) produced two Nuevomexicanos variants. It is clear in this exercise that Mexican lexical choices dominate the Mexican, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’ Spanish lexicon. As Bills and Vigil observed, Spanish (and particularly Nuevomexicanos Spanish) are on the decline within the younger generation.
TABLE X
MXNMX RESPONSES TO LEXICAL ELICITATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>strawberry</th>
<th>nurse</th>
<th>stamp</th>
<th>dress</th>
<th>peas</th>
<th>green beans</th>
<th>apricot</th>
<th>turkey</th>
<th>Bat</th>
<th>Light bulb</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>Bat</td>
<td>NMX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexa</td>
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<td>other</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
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<td>Rosalinda</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonio</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro</td>
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<td>other</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
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<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolando</td>
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<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edna</td>
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<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>NMX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica</td>
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<td>MX</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>MX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>NMX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>MX</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5  **Gauging Spanish Language Maintenance and Shift: Weekly Spanish Use**

The self-reports of typical weekly Spanish use among the Mexican, Nuevomexicano, and Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants reveal that most Mexican participants (n=7, 78%) speak more Spanish than both their Nuevomexicano/a partners and Mexican-Nuevomexicano children. The Mexican partners report speaking anywhere from 40% Spanish to 90% Spanish in a typical week. The Nuevomexicano/a partners report speaking from 10% to 65% Spanish in a typical week. Sixty-seven percent (n=6) of the Nuevomexicano partners speak less Spanish than the Mexican partner. However, 22% (n=2) speak the same amount of Spanish as the Mexican partner. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects report speaking from as little as .5% Spanish in
a typical week to 50% Spanish. Over half of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects (n=9 or
75%) speak less Spanish than both their Mexican parent and Nuevomexicano parent. However,
two MXNMX subjects, Alejandro and Alexa, (17%) speak less Spanish than their Mexican
parent, but more than their Nuevomexicano parent. Also, one Mexican-Nuevomexicano subject
speaks less Spanish than her Mexican parent, but the same as her Nuevomexicano parent. In a
unique case, the two sisters in the Santos family report speaking more Spanish than their
Mexican parent. Carolina reports speaking more Spanish than her Mexican mother and the same
amount of weekly Spanish as her Nuevomexicano father. Edna, interestingly, reports speaking
more Spanish than both of her parents. The Santos family is the only example of a family with a
Mexican parent that speaks less Spanish than her Nuevomexicano partner in a typical week. The
table below documents the percent of weekly Spanish by each member of the Mexican-
Nuevomexicano family units.
TABLE XI
PERCENT OF WEEKLY SPANISH USE BY MEMBERS OF MEXICAN-
NUEVOMEXICANO FAMILY UNITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mexican-Nuevomexicano Subject (MXNMX)</th>
<th>% use of spoken Spanish in an Average Week</th>
<th>Mexican Parent</th>
<th>% use of spoken Spanish in an Average Week</th>
<th>Nuevomexicano Parent</th>
<th>% use of spoken Spanish in an Average Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milagros Rosalinda</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Gabriela</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Nicolás</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Armando</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Diana</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Olivia</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Luis</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>Penelope</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angelica</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Pía</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Francisco</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>José Luis</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Juanita</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Edna</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Marta</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Juan</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Antonio</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Pancho</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alejandro Alexa</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Manuel</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Andrea</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolando</td>
<td>.5%</td>
<td>José</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Ana</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, what these numbers do not reveal are the actual patterns of language use within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano households. These patterns of language use and language socialization are the focus of the next section.

3.6 “Somewhere in the Middle”: Language Socialization Practices

“My dad always spoke Spanish and my mom always spoke English and I was somewhere in the middle.” Rolando Quintana’ description of being “somewhere in the middle” highlights the complexity of language choice within his family. In fact, the notion of “somewhere in the middle” could describe the linguistic location of all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families with regard to their language use patterns. If we consider these
practices to reside on a continuum, as in Valdés’ 2001 proposal of a “bilingual continuum” with English monolingualism on one side and Spanish monolingualism on the other, these families find themselves along shifting positions of this continuum throughout different moments of their lives. For instance, Rolando reports that his parents always used a mix of English and Spanish with each other throughout his life. His father tended to use more Spanish and his mother used more English. Rolando remembers speaking all Spanish to both of his parents before entering school. However, after beginning school at age four\textsuperscript{22}, Rolando reports a pattern of speaking English with both his Nuevomexicana mother and his Mexican father. His mother spoke English with Rolando and his father spoke to him in Spanish. Yet, Rolando notes that recently the language use with his father is different than it was when he was in high school. His father agrees. José Quintana explains,

Últimamente se me hace que hablamos más español. Cuando estaban chicos es otro. No quieren hablar así jovencitos. Ya nada más empiezan a agarrar edad y yo creo que se sienten más confortables. Es lo que creo yo en cuanto a Rolando. Le gusta hablar conmigo ya más en español. De hecho, en veces texteamos.

[Lately, it seems to me that we speak more Spanish. When they were younger it was another story. They didn’t want to speak when they were little. I think they feel more comfortable as they get older. That’s what I think the case is with Rolando. Now he likes to speak with me more in Spanish. In fact, sometimes we text in Spanish.]

Valdés (2001) reminds us that “over the course of a lifetime, a single individual’s bilingual profile can vary immensely” (p. 42). Indeed, Schecter and Bayley’s entire project emphasizes that language choice and familial patterns are not static and individual language behavior is

\textsuperscript{22} This is consistent with (Valdes, 1996; Schecter and Bayley, 2002).
dynamic. Because of the “unfixed” patterns, the self-reports of weekly Spanish use in the previous section do not capture the nuances of linguistic flows that structure the language use patterns within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. The weekly percentages may elucidate certain trends regarding language maintenance and shift, however they may miss the “in the middle” practices highlighted in the Quintana family.

The Mexican-Nuevomexicano answers to the question, “Who speaks what to whom in the family and how has this changed over time?” allow for a more detailed portrait of language use and describe the perceptions of how familial linguistic flows may shift. Essentially, these Mexican-Nuevomexicano responses flesh out the notion of being “somewhere in the middle.” In line with Schecter and Bayley’s objectives, these responses contribute to a deeper understanding of “the complexity of individual language behaviors observed over years and across a spectrum of family contexts” (p. 173). Unlike Schecter and Bayley, my work has not followed these families over a period of years. Yet, the responses to this question and the narratives that it triggers allow for the (re) construction of the multi-directional language use patterns within each family.

Although there is no one-sized fits all paradigm for the language behavior in each Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit, below I attempt to group the families together according to certain commonalities in the directionality of the language flows between the family members. For example, both the Guzmán and Molina families report a predominant use of English by both parents and by both children in each family throughout most of their lives. This is represented in Figure 1.
Alexa Guzmán explains that she has always spoken English with her parents and that they have always spoken English with her. Alejandro Guzmán reports a slight difference in that he and his Nuevomexicana mother speak English to each other and throughout most of his life he has responded to his father in English, however, his father uses some Spanish with him. Both Alexa and Alejandro report English as the primary language between their parents. They specify that if their father spoke Spanish to their mother, she would respond in English. Likewise, Alicia Molina reports speaking English to her Nuevomexicana mother and her mother speaking English to her. She describes her Mexican father speaking both English and Spanish, but mostly English to her. She reports responding in English to her father. She describes speaking only English to her brother, Antonio, as well. She explains that her parents speak Spanish and English to each other with her father speaking more Spanish and her mother using more English. Antonio only remembers his father speaking English with the immediate family during most of his life. Antonio also reports speaking English with his parents and sister.

The Mexican-Nuevomexicano Quintana, Medina, and Jurado families also report English to be the dominant language in their interactions, however, these three families denote more
Spanish use by the Mexican parent than the Guzmán and Molina families. See a visual representation of these patterns in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Family Language Use Patterns of Directionality in Quintana, Medina, and Jurado Families

Like Rolando Quintana, Rose Jurado reports her father speaking both English and Spanish with her. She explains that she has always spoken English with him. Rose also notes that she has always spoken English with her Nuevomexicana mother and her mother has always spoken English with her. Adrian Medina reports that his Nuevomexicana mother has always spoken a mix of Spanish and English with him. However, Adrian has always responded to his mother in English. Adrian explains that his Mexican father has always spoken to him in mostly Spanish and Adrian responds in mostly English. Olivia describes that her mother has always spoken English to her and her father has always spoken mostly Spanish. She speaks English to both parents. Both Olivia and Adrian report that they have always spoken English to each other. They both also note that their parents speak mostly Spanish to each other.
The Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects in the Loredo and Navarro families report almost exclusive Spanish use between the Mexican parent and the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos. These households, overall, report more Spanish use. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Family Language Use Patterns of Directionality in Loredo and Navarro Families

Interestingly, both families have Mexican mothers. Angelica Loredo reports that she has always spoken Spanish to her Mexican mother and her mother has always spoken Spanish to her. Her father has always spoken English to her and she speaks English to him. Her parents speak both English and Spanish to each other, but they tend towards predominantly Spanish conversations. Like the Loredo family, the Navarro sisters report a similar linguistic pattern in their household. Milagros and Rosalinda state that Spanish was the only language in the home until they started pre-school. They both report that their Mexican mother has always spoken to both of them in Spanish and they have always spoken to her in Spanish. Both Rosalinda and Milagros report using English and Spanish with their father, however, they reveal that they typically use more English with him. Both sisters report that their father has consistently used English and Spanish with them equally throughout their lives. The sisters explain that English and Spanish have
always been used between their parents, however, Spanish has predominated. Rosalinda reports using English and Spanish with Milagros. However, Milagros reports using almost all English with Rosalinda.

Mexican-Nuevomexicana Verónica Fierro describes mostly Spanish use in her family as well. Like Rolando, upon beginning school she describes a shift to speaking English outside of the house with her friends and sister, however, she reports the linguistic patterns between her parents and herself to be relatively consistent. Veronica explains that growing up it was Spanish all of the time in the house between her parents and with her parents. Carolina Santos describes a similar scenario in her family growing up. She explains, “Everything was Spanish. There was no English. Everything was Spanish, Spanish, Spanish.” Carolina grew up speaking Spanish to her parents and her parents spoke Spanish to her. Figure 4 below represents Verónica and Carolina’s experiences growing up.

Figure 4. Family Language Use Patterns of Directionality in Santos and Fierro Families

```
MX ↔ NMX

Spanish

↓ Spanish          ↓ Spanish

NMX
```

However, Carolina’s younger sister Edna describes a different experience. She tells that she never wanted to speak or learn Spanish. She explains that she heard more Spanish from her
Nuevomexicano father than from her Mexican mother. She reports that her parents spoke Spanish between each other, however, she always spoke English to both of her parents. Edna reflects on this pattern: “And I don’t know how I really communicated with my parents a lot because they would speak a lot of Spanish, my dad in particular. I just, I never really wanted to learn it or anything when I was younger.” Edna’s different experience in language use patterns from that of her older sister highlights the diversity of experience even with the same family.

The ten year age difference between Carolina and Edna may account for the differences in familial linguistic experience (Silva-Corvalán, 2003). Younger siblings oftentimes are less proficient in the minority language than older siblings and Roberts (2001) emphasizes the influence of sibling order in Spanish language maintenance. This is consistent with Parada’s (2013) finding that with a higher birth order among siblings, the older sibling’s Spanish tends to be more proficient and used more frequently. The Navarro sisters also highlight a difference between their Spanish language abilities and those of their eight year-old sister. Milagros explains her worry about this situation: “I’m concerned about it, too, ‘cause sometimes I feel that she speaks more English than what she does Spanish than when I was at her age ‘cause I knew a lot more and understood a lot more.” Similarly, although both Alexa and Alejandro Guzmán speak of English dominating their household while growing up, Alejandro tells of writing articles in Spanish for the local newspaper and he speaks of a recent increase in his use of Spanish, particularly with his father. Yet, Alexa still emphasizes that she communicates in English with her immediate family and in her words, “My Spanish is bad. ..Because I like sort of stopped speaking it. Like I don’t speak it like as much as I should. And like I don’t like really feel comfortable speaking it.” These cases of younger siblings highlight the different positionalities on the maintenance/shift continuum even within the same family.

The language use portraits of each Mexican-Nuevomexicano family challenge notions of clear cut language boundaries within families. There are no realities of homogeneous language use in these households. Phrases like “mostly English” and “mostly Spanish” reveal the co-existence of Spanish and English within each family member’s linguistic repertoire. Different from Potowski (2004) and Ortiz (1975), the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family exhibits a diversity in linguistic and generational profile among the parents that most definitely influences the overall familial language use patterns. Even if the family reports a dominance of English among most family members, the Spanish “overhearing” (De Houwer, 2009) or receptivity is still present. Fishman (2000) highlights the notion of domains and role relations. He underscores that one approach to multilingual language use in the family domain is to recognize that “interacting members of a family (as well as the participants in most other domains of language behavior) are *hearers* as well as *speakers* (i.e., that there may be a distinction between multilingual *comprehension* and multilingual *production*)…their language behavior may be more than merely a matter of individual preference or facility, but also a matter of *role-relations*” (p. 60). Fishman’s words illustrate the diversity of interaction within the families and that one individual is usually not defined by one language alone with all interlocutors. These profiles also demonstrate the variability between families and within families. Schecter and Bayley comment on this variability:

Our agenda…has involved elucidating processes of language maintenance and shift both within and across time. In pursuing this inquiry, we have discovered that various enabling or constraining factors do not necessarily have the same effects for different actors, or for the same actors at different times in their evolutions. Although some of
these processes have proven responsive to sociolinguistic hypotheses, we have also learned that in some situations when people have choice, there is a limit to how accurately one can predict how they will choose. (p. 177)

Schecter and Bayley’s words emphasize that unpredictability of language choice. They note that the study of variability, as in Labov (1971), implies systematicity and the controls provided by such structure. A rigid framework of systematicity may not capture the variability within the families studied in Schecter and Bayley (2002) or within and among the different Mexican-Nuevomexicano family units.

Hornberger (1988) examines a similar situation when studying community language choice between Quechua and Spanish in a Peruvian community. Although Quechua use is largely favored in the family/home/community domain, and Spanish is usually the language of choice outside of this domain, circumstances such as setting-role mismatch or interactions occurring in what Hornberger terms a “comunidad” domain (p. 107) disrupt strict associations between one language and one domain. Additionally, in her examination of code-switching and lexical borrowing she states that individual factors “influence language choice above and beyond generalized domain” and “when factors of individual bilingualism are added to the domain..there is room for an almost infinite variety of language use” (p. 115). Hornberger reminds us that community language use is complex and “there are no simple generalizations to be made about language use in the community” (p. 115). Yet, she does emphasize that some generalizations can be made. Hornberger’s discussion complements Schecter and Bayley’s work in that it allows for the loose association of certain domains with certain languages, i.e. “mostly English” in the house, but also highlights the complexity and variability present at the individual level. This variability underscores the notion of MXNMX “language-shaping.” The Mexican-
Nuevomexicano descriptions of the language use patterns make visible the subtle acts of maintenance, recovery, and agency over time. Although six of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects from four of the nine families (Medina, Jurado, Loredo, and Navarro) report no change in language use patterns over time, the majority report movement along the continuum of Spanish/English language use throughout their family life. These movements along the continuum constitute Schecter and Bayley’s “affirmations and reaffirmations,” of commitment to the minority language. In some cases slight, and in other cases more dramatic, the change indexes moments of “language shaping” and sheds light on the families’ own theories about language behavior.

In the only case of a change towards a perceived increase in English within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families, Verónica Fierro reports her present language use to be almost all English with her Nuevomexicana mother and half and half with her Mexican father. That is, she speaks almost all English with her mother and her mother speaks all English with her. Verónica’s father speaks half English and half Spanish with her and she responds using half English and half Spanish. She attributes her father’s work, his desire to better his English, and the desire to communicate with the grandchildren (the children of her sister) for the increased English use within the family unit. This shift to English might seem somewhat expected given previous studies. However, it is significant that Verónica (one of only three married Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects) has chosen a first-generation Mexican husband. She reports speaking mostly Spanish with her husband. In a fascinating move, as Verónica’s Spanish with her parents has decreased, she has shaped a new home environment with her husband in which Spanish dominates.
In addition to the Quintana family denoting a recent increase in Spanish use\textsuperscript{23}, the Guzmán and Molina Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects also describe a recent increase in Spanish use within their families. As I mentioned above, Alejandro Guzmán reports an increase in Spanish use with his Mexican father. He explains that if Spanish was spoken in the house when he was growing up it was by his father. When he was younger, he always responded in English. However, as he has grown older, he responds in Spanish. Similarly, while growing up, Alicia Molina describes that she only spoke English with her younger brother, Antonio. Now, however, she explains that her brother prefers for her to speak more Spanish. Antonio echoes this when he states that he usually speaks English to his sister, but wants her to “mix it up” and speak more Spanish to him now. He also reports that now that they are older, their father speaks more Spanish to both him and Alicia and he perceives that his parents are speaking more Spanish between the two of them as well. Antonio’s father describes the language use patterns in the family over the years. He explains,

\begin{quote}
Nos fuimos por la ruta más fácil….te empiezas a meter en una guerra de cada rato:

“Háblame en español, no hables inglés, y no esto, y no lo otro”, entonces ya son muchos “no, no, no.” Desgraciadamente escogieron no hablarlo mucho. Alicia ahora se interesó. Antonio ahora está muy interesado, y ahora les ayudo. En todo lo que me piden ayuda, les ayudo. Pero sí, cuando estaban chiquitos, no se interesaron.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{23} Zentella (1997) also finds an increased use of Spanish among her participants later in their lives. However, Zentella connects this to her participants becoming mothers.
Now Antonio is very interested and now I help them. I’ll help them with anything they ask. But, yes, when they were little, they were not interested.]

Pancho highlights the English dominance in the household when his children were younger and he clarifies that it was a conscious choice. In order to avoid conflict in the home and not stifle communication within the family, he and his wife chose not to demand Spanish. His words reveal his own agency in issues of language choice.

Pancho’s words also illustrate Schecter and Bayley’s comments regarding directionality in language socialization. Schecter and Bayley explain,

> Clearly, interpretations of patterns of variation and choice within a framework where language socialization is a one-way process in which mothers, teachers, and other caregivers inculcate the values, knowledge, and linguistic repertoire of their culture into children are increasingly problematic in reference to contemporary Western settings where adolescents, and even preadolescents, exercise a fair amount of autonomy within family units (p. 173).

The influence of Alicia and Antonio within the language socialization process is significant. Pancho speaks of not wanting to fight or “meter en una guerra” because of his children’s resistance to speaking Spanish. The notion of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects playing an active role in their own language socialization is important to consider. The concept of directionality is expanded in this case through the idea that children can also socialize parents. However, the directionality of language shift is also challenged within the Molina family because both Alicia and Antonio speak of desiring to and, actually, increasing their Spanish use recently. Alicia had just taken a trip to visit her grandmother in Mexico when I interviewed her. This was the first time she had ever stayed for an extended period of time without her father. She remarks
that after this trip she feels more confident and wants to speak more Spanish in her family.

Additionally, she was also student-teaching in a dual-language elementary school classroom the semester before our interview. Antonio speaks of his favorite norteño bands and how he enjoys going to Mexico with his father and spending as much time with him as possible in “his world.”

The Molina family, Rolando Quintana, and Alejandro Guzmán illustrate that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects can recover, re-infuse and restimulate their Spanish use even as young adults.

The case of the Santos family also challenges notions of directionality within language socialization patterns and language shift. Recall that Edna Santos reported speaking almost all English growing up and that she strongly disliked speaking Spanish. However, now she currently reports speaking 63% Spanish in a typical week. What accounts for such a drastic change over her lifespan? Just as Potowski (2004) has underscored that the language used with peers predicts language maintenance, Edna’s primary socialization with Mexican monolingual Spanish speaking co-workers and friends has propelled her Spanish dominance in recent years. Previous employment at Wal-Mart and current employment at a dual-language middle school and Home Depot assure daily Spanish use with friends, co-workers, and students throughout her work day. Edna describes her educational assistant’s perceptions of her abilities. She explains, “When I started there she said she was really nervous for me. She goes, ‘You tried your hardest, but, eh…you were bad.” And she says now, she said I’ve improved like 100 percent.” Edna’s older sister, Carolina, also works as a teacher in a dual-language school and she reflects on this change in Edna: “Yeah, so it’s really weird that Edna ended up a Spanish teacher because she hated it. Now her BFFs are all Mexicanos…Her aide and her hang out three times a week, go do lady stuff, and do all kinds of stuff. Now she’s thinking of going to Colombia. Her two friends
from work, a husband and wife team, came back from Colombia from doing a two-year stint out there.” Not only has Edna’s Spanish use increased, but she is actively considering opportunities to continue to enrich her Spanish.

Yet, as both Carolina and Edna’s Spanish language use has become a consistent and dominant force in their everyday lives, the Santos parents’ Spanish use has followed a different trajectory. Edna explains,

Yeah, my dad would always speak Spanish. And it’s really weird to see my parents just now speaking more English than Spanish…when I call I’ll try to talk in Spanish and sometimes they answer in English…it’s reversed. I’m like, “Ah.” I get so frustrated. So yeah, it’s really weird…A year ago, I think, we went to the Mexican consulado for my mom to try and get her birth certificate from Mexico and, um, there was a lawyer from Mexico there, from Chihuahua. And they were talking and they were asking my mom questions. And, I mean, they were talking really fast and they asked my mom a question and she was like -- she didn’t know how to answer. Like, her and my dad just, like, looked at each other and they didn’t know how to, like, talk back to him. And I just looked at him and so I answered for her and I told him what we were looking for and I go, when we left, I go, “Mom what happened?” I mean like -- and she goes, “I didn’t know how to respond.” She goes, “I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know how to say it,” she goes…I called my sister and I said, “You will not believe what happened to mom today.” And then my sister had seen it the other day at a restaurant. They went to a Mexican restaurant and the waiter -- the waitress talked to my dad in Spanish and my dad talked English. And it never used to be like that, never.
Edna and Carolina report amazement at their own parents’ language shift to English. The fact that Edna was able to intervene in the communication between her parents and the Mexican consulate speaks to her own confidence and the shifting role that Spanish has played in her life. Much like Rivera-Mills’ study in Fortuna, CA, (2001), the moments described by Edna highlight the shift to English that can occur within one generation. It seems that as Marta and Johnny have expanded their domains of English use and, thus, reduced their domains of Spanish use, the opposite has occurred in the cases of the Santos daughters. Zentella (2002b) reminds us in her introduction to Schecter and Bayley’s work that

…As bilinguals, we do not live double lives, with the exact same range of speakers, locales, and discourse demands in both of our languages. For most of us, one language is dominant. As the rich case studies in this book reveal, the dominant language may change as our lives change, and the authors argue persuasively that the deep emotions that accompany these changes are not given the attention they deserve.” (p. xi)

Edna and Carolina have deep emotions about family language use and about the changes in this use. Carolina asserts, “I love to speak Spanish because I still feel that it’s respectful for me to speak Spanish to my parents.” The changes in her parents’ linguistic patterns and in her younger sister’s use of Spanish both challenge fixed notions of directionality and underscore the many layers of language maintenance and shift.

Edna’s case not only highlights a fascinating instance in which the younger sibling now utilizes more Spanish than both her parents and older sister, but also illustrates the importance of domain expansion in influencing Spanish language maintenance. The expansion of Spanish language use in the work domain is key to the Spanish language increase and maintenance in the cases of Edna, Carolina, Alicia, and Alejandro. Alejandro specifically sought out a job in the
Latino cultural and student services organization at his university in order to be able to utilize his Spanish in the workplace with his peers. Alicia, Carolina, and Edna all hold positions as dual-language elementary and middle schools. Dorian (1981) defines the association of one language with a particular domain with “language allocation.” It is clear that in the case of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos, Spanish is limited to the home or family domain and even in this domain, the use of Spanish is most definitely not exclusive. However, in the case of these Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects, an instance of language reallocation seems to be occurring. Seven Mexican-Nuevomexicanos are not full-time students. Of these seven participants, four Mexican-Nuevomexicanos have chosen jobs that require Spanish. These choices illustrate an important act of agency in shaping their language use.

However, even Rose, who does not report an increase of Spanish in her immediate family and does not hold a job that requires the use of Spanish, has taken measures to increase her Spanish in her adult life. Like Verónica, she also made choosing a husband who was proficient in Spanish a priority. She explains, “Well, when I was in – in college, one of the – one of the biggest things for me is I wanted to meet somebody that spoke Spanish. Plain and simple.” This conscious choice in a romantic partner serves as an act of agency in language maintenance due to Rose’s desire that her own children know Spanish. It seems that all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos take intergenerational transmission of Spanish seriously. One hundred percent of the subjects expressed that they want their children to speak Spanish and that, with the help of their parents, they will teach them Spanish.

Despite the fact that the language use patterns within some of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families have not changed over the years, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects still reflect on and express strong opinions about the language use situation within their families.
Rose, for example, is not pleased with the fact that Spanish use has not increased with her parents. She explains,

Yeah. That’s what I tell my dad. It’s your guys’ fault that my Spanish isn’t all that great. [Laughs]…They laugh at me because they know it’s – you know, it’s not really true. It’s just a joke we have. But, honestly, it really is – that’s how I feel anyways that if it would have been spoken to me or made me – or if they would have made me speak it to them. But they – they blame it on me. They say it’s me that I never spoke it. I’m like I didn’t speak it because you told me to talk to you in English. Or you would only speak to me in English… I mean her – my grandma and grandpa, that’s all they spoke to each other was Spanish. They spoke to them in Spanish. My mom grew up speaking Spanish. That was her first language. Um, but she didn’t teach it to us as a first language.

Rose may not be able to change the language use patterns between herself and her parents, but this does not mean she does not form her own theories about these patterns. This discourse of blame embodies the ways in which the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families make sense of the complex contact zone of which their household is a part. Consider Schecter and Bayley’s words:

In situations of language and dialect contact, or what Pratt (1987) has described as the ‘contact zone,’ a fair amount of ‘online’ decision making takes place that is not circumscribed by schematic behavior related to who speaks what language to whom. To be sure, this decision making is ideologically motivated, but ideology, we must insist, is not impervious to individuals’ immediate best interests. (p. 177)

The Mexican-Nuevomexicano families exist in a society in which Spanish continues to be the minority language and in which ideology and “best interests” matter. Diana’s Nuevomexicano family represents the Nuevomexicano historical legacy of the imposition of English and the
gradual dispossession from Spanish. Rose’s father learned firsthand the necessity of English proficiency in order to succeed as an immigrant in the U.S. Throughout his interview he references suffering discrimination from Anglos and Chicanos alike. These larger socio-historical issues play themselves out within the households through language use patterns that lead to shift and maintenance. Rose’s parents, as well as Mexican and Nuevomexicano parents alike, are faced with the perceived dilemma of actively maintaining a minority language and social advancement. It is important to recognize that in the contact zone of Spanish interacting with English, the majority language of English and its ideology of monolingualism, eclipses good intentions to maintain a minority language. I would like to suggest that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families make sense of these larger socio-political issues through the discourses of blame and responsibility. Returning to Milagros Navarro’s comments about her younger sister’s Spanish proficiency, we see another dimension to the blame. She explains, “I think my parents have kind of emphasized it on her a little bit more, but, um, I guess they are also leaving it to us. It just feels kind of unfair because, uh, I’m just her sister. I’m not supposed to raise her, I’m supposed to just help her in whatever she needs help with, and so it’s my parents’ job to teach her Spanish.” Reminiscent of the Jurado family exchange at the beginning of this chapter, Milagros assigns the responsibility of intergenerational transmission of the language to her parents, rather than to siblings.

3.8 **Reframing Maintenance and Shift around the Mexican-Nuevomexicano Offspring**

These acts of maintenance, recovery, and agency are key to understanding the dynamic nature of language use practices, language socialization, and language shift and maintenance in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. However, in order to paint a more complete picture of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano Spanish language use it is essential to highlight with whom the
Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects actually do speak Spanish. We know that the percentages of weekly Spanish use and we know the language use patterns within the immediate families. However, it is clear that in 7 out of the 9 families (75%) English has consistently dominated the communications of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects. Even when the Mexican (or Nuevomexicano parents) speak in Spanish, eleven of the fourteen Mexican-Nuevomexicanos speak mostly English with their parents. These results differ from both Ortíz (1975) in which Spanish was used almost exclusively with parents in the household and Potowski (2004) in which Spanish was used 75% of the time with parents. The most notable exceptions to this trend are the Navarro, Loredo, and Santos households (all with Mexican mothers24). Yet, the question remains: to whom do the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos speak Spanish if they tend to speak mostly English in the home? I previously mentioned that the workplace plays a significant role in Spanish use among several of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants. Aside from the work domain, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives reveal that it is with extended family members from their Mexican parent’s side of the family with whom they speak Spanish exclusively. This generally includes grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Even when the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos speak pejoratively of their Spanish skills, or claim to only spend a fraction of their week in Spanish, they all report being able to conduct themselves completely in Spanish with members of their Mexican extended family.

Alexa and Alejandro report spending every Sunday with their grandmother, aunts, and uncles on their Mexican father’s side of the family. During these Sunday dinners, they speak all Spanish with this extended family. Rolando tells of this same type of Sunday tradition with his

24 This fact might suggest that the dominant language in the home follows the dominant language of the mother just as Potowski (2008) finds a correlation between Spanish lexical choices and phonological production with the Latino background of the mother.
Mexican father’s side of the family. Adrian and Olivia both report spending regular weekly time with their aunts, uncles, and Mexican grandparents. The remaining Mexican-Nuevomexicanos report that their Mexican family members still live in Mexico. However, when speaking on the phone, or when visits occur, Spanish is the exclusive language between Mexican grandparents, aunts, uncles, and the Mexican Nuevomexicanos. Notably, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not report speaking Spanish with their Mexican cousins unless the cousins live in Mexico. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives reveal that their Spanish use tends to be widely person-specific and based on communicative need. Generally, their older Mexican relatives living in New Mexico or all Mexican relatives living in Mexico, are Spanish dominant. This presents a communicative need to speak in Spanish. The fact that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano Spanish use appears to be mostly limited to certain individuals, rather than to larger domains, seems to be a sign of language shift. Additionally we know that 75% of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects speak less Spanish in a typical week than both of their parents. The fact that the majority of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects speak less Spanish than their parents falls in line with previous findings both outside of New Mexico and among Nuevomexicanos of intergenerational decline of Spanish.

Yet, it is important to note that all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects report some weekly use of spoken Spanish. Additionally, 25% of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos speak the same amount of Spanish or more as one or both of their parents. This is significant given the rapid shift patterns reported over thirty years ago in Martíneztown in Hudson-Edwards and Bills (1980) and even in Arroyo Seco in Ortíz (1975). Indeed, Bills and Vigil are quite aware of the dwindling number of participants under the age of 40 who could participate in their project. They explain,
One of the biggest obstacles to achieving the desired balance of consultants across ages was lining up persons under the age of forty who had sufficient skills (and confidence) in Spanish to participate. A few of the youngest subjects were essentially passive bilinguals with a markedly limited productive ability in Spanish. The NMCOSS did not sample the speech of many other Hispanics who possess still more rudimentary Spanish skills—or none at all. (2008, p. 243)

Bills and Vigil highlight the decreasing numbers of younger Nuevomexicanos who are able to converse in Spanish in the 1990s. In addition to lamenting the loss of Traditional Spanish in New Mexico in their work, Bills and Vigil also predict the overall loss of Spanish. They explain, Cumulatively, the varied findings…point to a high degree of functional reduction of Spanish vis-à-vis English and imperfect learning of the ethnic mother tongue. The loss of a nonstandard dialect can be no surprise given such a high level of performance error. This performance is not just a dialect shift away from the Traditional Spanish norm, however. It is the symptom of a terminal disease. Continued reduction of proficiency in the ethnic language is sure to culminate in the death of the Traditional Spanish dialect and in the death of the Spanish language in general for many persons of Hispanic heritage in the NMCOSS region. (2008, p. 260)

More than twenty years later, it might be expected that these predictions would already be a reality, in particular for Nuevomexicanos in the age group of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos (ages 15-35). However, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects represent a departure from this trend. Indeed, the Nuevomexicano partners, and the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos themselves, are well aware of their children’s higher Spanish proficiency when compared to their Nuevomexicano peers. Verónica speaks of differences between herself and her Nuevomexicana
friends. She explains, “I remember very vividly having friends who had grandparents who only spoke Spanish, and they – how they understood each other I still don’t know, um, because the – the grandchild spoke English, and the grandparents spoke Spanish. They could understand each other, but they couldn’t respond in the appropriate language.” On the other hand, Verónica and her sister always understood when their parents and their friends’ families spoke in Spanish. This would cause a ripple in the Nuevomexicano parents’ practice of speaking in Spanish so that the children would not understand. Juanita explains,

We could never do that with our girls because we spoke both Spanish and English in the house. Also, Veronica and Brenda always knew what was going on… The kids were like, ‘Can we go to this party’ and the parents would be like ‘¿La dejamos ir? ¿No la dejamos ir? ¿Con quién van?’ So Veronica and Brenda would be standing there and the kids were like, ‘I don’t know what my parents are going to say.’”

Juanita explains that her daughters would translate, “‘Well, they are saying that they don’t know who we really are because we just came…’” and the friends would respond with surprise, ‘Oh my God. You know what they are saying?’ So we could never get away with that with the girls.” Francisco Loredo comments on his daughter Angelica’s bilingual abilities when compared to her Nuevomexicano boyfriend. He states, “It’s una bendición que ya sabe los dos idiomas. Most kids nowadays no saben. Como éste que anda con Angelica… este Aaron, you know?..Oh this guy don’t know nothing… he knows a couple of words. He is learning more that he is hanging here at the house. But … it’s gonna take him a lifetime.” In the previous chapter I highlighted Francisco’s belief that marrying a Mexicana has contributed to his Spanish language maintenance. In the case of Angelica, we see a potential for another recontact process between Mexican-Nuevomexicana Angelica and her Nuevomexicano boyfriend.
My purpose in referencing these Mexican-Nuevomexicano family narratives is to underscore that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects’ weekly Spanish language use may not be surprising when compared to language shift studies among Latino populations with mostly G1, G2, and G3 populations (Potowski, 2004). However, when compared to the Mexican-Nuevomexicano’s Nuevomexicano peers, and earlier studies of Nuevomexicano family language maintenance patterns, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos represent a different profile of language maintenance and ability. In a sense, the Nuevomexicano peers of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos represent the trajectory of shift that the Nuevomexicano partners may have continued if they would not have married their Mexican partner and reaped the benefits of recontact. I would like to suggest that this noteworthy linguistic distinction between Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and their Nuevomexicano peers is attributed to the pairing of the linguistic profiles of their parents: A G1 Mexican and a Nuevomexicano engaged in the process of recontact. Like their Nuevomexicano parents, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos represent what Villa and Rivera-Mills (2009) term “an intergenerational persistence of Spanish.”

3.9 Concluding Thoughts: Symbolic Associations and the Complexities Language Maintenance

Schecter and Bayley explain that “…language socialization …is able to elucidate changes in the symbolic associations of the use of different language varieties. It is also able to document changes in family and community ideologies concerning the importance of different languages” (p. 15). It has been my objective in this chapter to reveal the complex language use patterns within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families and challenge unidirectional conceptualizations of language shift by presenting the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos own perceptions and theories about their familial linguistic behavior. How the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos symbolically associate the
languages, and the dynamicity in these associations, adds an additional layer to the nuanced portrait of Mexican-Nuevomexicano language use. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives from the Santos family provide an ideal example of how symbolic associations with Spanish and English change over time. Edna now associates socializing, professional advancement, and the ability to aid in familial communications with her use of Spanish. Her parents also view their use of English as a positive route to communication with their grandchildren. These constantly in-motion flows between Spanish and English are key to understanding the complex language use patterns of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family units and the linguistic sophistication and competency (Zentella, 1997, 2002a) that is activated in order to navigate these flows.

The case of the patterns of communication between the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and their extended Nuevomexicano family members highlights this sophistication. With the exception of Adrian, who reports speaking frequent Spanish with his maternal Nuevomexicano grandfather, and Carolina who spoke exclusively in Spanish to her Nuevomexicano grandparents, 86% of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos report speaking English with their Nuevomexicano grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. As Fishman (2000) indicates, this does not necessarily mean that Spanish is not present within the soundscape of the interactions between the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and their extended Nuevomexicano family. For example, Angelica explains that her Nuevomexicano grandparents speak Spanish with her, but she responds in English. She states that “it’s awkward to respond in Spanish.” Alexa reports speaking in Spanish “sometimes” to her maternal Nuevomexicana grandmother. She explains, “That’s the thing all the viejitos have.” She characterizes her maternal grandmother as one of these viejitas who “has” Spanish. Angelica’s reference to awkwardness in using Spanish with
her Nuevomexicano grandparents and Alexa’s categorization of Spanish as “belonging” to the Nuevomexicano viejitos reveals co-existing symbolic associations with language use.

First, in terms of day to day communication, English is symbolically associated with Nuevomexicano extended family. That is, Nuevomexicanos view English as the most natural language to use with Nuevomexicano family members. Indeed, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not perceive any communicative need to use Spanish with extended Nuevomexicano family as they are all bilingual. Yet, the fact that they still “have” Spanish acknowledges a simultaneous association of Spanish with Nuevomexicanos. Schecter and Bayley underscore this complex linguistic ability and Zentella’s own research in this area. They explain, “…a speaker’s choice of one or another variety represented not only a linguistic decision, but, perhaps, more importantly, a choice of identity. Indeed, Zentella’s 14-year longitudinal study showed how, for children and adolescents of a community such as el bloque, language socialization includes becoming competent in many of the varieties spoken in the community and learning to switch from one variety to another according to the image of himself or herself that the speaker wishes to represent” (p. 14). The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos possess a sophisticated competency in distinguishing when it is appropriate to utilize Spanish and when it is not. Simply because they and their Nuevomexicano extended family may both have proficiency in Spanish does not necessarily dictate its use. Angelica’s labeling of speaking Spanish to Nuevomexicano family members as “awkward” contributes to an understanding of this act as artificial. Simply because one has bilingual ability and is Latino does not necessarily dictate the use of Spanish. This assumes a “lamination of culture and language” (Urciuoli, 2008) and ignores that English and Spanish are both Nuevomexicano and Mexican-Nuevomexicano languages. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano families can and do utilize both. Additionally, their
narratives speak of their agency to return to and re-stimulate their Spanish use. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano families may be in the midst of larger language shift trends. However, I think it is imperative that these language shift trends not eclipse the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos own conceptualizations of their Spanish language maintenance and the nuanced and complex acts of language shaping that occur within the family unit.
4. THE WEIGHT OF WORDS: SPANISH LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES, LEXICAL CHOICES, AND AUTHENTICITY IN MEXICAN-NUEVOMEXICANO FAMILIES

4.1 Introduction

“You did it again!” interjects one of Nicolás Navarro’s daughters. She continues, “Es casi!” The living room was full of activity as Nicolás and I conversed together on a warm Thursday night. Music and laughing intermittently provided pleasant interruptions to our interview. Because the living room was situated in the center of the house, his four daughters would occasionally pass through the room and provide commentary to our conversation. This was one such moment. Nicolás remarks to me, “¿Ves? Ella anda corrigiéndome otra vez.” Laughter then followed the exchange. In the seconds preceding his daughter’s interjection Nicolás was describing the nature of Mexican immigration to New Mexico. He explained, “Porque en ese tiempo cuaji los hombres se vinían a trabajar y no traían a su familia...” His daughter was particularly bothered by his use of the variant “cuaji” for the more standard pronunciation of “casi.” She explains to him, “Sorry....When you say cuaji…it’s like Kawaii. It’s a place in Hawaii or something…it’s something in Hawaii, Dad, just to let you know.” Then a second daughter adds, “New Mexico changes the Spanish language a lot I’ve noticed.” This interaction afforded me the unexpected opportunity in my fieldwork to not only be told by my participants about their linguistic attitudes, but also to actually witness a manifestation of these attitudes through the activation of specific language ideologies within the family unit.

The conversation in the Navarro living room reveals several significant elements within the family dynamic regarding linguistic practices and attitudes. First, Nicolás uses a stigmatized variant of the word “casi.” Second, his daughters are aware of this usage and seem to reject it. Third, with Nicolás’s phrase “anda corrigiéndome otra vez,” we learn that the practice of
correction seems to be a commonplace occurrence in the Navarro home. Lastly, the second daughter’s comment illuminates the perception that New Mexico, in a general sense, engages in linguistic practices that, in her opinion, change the Spanish language (as if there was one Spanish language). These brief moments in the Navarro living room demonstrate that the New Mexican “changes” to Spanish are not necessarily well-received. I highlight this conversation in order to draw attention to the weight of words and the ideologies that accompany them. Far from neutral, words matter in these families. In this chapter I focus on the ways in which the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families talk about words. The articulation of a lexical difference is central to the ways in which the Mexican and Nuevomexicano partners frame each other’s Spanish within their narratives. These narratives reveal that lexical choices have consequences and they often illuminate salient language beliefs. I will trace the flows of these language ideologies within the family units and the ways in which the belief systems simultaneously overlap, intersect, and diverge. Essentially, this chapter answers the question, what are the dominant language ideologies circulating in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families? My analysis draws primarily from the participants’ direct responses to questions that ask them to characterize their Spanish, their family members’ Spanish and any differences or similarities that they note between family members’ Spanish varieties (i.e. Mexican vs. New Mexican Spanish). I also incorporate portions of the narratives in which the participants bring up these types of descriptions without elicitation. This chapter focuses primarily on the responses of the fourteen Mexican-Nuevomexicanos, but also includes the narratives of the Mexican and Nuevomexicano parents in order to contextualize the family dynamics and to better comprehend how ideologies function within the same family. Overall, I would like to approach these ideological sites of convergence and divergence as an additional zone of ethnolinguistic contact in which different faces of Latinidad again manifest
themselves in the dynamic meeting place of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family. Essentially, in this chapter I examine the intricate links between beliefs about language and beliefs about authenticity, correctness, difference, and power.

In the first part of the chapter I highlight a process of linguistic validation among the Mexican and Nuevomexicano/a partners that then gives way to what I term “slippages” or moments of dissonance that emerge in the family member’s descriptions of each other’s language. It is in these moments of slippage when the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, practices of correction and linguistic hierarchies are revealed and reproduced. I suggest the notion of an intergenerational transmission of these “insidious linguistic hierarchies” (Zentella, 2007, p. 36) through acts of correction. I then explore the practice of correction more deeply and the ideologies it constructs in order to reveal uneven relationships between language and power.

4.2 Some Notes about Ideology

Before advancing with my analysis of language ideologies in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context, I would like to discuss several key definitions regarding “ideology” that guide the theoretical framework of this chapter. Silverstein (1979) explains language ideology as “a set of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p. 193). Silverstein’s use of the term “perceived” is particularly important because this chapter seeks to not only explore the family’s perceptions, but also to explore how these perceptions co-exist and contradict each other. Kroskrity addresses the importance of validating a speaker’s perceptions and beliefs about his/her language. He explains,

The dominant and disciplinary institutionalized approaches to language…denied the relevance—to linguistics, certainly—of a speaker’s own linguistic analysis and valorized
the referential functions of language to the exclusion of others. ..Today, although students of language ideology recognize the limitations of members’ explicitly verbalized models (Silverstein 1981, 1985), they do not view these knowledge systems as competing with expert or scientific models…Rather, these local models are valued as constructs that emerge as part of the sociocultural experience of cultural actors. (p. 7)

How the Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants may or may not change their linguistic and discourse forms in response to these ideological constructs is not necessarily the focus of this chapter. I have not tracked the Navarro father’s usage of “cuaji” vs. “casi” in order to document if the Navarro father actually changes his use of “cuaji” in response to his daughters’ correction tactics. However, Nicolás’s perceptions of his usage, and his reactions to the correction, are the relevant points to my analysis. They index his own local knowledge system. Similar to Kroskrtiy, Lippi-Green (2000) recognizes the importance of social context and speaker perceptions. She states, “However objective linguistic definitions of a given language may be, no matter how detailed the description of phonology, intonation, lexicon, syntax, semantics, and rhetorical features, nonlinguists will define the language on the basis of their personal relationship to the sociocultural context in which the language functions” (p. 232). In the spirit of Kroskrtiy and Lippi-Green, my analysis of Mexican-Nuevomexicano family language ideologies does not seek to challenge the veracity of my participants’ perceptions, but rather to explore what these belief systems allow Mexicans, Nuevomexicanos, and MXNMX intra-ethnic subjects to do as cultural actors in their own daily lives.

An additional significant framework for the discussion of language ideologies arises within Glenn Martínez’s 2006 analysis of Mexican Americans and language. Martínez invokes Kroskrtiy (2000) in highlighting four facets of language ideologies relevant to Mexican
American communities. Particular to my study are the lenses of multiplicity, awareness, and interest (p. 9-17). Regarding multiplicity, Martínez explains, “The multiplicity of language ideologies within the Mexican-American community suggests that there is no one Mexican American language ideology, but rather that a confluence of ideologies emerges from within and from without, penetrating inwards and extending outwards” (p. 15). Martínez’s words recall Gloria Anzaldúa’s declaration: “There is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience” (p. 80). These multiple language experiences and ideologies mutually and dynamically inform each other within and between the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families.

Although I intend to draw correlations between individual and familial belief systems, I approach my discussion cognizant of this multiplicity, as well as the contradictions among multiple ideologies. Martínez also underscores that speakers may not be aware of these contradictions due to “varying degrees of awareness of local language ideologies” (Martínez p.13).

Indeed, the contradictory nature of language ideologies is central to my analysis. Kroskrity reminds us of the utility of such contradiction. He explains that “clashes or disjunctures in which divergent ideological perspectives on language and discourse are juxtaposed” result in “conflict, confusion, and contradiction” (Kroskrity, 2000, p. 13). Furthermore, he explains that this “contestation and disjuncture thus disclose critical differences in ideological perspectives that can more fully reveal their distinctive properties as well as their scope and force (p. 13). This notion of contradiction relates to the feature of “interest” in language ideologies. Many times contradictory ideologies are based in opposing interests. Martínez explains that “A language ideology represents a perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group” (p. 9). Yet, many times these interests are opposed. He continues, “Language ideologies are oppositional in the sense
that one always challenges and attempts to subvert the other” (p. 11). On a related note, Eagleton (1991) explains ideology as “something that is used and possessed by the powerless in order to challenge the perpetuation of asymmetric power relations” (Eagleton, p. 6-7). The relationship between language and power is clear in both Martínez and Eagleton’s explanations. In my examination of recontact in Chapter 2, I unpacked the role of power and influence in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano partnerships. Power relations fluctuate and the positions of power are not fixed. These same types of shifting asymmetrical power relations reveal themselves in the present chapter through the activation of the language ideologies within the families.

One last element that is important when mapping out relevant definitions of “ideology” as it pertains to language are the notions of language panic and language pride. Again, related to the idea of “interest,” Martínez reminds us that “language ideologies are, then, fundamentally about social and political control of linguistically distinct groups.” Two cultural processes that highlight this control are embodied in language pride and language panic. Martínez explains language pride: “I understand language pride as the belief that the language of one’s home and community is a viable public language and a real option to be used and infused in expressing one’s voice.” In my analysis we will uncover how the familial language ideologies connect to notions of language pride in Mexican Spanish, New Mexican Spanish, and Spanglish. Jane Hill (2001) coins the term “language panic.” Martínez interrogates this notion as “a period of intense debate and heightened emotions over relatively obscure and technical issues” (p. 11). Martínez expands Hill’s definition in order to highlight language panics in everyday routine affairs (p. 12). Martínez emphasizes the application of language panics to such continuous occurrences as the use of mock Spanish (Hill, 2001) and other manifestations in which “whiteness” and English are elevated by the dominant society. Because my study is about inter-
Latino relationships, rather than Anglo vs. Latino interactions, the examples of mock Spanish and other manifestations of the elevation of “whiteness” by dominant Anglo society are not as relevant. However, that is not to say that “language panics” do not occur within Latino/a communities. Behaviors of “dialect dissing” (Zentella, 2002a) and “Spanglish bashing” (Zentella, 2002a) do, indeed, occur within Latino/a groups. These are important forms of chiquitification (Zentella, 1995) that fall under the umbrella of language panics and are particularly useful behaviors for viewing the manifestation of power within language ideologies. Martínez reminds us that “It would be a grave error to suppose that language pride is always and only expressed and reproduced within the Mexican American community and that language panic is always and only expressed within the dominant culture…the routine activities of ‘dialect dissing’ and ‘Spanglish bashing’ are just as common inside the Mexican American community as they are outside it” (p. 14). These behaviors occur between Latino groups and, in my study, between Latino/a family members.

In summary, as I move forward with my analysis of language ideologies I seek to validate local systems of perception and Latinos’ own theorizations about language grounded in their daily life experiences. I am aware of the multiplicity and the power differentials embedded in these ideologies. These concepts naturally fit in with the framework of Latinidad. Through the manifestation of Latino/a language ideologies we see moments of convergence and divergence, competing authenticities (Aparicio, 1999), and inter-Latino knowledge produced through the activation of these belief systems. Indeed, Glenn Martínez emphasizes that “the degree to which our speech patterns conform to or differ from one another has to do with our lived experiences in social encounters. Language ideologies are thus embodied in these lived experiences” (p.9). Martínez’s approach to language ideologies implicitly invokes the theoretical framework of
Latinidad recalling Rúa’s 2001 study of mixed-Latino identities in Chicago and the ways in which “ordinary people, in this case individuals who are of both Puerto Rican and Mexican ancestry, theorize *latinidad* from their lived experiences” (Rúa, 2001, p.118). Here I will highlight how Mexicans, Nuevomexicanos, and MXNMX subjects theorize linguistic Latinidad from lived experiences embedded within ideological constructs.

### 4.3 Slippery Constructs: Moments of Ideological Contradictions

One process that allows for the viewing of the contradictory nature of language ideologies within the families is a fascinating interplay between validation and correction. This interplay circulates throughout my discussions with the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. For instance, Manuel Guzmán, a G1 Mexican, married to Andrea from Taos explains about the differences between his Spanish and that of his in-laws. He states,

*Sí hay mucha diferencia porque su familia de ella usa muchas palabras que no las entiendo. Dicen palabras muy diferentes que nosotras. Porque su mamá de ella habla muy bien el español, pero también hay palabras que significan diferentes cosas, que yo nunca las había oído. Entonces, para mí, sí hay diferencia…ellos tienen su forma y nosotros tenemos nuestra forma de hablar. Pero ninguno es mejor que otro.]*

*There is a difference because her family uses many words that I don’t understand. They say words that our very different from ours. Because her mom speaks very good Spanish, but there are also words that have different meanings that I had never heard of. So, for me, there is a difference…they have their way of speaking and we have ours. But neither is better than the other.*

Manuel’s words emphasize lexical distinction while not imposing any notions of linguistic deficiency. His affirmation of his mother-in-law’s “very good” Spanish confirms that difference
does not imply superiority. Manuel’s wife Andrea expresses a similar recognition and appreciation for the differences in their lexicon:

> Our vocabulary is totally different. Like we say *calzones* for pants and he says *calzones* for underwear and I would be like, “No! *Calzones* are pants.” And he’d be like, “No! They’re underwear.” I would always tell him, “You know what? Your Spanish is different than mine. I’m not saying that my Spanish is better and I’m not saying that your Spanish is better…Our Spanishes are just different and we need to adapt.”

Within both Andrea and Manuel’s characterizations of each other’s lexical choices we see a clear move to give equal footing to both New Mexican Spanish and Mexican Spanish. This move reveals an ideology of linguistic equality as well as a sense of pride in their respective varieties and respect for their partner’s variety. Additionally, Manuel and Andrea’s relationship has created the setting for certain inter-Latino linguistic knowledge to be produced, theorized, and negotiated in their daily lives. The couple’s interactions have resulted in the “increasing consciousness among U.S. Latinos” to which Sandoval-Sánchez (1999) refers.

Yet, moments later in Andrea’s interview she laments her husband’s tendency to overcorrect her. She explains,

> When I say words he’ll be like, “No..that’s not a word.” Or if I put the wrong ending on a word he’ll be like, “Oh babe, you still don’t know that?”…And then he would keep correcting me…he’d be like, “No babe you don’t say it like that.”…he’d be like…“that’s not even a word”…I’m like, excuse me, that is a word.

Andrea’s description of Manuel’s over-correction of her lexical choices, particularly in his use of the word "still", undermines the equal footing attributed to both varieties of Spanish and consequently relegates Andrea’s Spanish to a position of inferiority. In highlighting this subtle
linguistic hierarchy it is not my intention to question Manuel’s sincerity regarding his equal
gregard for New Mexico Spanish. However, Andrea’s account of Manuel’s linguistic policing
draws attention to an inconsistency that is potentially indicative of a larger belief system that
Mexican Spanish is always ultimately more correct than New Mexican Spanish.

A similar dynamic occurs in the Loredo family from Las Vegas. The G1 Mexican, Pía,
explains how she’s always emphasized to her daughter that she has three languages: New
Mexican Spanish, Mexican Spanish, and English. She also explains that she stresses that her
daughter must respect her father’s side of the family’s Spanish. When describing an incident at
her daughter’s paternal grandparents’ house, Pía states, “Ella los quería corregir, por los
términos…they would tell her ‘hija pásame el telefón’… y ella les decía ‘teléfono abuelito, tiene
acento.’ Le digo pues, ‘Angelica asi es el idioma de aqui…zanhoria por zanahoria la silleta por
silla’. [She wanted to correct them because of their words…they would tell her, ‘hija pass me
the telefón…and she would tell them, ‘teléfono grandpa, it has an accent.’ I would tell her then,
‘Angelica this is how the language is from here… zanhoria for zanahoria, la silleta for silla’]
Pía’s discovery of the historical linguistic connections between these words that she initially
stigmatized (see Chapter 2), now influences the validity she attributes to her in-laws’ Spanish.
However, it is important to note that the fact that Pía must discourage her daughter’s attempts to
correct her grandparents already implies that certain linguistic hierarchies may be at work in this
household. Pía’s next anecdote illuminates this implication. She elaborates, “Yo oía que
decían, ‘voy a mopear’ y le digo a mi esposo, ‘no me enseñes eso porque voy a aprender mal’ y
hasta Angèlica está aprendiendo así porque su maestra también le habla así. Entonces ella
también estaba cayendo en esas cositas. [I would hear them say, ‘I’m going to mop,’ and I
would tell my husband, ‘don’t teach me that because I am going to learn incorrectly’ and even
Angelica is learning that because her teacher also speaks like that. So she is also falling into those types of things. ]” These “cositas” again reveal the presence of a certain hierarchy, albeit subtle, between the two varieties of Spanish. Pía’s discourse validates New Mexican Spanish only to subordinate it with the correction of her daughter’s Spanish. Here we see the co-existence of ideologies of equality and “correctness” that are only revealed through these slippages or moments of dissonance. Milroy and Milroy (1985) provide some insight into these moments. They explain that “it seems to be virtually impossible to rely on speakers’ reports of their own usage or of their attitudes to usage…people’s overt claims about language are inaccurate and often contradict their own actual usage” (p. 15). In the case of Pía, we see this contradiction. She articulates an attitude of linguistic equality and in the same conversation undermines this equality. Pía’s account corroborates Milroy and Milroy’s assertion that “it is extremely difficult for anyone to calculate the extent to which his general attitudes to language have been coloured by prevailing prescriptions” (p. 87). Although Pía may defend and, even, use New Mexican Spanish, these moments of dissonance reveal the power of previously “learnt attitudes” (Milroy and Milroy, p. 87).

In describing her husband’s family’s Spanish, Gabriela also highlights a tension between linguistic validation and subtle subordination. She emphasizes that New Mexican Spanish “es diferente al que yo hablo… pero habían muchas palabras que eran casi igual que las que yo hablaba… una diferencia de palabras, pero… era la misma cosa. Pero ella la llamaba de un modo, y yo la conocía de otro modo diferente. [It’s different from what I speak…but there were also a lot of words that were almost identical to what I would say…a difference in words, but…it was the same thing. But she would say it one way, and I knew it as something different.]” In this account, Gabriela speaks of difference, but consistently minimizes the difference. She makes it
clear that the differences in words do not necessarily impede comprehension. In this instance she is referring specifically to the communication with her husband’s grandmother. Yet, when I asked her a few minutes later to elaborate on any perceived differences between the way she speaks and the way her husband’s family speaks she states, “Yo creo – la manera de pronunciar las cosas que no las decían correctamente...Antes decía, ‘Te truje.’ Le dije, ‘No digan truje, es traje. Te traje esto, pero no es truje.’ Les decía, ‘No, así no es.’ [I think—they did not pronounce things correctly---Before he would say, ‘Te truje.’ I told him, ‘Don’t say truje, it’s traje. Te traje esto, but it’s not truje.’ I told them, ‘That’s not the way.’]” Gabriela’s downplaying of difference gives way to a critique of this difference as “incorrect.” In an almost identical instance, José Luis also indicates equality between linguistic varieties when he states, “I speak three languages English, Mexican, and New Mexican so after a while you get used to it so you don’t even pay attention no more.” José Luis normalizes the variation. He then explains, “you get to the point after so many years that you don’t notice it; you know what they mean like “te truje” that’s another word “te truje” instead of “te truje” which in Spanish is “te traje” in Mexico. “Truje” it’s just a slang… because you know the New Mexican language is different than the real Mexican.” In his efforts to naturalize the differences, he actually draws attention to the non-neutral state of these differences. By using the term “slang” and “real Mexican” José Luis reveals a belief system that Mexican Spanish is ultimately more authentic. Although “real” and “correct” are not necessarily synonymous, José Luis still reveals the construction of a hierarchy in which Mexican Spanish is modified by the term “real” and New Mexican Spanish is equated with “slang.”

In highlighting these moments of dissonance I do not wish to imply that the sentiment of equality is not there. However, it does point to the feature of awareness in language ideologies
in that the speakers may not be aware of these contradictions. Yet, the slippage is significant because it speaks to a system of beliefs that reveals a hierarchy between Mexican Spanish and New Mexican Spanish through the process of correction. The ideologies of linguistic equality give way to notions of “real” and “correct” language. These tensions are significant because they speak to active embodiments of the convergences and divergences associated with Latinidad. Manuel’s assurances that his mother-in-law does speak “good” Spanish and Pía’s urging to her daughter to respect her grandparents’ Spanish actually denote moments of linguistic solidarity between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos. Yet, these moments of solidarity are not without the manifestation of the competing authenticities also active in moments of Latinidad that become visible through references to the practice of correction. This practice highlights an ideology of linguistic correctness and notions of “real” Spanish. This interplay between validation and correction, revealed through the slippages, also underscores a simultaneous manifestation of language pride and panic. The ideology of equality references a sense of pride while dialect dissing occurs through the practice of correction.

4.4 **Intergenerational Transmission of Linguistic Hierarchies**

In the case of Angelica, I alluded to the possibility that some of the parents’ ideologies are also present in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano’s perceptions about language. I propose that the moments of dissonance played out by the Mexican and Nuevomexicano parents contribute to the transmission of linguistic hierarchies to their Mexican-Nuevomexicano children. Although the couples may demonstrate varying degrees of dialectical acceptance and openness towards negotiation of meaning with regards to lexical choices, the Mexican parents seem less likely to be accepting of features that denote an unMexican Spanish from their children. This degree of

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intolerance, in many cases, is transmitted to the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects in the form of linguistic policing as reflected in the practice of correction. The moments of dissonance reveal ideologies of prescriptivism and these seem to override the transmission of notions of linguistic equality. An important point of departure when considering language and notions of “correctness” is the study of Standard English by Milroy and Milroy (1985). Providing a significant critique of prescriptivism, Milroy and Milroy explain, “Prescription depends on an ideology (or set of beliefs) concerning language which requires that in language use, as in other matters, things shall be done in the ‘right’ way” (p. 1). We clearly see the workings of language prescriptivism at play in constructing linguistic hierarchies.

In some instances these hierarchies seem to be quite stable and clearly demarcated as in the case of Angelica. When I asked Pía’s daughter, Angelica, about any differences between the Spanish that her mom speaks and the Spanish that her dad speaks, she explains bluntly, “My mom speaks it right.” She continues,

I think that it’s the right vocabulary because she’s originally from Mexico and just people from here like of course their grandparents and great great grandparents brought it over and they just left a couple of pieces on the road and they just put whatever words they had and made a new word.

Angelica clearly differentiates her mother’s Spanish as correct, right, and real. For Angelica, New Mexican Spanish is unorderly and random. In a related example, during the lexical elicitation activity, when asked which word she uses for “light bulb,” Angelica responds, “I don’t know what the right word in Spanish is, but sometimes they call it here globo.” Angelica creates a dichotomy between “right” and “here,” thus emphasizing that here in New Mexico they don’t speak right. Milagros Navarro expresses a similar ideology of realness and correctness regarding
Mexican Spanish. She states, “I try and speak more like they do in Mexico. I hope my Spanish is more Mexican.” Milagros’s hope that she speaks more Mexican reflects a transmission of the superiority of Mexican Spanish over New Mexican Spanish.

Yet, in other cases, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects’ ideologies are not so clearly aligned with strict notions of correctness. In the cases of Rose and Carolina, not only do the belief systems reveal a shifting nature, but also tensions between linguistic pride and panic. Many times this occurs within the same utterance. Consider Rose’s explanation of the differences between the ways her parents speak:

Um, like there’s a lot of words that are very different. But my mom’s more accustomed to saying ‘em the right way or – not the right way, but the Mexican way. I don’t know what to say – how to say it. You know, because the Mexicans are saying they’re right and, you know, New Mexicans always thought that they’re right. So, you know, it’s just whoever is right.

Rose begins by activating the notion of difference to describe New Mexican Spanish. With her use of “right” immediately following this statement it seems as if she is equating “different” with not right or incorrect. After expressing the thought about her mom “saying the right words” Rose seems to become aware of the dialect dissing in which she engaged and expresses bewilderment at how to address this idea of saying things “the right way.” She is caught within competing ideologies regarding the notion of “right.” Her account ends with a potential activation of the linguistic equality ideology with the last line of “So, you know, it’s just whoever is right.” However, Rose’s slippages and backtracking reveal the complexity and multiplicity of ideologies that are also transmitted to the MXNMX subjects simultaneously along with the hierarchies.
Carolina’s account reveals a similar dynamic. Like Rose, Carolina activates the notion of difference. However, in this case she does not necessarily utilize it as a euphemism for “incorrect.” Carolina downplays the difference in favor of an alternative perception of “fusion.” Upon reflection of her language perceptions growing up she explains,

I don’t think that even then that I thought that there was a difference. I mean, I knew there was a difference in the way she spoke, and the way he spoke, and my grandma and grandpa spoke. But after a while, I think it kind of meshed all into one, if you will. It just kind of all fused into one Spanish.

Carolina’s words minimize difference. She indexes her awareness of the difference without associating it with an ideology of correctness. For Carolina, the awareness of difference does not undermine the reality that the fusion was the norm for her. Like José Luis, she naturalizes the fusion or mixing. Carolina then reflects that with exposure to schooling she develops an awareness regarding “proper” Spanish. She explains,

I mean I always tell people – like I told you, trilingual because of his Spanish, her Spanish, and then English. But my dad’s Spanish…It’s not always the proper way to speak… I think now that I’m getting older, and I teach Spanish at school, it’s had me realize that there are some words that we grew up with that are not the right way to say things. When I’m teaching at school I always tell the kids, “Yes, we do say chopos, but that’s not the proper term. That is in New Mexico for slipper, but not the proper term.

Carolina begins with the activation of linguistic equality, yet, undermines it with an apparent subscription to the ideology of correctness. This moment of dissonance illuminates linguistic validation with subtle subordination. Additionally, Carolina’s words clearly ascribe to what Lippi-Green (1997) terms as the “standard language ideology” or SLI. Lippi-Green explains,
“(SLI) is defined as a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogenous spoken language” (1997, p. 64). She explains that it is “…a powerful idea that most people subscribe to without thought: the belief that there is a homogenous, perfect language, a language stripped of ethnic, racial, economic, religious diversity” (p. 244). The ideology of correctness inherently assumes that there is a “right” language and a “proper” way of saying things. Carolina identifies her father’s Spanish, and the terms that her and her students may have grown up with, as invalid while holding up the dictionary as a symbol of a proper, standard language ideology.

The standard language ideology as well as the previously mentioned ideology of correctness center around the notion of authenticity. References to ideas about “real”, “proper,” “right,” and “correct” language point to ideologies of authenticity. Even the beliefs about language equality and linguistic difference are related to authenticity. Linguistic equality ascribes to the notion that there is no one real or authentic language (or perhaps that all are real or authentic) and linguistic difference many times uses the term “different” as a synonym for “incorrect.” This belief assumes that there is a correct or authentic word or pronunciation. Mary Bucholtz’s framework regarding authenticity provides a useful lens through which to view these language beliefs.

4.5 Linguistic Power Plays: Deconstructing Correction as an Authenticating Practice

Recall that Bucholtz suggests the concept of authentication rather than authenticity. She explains, “Where authenticity presupposes that identity is primordial, authentication views it as the outcome of constantly negotiated social practices… This perspective does not deny the cultural force of authenticity as an ideology but emphasizes that authenticity is always achieved rather than given in social life, although this achievement is often rendered invisible.” (p. 408) Bucholtz’s focus on “constantly negotiated social practices” allows us to focus on the central
social practice that invokes authenticity within the families’ narratives: the practice of correction. The Navarro family provides an initial glimpse at this authenticating practice. All of the preceding narratives have reported instances of correction. It is clear that the authenticating practice of correction allows the Mexicans, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican-Nuevomexicanos to express beliefs about correct (authentic) or incorrect (inauthentic) Spanish. However, I would like to take a closer look at the practice of correction and how it allows for the authenticity ideology to reveal deeper relationships between language and power. Essentially, I would like to explore how correction as an authenticating practice allows the MXNMX subjects to make power differentials visible and potentially shift them. Primarily focusing on the narratives of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects, I will unpack two case studies in correction in order to highlight the dynamics between language and power and the resulting linguistic power plays.

The first case study centers around the narratives of the Santos daughters. Both of the Mexican-Nuevomexicana daughters in the Santos family describe instances of correcting their Nuevomexicano father’s Spanish. Carolina explains,

In a way, I’m kind of teaching my dad too because I’m always correcting him, not meanly, but trying to teach him that there’s another way to say something. You know he’ll say, “crismes” and I’m like, “Dad, that’s not how you say it.” What do you mean? I’ve been saying that forever. I know Dad, but it’s “Navidad.” It’s just the better term. So it’s funny. My mom just giggles in the back because I know she still remembers. When she gets with her people, with the cousins from Albuquerque, that’s not very often, but when we got together for a funeral, her Spanish changed within seconds. I have always seen it because that’s the way she is.
Carolina’s correction privileges the term “Navidad” over the term “crismes” despite the fact that “crismes” is the only term her father has ever used as well as the dominant variant in northern New Mexico (Bills and Vigil, 2008). Carolina mentions that her mother “still remembers” the term “Navidad.” It is interesting that Carolina identifies this as the “better” term despite the fact that her mother does not describe any moments in which she corrects her Nuevomexicano husband or her children. Carolina and her sister also do not reference any linguistic policing by their Mexican mother. Yet, Carolina aligns her Spanish more clearly with the non-Nuevomexicano lexical choice. Carolina’s reference to her mother’s “remembering” highlights this lexical choice as part of her mother’s Mexican past. Edna, Carolina’s younger sister, engages in similar corrective practices with her father. She explains,

   The way my dad talks he’s like -- one time, I don’t know where we were at, and my dad goes, “¿Dónde está la línea?” and they looked at him, and they were Mexican immigrants, and they looked at him and I went like this and I go, “Dad it’s not línea.” I said, “For a line you don’t say línea.” And he goes, “Yes, you do.” And I say, “No, you say fila.” And then he’ll say, “No.”

Edna’s correction of her father places the presence of “Mexican immigrants” at the heart of her concern for her father to speak with the “proper” lexicon. Edna does not want her father to use a marked lexical choice. Edna’s narrative constructs the word “fila” as the unmarked lexical item. Edna’s corrections imply that Mexican word choices are the unmarked norm. Beyond instilling notions of Mexican Spanish as the correct, better, and real Spanish, I would like to suggest that Edna and Carolina’s corrective practices actually reveal a re-working of a familial relationship between language and power that is then mapped onto a linguistic hierarchy that favors Mexican
word choices. In Chapter 2, I referenced the interactions between Marta and Juan when they first met. Recall the following exchange:

Marta: Y cuando le hablaba a él en mi español, se enojaba.

LG: ¿Por qué?

Marta: Porque no me entendía.

Juan: Las palabras eran diferentes, bueno como ahora la comida o la ropa.

Marta: Todo me decía, me decía tráeme mis calzones y le traía los calzoncillos.

Me decía, ‘¿por qué me traes mis calzoncillos? Quiero mis pantalones.

Juan: Yeah, porque eran diferentes.

Marta: Y luego me decía él, ‘si no me vas a hablar bien, no me hables.’ Porque yo estaba impuesta a todas las cosas en mexicano mío. Y cuando me enojaba con él, porque después de que nos casamos mi comida era diferente a la de él, y hacía yo mi comida y me decía, ‘Esta comida no es como la que cocina mi mamá.’ Y le dije yo, ‘No, pero es la que cocinamos nosotros.’ Ya me tuvo que imponer a cocinar como él.

Not only does Marta retell this interaction twice within her interview, but Carolina and Edna also reference it in their individual interviews. This patriarchal linguistic hierarchy seems to have made a significant impact on all three women. I would like to suggest that the corrective practices of Carolina and Edna serve to re-instill power and authenticity to their mother’s Mexican Spanish and Mexican culture because of the asymmetrical power relationship established by their Nuevomexicano father from the beginning of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano partnership. Here the authenticating practice reveals key connections between power, language, and gender. The social practice of correction remaps gender power dynamics onto language
ideologies. It is significant, and a point for future analysis and research, that the linguistic policing itself seems to be a gendered activity. The clearest examples of this behavior exist between Mexican-Nuevomexicanas and their Nuevomexicano fathers. The authenticating practice of correction in the Santos family serves to rewrite the power dynamic between their parents and establish the “standard language” as Mexican Spanish.

The second case I would like to highlight revolves around discourses regarding the use of the variants así/asina. The narratives of the Navarro daughters in particular index the relationship between language, power, and the use of así and asina. The term “así” translates to “like this” or “like that” in English. In another moment of linguistic policing in the Navarro living room, Nicolás is chastised for his word choice. Nicolás explains, “La única que me corrige aquí es mi hija. [The only one who corrects me is my daughter.]” At this very moment his daughter walks in the room. It is her birthday and the family is preparing a barbeque while I am interviewing Nicolás. The exchange between the two is documented below:

Nicolás: Happy birthday mi jita
Daughter: Thank you, Dad.
Nicolás: ¿Cuál palabra siempre me...?
Daughter: Asina!
Daughter: Asina, no! Así!

The choice between así vs. asina proves to be contentious within the Navarro family. Nicolás’s daughter’s correction implies that Nicolás’s use of “asina” must be frequent. However, during

26 Lipski (2008) categorizes the standard variant of así vs. asina/ansina/ajina variants under the categories of “urban” vs. “rural.” Although my participants associate the “rural” variants exclusively with New Mexico, Lipski emphasizes that they “are not peculiar to Mexico or Mexican-American Spanish, but are found in many rural Spanish dialects throughout the world” (p. 95).
Nicolás’s entire 84 minute interview he only uses the variant “asina” twice. Yet, he uses the variant “así” twelve times. There seems to be a perceived proliferation of the variant “asina” in the family that does not necessarily match real speech. Nicolás’s other daughter, Rosalinda, mentions her own confusion with así vs. asina. She explains that “sometimes I’ll say asina y es así. I try to say así but sometimes I catch myself and my mom will correct me...I think I try to use así but I still catch myself sometimes saying asina cause like I’ve heard that a few times and like people say, ‘oh no puedes hacer lo asina’ and I’m just like ‘huh.’ But I always catch myself and I say, ‘okay, no. Es así’ and my mom will correct me too.” Rosalinda’s struggle with así and asina quite literally functions as an embodiment of the competing authenticities of a linguistic Latinidad converging in her own linguistic repertoire. Rosalinda acknowledges the difficulty in consciously disciplining herself to use a word (así) that is not like the variant (asina) that she hears in her community. Rosalinda’s self-policing and the linguistic policing Nicolás receives by his daughters both reveal an apparent language panic around the así vs. asina binary. After all, Nicolás overwhelmingly uses así rather than asina and Rosalinda is acutely aware of the need to use así and “catches” herself if she slips up. What, then, accounts for these corrective practices if the actual use of asina does not seem to be dominant in the Navarro family? What is really at stake if one uses asina vs. así? Rosalinda’s older sister, Milagros, sheds some light on the beliefs that lie beneath this language panic.

When I asked Milagros if any of her family in Mexico ever comments on the way she speaks Spanish, she responds, “…there may have been one time, that was a very long time ago and ‘cause over here we say asina (laughs) and then my cousin, ‘¡Asina? Asina, ¡no!’(laughs) and he made, oh gosh, and he made us look, it was me and my sister actually, and he made us

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27 This suggests that así/asina are in free variation within Nicolas’ narrative.
look so stupid. And we were just like, ‘oh no!’” Milagros’s memory illuminates the consequences for using a term like asina in Mexico among Mexican family members: embarrassment and shame. Indeed, Gabriela (Milagros and Rosalinda’s mother) tells of warning her husband about being made fun of if he uses terms specific to New Mexico in Mexico. She says, “Y le explicaba yo a Nicolás, le dije: ‘Eso no lo digas allá porque se van a reír de ti.’ [I explained to Nicolás, I told him, ‘Don’t say that there because they will laugh at you.’]” It seems that the corrective practices of both the Mexican partners and the MXNMX offspring are rooted in a larger fear of being corrected by Mexican family members in Mexico. The authenticating practice of correction among the MXNMX families reproduces Mexican family members’ language ideologies regarding linguistic correctness. Pía and Angelica’s corrective practices function around this same fear. I asked Pía if she felt her Spanish had changed throughout her years of living in Las Vegas. She explains, “No ha cambiado. No puede cambiar. Es muy difícil porque cuando tú regresas a México, se ríen de ti. [It hasn’t changed. It can’t change. It’s hard because you return to Mexico, and they laugh at you.]” Pía’s self-regimenting linguistic practices may, in fact, contribute to her daughter Angelica’s acts of correction. In her comments about Spanish spoken in the Las Vegas area, Angelica gives an example of a “made-up” word. She says emphatically, “Like ajina…es asina! Not ajina, you know?” Interestingly, Angelica adds another layer to the asina vs. así debate. Angelica’s zeal to correct leads her to unknowingly correct one stigmatized item (ajina) with another (asina). We see here how the awareness of certain consequences (primarily embarrassment) fuels this fervor to correct. The practices of correction around así reveal the desire of the MXNMX subjects to avoid these consequences.
Beyond functioning as a strategy to safeguard against embarrassment, the authenticating practice of correction also serves as a contestatory practice that addresses uneven power dynamics. The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos use correction to legitimize themselves as valid speakers of authentic Spanish. Whereas their Mexican parents may express anxieties about Mexican family members making fun of changes to their Spanish, the question as to whether or not the Mexican parents can speak Spanish is not up for debate. The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos, on the other hand, may not enjoy the same level of linguistic legitimacy. Like their Nuevomexicano/a parents, the MXNMX are all born and raised in New Mexico and have grown up hearing stories and witnessing their Nuevomexicano parents’ linguistic abilities in Spanish be questioned, corrected, and chiquitafied. For example, Rosalinda explains that her father initially needed her mother’s help with Spanish. She explains, “with my mom’s family, the first time she met him, she had to help him in Spanish a lot cause like even though my grandma spoke it and my great grandma, my dad was like not a very fluent speaker.” Rosalinda emphasizes that her father’s Nuevomexicano linguistic abilities were not sufficient. Similarly, Veronica retells her Nuevomexicana mother’s first interaction with her Mexican grandparents in Mexico:

I’ll tell you the story about when my mom and dad – when my mom and dad eloped and they went to Mexico. Um, my mom went to my abuelita and said to her, “Necesito un cajete para lavar las lonas de José Luis.” And the only cajete that my abuelita knew of was the molcajete and lonas is, of course, a tarp, and she – she turned to Mom, and she said, “José Luis no tiene lonas.” “Sí, tiene muchas lonas.” It took quite a while to figure out – you know, they – they still didn’t understand each other, and then it wasn’t ‘til my dad walked in, and he said, “Quiere la tina para lavar los pantalones de mezclilla.” Oh, okay, you know, that kinda thing. Um, you know, she asked for un pitcher para hacer
They didn’t know what a *pitcher* was. So it’s kinda that – it’s that – I call it New Mexican Spanish…it is Spanish, but it has this certain spin on it that you go to Mexico and they’re confused.

With these stories in mind, the corrective practices of the MXNMX subjects reflect a desire to avert this confusion by asserting themselves as linguistic experts. Indeed, Rosalinda describes her father’s Spanish as “still a work in progress” and Alicia explains that her mom has “come a long way” with her Spanish. Both of these reports of “progress” indicate that dominating a Mexican Spanish is the desired goal and positions the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects as evaluators of this “improvement.” Even Rose applauds her Nuevomexicano husband for being mistaken for Mexican at work: “I give him props because he’s come a long way. And, in fact, he – he was so excited a while back. He works out in the field. He works for the gas company…he works with a lot of Mexicans. And he came home one day and he was like all excited. He was like, ‘Guess what? This Mexican said that he thought I was from Mexico.’” For Rose, and her husband, sounding Mexican enough to pass for Mexican is an accomplishment and a measure of good Spanish. Therefore, correction is a symbolic practice that continuously reinforces the notion of authenticity and allows the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos to establish themselves as valid Spanish speakers.

However, in achieving this empowerment, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects do, in fact, inscribe a linguistic hierarchy within their Nuevomexicano communities and among family members. In resetting the power differential between themselves and potential Mexican correctors, they reenact it onto Nuevomexicanos. This is clear as Angelica corrects her Nuevomexicano grandparents and as Edna, Carolina, and Milagros correct their respective Nuevomexicano fathers. The acts of correction highlight a “process in which ideology, in
simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities invisible” (Irvine & Gal, 2000, p. 38). The practice of correction, and the ideology of authenticity it constructs, renders Nuevomexicanos and their variety of Spanish invisible. Considering that Zentella’s findings in El Barrio in New York emphasize that “children in neighborhoods like el bloque learn to negotiate the linguistic diversity that surrounds them in keeping with the central cultural norm of respeto (“respect”), which requires that the young defer to their elders and accommodate the linguistic abilities of their addressees wherever possible” (1997, p. 327). The Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects’ impulse to correct seems to trump the notion of deferring and accommodating to their Nuevomexicano elders. Is this a case of lack of respeto? Are the MXNMX subjects complicit in a process of linguistic oppression through their acts of correction?

It is clear that the practice of correction does, indeed, reveal another example of shifting power relationships in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context. However, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’ linguistic power play cannot be reduced to a one-way binary relationship between oppressor/oppressed or a case of disrespect. Despite the hierarchical view of their parents’ linguistic varieties, every Mexican-Nuevomexicano subject emphasizes in each of her interviews that she feels equally identified with Mexico and New Mexico. Many times the subject uses expressions such as “I’m half and half” or “I’m both.” They are very careful not to claim one identity over another in order to honor both parents. This fact problematizes any notion of clear-cut disrespect. I do not believe it is necessarily an issue of blaming the Mexican partners and MXNMX subjects for linguistically subordinating Nuevomexicanos, but recognizing that the MXNMX impulse to correct represents a response to a larger framework of historical linguistic oppression in the Nuevomexicano context.
A focus on the intersection between correction, authenticity, and standard language ideology illuminates this framework of oppression. Specifically, Lippi-Green (1997) discusses the implications of this intersection: “In the simplest terms, the disciplining of discourse has to do with who is allowed to speak, and thus, who is heard. A standard language ideology, which proposes that an idealized nation-state has one perfect, homogeneous language, becomes the means by which discourse is seized, and provides rationalization for limiting access to discourse.” Lippi-Green highlights the process in which Nuevomexicano Spanish is silenced in favor of the “standard” Mexican Spanish. She connects this disciplining to ideas about nation.

One of the driving forces in the practice of correction is the fear of being made fun of in Mexico. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects attribute much validity to Mexican Spanish because, as Angelica reminds us, her mom speaks “the right vocabulary because she’s originally from Mexico.” The MXNMX subjects are able to attach this variety to a “legitimate” Spanish-speaking nation-space and this nation validates its authenticity. This ideology emphasizes that New Mexican Spanish does not have a national identity; therefore, it cannot function as a standard Spanish. In a sense, Nuevomexicano Spanish exists as a language without a nation. Indeed, when Gloria Anzaldúa speaks of “Chicano Spanish,” she references this absence of a nation to “legitimize” the language:

For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with the standard (formal, Castilian) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves…(p. 77)
Spanish in New Mexico has an over 400 year old presence that has lived through several changes in nation. Absorbing influences from Pueblo Indian languages, Nahuatl, early and contemporary Mexican Spanish, and English, as well as reflecting its own internal innovations (Bills and Vigil, 2008) it embodies a language reflective of Nuevomexicanos’ continuously changing realities. Part of this reality consists of a historical trend of linguistic silencing that began long before the Mexican partners and Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects initiated their correction practices.

From the beginning of the U.S. conquest of New Mexico in 1846, New Mexico has experienced a history of linguistic oppression (Nieto-Phillips, 2000; Roberts, 1998; Gonzales-Berry, 2000; Gonzales, 1999; Bills and Vigil, 2008).

The ideological inter-Latino linguistic hierarchies constructed within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families represent a legacy of this historical linguistic oppression. The Somos Primos campaign underscores the obscured histories between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos that contribute to this dynamic. The campaign’s video states, “History textbooks in New Mexico schools did not include the history of the region before the U.S. occupation. Nuevomexicanos grew up not knowing the deep roots they shared with their primos on the other side. Mexican textbooks do not mention the over 60,000 Mexicans that remained in the conquered territory.”

Yet another example of Latinidad, the video recalls the (post) colonial analogies (Aparicio, 2003, p. 94), similar histories, and displacements between Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans. This lack of inter-Latino knowledge creates fertile ground for authenticating practices that construct linguistic hierarchies. Take the case of así vs. asina. Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos interact around this variant completely unaware that both of these variants are used in Mexico and New Mexico (Lipski, 2008). Artificially associating only one variant with one region conceals the heterogeneity within these communities. The notion that New Mexican Spanish is so different
from Mexican Spanish relies on the premise of separate linguistic histories, when, in reality, these histories overlap. Indeed, Bills and Vigil capture this notion when they argue that, “…all of New Mexican Spanish is ‘Mexican’” (Bills and Vigil, 2008, p.7).

When positioned within the framework of a larger sociolinguistic history of repression, I would like to suggest that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano’s practice of correction operates on a critical level to combat the linguistic invisibility of Spanish in New Mexico. Catherine Walsh (1991) describes critical bilingualism as “the ability to not just speak two languages, but to be conscious of the sociocultural, political, and ideological contexts in which the languages (and therefore the speakers) are positioned and function, and of the multiple meanings that are fostered in each” (Walsh, p. 126-7). In the context of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects, it seems that we have a critical bi-dialectalism in which they choose their lexicon based on certain sociocultural and ideological contexts and consequences. Zentella complements Walsh’s definition with her own critical perspective on bilingualism that attempts “to understand and facilitate a stigmatized group’s attempts to construct a positive self within an economic and political context that relegates its members to static and disparaged ethnic, racial, and class identities, and that identifies them with static and disparaged linguistic codes” (Zentella, 1997, p. 13). The critical frameworks of Walsh and Zentella allow us to see beyond binaries of correct and incorrect, linguistic oppressor/oppressed, and real/unreal. Rather than focus on the ways in which Nuevomexicano Spanish is disparaged in the cases of correction, it is possible to view this authenticating as a response to a larger system of linguistic oppression. It serves as the Mexican-Nuevomexicano way out of a legacy of linguistic terrorism and represents a critical strategy to construct a positive self. Through the practice of correction, and the ideologies it constructs, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano intra-ethnic subjects actually confront a larger silencing of Spanish in
New Mexico and assert their linguistic skills amidst the tides of language shift. The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos make Spanish visible in New Mexico, albeit by correcting it, but at the very least this potentially creates a dialogue about Mexican and New Mexican lexical choices within the families. In a sense, the practices of correction re-insert Mexico into New Mexico. Although their corrections may index Mexico as the legitimate Spanish-speaking nation, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects simultaneously, and perhaps unknowingly, (re) construct New Mexico as a vibrant Spanish speaking space through their own language pride and zeal to speak the “right” Spanish.

4.6 Concluding Thoughts: Spanish Language Affirmation amidst Linguistic Hierarchies

People’s metalinguistic sense—how they define and analyze the elements of a language—is worked out over the course of their lives. A metalinguistic sense involves both private and public perceptions and experiences of language. (Urciuloi, 1997, p. 91)

The Mexican-Nuevomexicano family context contributes a distinct dimension to Bonnie Urciuloi’s notion of metalinguistic sense. Although this is not a longitudinal study in which I can truly explore how these families “work out” their perceptions about language over the course of their lives, or even several years, through the contradictions, slippages, and moments of dissonance we are able to see an active process of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families working out their definitions of the multiple Spanishes in their daily lives. The families’ metalinguistic sense is not fixed and is continuously (re) constructed and influenced by authenticating practices such as correction. Interestingly, rather than a public/private dichotomy, as Urciuloi suggests, in which private might be thought of as in-group (or at least in-family) and “public” is conceptualized as “out-group,” the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family complicates this
division. Consider Urciuloi’s description of “inner-sphere” and “outer-sphere” in order to understand the public/private complication. In the context of code-switching, she describes these analogous concepts: “The inner sphere is the place where, ideologically, Spanish and English can ‘mix’ or co-exist as code-switching…What is normal to ‘us’ is a mistake to ‘them,’ that is, to a ‘teacher’ as exemplar and monitor of order or correctness” (p. 97). Because of the acts of correction and policing that occur within the same family, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family functions as a microcosm of a public/private or inner/outer sphere. The monitors of correctness exist within the same family. Through the activation of the specific language ideologies of correctness and authenticity, as well as linguistic equality, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family again proves to be a dynamic ethnolinguistic contact zone in which inter-Latino convergences and divergences occur around the perceptions of certain marked and unmarked lexical choices.

This ideological contact zone contributes to Zentella’s call for the study of diverse U.S. Latino/a linguistic portraits. She states,

In the end, speakers shape ideologies brought from the homeland in ways that help them make sense of situations and groups they encounter in specific Unites States locales. All the changes wrought in different areas and eras, and by different generations, genders, classes, or races, have yet to be analyzed for any one group of Latin@s. The partial portraits that we do have indicate that some members of the second generation learn to communicate in ways that resist the ‘chiquita-fication’ of their language skills. (Zentella, 2002a, p. 326)

The study of language ideologies within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families allows me to add a piece to the partial portraits to which Zentella refers. Yet, the notion of homeland takes on a very different face in the context of Mexico and New Mexico. The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos
resist chiquitification of their skills through the authenticating practice of correction and the affirmation of Mexico as the bar for linguistic authenticity. Although the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos may then subsequently chiquitafy Nuevomexicano Spanish, what is clear in all of the dominant ideologies circulating throughout the families is that Spanish is, indeed, being affirmed.
5. CONTEMPLATING MEXICAN-NUEVOMEXICANO LINGUISTIC FUTURES: REFRAMING NEW MEXICAN SPANISH THROUGH SPANGLISH AND EVALUATING DIALECT CONTACT

5.1 Introduction

Veronica describes New Mexico Spanish as “Spanish with a spin to it.” Consistently, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos define this “spin” as the influence of English on New Mexico Spanish. This chapter serves as a partial continuation of the previous chapter in that it more closely examines this “spin” and unpacks the crucial role of English, and the ideologies that surround it, in constructing discourses about New Mexican Spanish. A fascinating finding that resonates throughout all of the interviews is that the majority of the participants describe New Mexican Spanish by invoking the presence of English. This invocation is most commonly viewed as negative. The participants essentially equate New Mexican Spanish with Spanglish. Just as Spanish has a long-standing presence in New Mexico, English also has a long-standing presence in New Mexico Spanish (Bills and Vigil, 2008; Lipski 2008). My data suggests that contemporary definitions of New Mexican Spanish based on the Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives define New Mexican Spanish through the term Spanglish. All of my participants in one way or another equate the use of English and Spanglish with New Mexican Spanish. These descriptions are also consistently sprinkled with negative evaluations of this English presence and many times reflect Zentella’s “Spanglish bashing.” The connection between the presence of English in New Mexican Spanish and the ideologies that accompany this influence, not only contribute one more dimension to the authenticity ideology (i.e. New Mexican Spanish isn’t real

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28 In a subsequent section in this chapter I define “Spanglish” more in-depth. However, I would like to call attention to the fact that the term itself is contested. Otheguy and Sterns (2010) reject the use of the term because “there is no objective justification for the term, and because it expresses an ideology of exceptionalism and scorn” (p. 85). Yet, Zentella (2010) and Urciuoli (2013) insist that the term “Spanglish” should be respected and captures the lived experiences of U.S.Latino/as.
Spanish due to the presence of English) but also reframes definitions of traditional New Mexican Spanish. This is significant because it speaks to a certain resemantifying of New Mexican Spanish based on contact with English, rather than popular characterizations of New Mexican Spanish as an archaic and isolated variety.

In this chapter, I will unpack two key ways in which the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families characterize New Mexico Spanish as analogous with Spanglish and then I will explore the implications of these characterizations as part of yet another ideological ethnolinguistic contact zone. I, then, explore the intergenerational transmission of Spanglish in New Mexico and conclude with a discussion of the dialectal future of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos, particularly in regards to New Mexican Spanish. I continue to draw on the Mexican-Nuevomexicano participants’ direct responses to questions that ask them to characterize their Spanish, their family members’ Spanish and any differences or similarities that they note between family members’ Spanish varieties.

5.2 Constructing an Equation: New Mexico Spanish Equals Spanglish

The first and most salient way in which the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos construct parallels between New Mexico Spanish and Spanglish is through the explicit mention of English and Spanish-English contact phenomena in defining New Mexico Spanish.

MXNMX Rolando Quintana from Santa Fe states,

New Mexico Spanish…It just doesn’t flow as well… a lot of people ‘speak Spanish’, but they don’t really speak Spanish. They know some words and then use Spanglish and then there is New Mexico’s own dialect and vocabulary and some things that aren’t even words anywhere else or even in the dictionary.

Maybe what defines NM Spanish is a lack of Spanish words and using an English
word with a Spanish ending. They think it sounds right, or they’ve grown up thinking it sounds right, but it’s not even Spanish.

Rolando’s perception of New Mexican Spanish is fascinating because, unlike many of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples, he does not engage in a process of distinction between Spanish lexical items in order to differentiate New Mexican Spanish from Mexican Spanish. It is the presence of English that defines New Mexico Spanish for Rolando. He questions the validity of “New Mexico’s own dialect” because of its lack of standardization and manifests the standard language ideology as well as the belief that New Mexico’s Spanish is isolated and irrelevant. These words along with his description of “throwing in an English word” create a description of New Mexican Spanish as based in English. He also references loan words (“English words with Spanish endings”) in his account. Like Rolando, Milagros talks of “typical New Mexican Spanish” as “just that mesh with English and Spanish and then, um, uh, I don’t know…over here they have troca and then it’s camión or camioneta or whatever it is there.” Milagros again references a mesh or mix of English and Spanish particularly through loan words like troca.

Edna offers a similar description:

You know, so like my dad’s Spanish is real, like -- northern New Mexico is where they put a little bit of English in with their Spanish. Like, um, when they say línea or queque for cake you know, and stuff like that. And I used to talk like that, you know. I’m not going to, you know, say anything bad about it but I used to talk like that and people used to look at me like, “What are you saying?”

It is interesting that Edna emphasizes that “she used to talk like that.” When she refers to “people,” she clarifies that she is talking about Mexicans. Edna’s perceptions about her previous
Spanish use, as well as Milagros’s use of “here” and “there,” allude to a notion of progress towards Mexican Spanish that, again, activates the ideologies of correctness and authenticity. Antonio discusses the role of English in New Mexican Spanish in terms of direct translations. He explains,

> With like the Mexican, like they know what everything like translates to. Like they know how to translate things properly. But with the New Mexican Spanish, they just like they put the little meaning from English to Spanish…but with like Mexican…they know what to say properly. But with the New Mexican, they just put it the way they see it in English, that’s the way they put it in Spanish.

Antonio equates New Mexican Spanish with a series of improper literal translations or calques. The presence of English activates the ideology of correctness and, in this case, renders New Mexican Spanish as improper. Rolando, Milagros, Edna, and Antonio’s descriptions all reveal the central role of English in defining New Mexican Spanish and the ways that English activates the language ideologies that have been at the heart of this chapter.

In addition to referencing English directly and providing examples of contact features such as loan words and calques, New Mexican Spanish and Spanglish are also connected through a specific set of descriptors. Angelica’s father, Francisco, invokes these descriptors: “We got the lazy Spanish,” explains Francisco. I repeat in an interrogatory tone, “The lazy Spanish?” He replies, “Yeah everything is like the short word… the short word…Like when you say ah… to say a chair for them es una silla y nosotros decimos sieta…the lazy way.” Francisco’s description of New Mexico Spanish as lazy and short when compared to “them” or Mexicans is also consistent with notions of slowness attributed to New Mexican Spanish by the Mexican-

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Nuevomexicanos. All fourteen Mexican-Nuevomexicanos describe New Mexican Spanish as slower in comparison to Mexican Spanish. For example, Alicia states, “they speak it slower…Yeah, like, I notice hearing my dad or my dad’s family. They speak it fast, like, blah, blah, blah.” Alejandro states something similar, “Mexican people usually speak faster and a lot more clear and fluent.” Rolando also explains, “Someone who grew up in Mexico speaks Spanish faster and turns it to more of a stream.” Lastly, when Carolina recalls her Mexican mother speaking with her paternal Nuevomexicana grandmother she describes that she always spoke “a little bit faster still, but trying to let them catch up. Yeah, because hers is such a rapid pace that it’s just she was trying to let them catch up. She would speak and let them soak it in to see what she was saying. Then she would continue speaking.” I would like to bring together these ideas of New Mexico Spanish as lazy and slow with another descriptor: random. Recall Angelica’s comparison between the Spanishes spoken by her two sides of the family. She states that New Mexicans “just put whatever words they had and made a new word.” She elaborates a few minutes later with an image of mixing the languages up “like scrambled eggs.” In a similar vein, Rolando explains New Mexico Spanish as “Throw in ‘o’ at the end of a lot of words and pretend it’s Spanish!” Veronica explains the New Mexican Spanish of her maternal grandparents: “They would just put random words together.” Lazy, slow, random. Not real Spanish. Just made up. All of these descriptions accompany the language ideologies that have been at the center of this chapter. However, they are also consistent with ideologies regarding Spanglish. Consider these phrases: “lazy, sloppy, cognitively confused”; “A linguistic mish-mash”; “a deficient code spoken by deficient speakers.” The preceding phrases are reported by Zentella (2002a) in her exploration of “Spanglish bashing” as ways in which Spanglish and its

30 Here Rolando seems to be referencing Hill’s (2007) notion of mock Spanish.
speakers have been pejoratively characterized. Although these parallel descriptions do not at
anytime utilize the term “English” or examples of contact phenomena between English and
Spanish, they contribute to the construction of the synonymous relationship between Spanglish
and New Mexican Spanish through underscoring analogous perceptions of these overlapping
varieties.

5.3 Some Linguistic Notes about New Mexican Spanish and Spanglish

Up to this point I have intentionally not described the documented lexical, phonological,
and syntactical features that tend to define what Bills and Vigil term “the Traditional Spanish of
New Mexico.” Lipski (2008) and Bills and Vigil (2008), among others, provide excellent and
comprehensive studies of the dialectical features of New Mexico Spanish. My purpose in this
discussion is not to provide a descriptive analysis of New Mexico Spanish or Spanglish, but
instead to discover how the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families define these terms. Nevertheless,
I would like to highlight a few relevant features of both New Mexican Spanish and Spanglish in
order to better understand the implications of the New Mexico Spanish equals Spanglish
equation. One important notion about what Bills and Vigil term “the Traditional Spanish of New
Mexico” is its frequent description as “archaic” and as “Spanish of sixteenth-century Spain”
(Bills and Vigil, p.14). Bills and Vigil address this characterization:

It merits explicit mention that New Mexican Spanish is, of course, Spanish. It shares
with all other varieties of Spanish the overwhelming stock of its lexical, grammatical, and
phonological features. These features were passed down across many generations from
the fifteenth century inhabitants of the Iberian peninsula. New Mexican Spanish is
‘archaic’ in this sense, just as all Spanish dialects are. However, retentions from earlier periods are typically classified as ‘archaisms’ only when they remain in one variety of the
language after they have disappeared in another variety that the classifier accepts as the ‘correct’ or ‘standard’ variety. Because of its history of relative seclusion, New Mexican Spanish is often characterized as highly ‘archaic’ in this restricted sense…the Traditional Spanish of New Mexico certainly has many archaisms of the customary kind.(Bills and Vigil, 1999, p. 49)

The Mexican-Nuevomexicano families have already emphasized some of the most common archaisms in the preceding narratives. These include Andrea’s mention of the term “calzones” for pants; Pía and Francisco’s mention of “silleta” for chair; the morphological archaism of “truje” instead of the standard “traje” mentioned by Gabriela and José Luis; Veronica’s mention of “lonas” for jeans; and the stigmatized archaisms of “asina” and “cuasi” mentioned by the Navarros. Interestingly, both “asina” and “cuasi” are documented in other geographic contexts of Mexican-American and Mexican Spanish (Lipski, 2008). The phonological feature of first syllable initial aspiration of /s/ in both of these contexts, represented by the letter j in “cuaji” and “ajina,” is, however, unique to New Mexico.

Yet, Bills and Vigil make clear that “you’ll find in New Mexican Spanish just as many or more ‘new’ forms as ‘archaic’ forms” (2008, p. 15). They highlight specific internal innovations or

“the independent development of the language by means of internal resources. Such innovations occurred typically (though not exclusively) as a response to new concepts and circumstances. Connections with the mainstream evolution in Spanish were too weak for the New Mexicans to keep pace with parallel changes, permitting these home-grown linguistic adaptations to take root and thrive.” (2008, p.15)
I have emphasized some of these adaptations in the lexical elicitation section with the variables “bat” and “turkey” and the New Mexican variants of “ganso de la tierra” and “ratón volador.” Words like “globo” for light bulb and “chopos” for slippers are also independent developments within New Mexico (Bills and Vigil, 2008). Other “new” forms are those words influenced by Nahuatl. Veronica’s reference to her mother’s use of “cajete” falls under this category of a Nahuatlalism.

In addition to certain archaisms, internal innovations, and indigenous influence, the 150 years of contact between Spanish and English in New Mexico contributes to the feature that is the central focus of this section. The influence of English on New Mexican Spanish is almost exclusively limited to “the lexical inventory” (Bills and Vigil, 1999, p. 54) and it is these words that carry the weight of “incorrectness” and “inauthenticity” for the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects. We have already heard mention of some of these uses when Pía mentions the loan-word “mopear” and “telefón”; in Carolina’s critique of her father’s use of “crismes” for Christmas; Edna’s mention of the semantic extension “línea”; and Edna and Milagros’s mention of the loan words “troca” and “queque.” My use of the term Spanglish in this chapter includes these examples of English influence and refers specifically to the contact-induced speech phenomena that occur in the contact situation between English and Spanish in New Mexico. These phenomena are not unique to the New Mexico context. As Potowski reminds us:

Siempre que ha habido contacto significativo entre hablantes de diferentes lenguas, han surgido cambios en las lenguas que hablan. Siempre…Y cuando una de las lenguas tiene más prestigio y/o hablantes que la otra, normalmente es la que ejerce más influencia en la lengua minoritaria. El caso del español en Estados Unidos no es excepción.
[As long as there has been significant contact between speakers of different languages, changes have always emerged in these languages. Always…and when one of these languages has more prestige and/or speakers than the other, usually it is this language that exerts more influence on the majority language. The case of Spanish in the United States is no exception.] (2011, p.102)

Indeed, Lipski also reminds us, “When two languages come together for sustained periods of time---in various parts of the world and in a wide-range of circumstances—fluent bilinguals inevitably engage in three contact-induced speech phenomena” (p. 223). Lipski outlines these phenomena as lexical borrowings, translated idiomatic expressions, or calques, and code-switching. Potowski (2011) adds semantic extensions to these phenomena and Otheguy and García (1993) elaborate on the use of neologisms and add an additional layer to the consideration of loan-words as a necessary phenomenon due to new cultural concepts. Lipski explains that “in the context of English-Spanish bilingualism, all three phenomena have at times been referred to as Spanglish, although each is found in some form or another in every bilingual community in the world, past and present” (p. 224). Bills and Vigil refer to these phenomena in the New Mexican context as “anglicisms” (2008, Chapter 10). The NMCOSS focuses attention most centrally on code-switching and lexical borrowings. These are also the features that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families commonly connect to New Mexican Spanish. However, code-switching most definitely dominates their discourses about Spanglish in New Mexico. This is significant because code-switching has often been associated with negative language ideologies.

Returning to the disparaging opinions about Spanglish highlighted previously by Zentella (2002a), she states that “Second-generation Latin@s are accused of not knowing Spanish or
English and of corrupting both” (p. 328). She cites accusations of bilingual behavior signifying semilingualism and alingualism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1984) and narrow views of bilinguals as “ideal” or “balanced” (Weinriech, 1953). However, over 30 years of sociolinguistic research (Gumperz and Hernández-Chávez 1975; Valdés 1976; Poplack 1980; Poplack and Sankoff 1988; Lipski 1978, 1985; Otheguy, García, and Fernández 1989; Zentella 1997) has affirmed that the abilities to code-switch, both inter-sententially and intra-sententially, demonstrate tremendous skill and ability in both languages without violating grammatical rules in either language. Although these studies offer definitive linguistic proof of the cognitive abilities of bilinguals in both languages, dominant language ideologies both outside and inside of U.S. Latino/a communities are many times still overridden with negative perceptions of Spanglish and code-switching in particular.

With a clearer understanding of what constitutes New Mexico Spanish and Spanglish, we can better understand the implications of equating New Mexico Spanish with Spanglish. As we have seen, the narratives of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects invoke the English influence in New Mexico Spanish (and examples of it) more than any other feature of New Mexico Spanish mentioned above. Although certain archaic and uniquely innovative features of New Mexico Spanish were mentioned by Mexican partners, many times it was only after several follow-up questions, usually regarding their Nuevomexicano partner’s grandparents, aunts, uncles, or parents. For example, when I asked Mexican José Luis about his communication with Nuevomexicanos he describes,

`El español que hablan aquí es como las canciones que cantan, las mexicanas; nomás las arreglan como ellos quieren, pero no, no se parece en nada. Es lo que decimos nosotros, que hablan como dicen ellos, el spanglish que hablas tú, y es muy diferente, o sea casi el`
100%. Nosotros no les entendemos ni el español a muchos...porque hablan puras tonterías, hablan puras... ahí lo hablan mitad en español y mitad inglés; y lo que hablan ellos es muy diferente a lo que sabemos nosotros.

[The Spanish they speak here is like the songs they sing, the Mexican songs; they just arrange them however they want, but they don’t sound anything like the original. It’s what we say about how they speak, the Spanglish that you speak, and it is very different, like 100% different. We don’t even understand much of their Spanish....because they speak pure nonsense, they speak pure...they speak half in Spanish and half English; and what they speak is very different from what we know.]

However, a few moments later, I ask about the communication with his in-laws and he states,

Con mi suegra y sus hermanos, siempre hablaban ellos hablaban muy bien español, muy bien. Y las dos personas que le estoy hablando que yo trabajé, nunca mixteaban el español y el inglés, nunca; porque ellos crecieron, son nacidos aquí pero ellos crecieron hablando el español, ellos sí sabían. No como las generaciones...más jóvenes. Sí, o sea ya estas generaciones de ahorita no saben nada, la mayoría.

[With my mother-in-law and her brothers and sisters, they always spoke very good Spanish, very good. And the two people I work with that I was telling you about, they never mixed Spanish and English, never; because they grew up, they were born here, but they grew up speaking Spanish. They did know it. Not like the younger generations. Yeah, I mean this generation today doesn’t know anything, the majority.]

For the Mexican partners, the first association they tend to make with New Mexican Spanish is an, oftentimes, incomprehensible mixture with English. Their perceptions perpetuate negative

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31 Interestingly, José Luis employs a loan-word with “mixtear.”
ideologies about mixing Spanish and English. The fact that they identify a “good” Spanish that
does not mix Spanish and English only with older generations points to Spanglish as the
contemporary indicator of New Mexican Spanish. Indeed, the lexical elicitation activity
illustrates that, at least at the time of the activity, less than half of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano
subjects produce any of the Nuevomexicano “archaic” variants for the lexical items. Perhaps,
fulfilling Bills and Vigil’s prediction about the disappearance of Traditional New Mexico
Spanish (Bills and Vigil, 1999), undoubtedly, the first frame of reference for Mexican-
Nuevomexicano subjects regarding New Mexican Spanish is Spanglish.

5.4 **Spanglish: The Language of the Future?**

One of the most fascinating implications of equating Spanglish to New Mexican Spanish
is that it provides a reframing of the notions of “old” and “new.” Generally, Spanglish is
popularly viewed as a “new” phenomena associated with young, U.S. born, 2\(^{nd}\) generation
Latinos/as. Ilan Stavans’ problematic study of Spanglish is entitled *Spanglish: The Making of a
New American Language*. HBO Latino’s 2008 series “*Habla Ya*” features multiple young
Latinos/as speaking about their linguistic abilities and Spanglish in particular. Even Zentella’s
semanal 1997 study of *el bloque* highlights code-switching practices among the U.S. born Puerto
Rican children in this New York neighborhood. From these and many other associations of
Spanglish in popular culture, code-switching and other contact features are conceptualized as a
“young” practice. Yet, consider the ways in which the MXNMX subjects describe Spanglish in
terms of “old” and “new.” Upon asking MXNMX Angelica Loredo if she mixed Spanish and
English she responds that she does not mix the languages. When I asked her who in her life does
do this, she states, “Uh, my grandparents, mostly. You know and just older people.”
Interestingly, Angelica does not associate her own linguistic practices with this mixing, but
instead associates these practices with older generations, namely her paternal grandparents and their peers. Recall Veronica’s words about “the old timers” using New Mexican Spanish: “My grandma and grandpa spoke what I call New Mexican Spanish, which is Spanglish.” Again, a Mexican-Nuevomexicana subject associates Spanglish practices with her grandparents. Alicia also attributes Spanglish/Nuevomexicano Spanish use to her Nuevomexicano grandparents. When I asked her about the ways that different members of her family speak she explains about her grandparents, “The difference is they use a lot of the English words, like the Spanglish, I guess. My grandpa – I heard him say ‘elque’ – for elk.” Alicia does not identify with these practices, but attributes them to an older generation.

Additionally, when she talks about “New Mexican Spanish” that is not associated with contact features such as code switching, loan words, calques, or semantic extensions, she highlights her lack of familiarity with the “older” traditional New Mexican Spanish. She explains,

Because some of their Spanish I don’t know because of the New Mexican Spanish, so some of the words I’m, like, what? – and they when they give me the other word then I’m, like, oh, ok… And then my grandma – for pants, says calzones. So the first time she said that I’m, like, what? So it’s just different ways like that like I’ve heard them say. It’s – now I hear it more and, like, I can pick it out. But it’s still kind of, like, huh?

In a fascinating move, we see that what has long been considered and “old” archaic Spanish variety in New Mexico is actually new for Alicia, whereas Spanglish is something with which she is familiar and associates with older Nuevomexicanos. Thus, an interesting reversal: Spanglish is old and familiar and older non-contact features of traditional New Mexican Spanish are new and unfamiliar. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects’ perceptions of New Mexican
Spanish and Spanglish challenge a popular belief system about fixed generational categories and ages associated with Spanglish practices.

With this “oldness” of Spanglish in mind, I would like to address the implication of intergenerational transmission of Spanglish in New Mexico. The preceding narratives give us some indication that both the Mexican Nuevomexicanos’ Nuevomexicano grandparents and parents speak Spanglish. This calls attention to an intergenerational presence and persistence of Spanglish practices. Nicolás Navarro emphasizes this presence:

*Nosotros tenemos nuestra lengua aquí y le llamamos Spanglish. Y podemos hablar español, le digo yo a mi esposa y at the same moment jump into English and jump back into Spanish y seguirle hablando en las dos idomias como que si nada. Es nomás así es la cultura de nosotros acá y se dice uno muchas palabras totalmente son en inglés pero le ponemos el sonido del español.*

[We have our language and we call it Spanglish. And we can speak Spanish, I tell my wife, and at the same moment jump into English and jump back into Spanish and continue speaking the two languages like nothing. It’s just that that is how our culture is here and one says many words completely in English, but with a Spanish sound.]

Nicolás’s use of the phrase “*nuestra lengua*” and the deitic adverbs “*aquí*” and “*acá*” identify Spanglish with New Mexico and his community. He also references that his mother grew up linguistically the way he did, with both English and Spanish. For Nicolás, Spanglish is a source of language pride. He continues,

*I call that a new language, I tell my wife either way no matter how you think about it, I tell her Spanglish is the new language of the future… And and they’ll be seeing that a lot more I think in the future. Um people are not going to be ashamed of um speaking...*
Spanglish...our language reflects the Spanglish lives that we live...Spanglish is the new language of the future.

Navarro establishes Spanglish as a long-standing linguistic code in his community and Nuevomexicano family. However, in his narrative above he also infuses the term with “newness” and predicts Spanglish as the language of the future. Yet, Nicolás’ attitudes about Spanglish are not echoed by his daughter. Milagros explains, “No, I don’t speak Spanglish. I just speak Spanish...Spanish is an official language not Spanglish.” It is clear that Nicolás’s daughter does not include herself in her father’s vision of “the Spanglish lives we lead.” In fact, Nicolás’s daughter shuts down any notion of Spanglish being part of her linguistic future. Thus, intergenerational transmission of Spanglish seems to stop with Nicolás’s daughters. Is this the case with all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano intra-ethnic subjects?

I ask the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos two questions that can, perhaps, illuminate the future of Spanglish and New Mexican Spanish in these families. The first question is if the MXNMX characterize their Spanish as more Mexican or New Mexican. The overwhelming majority (86%) of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos describe their Spanish as more Mexican. This finding, as well as the finding mentioned previously that the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not report knowing any New Mexican Spanish variants for the variables in the lexical elicitation activity, is consistent with Bills and Vigil’s (2008) findings about the future of New Mexican Spanish. They explain, “The features in decline across the generations are frequently those that are particularly characteristic of Traditional Spanish...These distinctive features are being replaced under the pressure of two forces: English on one side, and Mexican Spanish and Standard Spanish on the other” (Bills and Vigil, p. 217-8). According to the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’ responses, if we continue to equate Spanglish with New Mexican Spanish, not only are the more
unique features being lost, but the New Mexico Spanish that is infused with contact features is also not being transmitted.

Additionally, I ask the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos if they use Spanglish. The responses are rarely clear-cut “yes” or “no” answers. Angelica and Milagros do, however, respond with emphatic “no” responses and voice negative perceptions about Spanglish. Rolando and Antonio also report that they do not use Spanglish, but they are both clear that they do not have any negative opinions about Spanglish. Edna does not report currently using Spanglish, however, she states that she “used to talk that way.” Although Spanglish was part of her past, she does not consider Spanglish as part of her current linguistic repertoire.

The remaining nine Mexican-Nuevomexicanos report using Spanglish, but only under certain circumstances. Eight out of nine of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos (89%) attribute notions of “incorrectness” to its use. For example, when I asked Alicia if she speaks Spanish to older people in her community she responds, “More of, like, the Spanglish because – again, my bad habit comes out of where, like, they’ll speak to me in Spanish and there I go, speaking in English.” Alicia characterizes her mixing of languages as a “bad habit.” She uses Spanglish out of necessity, but it seems to be a practice she wishes she could correct. Similarly, Nick reports using Spanglish “not very often.” He explains, “if we were having a conversation, whatever language we stuck to, was what we stuck to. And then with – I mean if we started talking about something else, then we’d switch it.” Nick describes his language use as keeping English and Spanish separate. Similarly, siblings Olivia and Adrian both characterize Spanglish as something used to joke around with family members. Olivia states that Spanglish is “just funny;” “it’s not serious at all;” and, lastly, she states, “it’s incorrect.” Both Rosalinda and Alexa report using Spanglish in situations of lexical gaps. Rosalinda explains that she uses Spanglish,
“when I don’t know a word.” Alexa states, “Sometimes, like whenever I forget what to say in Spanish, I’ll say it in English.” None of these accounts exhibit the language pride that Nicolás Navarro demonstrates towards Spanglish. Carolina explains that she uses Spanglish among family and friends, but she clarifies, “I think it would be negative if I was talking to a Mexican.” In this instance, Carolina’s description of her Spanglish use disassociates Mexicans from Spanglish and, again, equates Spanglish with Nuevomexicano linguistic practices. Rose’s description of her use of Spanglish does depart from other Mexican-Nuevomexicano accounts in that she emphasizes the normalcy and frequency of use of Spanglish in her home. However her account does not necessarily display pride because she ends her reflection with the evaluation that Spanglish is still “incorrect.” Rose states, “We use it always – every time. All the day. All the time…Actually, I think it – I don’t think of it as so much a positive. I – but I don’t see it as negative. I just don’t think it’s correct.” The fact that Spanglish is “normal” and frequent in her home, does not necessarily assure that it is a practice of which to be proud.

5.5 The Intergenerational Transmission of Spanglishes

Verónica also emphasizes the normalcy of Spanglish both in her childhood and in her present home with her children and husband. However, unlike Rose, embraces Spanglish as “our language.” Consider the exchange below between myself, Verónica and her Nuevomexicana mother:

Verónica: Spanglish – Spanglish – my – my grandma and grandpa used to speak, you know “Emilia, ve afuera y agarra the can,” you know? I mean it was just that whole mix of the Spanish and English. I – so I – that, to me, was normal….So I didn’t – that’s all I got from – growing up, Spanglish, to me, was normal. I didn’t know that it even was Spanglish. That’s just –
that’s how they talked. That’s how we grew up with. Spanglish is our language.

LG: Even your dad?

Verónica: Oh, yeah my dad does it all the time I mean we all do, even my husband. We do the whole Spanglish thing. That’s our language. That’s our culture now.

Juanita: That’s why a lot of people don’t know that José Luis is Mexican.

Verónica: Yeah, because he is able to do that so easily.

Verónica’s account of her childhood affirms the intergenerational presence of Spanglish in her home. Her Mexican father is even able to pass for Nuevomexicano because of his Spanglish abilities. The current strength of Spanglish in her home is also affirmed by mentioning that her G1 Mexican husband also speaks Spanglish. It seems that Verónica and her family do, indeed, embody an intergenerational transmission and a vibrant present and future for Spanglish.

Yet, Verónica makes an important distinction about the Spanglish her Nuevomexicano grandparents spoke and the Spanglish she currently speaks in her home. She explains, “Because the Spanish that my grandma and grandpa had was very - it was already Spanglish, but it was like English words with Mexican mixed in it…but it really does come from an English root…There were some words that were like only unique to here that we never heard them in Mexico.” Verónica distinguishes her grandparents’ Spanglish from the Spanglish she speaks with her husband and children. It is significant that Verónica invokes the existence of multiple Spanglishes. From a linguistic standpoint, it seems that she is associating the Spanglish of her Nuevomexicano grandparents with code-switching that has English as its matrix language (Muysken, 1995). Whereas, the Spanglish she identifies with has Spanish as its matrix
language. This distinction is important because it allows us to see the lack of an intergenerational transmission of the Spanglish of her grandparents and the manifestation of a different Spanglish that has more Spanish. Veronica’s theorization contributes to the understanding of Spanglish as multiple and varying and highlights the understudied diversity of Spanglish within distinct U.S. Latino/a communities. Zentella (1990) calls attention to the fact that some loan-words are more distributed than others throughout the country. Escobar and Potowski (2014) also document the different distributions and uses of Spanish loan-words throughout the United States. This work acknowledges that contact phenomena look different among different groups of U.S. Latino/s. Here we see that Verónica perceives code-switching to sound and feel different between older Nuevomexicanos and her own code-switching with her G1 husband. Therefore, the Spanglish of Verónica’s second-contact generation Nuevomexicano grandparents is different than the Spanglish of a Mexican-Nuevomexicana who identifies her Spanish strongly with Mexico and has married a first-generation Mexican. Indeed, we cannot homogenize Spanglish. Zentella (2007) states that “Spanglish cannot be reduced to static dictionary entries; it is a creative and rule-governed way of speaking bilingually that is generated by and reflects living in two cultures” (2007, p. 33). Through Verónica’s family we see that homogenous binaries between English and Spanish do not work in characterizing Nuevomexicano and Mexican-Nuevomexicano Spanglish. Spanglish is nuanced and internal, generational, and regional differences also play themselves out in this context. Examining the multiple Spanglishes among U.S. Latino/as is, indeed, an understudied area of research and one that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family units could illuminate in future work. Other Mexican-Nuevomexicano individuals did not discuss a distinction between Spanglishes, however, it is
worth considering that, perhaps, they too might be more inclined towards a Spanish-based code-switching. In future research it would be important to interrogate this distinction.

It is significant that in evaluating her grandparents’ Spanglish, Mexico still serves as the measuring stick for authenticity for Verónica. This is clear when Verónica states that her Nuevomexicano grandparents used some words that were unfamiliar in Mexico. The ideologies of “correctness” and authenticity still weave their way through discourses about Spanglish. Nonetheless, it is clear that a type of Spanglish has been transmitted to Verónica and continues to be affirmed in her current household. Therefore, Spanglish is and is not a part of Verónica’s future. The more English-based Spanglish of her Nuevomexicano grandparents is not part of her future linguistic repertoire. However, the more Spanish-based Spanglish of her parents, and her current household, is the language of Verónica’s future.

5.6 The Dialectical Future of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos

Discussing the future of different Spanglishes among the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos provides a nice entry point into a brief conversation about the future of different Spanish dialects for the Mexican-Nuevomexicano offspring. In the same way that Nuevomexicano Spanglish does not seem to be used or valued32 by the MXNMX offspring, we have already seen from the previous chapter that New Mexican Spanish is corrected, policed, and subordinated by almost half of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos (43%). This is a point of divergence from Potowski’s (2014) analysis of “Ethnolinguistic Identities and Ideologies among Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and ‘MexiRicans’ in Chicago.” In this study, all of the mixed Mexican-Puerto Rican (MXPR) participants could cite distinguishing features between the Mexican and Puerto Rican dialects, however, not a single MXPR offered any direct criticism of either Mexican or Puerto Rican

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32 See evidence from the current chapter as well as Milagros and Rosalinda Navarro’s discussion with their father in Chapter 6.
Spanish. These results differ from the ideologies of correctness and authenticity, and that surface within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives. Zentella (1990) points to social factors such as class, social status, and education level as potentially overriding determinants in situations in which speakers have choices between two dialects. Also, Giles, Bouhris, and Taylor (1977) underscore the importance of status in determining ethnolinguistic vitality. The ideological portraits provided by the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families do not elevate New Mexican Spanish to a high-status nor do they attribute prestige to the dialect. All of these factors play a role in the future of a dialect. I would like to begin to posit some preliminary thoughts in this brief section about what the linguistic future of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano looks like in terms of dialect. We already have a useful sample of narratives that highlight the ideological disassociation from New Mexican Spanish by the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos. However, I would like to know if the negative ideologies contribute to a linguistic portrait in which New Mexican Spanish is absent from the Mexican-Nuevomexicano linguistic repertoire.

Like, the MXPRs in Potowski (2008, 2014), the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos are also able to articulate and recognize differences between Mexican and New Mexican Spanish. Although Mexican and New Mexican Spanish are not as markedly different as Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish, 100% of the MXNMX stated that they could easily tell if a person was speaking New Mexican Spanish or Mexican Spanish. The MXNMXs cite lexical differences (as noted in Chapter 4), the presence of English and contact phenomena (as noted in the present chapter), and a general “slowness” (as noted in the present chapter). The only phonological example consistently provided by the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos was that of the “routine pronunciation of /s/ at the beginning of a syllable or at the end of a word, as an aspiration like the English $h$” (Bills and Vigil, 2008, p. 15). Bills and Vigil represent this pronunciation with a $j$ and my MXNMX
participants cite examples such as *ajna* and *cuaji*. Clearly, Mexican-Nuevomexicanos articulate an inter-Latino linguistic knowledge of differences. Lipski (2008) and Bills and Vigil (2008) have contributed to a larger discussion regarding the dialectical differences between Mexican Spanish and New Mexican Spanish. Therefore, through previous studies and my participants’ own theorizations we know that Mexican and New Mexican Spanish constitute different dialects. How, then, are the dynamics of dialect contact at play in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano households and among the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos?

Trudgill (1986) provides an extensive exploration of dialect contact in the context of English and documents that combining speakers of different dialects, in the absence of a local norm, will yield the acquisition of a dialect mixture by children. Because Spanish occupies a minority status in the U.S. and may not necessarily reflect Trudgill’s conclusions due to the dominance of English, multiple studies regarding dialect contact of different varieties of Spanish in the U.S. have explored the realities of what occurs in these contact situations. For example, Zentella (1990) addresses the lexical choices between Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, and Colombians in New York. Zentella did not find any definitive evidence of dialect-leveling in her study. Instead, she determined that national-origin and socioeconomic class were much more indicative of lexical choices among Latinos in New York.

Also examining the dialects of U.S. Latinos in New York, Otheguy, Zentella, and Livert (2007) analyze the subject personal pronoun use among the six largest Latino groups in New York: Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Colombians, Cubans, Mexicans, and Ecuadorians. The authors find that subject personal pronoun use among first-generation groups continues to be dictated by their nation of origin, and particularly by mainland vs. Caribbean distinctions. Additionally, the authors found a surprising bidirectional accommodation between mainlander
and islanders. With mainland Spanish generally considered to be more prestigious among Spanish-speaking populations, this bidirectionality could indicate a certain level of local prestige for Caribbean Spanish in New York. Also, the authors found that English continues to exert its influence on the second-generation, as well as the first-generation’s use of subject pronoun use. This effect of English is further documented in Livert and Otheguy (2010).

These previous studies of dialect-contact in the U.S. highlight salient issues that have already emerged in the discourses of the MXNMXs such as prestige and the presence of English. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano context, however, is different than the above-mentioned studies because of the intimate nature of the dialect contact that occurs within the same household and the same family. This ethnolinguistic dialect contact zone provides a space for the viewing of what Potowski (2010) terms “intrafamilial dialect contact.” She explains:

The study of intrafamilial language dialect contact is complicated by a number of variables, including the fact that the parents may begin to converge on each other’s dialect and that it is difficult to quantify with precision the amount of time children spend interacting with family members and other speakers of each dialect. In general, though, there would seem to be a continuum of linguistic outcomes…On one end, their language could exhibit a predominance of features from the mother’s variety. On the other end, it could exhibit a predominance of features from the father’s variety. At various points in between, their language could exhibit a combination of features from one dialect or the other. (p. 587)

In one of the few linguistic studies of mixed-ethnicity Latino/as, Potowski (2008, 2010, 2014) documents the intrafamilial dialect contact occurring among mixed Mexican and Puerto Rican
families through interviews with the MXPR offspring. She concludes that approximately 75% of
MXPRs produced dialect features that strongly marked them as either MX or PR. She explains,

The other 25% of the participants evidenced mixed varieties that combined, for example,
PR phonology such as coda /s/ weakening with MX lexicon like the use of the
interrogative “¿Mande?” (“Excuse me?/What?”)...Thus, dialect consistency (75%) was
far more prevalent than dialect hybridity (25%). (2014, p. 24)

My sample is not as extensive as Potowski’s MXPR corpus, but I do think that there are
tendencies and significant trends that lend themselves to the discussion of dialect contact. First,
Chapter 3 shows us that despite a dominance of English among the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos,
there are acts of maintenance, recovery, and agency. However, these acts take place in a largely
Mexican context. Increased use of Spanish by using more Spanish with a parent, at the
workplace, or with a spouse generally occurs with Mexican speakers33. As previously stated,
interactions with Nuevomexicano parents, extended family members, and peers tend to take
place in English. Also, accounts from Nuevomexicano parents regarding lexical choices in
Chapter 2, as well as the manifestations of ideologies in Chapter 4, highlight a dominance of
Mexican Spanish in the household. It is hard to tell exactly how much New Mexican Spanish the
Mexican-Nuevomexicanos were exposed to because their New Mexican parents either report
speaking English or that their Spanish has become more Mexican (see Diana’s narrative in
Chapter 2). All of these factors contribute to a picture of dialect contact that leads us to the
question, how much dialect contact was/is actually occurring in the household? A future
analysis of the Mexican and Nuevomexicano speech samples in Spanish might illuminate

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33 Rose is an exception in that her spouse is Nuevomexicano and when she speaks in Spanish with him and his
family she explicitly states that she uses New Mexican Spanish.
findings regarding issues of dialect convergence between the parents. However, I would like to briefly examine the Mexican-Nuevomexicano responses regarding their Spanish and my own linguistic impressions of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano Spanish speech samples in order to arrive at some preliminary conclusions regarding dialect contact and the dialectical future of Mexican-Nuevomexicanos.

First, recall that only 43% (n=6) MXNMX offered a NMX variant during the lexical elicitation activity and the maximum amount of NMX variants offered by one person was three. A second point to consider is that eleven (79%) of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos reported that they believe their Spanish sounds more Mexican. Two (14%) MXNMX participants reported that they thought their Spanish sounded more New Mexican and one participant reported that her Spanish sounded like both (7%). However, only two MXNMX thought that they could switch between Mexican Spanish and New Mexican Spanish depending on with whom they were speaking. They reported doing this through lexical choice and by “slowing it down.” However, upon listening to the Spanish speech sample from the interviews, I found almost no distinctive New Mexican linguistic features that would indicate that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano Spanish sounds like New Mexican Spanish. This is the last point I would like to consider. Twelve of the fourteen (86%) MXNMX participants’ Spanish sounded Mexican to me. These participants did use contact features, however, there were no distinct phonological features, archaic lexicon, or morphology that would necessarily mark their Spanish as New Mexican. One MXNMX (Adrian) answered the Spanish questions in English and Spanish. When he used Spanish he did employ several New Mexican lexical choices and his cadence and rhythm did sound New Mexican to me. One participant answered all of my Spanish questions in English, so I did not
have a sample from her. Unlike Potowski’s work, there are no observable instances of dialect hybridity among the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos.

5.7 **Concluding Thoughts: Preliminary Predictions of a Mexican-Nuevomexicano Dialectical Future**

Again, this is simply a preliminary discussion and I acknowledge that the data should undergo further analysis and, like Potowski (2008), should use outside raters to listen and rate the Spanish speech samples. However, if we are speaking about a glimpse of the dialectical future of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos, unlike the MXPR sample of Potowski (2008), the MXNMX future leans in one Spanish direction---and this is Mexican Spanish. I would like to recognize that, just as the Mexican parent found communicative solidarity with older Nuevomexicano relatives of their spouse (see Chapter 2), perhaps if the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subject interacted with an older Nuevomexicano who was primarily monolingual in New Mexican Spanish, we might see evidence of some use of New Mexican Spanish due to communicative need. Unfortunately, because of both language shift to English and the Spanish language shift to Mexican Spanish (Bills and Vigil, 2008), these speakers are few in numbers (Bills, 1999). The reality we have in front of us is of a group of young Mexican-Nuevomexicanos who *can* and *do* speak Spanish in New Mexico. In terms of Spanish varieties, Mexican Spanish is reported as dominant. Although the mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano marriage may reduce the ethnolinguistic vitality of New Mexican Spanish, it actually increases the vitality of Spanish in northern New Mexico. Although this Spanish may be a Mexican Spanish, the ethnolinguistic vitality of Spanish overall is still higher than in Nuevomexicano families that do not have a Mexican partner. Additionally, although the Spanish may be Mexican Spanish, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano clearly has inter-Latino linguistic knowledge of
Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos. This consideration leads us away from reductive thinking that equates that fact that because Mexican-Nuevomexicanos speak Mexican Spanish, their ethnolinguistic identities are necessarily Mexican. The next chapter provides an in-depth exploration of Mexican-Nuevomexicano identity and the crucial roles that English, Spanish, nation, ethnicity, and hybridity play in its constructions.
6. FEELING HALF AND HALF AND IN-BETWEEN: THEORIZING THE MIXED IDENTITIES OF THE MEXICAN-NUEVOMEXICANOS

“Every now and then I’ll say I’m Chicana, but really – even with that I’m kind of iffy because I don’t even know – because I remember when I was younger I asked my dad, well, what am I because – it’s something that I’ve always been confused about. Am I Mexican, am I Chicana, am I Latina, am I Hispanic – what am I? But now I just call myself Hispanic.”

(Alicia Molina, MXNMX)

6.1 Introduction

On a late summer afternoon in the Molina living room, I was interested in developing the discussion about identity that I had individually with Alicia several weeks before. On this particular day the entire Molina family was present in the living room and the term “Chicano” had been used several times already during our conversation. I asked Pancho (MX) if he considered his children to be Chicanos. He then replied with an emphatic “No!” Below is the conversation that followed this response:

Alicia: You told me, I’ve asked you before ‘cause when I was little I was confused as to what I was and you told me once that I was Chicana.

Pancho: Quizás, pero no. Para mí, los chicanos chicanos vienen siendo de que los papás son de aquí siempre. Los niños también, hasta los abuelitos. Al menos es lo que he aprendido de la gente de aquí de Nuevo México. Si te dije eso no sé por qué. Les digo que son americanos, que son de aquí….Me preguntan, ‘¿Estás casada con una americana? ¿Una chicana?’ Si, les digo. Es hispana. Pero es Americana. Siempre les he dicho que es Americana.
[Maybe, but no. To me, Chicanos Chicanos are those whose parents have always been from here. Their kids too and even the grandparents. At least that is what I’ve learned from the people from here from New Mexico. If I told you that, I don’t know why. I tell you that you are Americans, that you are from here. Sometimes I’m asked, ‘Are you married to an American? To a Chicana?’ Yes, I tell them. She is Hispanic. But she is American. I’ve always told them that she is American.]

At this point in the conversation, I noticed Pancho’s wife, Elizabeth (NMX), shaking her head in disagreement and frowning. Pancho continued, “Aunque sean hispanos, nuevomexicanos, chicanos, son americanos. Yo les considero americanos. [Even though they are Hispanic, New Mexican, Chicanos, they are American. I consider them American.]” I then asked Elizabeth, Alicia, and Antonio, “Is that how you would identify? As American first, before anything else? Alicia answered, “I would say hispana before americana.” Elizabeth then added, “I would say Hispanic.” Antonio echoed his mother’s response as he stated: “I’d say Hispanic.”

In a space of about ten minutes, the Molina family invokes four different identity terms. These terms are simultaneously defined, explained, accepted, and contested. Elizabeth’s disapproving expression and shaking of her head signal a rejection of her husband’s use of “americana.” Similarly, Alicia and Antonio clarify that they would identify as “hispana” or “Hispanic” before using “americana.” The convergences and divergences between the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’ notions of identity and their parents’ conceptualizations reveal tensions between nationality, citizenship, ethnicity, and regional identity. Alicia’s opening comments also reference several distinct terms of identity amidst a certain sense of fluidity regarding each term’s use in her life. Rather than simply report on the descriptive terms used by the Mexican-
Nuevomexicanos to define themselves culturally, I would like to focus on what the tensions and contradictions reveal within these meaning-making processes. It is not my intent to arrive at some over-arching or all-encompassing fixed identity term to which the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos ascribe. The words of the Molina family highlight that these terms, and the identity conversations they trigger, seem to be in a constant state of movement. Similar to Ochoa’s (2004) model that considers relational and situated identities, in this chapter, I would like to approach these identity discussions through a framework of “identity flows” that illustrate the movement within and between these meanings.

I utilize this movement-oriented framework recalling Appadurai’s 1996 work with global flows and Pennycook’s (2007) “transcultural flows.” Appadurai explains that “…global cultural processes today are products of the infinitely varied mutual contest of sameness and difference on a stage characterized by radical disjunctures between different sorts of global flows and the uncertain landscapes created in and through these disjunctures” (p. 43). I would like to suggest that the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families are not isolated from these landscapes, flows, and disjunctures. Like transcultural flows,34 these identity flows reveal a continuous re-organization of local cultural identities and the construction of new and hybrid meanings attached to these identities. In what follows, I examine several case studies that allow for a closer look at the flows of identity that circulate around the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects. First, I explore several additional examples of familial disjunctures around discussions about cultural identities. I then highlight the role of language in these identity-making processes. Lastly, I unpack the multiple meanings of the identity terms invoked by the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and, specifically, the resignification that occurs around the term “Hispanic.”

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34 Pennycook defines “transcultural flows” as a continuous re-organization of the local that occurs when cultural identities, language, and popular music intersect.
6.2 **Some Notes on Identity and Hybridity**

When discussing cultural identity in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context, I think it is particularly relevant to highlight Stuart Hall’s theories. Hall’s work illustrates that movement and flow are always present in conceptualizations of cultural identity. Hall explains,

“Cultural identity…is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being.’ It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power…identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.” (1990, p. 225)

Hall highlights movement in his theories through the simultaneous processes of “being” and “becoming” as well as the emphasis on the temporal interplay between distinct positionalities. I explore these positionalities, and their histories, with the Mexican-Nuevomexicano couples in Chapter 2. The present chapter expands this analysis to include the ways in which the Mexican and Nuevomexicano parents position their children’s identities and how the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos position their own cultural identities.

Appadurai’s framework of “scapes” adds an additional dimension to this process of positioning. When explaining his proposition of different global landscapes, he explains that the suffix of –scape “indicates that these are not objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision but, rather, that they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors” (p. 33). The Mexican-
Nuevomexicano identity narratives undergo continuous situating and (re)positioning according to the distinct perspectives represented by the Mexican, Nuevomexicano, and Mexican-Nuevomexicano “angles of vision.” Circulating within these notions of positionalities and perspectives is the idea of difference. Hall underscores the importance of “difference” when considering cultural identity as he explains the diaspora experience. He states, “The diaspora experience…is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (p. 235). The concepts of transformation, difference, and positionalities infuse cultural identity with notions of continuous movement. These ideas suggest that identities are also relational. Clary-Lemon explains, “The idea that one’s individual and collective identity may be seen as fluid, and always in relation to the Other, has offered a long-standing basis for understanding the constructs of ‘identity’, which rests specifically in determining what one is by virtue of what one is not…This model…allows that identities not be fixed in time or space, even by linguistic construction” (p. 8). Therefore, we not only have a model that emphasizes the fluidity (or flows of identity), but also its relational and situated nature. In line with Hall, these concepts ultimately emphasize hybridity. Homi Bhabha’s vision of hybridity complements Hall’s work in that it invokes a space from which the co-existence of many identities simultaneously coalesce and contradict “without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, p. 5). Yet, it is important to note, as Aparicio (forthcoming) has cautioned “It is essential to acknowledge that hybridity is not parity and that new power and social differentials emerge in these mixed national social spaces.”
this chapter, I unpack these differentials alongside the multiple identities that emerge as I explore the “identity flows” that circulate around the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos and their own hybridity.

6.3 Familial Divergences, Disjunctures, and Differences

The conceptual divergences regarding identity that occur in each Mexican-Nuevomexicano family allow for a window into the continuous processes of “becoming” and “being.” In this section I will unpack two specific case studies in order to gain better insight into how identity flows in this process. First, I would like to return to the Molina family’s conversation regarding americana. This particular disjuncture, seen most clearly in Elizabeth’s frown and head shaking, is significant because it speaks to the desire for difference. Elizabeth’s headshake actually insists on difference. Elizabeth, Alicia, and Antonio all indicate that their primary identification is with the term “Hispanic.” Pancho perceives this disapproval and continues, “Es su país, sus leyes no más el color de la piel es diferente. O sea no quiere decir que son americanos gringos. [It’s their country, their laws it’s just the color of their skin that is different. I mean it doesn’t mean that they are American gringos.]” Elizabeth agrees and strongly says, “NO!” I then ask Elizabeth what gringo means to her. She responds, “That’s White!” I then ask the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos if they have ever been called gringa or gringo. Alicia states that her Mexican grandmother recently used this term in reference to Alicia when she was visiting her in Mexico. Alicia explains that a friend of her grandmother’s asked if Alicia was from Chihuahua and her grandmother responded with the words, “No. Es gringa.” Alicia explains, “I took it as kind of an insult, but I didn’t tell her nothing.” Equally insulted, Carolina Santos tells of feeling insulted at Wal-Mart when a Mexican man complained to his wife about her with the reference of “esa gringa” because he thought Carolina was holding up the line.
Carolina comments that she was surprised that this man perceived her as Anglo. She recounts that she thought to herself, “Dude, do I look Anglo? I don’t think I look Anglo!”

I would like to suggest that the feelings of insult, offense, and visible disapproval through the reactions described above are a rejection of a perceived process of homogenization. Appadurai tells that “the central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization…for polities of smaller scale, there is always a fear of cultural absorption by polities of larger scale, especially those that are nearby” (p. 32). This tension between cultural homogenization and heterogenization becomes present in the negative reactions to “americana” and “gringa.” The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos in these cases (as well as Nuevomexicana Elizabeth) equate both of these terms with Anglo or White. The insistence on “Hispanic” as a primary identity seeks to fight the absorption of their ethnic identity into an overarching national identity infused with unmarked whiteness. Alicia, Antonio, and Carolina seem to be at odds with an identity classification based on nationality due to its erasure of cultural difference. This recalls Pablo Vila’s emphasis on the ethnic minority classification systems that take shape only once one is part of the U.S. (Vila, 2006). In the same way that the term “Latino” only becomes meaningful once in the U.S. (Oboler, 1995), the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not wish for their Hispanic identities to become less meaningful, or specific, by taking on a homogenous “American” or “White” identity. Even when Pancho explains to his family that his mother’s use of “gringa” simply “quiere decir que vive en Estados Unidos y nació en Estados Unidos” [means that she lives in the United States and was born in the United States],” the socio-historical association of the term “gringo” with Anglo and White still holds power in this discussion. The preoccupation with cultural absorption seems especially relevant given that most of the first-generation Mexicans were not even aware of a Hispanic
identity in New Mexico prior to their immigration. Consider José’s (Ana’s husband) words about his preconceived notions about New Mexico: “Los chicanos ni existían con nosotros hasta que llegamos. Nosotros siempre nos lo imaginábamos gringos, gringos, todo el tiempo gente güera y gringa hablando inglés. [Chicanos didn’t even exist to us until we got here. We always imagined it here with gringos, gringos, all the time light-skinned, blonde, and gringa speaking English.]” For Pancho, and perhaps the other first-generation Mexican partners, the importance of a primary Hispanic identity over a national American identity is not a familiar paradigm. The disjunctures around the meanings of “americana” and “gringo” reference two hundred years of historical Anglo-Hispanic relations in New Mexico in which cultural erasure was at the center (Nieto-Phillips, 2004). Perhaps the larger dominance and whiteness of Anglo American culture in the contemporary Latino U.S. continues to fuel this disassociation and disapproval among Mexican-Nuevomexicanos like Alicia and Antonio.

Another fascinating point of disjuncture within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families centers around hybridity. Whereas the Molina children and Carolina desire to make visible their distinctly Hispanic identity, rather than favor a homogenized “American” identity, the Navarro daughters reject their father’s affirmation of a hybrid Hispanic identity. Nicolás Navarro explains,

I call my kids hispanos. I tell them this is why you are Hispanic: because you come from Spanish ancestors, the whole mixture of our different cultures and um we fall under the umbrella of being an hispano…that’s the way I teach them because um because I tell them that you’re not only um Mexican and Indian you also are of um Spanish culture, because there is still a lot of Spanish culture in our area.
Navarro’s description of Hispanic/hispano indexes notions of mixture, pan-ethnicity, and a multiplicity of identities. The co-existence of these notions embodies hybridity. Yet, Rosalinda and Milagros do not embrace this term or these meanings. Both daughters identify as “Mexican-American.” Milagros explains, “Yeah, ‘cause I think if you say Hispanic, uh, people are, it’s not really saying who you are and you could be from, um, like Colombian-American and you’re considered Hispanic or you can be from any other Spanish-speaking country and you’re a Hispanic and if I say Mexican-American it’s saying a little more of who I am.” With the term “Mexican-American” Milagros and Rosalinda seem to desire more specificity. When asked how she would identify her father, Milagros explains, “Hispanic, I guess ‘cause, um, I think, uh, his blood’s kind of a little bit died down through, there’s not much Mexican in it anymore or any other thing, so he’s just a Hispanic.” It is fascinating that Nicolás Navarro conceptualizes “Hispanic” as the most accurate identification due to the word’s utility in encompassing the co-existence of multiple identities. However, Milagros views this same multiplicity as a sort of “watering down” of the Mexican. Her phrase, “just Hispanic” actually communicates a sense of lacking. For Milagros and Rosalinda, the reference point for their identity circulates within the connotations of “Mexican.” Indeed, when they clarify the meaning of “American” in “Mexican-American,” Rosalinda expresses that she is not referring to “rednecks” with the term “American.” Rosalinda and Milagros agree that using the term “American” denotes citizenship, much like Pancho’s conceptualization of the term. Milagros explains, “When I use ‘American’ it means, yes, I have that freedom to do all those things you can do.” Rather than an embracing of a homogenous “American culture,” the Navarro girls’ use of “American” functions as a contestatory response. In effect, the use of Mexican-American talks back to a dominant American society that they perceive “thinks we are just wetbacks.” The Navarro daughters’ use
of Mexican-American inserts their presence into a vision of America from which they often feel excluded and, as Aparicio (forthcoming) theorizes, they are “re-writing the concept of ‘American’” (p. 19). However, this re-writing is distinctly Mexican and Rosalinda and Milagros’ concept of their own cultural identity still diverges from the vision of their Nuevomexicano father.

I would like to explore this divergence a little deeper by unpacking the intersection of linguistic practices and cultural identity within the discourses of the Navarro family interview. Below I reproduce a relatively long excerpt from the family’s group interview in order to better explore this intersection and its concomitant divergences. These moments from the conversation begin with Nicolás reiterating his ideas about Spanglish:

Nicolás: Like I said before, I think our language over here is Spanglish. I see Spanglish being the future language of our Hispanic culture from coast to coast. *Es la ventaja que tenemos nosotros de aquí*…with Spanglish we can jump from one language to the other without even having to stop. I believe that’s what our future language is going to be.

Milagros: It’s just like a couple of words. It seems like I hear more English in the speaking of Spanglish than what I hear Spanish. I’d say it’s like 80% English, 20% Spanish.

Nicolás: Yeah, but that’s what I’m talking about--that I see the future of our Hispanic culture with such a blend. It may be 80/20, but you’re still going to have a mixture.

Milagros: Either way the English kind of overrides it.
Nicolás: And that’s because that’s what we use the most because now we deal with more people who use English than Spanish.

Rosalinda: But that was back then. But think about it now. Now it’s great to know Spanish.

Nicolás: I guess that maybe it’s my generation. That maybe we carry our Spanglish a little more fluent and to us mixing is like no big deal. Because they’re trying to be more fluent in one or the other.

Nicolás uses Spanglish to not only describe a linguistic practice, but also a cultural identity. In his individual interview he refers to “the Spanglish lives we live.” Spanglish embodies Nicolás’s idea of Hispanic. Nicolás’s theorizations underscore the interconnectedness between language and identity. He emphasizes a cultural mix and a linguistic mix that continuously inform each other. Yet, Rosalinda and Milagros clearly state that they do not speak Spanglish and they do not ascribe to their father’s identity vision. Milagros focuses on the absorption of Spanish by English within the Spanglish practices that her father references. This focus on the dominance of English seems to erase the empowerment that Nicolás derives from the “blending.” Whereas Nicolás finds victory and pride within the linguistic and cultural mixing, even if the amount of Spanish is less than English, Milagros and Rosalinda view Spanglish as always already culturally absorbed by English dominance.

These divergences can, perhaps, be best described through Stuart Hall’s use of “coupling” (p. 29). Hall explains this logic of coupling as a tool of empowerment in which one can be “black and British, not only because that is a necessary position to take…but because even those two terms…do not exhaust all of our identities” (1992, p. 29). Hall’s strategy of coupling makes possible the existence of multiple differences at the same moment within one’s
identity rather than binary oppositions. Effectively, the logic of coupling is the logic of hybridity. For Nicolás, he can use Spanish and English together and this does not diminish his Hispanic identity. On the contrary, it affirms it. For Nicolás, English can be just as Hispanic as Spanish. However, Milagros and Rosalinda affirm their cultural identities by keeping the languages separate or “by trying to be more fluent in one or the other.” For these Mexican-Nuevomexicanas, the presence of English is equivalent to cultural absorption and homogenization.

Interestingly, the cultural “identity flows” that travel between Nicolás and his daughters are not so different. It is not necessarily that the Navarro girls are operating outside of a system of cultural hybridity in favor of binaries and cultural essentializations. It is simply that the Navarro daughters’ reality of hybridity looks different than that of their father. The apparent tensions and disjunctures between the Navarro daughters and their father reveal distinct strategies to negotiate hybridity from different localities. Pennycook suggests the concept of “transcultural flows” in which language and cultural identities collide in a “reorganization of the local.” I would like to suggest that both Nicolás and his daughters are involved in “transcultural flows” of hybridity that “reorganize the local.” However, Nicolás’s notion of “local” and Rosalinda and Milagros’s notion of “local” originate from different “angles of vision” (Appadurai, 1996). Carmen Fought’s (2006) words illuminate these different positionalities. She explains,

There are, then, multiple cultural groups available within which (and against which) Latino speakers can define and enact their identities, including: a) the heritage culture of other countries (e.g., Mexico), b) the immigrant Latino culture in the USA, c) the second-generation (and later) Latino culture in the USA, and d) other US cultural groups,
including the dominant European-American culture and the cultures of other ethnic minority groups such as African-Americans. (Fought, p. 71-2)

Whereas Nicolás’s generation is more fluent in the mixing of Spanglish, Rosalinda and Milagros do not recognize this practice as relevant or useful. Their concept of “local” involves separateness. This could be due to the fact that Nicolás operates in a system that recognizes “the second-generation (and later) Latino culture in the USA” and Rosalinda and Milagros seem to be operating in a system in which they define and enact their identities against monolingual Mexican Spanish speakers and “the dominant European-American culture” (Fought, p. 71-2).

The Navarro daughters speak Spanish to their Mexican mother and to their Mexican family members in Mexico. Blending the languages would not make communicative sense in the context of monolingual Spanish speaking family members and, as Rosalinda states, “It’s just confusing.” Additionally, as reported in Chapter 3, Rosalinda and Milagros tend to speak English with Nuevomexicano family members. Therefore, they do not view the mixing of Spanish and English as natural or necessary. Rosalinda and Milagros negotiate this linguistic separateness in response to the reality of what “local” is to them. In explaining this reality, Milagros reflects, “Like, I’m not really a part of one solid thing…I don’t want to say I don’t belong here, but this is not my group. But over there is not my group.” Rosalinda then adds, “Even sometimes when we go over there a lot of people---there’s occasionally people who think we are just snotty Americans. And there are times when we’re here and we meet redneck people and they think we are just wetbacks.” It seems that Rosalinda and Milagros are operating in a local system that reacts to imposed binaries between “here” and “there,” and snotty American vs. wetback. Milagros and Rosalinda’s rejection of Spanglish practices, and their father’s vision of Hispanic, illustrates that their angles of vision involve reacting to Mexican family members and
dominant Anglo society. Not being a part of “one-solid thing” already reveals the hybridity present in Rosalinda and Milagros’s local realities and they negotiate their in-betweenness through a system that works for them despite the fact that it may look different from their father’s system. These disjunctures in relational identities within the Navarro family allow us to view the multi-layered heterogeneous cultural identities within a single Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit.

6.4 Linguistic Flows: The Location of Language in Cultural Identities

The linguistic and cultural intersections revealed in the preceding discussion of Spanglish provide a useful beginning point to a larger discussion regarding the role of language in Mexican-Nuevomexicano theorizations about cultural identity. In what ways does language inform the Mexican-Nuevomexicano conversations about cultural identity? Interestingly, unlike Potowski (2014), discourses about language and identity do not converge in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives through any accounts of (or remarks of others noticing) the use of a particular Spanish dialect or Spanish lexical choice that indexes either Mexican or Nuevomexicano identity. Rather than accounts about the intersection of Spanish use and identity construction, language ideologies linking Spanish ability and proficiency surface as a salient discourse within the MXNMX narratives. Bonnie Urciuoli (2008) refers to this connection as the “lamination of culture and language” or the assumption that culture and language always co-occur. For example, Alicia defines the term “Hispanic” as based in locality and language. She explains, “For me, personally, it just means being from New Mexico and being a Spanish speaker.” Similarly, although Verónica does not identify with the term “Chicano,” when she does define it, she again invokes place and linguistic ability. She describes, “Uh, Chicana, to me, is someone who was born and raised here and learned Spanish
here and kind of just absorbed the culture – Hispanic culture from here.” Edna also defines “Hispanic” as distinctly New Mexican with Spanish language ability. She states, “Hispanic to me means born in New Mexico speaking Spanish.” Olivia advances these associations into further specificity. She states that being Hispanic means that “I was raised northern New Mexican and I can speak Spanish and my parents are Hispanic.” It is fascinating that Olivia’s description emphasizes the “localness” or “New Mexicanness” of identifying as Hispanic and also equates this with an ability to speak Spanish. Olivia’s cultural identity indexes a linguistic identity as a competent Spanish speaker. Interestingly, the pride in her linguistic ability is eclipsed by her own self-critique in our discussions about proficiency in Chapter 3. However, when speaking about cultural identity, her pride in linguistic ability is reveals itself through a connection to place.

Another dimension to the “lamination of culture and language” described above occurs in Antonio’s disassociation with the term “Mexican.” When I asked him if he would ever use the term “Mexican” to describe himself, he states, “Maybe once I’m older and I would then know how to actually speak the language. Because I mean I really don’t want to claim that I’m Mexican, when I don’t even know how to speak Spanish. So maybe once I’m older and I know how to speak it, then yeah.” Antonio seems to view himself in the process of “becoming Mexican.” He states that he prefers to identify as “Hispanic.” Yet, he clarifies, “but I have like strong Mexican blood in me since my dad is from Mexico.” The co-occurrence of language and culture in Antonio’s definition of “Mexican” precludes him from being able to presently claim a Mexican identity. He views an “authentically” Mexican identity as dependent on his own increased linguistic ability. Yet, when I asked Antonio if Spanish was necessary to identify as “Hispanic” he clearly responded that it was not necessary. Antonio’s thoughts are very similar to
Ana’s opinions about the cultural identity of her Mexican-Nuevomexicano son, Rolando. She explains,

and I think we always tell our kids, you know, don’t be embarrassed of your culture or your heritage. And you know, you’re Mexican, you better, darn better speak Spanish, you know, because that is who – I mean, that is part of who you are and you need to know the language…I think that they have a higher bar they have to achieve than, than I do. Because, I mean, ah, my family spoke Spanish. Um, and I – you know, I don’t know. I guess I don’t, I didn’t really feel that way for us.

Ana echoes Antonio’s conceptualization of “Mexican” as equivalent to a certain level of linguistic ability and linguistic responsibility. Like Antonio, Ana emphasizes that these requirements are not necessary when one identifies as “Hispanic” or, what Ana terms, “us.” These particular manifestations of Urciuoli’s “lamination of culture and language” represent Appadurai’s “deeply perspectival constructs” of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos regarding which identities are linked to linguistic ability. There is not necessarily a consensus to be reached. However, highlighting the (re) productions of these linkages provides insight into the ongoing processes of inclusion and exclusion as the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos theorize about their cultural identities. For example, linguistic ability is included when defining certain identity terms which in turn includes and excludes certain individuals. Urciuoli explains further, “Language has a complicated place in processes of identity formation. It occupies a place in the list of things one ‘has’ when one ‘has’ a culture. But the link is not a necessary one, it is not
always there, and when it is there, it may or may not signify belonging” (Urciuoli, 2008, p. 264).35

Milagros Navarro grapples with this idea of “having a language” as equivalent to “having a culture” when she speaks about those who have Hispanic last names, but do not speak Spanish. She comments,

…people who have a Hispanic last name but who don’t’ speak Spanish? I just, I don’t know. I don’t know what to consider them. I guess I’d consider them Hispanic but like when I think about it a lot more, I just think well, they’re kind of lost. They’re just like they’re not Hispanic. They’re not white. They’re not anything. They’re just, it kind of seems like they’re just this invisible people who doesn’t have a name for themselves, and that’s kind of how I view them. Like anyone around here who has that Spanish last name and who speaks Spanish, that’s Hispanic. But anyone who just has that name has just, and doesn’t have that language has completely lost who they are or what kind of made them into who they are. That’s just kind of how I view it….It’s a loss of identity. A whole big group of people who are part of a lost generation.

Navarro, at first, attributes the designation of “Hispanic” to those who do not “have” the language. Yet, as her thoughts continue to flow, the designation shifts. Those with a Spanish last name who do not speak Spanish are then removed from the identity category of “Hispanic” into a group that seems to be identity-less. Milagros’s words seem to enforce a certain policing of identity boundaries around linguistic ability. Suzanne Romaine (2011) comments on these ethnolinguistic boundaries:

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35 Valdés (2011) focuses on the link between language and identity formation among two G3 pre-adolescent young girls and is relevant to Urciuoli’s ideas about “having” a culture.
when the link between language and culture is intact, boundaries and identities may be taken for granted. However, because identities emerge in response to economic, cultural and political forces, perceptions realign themselves to changing situations. In some groups there may be debate about which particular aspect of their culture is of prime significance, or whether someone can be a ‘real’ member of the cultural group without speaking the associated language. (p. 11)

Clearly, Milagros’s words express a boundary of exclusion that judges authentic group membership in terms of Spanish ability. Alexa Guzmán expresses a similar opinion. She states, “Well, like people say that they’re Hispanic. Like the people – like – I don’t know. I think if they’re Hispanic, they should know like some Spanish. Like I know a lot of Hispanics that don’t know like nothing in Spanish.” Alexa’s use of the phrase “say that they’re Hispanic” seems to call into question this identity because of the lack of linguistic ability in Spanish. This comment aligns with Aparicio’s observation that “because of their ‘lack’ of competence in Spanish, most English-dominant Latinos/Latinas have been excluded from consideration as truly Mexican or Hispanic” (2000, p. 268). Interestingly, whereas Milagros removes the designation of “Hispanic” and labels them as “invisible,” Alexa continues to use the term as an identifier. The fact that Alexa affirms that she knows “a lot of Hispanics” that do not have this linguistic ability adds an element of simultaneous recognition and rejection regarding these particular individuals.

Although the preceding Mexican-Nuevomexicano accounts seem to affirm an inextricable connection between linguistic ability and cultural identity, Alexa’s words acknowledge that Hispanics without this ability do, in fact, exist. Verónica concurs. She states, “I mean to me if they are Martínez they are Hispanic. They have to have Hispanic somewhere; whether or not they speak Spanish or not.” Perhaps, this “having Hispanic somewhere” aligns
with Carmen Fought’s words regarding linguistic ability and ethnicity. Fought explains, “…it is also important to note that the linguistic expression of identity for Latinos and Latinas in the USA is not only or even primarily signaled by an ability to speak Spanish. A large number of the speakers born here, especially from the third generation and later, are completely monolingual in English…so they must mark their ethnicity with resources other than the use of Spanish” (p. 70). Nicolás Navarro refers to this marking in the form of “cultural awareness.” Nicolás comments on Hispanics in the area that do not speak Spanish. He describes, “I feel that there’s less Spanish spoken, but by the same token I see um the younger kids are more aware of their culture and more proud to be a Hispanic…they’ll still say a few words. Maybe they’re not um able to have a complete conversation in Spanish…At the same time, their awareness of their culture is still alive.” Nicolás and Verónica reference a cultural marking that goes beyond linguistic marking. Even in terms of linguistic ability, there is a certain validation of the linguistic “pieces” that these Hispanics may still possess. Even if Spanish proficiency is absent, its absence is still invoked at some level in discussions about cultural identity.

With this extra-linguistic cultural marking in mind, I would like to explore Romaine’s comments a little more closely. She explains that “identities emerge in response to economic, cultural and political forces, perceptions realign themselves to changing situations” (p. 11). These words challenge the taken for granted link or “lamination” between culture and language. In the sociolinguistic context of New Mexico, in which such a large population of Hispanics have experienced language shift (Bills and Vigil, 2008 and Gonzales-Berry, 2000), it might be expected that this link would not be quite so strong. Yet, more than half of the Mexican-

36 Although the Census does not quantify numbers of Latinos in the U.S. by generation level we have no way of knowing exact numbers of G3s in the country. However, simply utilizing the most recent numbers of Latinos born in the U.S., 64% or 12 million Latinos are U.S. born Latinos.
Nuevomexicanos do connect Spanish ability to cultural identity in their narratives. Why are linguistic abilities and cultural identities so strictly bounded by the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects? Again, I think that the conversation in the Navarro household can provide some insight. In the previous section, Rosalinda challenges her father’s statement regarding an increased use of English due to the need to communicate with people who use more English than Spanish. Rosalinda responds, “But that was back then. But think about it now. Now it’s great to know Spanish.” The contrast between “then” and “now” may shed some light on the policing of linguistic borders in the realm of cultural identities. Nicolás’s linguistic experience, along with many other Nuevomexicanos’ linguistic experiences, does belong to another historical and cultural moment. He acknowledges this when he responds, “I guess maybe it’s my generation.” The historical memory of language oppression and dispossession (Aparicio, 2000) still exists in the family histories of those of Nicolás’s generation. Rosalinda and Milagros feel that Spanish is now valued. Their Mexican-Nuevomexicano experience has never been without this “value” of Spanish and they have never been without Spanish linguistic ability. In Aparicio’s (2000) words, they have not been “of Spanish dispossessed.” Perhaps the lamination of culture and language is so strong among several Mexican-Nuevomexicanos because of this difference in experience, generation, and reference point. Rosalinda and Milagros have not been victims of an intergenerational linguistic terrorism (Anzaldúa, 1987) or suffered from language oppression.

However, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, we do see a certain lamenting among all Navarro family members regarding the lack of Spanish ability in Bibiana, the eight-year-old youngest Navarro daughter. It will be the topic of a future study to explore the ways in which new identities emerge and perceptions about “Hispanic” will realign in the Navarro family in response to Bibiana’s potential dispossession from Spanish in the future. Bibiana’s future, like
the hybrid Spanglish reality of her father, may shed light on the role that English plays in the construction of Mexican-Nevomexicano identity. I propose that English can also be theorized as a crucial element of U.S. Latino/a identity and particularly Mexican-Nevomexicano identity. Rosa (2010) explores English language practices as potential indexes of U.S. Latin@ panethnicity and explains that “it is crucial to note that within a culturally valorized register that includes English and Spanish forms…it becomes possible to investigate the possibility of being/doing Latin@ in Spanish and English” (p. 24). Therefore, rather than viewing English as an intrusion or inauthentic presence in Spanish, what if English also functions as an index of Latinidad?

6.5 **Ethnic Labels, Mexican-Nevomexicano Lives**

I use the sub-heading above referencing Suzanne Oboler’s seminal 1995 study *Ethnic Labels, Latino Lives* which interrogates the homogenization of Latinos in the U.S. through the use of ethnic labels. In this chapter I am interested in tracing the ways in which these labels flow within the narratives of the Mexican-Nevomexicano families and how they contest concomitant processes of homogenization and engage with notions of specificity and locality. In the previous sections of this chapter I documented the Mexican-Nevomexicano references to certain ethnic labels in the context of familial disjunctures and linguistic and cultural intersections. However, I have not yet unpacked the specific labels and cultural identities that have meaning for the Mexican-Nevomexicano subjects. Essentially, this section of the chapter highlights the ways in which the Mexican-Nevomexicanos struggle with and expand upon existing identity categories to describe their unique positionalities. Oboler (1995) notes that “while the homogenizing nature of ethnic labels is perhaps inevitable, the lack of historical memory that often accompanies their use means that there is often very little understanding of the conditions under
which each label was created and through which its meanings and social value have been shaped and change over time” (Oboler, p. xvi). The exploration of Mexican-Nuevomexicano cultural identities in this section illustrates the interplay between historical meanings and resemantifications in order to unpack the identity terms that possess cultural currency for the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos.

How do the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos actually identify? Of the 14 Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects, two identify as Mexican/Mexicana (14%) and four (29%) identify as Mexican-American. One Mexican-Nuevomexicana (7%) identifies as Mexicana-Hispana and one participant (7%) identifies as Chicana. Half of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano subjects identify as Hispanic (43%). It is clear that the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos do not all conceptualize their cultural identities in the same way by the use of five different terms. Absent from these identifications is the designation of “Latino.” Not a single participant (Mexican, Nuevomexicano, or Mexican-Nuevomexicano) spoke of identifying with the term “Latino.” Only within the context of filling out applications did the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos reference any association with the term. Alicia explains, “When I think of Latino/Latina I think of – I don’t know, someone either, like, from middle America or South America – even Mexico, I think they can call themselves Latino or Latina.” Olivia simply states, “We don’t use that word here.” The consensus among most of the participants is that “Latino” refers to someone from Latin America and is not a relevant term in their everyday lives.

In contrast, the term “Hispanic” is uttered frequently and circulates widely within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives. Because nearly half of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos
identified with “Hispanic,” most of my analysis will center on the multiple layers of meaning associated with this term and the larger process of semantic inversion (Zentella, 2009) that occurs around it. However, before unpacking the many meanings of “Hispanic,” I would like to look briefly at the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’ theorizations around the terms “Mexican” and “Mexican-American.” Alejandro, Angelica, Milagros, and Rosalinda all identify with the term Mexican-American. I previously highlighted Milagros and Rosalinda’s associations with “American” and the term “Mexican-American” when discussing the familial identity disjunctures. Similarly, Angelica, identifies as “Mexican-American” because “My mom is Mexican and my dad is American.” Again, the associations with the term “American” seem to be based in nationality and citizenship rather than in whiteness or what Rosalinda terms “rednecks.” Additionally, three of these four Mexican-Nuevomexicanas report having dual citizenship. They report this fact almost immediately after they identify as “Mexican-American.” This positioning of the topic of dual-citizenship in the conversation supports the connotation of “American” as based in notions of nationality rather than ethnicity.

Slightly different than “Mexican-American,” Edna Santos identifies as “mexicana” and she is quite straightforward about why she chooses this identification. She describes,

I say that I’m mexicana because of my mom, you know. I mean, if somebody asked me, ‘Are you Hispanic or Mexican?’ I say mexicana. Um, I don’t know if it’s because I don’t -- I kind of, like, when we were growing up, like, I used to always remember my dad, like, bad mouthing Mexicans, you know. And he worked with a lot of them. I will say, you know, my dad’s Hispanic. My mom’s Mexican. I’m mexicana and Hispanic,

37 In a recent study of approximately 100 Spanish heritage learners in Albuquerque, Wilson (2011) found the predominance of the identity label “Hispanic” in his data as well. Over 88% of the participants preferred this term, whereas less than 20% identified with the term “Mexican” or “Mexican-American.”
but I’d rather say *mexicana*. I don’t know why. I guess it’s because of my mom and, like, how she doesn’t really -- she hides it a lot. You know what I mean?

Edna articulates her preference for “*mexicana*” as a response to the invisibility of her mother’s Mexican identity. She clearly acknowledges the cultural identities of both of her parents and even utilizes the strategy of coupling (Hispanic and *mexicana*) in order to honor both parents. However, she exhibits her own agency in choosing to align her identity with her Mexican mother as a contestatory response to the discrimination Mexicans have experienced from Hispanics. It is almost as if Edna wishes to compensate for her mother’s hesitance in expressing her own Mexican cultural identity. Again, as we have seen in previous chapters, issues of gender and Nuevomexicanos male gender dominance again manifest themselves in the case of the Santos family. However, Edna addresses this familial gender dominance by asserting her own Mexicana identity.

Carolina Santos also asserts her Mexican identity, but does not choose one parent’s cultural designation over the other. She produces a new and different identity. Carolina explains, “My dad is *hispano* and my mom is Mexicana. I guess I’m *mexicana-hispana*. Until I grew up did I realize there was a difference between Mexican and New Mexican. I knew there was a difference in the way he spoke and the way she spoke and the way my grandma and grandpa spoke, but after a while it kind of all meshed into one.” Carolina’s description not only highlights the inseparability of language from the production of cultural identities, but also emphasizes the artificiality of a dual or hyphenated identity. Urciuoli reminds us that “it should thus be clear that bilinguals do not literally ‘have’ two languages or cultures” (Urciuoli, 2008, p.259). Carolina’s home did not contain borders that bounded each of her parent’s cultural
identities into neat packages. She did not literally live two cultures, as in the term “bi-cultural,” but instead lived one hybrid culture that “kind of all meshed into one.”

In the same way that Carolina indexes cultural hybridity through her use of the term Mexicana-Hispana, the remaining six Mexican-Nuevomexicanos also activate discourses around hybridity through their use of the term “Hispanic.” This is the fundamental difference in the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos’ use of the term “Hispanic” and its highly-contested and critiqued pan-ethnic use within the larger Latino U.S. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano uses of the term “Hispanic” simultaneously denote hybridity and specificity. These uses diverge from the “historical” meanings associated with the term. Suzanne Oboler’s work focuses on the increased circulation of the term as a pan-ethnic unifier beginning in the 1970s and the challenges that such a term presents. She explains,

Like other ethnic labels currently used to identify minority groups in this country, the term Hispanic raises the question of how people are defined and classified in this society and in turn how they define themselves in the United States. It points to the gap between the self-identification of people of Latin American descent and their definition through a label created and used by others…Insofar as the ethnic label Hispanic homogenizes the varied social and political experiences of more than 23 million people of different races, classes, languages, national origins, genders, and religions, it is perhaps not surprising that the meanings and uses of the term have become the subject of confusion and debate in the social sciences, government agencies, and much of the society at large. (p. 2-3)

Oboler emphasizes homogenization, erasure of difference, and lack of agency when discussing the term. Indeed, the term was not created organically by the people it was supposed to represent, but instead was created by “activists, government officials, and media executives”
who “institutionalized the Hispanic category and developed a national movement to popularize the Hispanic identity” (Mora, 2014, p. 5). Cristina Mora’s (2014) analysis of the term explores the inherent ambiguity in its use. Mora states,

This ambiguity allowed stakeholders to reduce any potential resistance to the idea of panethnicity. By pointing toward a vague cultural definition of panethnicity, stakeholders could position the category as broad and as complementary to, rather than in conflict with, national identity. One did not have to speak Spanish or have a Spanish surname to be Hispanic because panethnicity was predicated on a set of historically based cultural values. More important, stakeholders suggested that one did not have to choose between nationality and panethnicity because one could be both Hispanic and Mexican, or Hispanic and Puerto Rican…As a result, an immigrant with close connections to his or her homeland could claim to be as Hispanic as a fourth-generation individual with little or no connection to Latin America. (p. 156)

Like Oboler’s work, Mora usefully historically situates the careful and conscious construction of the term “Hispanic.” Yet, the question remains, to what degree do Mexican-Nuevomexicanos use the term in the pan-ethnic, ambiguous, and homogenizing ways that Oboler and Mora document?

In actuality, the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos mobilize the term “Hispanic” to denote an attachment to a specific locality and to denote the multiple identities that constitute hybridity. For example, when describing their Nuevomexicano parents, all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos used the term “Hispanic” or “hispano/a” to identify them. Also, when highlighting the connections between language and cultural identities in a previous section of the present chapter definitions of “Hispanic” illustrated a specific connection to the place of New Mexico. Alicia, Edna, Verónica, and Olivia clearly state that being “Hispanic” means being born
in or from New Mexico. Olivia goes one step further and specifies that “Hispanic” means being raised in northern New Mexico. Thus, Oboler’s concerns that the term “Hispanic” conceals “the specificity of the diverse histories and experiences of the population identified as Latinos in the United States” (p. 16) are not applicable to this particular Mexican-Nuevomexicano use of the term. The Mexican-Nuevomexicanos infuse the term with a specific regional identity. In essence, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano use of the term embodies a transcultural flow that reorganizes the term’s locality and resemantifies the term as representing specificity rather than homogeneity.

It is important to note that many times the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos use “hispano/a” and “Hispanic” interchangeably. John Nieto-Phillips documents Nuevomexicanos’ use of the term “hispano” in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as possessing “a particular meaning and rhetorical function in the context of New Mexico’s struggle for statehood” (2004, p. 81). Nieto-Phillips explains that the term “hispano” mobilized a Spanish heritage narrative in a particular historical moment that was “the source of collective identification with the land and with a historical discourse of conquest, settlement, and occupation” (2004, p. 8). The historical trajectory of the term “hispano” is much more extensive than that of “Hispanic.” However, I suggest that it is due to the close association between the two words that “Hispanic” takes on the strong connotations of place and region in New Mexico. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano use of the term, in essence, localizes it and activates a certain “grounded identidad” (Rúa, 2012). Alicia highlights this locally “grounded identidad” in her explanation regarding why she claims a “Hispanic” over a “Mexican identity.” After asking Alicia if she uses the term “Mexican” to describe herself, she responds,
No, not really, just because I know I’m Mexican – part Mexican – I just, like – I’ve never really – I mean I grew somewhat in that culture, but I never really grew up in it. And I never really lived in Mexico, so I – I don’t like to call myself Mexican because I’m not – I don’t consider myself – like my dad – he’s Mexican. But to say that I am – No, I always emphasize just the Hispanic.

It seems that Alicia also associates a sense of place and localness with a Mexican identity. This notion of locality precludes Alicia from claiming a “Mexican” identity because she does not locate herself entirely in the place and culture of Mexico. Alicia explains that she is “part Mexican.” However, because she considers herself fully a part of New Mexico, she aligns herself with the term “Hispanic.”

In addition to these place-based associations, “Hispanic” also represents cultural hybridity in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano context. Consider Antonio’s words: “Hispanic to me means half-blooded from – you have one parent from Mexico and then the other from here…It means somebody – yeah, who has like half – that has like either like New Mexican blood and Mexican blood, you know?” Antonio’s description of his identification with “Hispanic” actually addresses both place (through is use of “here”) and the co-existence of multiple identities. Antonio acknowledges that his identity contains different cultural components and he asserts that “Hispanic” denotes these distinct pieces. Adrian attributes a similar meaning to “Hispanic.” He states, “I would say I’m half Mexican and half Hispanic. My dad’s Mexican. I would just say Hispanic.” To Adrian, “Hispanic” represents “the half and half.” Similarly, Verónica explains, “I’m Hispanic. My mom is Hispanic and my dad is Mexico…. I feel – my – personally, I – I think I have more Mexican around me – more of that world around me. So to me, that – Chicana doesn’t – doesn’t apply.” Verónica explained earlier that she identified “Chicana” as “someone
who was born and raised here and learned Spanish here and kind of just absorbed the culture – Hispanic culture from here.” Because Verónica feels that she “absorbed” more of the Mexican world, her conceptualization of “Chicana” would not be an appropriate designation. Verónica seeks an identity term that captures Mexico and her mother’s Hispanic world and she finds this through the term “Hispanic.” For Verónica, the term allows her to embrace both parents’ cultures. Rolando’s conceptualization of “Hispanic” also allows him to honor both of his parents’ backgrounds. However, it also reveals a subtle interplay between homogeneity, specificity, and cultural difference. Rolando reflects,

I usually just say Hispanic. It’s the easiest. It’s kind of all encompassing is what I see it as… If they are interested, I’ll give them the rundown: New Mexican Hispanic and then Mexican, half and half, and depending on… obviously if you are talking to someone from New Mexico they know the difference… I view it as all encompassing, so it’s not like an omission on my part or anything like that.

Rolando’s vision of “Hispanic” functions somewhat panethnically in his use of the phrase “all-encompassing.” Yet, his idea of all-encompassing is still infused with specificity. He explains that it encompasses both the New Mexican Hispanic and the Mexican. The notion of “half and half” reiterates this reference to the co-existence and coalescing of multiple cultural identities within the framework of hybridity. Additionally, Rolando’s reference to a New Mexican knowing the difference highlights the fluency in inter-Latino cultural knowledge that Rolando perceives New Mexicans possess. He acknowledges New Mexicans’ proficiency in recognizing his hybridity through being able to read his cultural difference. Rolando’s account is similar to that of Raquel in Rúa (2001, p. 128). Like Rolando, Raquel does not offer details regarding her Mexican and Puerto Rican identity to everyone. However, unlike Rolando, Raquel and Rúa’s
other participants do engage in a process of “colando-ing” (p. 122) in which they “water-down” or emphasize their different identities depending on different circumstances. Many times this process is imposed on them. Rolando concludes his remarks about his identity by exclaiming, “I’m both! But I’m neither. I couldn’t say I’m one.” All of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos articulate a desire to honor (and not conceal) both of their parents’ cultural identities. This is similar to Potowski’s (2008, forthcoming) findings and those of Aparicio (forthcoming). Yet, Rúa (2001) and Aparicio (forthcoming) also highlight their mixed-ethnicity Latino participants’ experiences with enacting “cargao” and “aguao” (Rúa, p. 122) identities due to instances of racialization and silencing. The fact that Rolando resists picking one term over the other illustrates the utility that he attributes to the term “Hispanic.” In a similar way, Aparicio (forthcoming) cites one of her intra-Latino participants’ preferences for the term “Hispanic” because it signifies that he is from Island of Hispaniola, “thus rewriting the more conservative ideologies that have historically informed the term” (Aparicio, forthcoming, p. 19).

Additionally, Aparicio (forthcoming) finds that many of her participants choose the term “Latino” for many of the same reasons that my participants choose the term “Hispanic”: “a true reflection of who they are” (Aparicio, forthcoming, p. 19) without having to choose. For Rolando, “Hispanic” allows him to embrace the tensions and contradictions in being both, neither, in-between, and half and half. The Mexican-Nuevomexicano resemantification of “Hispanic” also re-writes the term and produces a hybrid identity that expands upon an existing identity category and connects it in new ways to the unique life experiences of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos.

6.6 **Concluding Thoughts: Productive Disjunctures and Identity (Re)Productions**
In an interview with Coco Fusco in her work *English is Broken Here*, Guillermo Gómez Peña reflects on cultural identities. He states, “There is a point at which you realize that to defend this monolithic concept of identity...in a process of ongoing border crossings and reterritorialization and deterritorialization is absurd. What many people in the border say is that we assume a multiple repertoire of identities. We have transitional identities in the making. We are developing new cultures” (qtd in Fusco, p. 153-4). Rather than a framework of epistemological borders, I have suggested that the multiple and contradictory invocations of cultural identity move throughout the narratives of the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos in what I term “identity flows” that reveal the relational nature of these cultural identities. These relational “identity flows” not only reveal Gómez-Peña’s “multiple repertoire of identities” but also illustrate the continuous movement of these “identities in the making.” Cultural hybridity is not fixed or static and the familial disjunctures, as well as the semantic inversion of existing identity terms, allow us to see the constant (re) productions of cultural identities within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. The many convergences and divergences between meanings about identity and hybridity also illustrate the continued activation of Latinidad within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. Consider the opening conversation by the Molina family once again. Amidst the acceptance and rejection of terms and definitions, the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family members are actively participating in the co-construction of meaning and the production of inter-Latino knowledge, even if this knowledge creates a landscape of disjunctures. It is within the disjunctures that we gain significant insight into the processes from which the dynamic terms for Mexican-Nuevomexicano cultural identities emerge.
7. CONCLUSIONS: THE CONTINUOUS EMERGENCE OF MEXICAN-NUEVOMEXICANO ETHNOLINGUISTIC CONTACT ZONES

7.1 Introduction

July 20, 2008: En route to Santa Fe, New Mexico, from Mexico City, on July 22, 2008, la virgen de Guadalupe was detained at the border. The pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Santa Fe, NM, received a call that the long-awaited 4,000 lb., 12 feet statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, that the parish had commissioned from an artist in Mexico City over a year before, had been stopped at the Cd. Juárez/El Paso border due to improper paperwork. Like so many recently-arrived immigrant parishioners who had made Our Lady of Guadalupe parish their home over the past few years, this symbol of faith did not have the documentation to freely cross the border. “Let’s just go down and get her, father! And we won’t leave until we have her.” These were the words of Richard Gorman, a lifelong Nuevomexicano parishioner of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the architect of the space that was to hold the statue. Hours later, the Nuevomexicano architect and the Mexican deacon from the parish piled into a large pick-up truck, hooked a flat-bed trailer to the vehicle, and set out to retrieve the detained Virgen. The next day, the truck returned with the statue in tow having journeyed along the historic Camino Real to end at the statue’s new home in Santa Fe. Arriving to welcome her, and assist with the installation, were generations of life-long Our Lady of Guadalupe Nuevomexicano parishioners and newer first-generation immigrant Mexican parishioners. Just as in the pick-up truck, Nuevomexicanos and Mexicans conversed, interacted, and worked side by side to welcome a symbol of faith and a new immigrant.

I reference this occurrence in Santa Fe because these moments served as starting points for this project. The journey of the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, along with her installation,
served as an ethnolinguistic contact zone between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos that I witnessed from within my own family. I observed my Nuevomexicana grandmother working side by side with fellow Mexican parishioners and conversing in Spanish as they readied the church for the welcoming reception. I listened as my Nuevomexicano uncles spoke more Spanish than I had ever heard them speak as they problem-solved the transport and final bolting down of the statue with Spanish monolingual Mexican volunteers. I witnessed Nuevomexicanos contemplate the experience of being undocumented and the realities of the border through the experience of the statue.

I would like to juxtapose this vision of Mexican-Nuevomexicano solidarity and knowledge production with Ana Quintana’s reflections about Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish: “It doesn’t belong to the old people that used to be there, you know. It’s all Mexican now and, you know, I left the parish for that reason. It wasn’t home anymore.” Ana Quintana articulates a foreignness about a place that was once familiar. The Mexicanness of the parish does not feel like home to Ana. Indeed, it was because of these tensions and shifting demographics within the parish that the pastor commissioned the statue in the first place. He envisioned a familiar and sacred symbol of faith that would unite both Mexican and Nuevomexicano communities together. This mission was visibly accomplished during the first days of the statue’s arrival at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish. However, as one Nuevomexicano parishioner reflects, “I don’t think that it brought people together so that all of a sudden people are mingling more or mixing more, but as a parish everyone celebrated together.” Another parishioner shares, “I guess it did have an effect on the parish, but I don’t think that it was like where all of a sudden the division is completely gone…” The case of the 12 foot, 4000 lb Our Lady of Guadalupe statue at Santa Fe’s Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish is representative of the everyday lived realities of Mexicans
and Nuevomexicanos in northern New Mexico and they play out through simultaneous moments of solidarity, conflict, convergences, and divergences. The events surrounding the Our Lady of Guadalupe statue embody Rúa and García’s “complex moments of convergence.” Rúa and García explain that “identity formations must be understood as dynamic processes of interaction outlined by the structures of everyday life…such complex moments of convergence, whether celebratory or conflictive or both…are sites that allow us to critically analyze notions of identity and community, as well as provide some direction into how productive tensions can serve to open new dialogues” (p. 336). The Mexican-Nuevomexicano ethnolinguistic contact zones I have explored in this dissertation, as well as the ones that are playing out as we speak in northern New Mexico, allow us to closer examine these tensions and open a space for innovative dialogues centered around these dynamic processes of solidarity, conflict, convergences, and divergences.

Consider MXNMX Rose Jurado’s recent dilemma about which Zumba class to attend. Her Nuevomexicana friends were angry with her because she had opted to attend the class that her Mexican friend was teaching, rather than the class that her other Nuevomexicana friend was teaching at a different locale. In this instance, the MXNMX individual must negotiate an ethnolinguistic contact zone that has been mapped onto Zumba classes even as she herself represents an ethnolinguistic contact zone. These moments in the ethnolinguistic contact zone of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the zumba classes are also moments of Latinidad. Through the Mexican-Nuevomexicano family unit we have seen how language is a crucial element in understanding these moments of Latinidad. Essentially, it is my wish that this dissertation has contributed to the conceptualization of moments of linguistic Latinidad both within the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families and outside of the families in larger contexts of ethnolinguistic contact.
in New Mexico and the larger Latino/a U.S. Through the mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano family I set out to provide a model for effectively bringing together issues of sociolinguistics/sociology of language with issues of Latino/a cultural studies. This model outlines a new type of methodology that illuminates the utility of highlighting language in Latinidad and Latinidad in language.

The mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano has given us an intimate glimpse into the inner-workings of ethnolinguistic contact through Latinidad. The project has drawn attention to real, concrete cases of cultural and linguistic recontact and has provided some preliminary tools for measuring such recontact. We know that English dominates the lives of all of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families. However, we can conceptualize Mexican-Nuevomexicanos as the result of recontact and recognize the MXNMX’s subtle acts of maintenance, recovery, and agency amidst Spanish language shift in their daily lives. We see the dominance of Mexican Spanish in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families and the complex subordination of New Mexico Spanish through authenticating practices of correction and linguistic hierarchies. Lastly, we see the dynamic ways in which the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families and the Mexican-Nuevomexicanos, in particular, engage in meaning-making processes about their identities and resemantify already established categories.

7.2 **Future Directions**

Interestingly, many of the processes that we see occurring around language in these ethnolinguistic contact zones occur simultaneously around other modes of expression such as music and food. For example, the construction of musical hierarchies takes a parallel path to the construction of linguistic hierarchies. In a preliminary analysis, I have found that musical discourses in the Mexican-Nuevomexicano narratives serve as a lens through which to view
tensions regarding cultural and linguistic authenticity. In a sense, ethnolinguistic hierarchies are mapped onto narratives about music. A similar process occurs around food. I look forward to continued future analysis of the multi-modal ways that Mexicans, Nuevomexicanos, and Mexican-Nuevomexicanos negotiate their identities both extra-linguistically and ethnolinguistically by engaging language and other cultural markers.

Additionally, in future analysis of the Mexican-Nuevomexicano data, I look forward to fleshing out the portraits of the participants’ Spanish. What does the Spanish look like of the different family members and in what ways have linguistic transculturations occurred? Lastly, I am eager to begin analysis on a completely untouched data set that was collected during my fieldwork conducting interviews with the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families in northern New Mexico. I collected approximately 300 online surveys from Hispanic high school students from six towns in northern New Mexico. The survey asked questions about cultural and linguistic background, practices, attitudes, and identity. The data obtained from the high school students serves to contextualize larger linguistic trends and cultural perceptions from the Mexican-Nuevomexicano families’ surrounding communities.

7.3 Conclusion: The Theoretical Implications of a U.S. Latino/a Linguistic and Cultural Home

I would like to highlight one final note regarding the potential implications for this study in future work. Applying the framework of Latinidad in the context of New Mexico forces us to think beyond national origin as the primary point of distinction between Latino/a groups. As already established throughout this dissertation, those who identify as Nuevomexicanos do not have a recent immigration history and do not identify as Mexican. Locating Nuevomexicanos’ homeland within the U.S. encourages the consideration of additional U.S. spaces as Latino
homeplaces. It is certainly the case for many Puerto Ricans that home is in fact not the island, but instead el bloque in east Harlem (Zentella, 1997) or Humboldt Park in Chicago (Pérez, 2004). Additionally, Zentella (1997) demonstrates that home on el bloque can also be defined by linguistic practices such as codeswitching (p. 114, 134). Understanding Nuevomexicanos’ historical claims to home opens up a line of thinking that is not confined to identifying Latinos by country of origin, but instead by U.S. region. It also discourages the dichotomous notion of a bilingual/bicultural individual. Consider the following words from a participant in Pugach’s 1999 ethnography in southern New Mexico:

Part of my family comes from Mexico and some of my relatives there can’t stand to see that I don’t honor the Mexican flag. But that’s not my flag; that’s my ancestors’ flag. I don’t have an Hispanic culture and I don’t have an American culture. I have a culture of where I’m living and I take in everything around me. Because you can’t, you can’t be totally Hispanic and you can’t be totally American. You have to accept something at some point, and when you accept from both I think it’s best. I feel more Hispanic when they start talking about race and when you start talking about tradition and culture. But mostly, you’re still an American, but you have your Hispanic background. I can’t say I’m totally Mexican, totally Hispanic, because I’m not. I live in America, and I’m very much American, but I’m not totally Americanized (34).

This participant’s articulation of a “culture of where I’m living” speaks to a Latino identity that exists within a U.S. space. It is not an artificial constant border-crossing between two cultures and two languages. It is one U.S. Latino culture anchored in the place of New Mexico. Urciuoli reminds us that “it should thus be clear that bilinguals do not literally ‘have’ two languages or cultures” (Urciuoli, 2008, p.259). This problematizes the imposed transnational origins on all
Latinos and points to some of my project’s theoretical implications. Examining the ethnolinguistic contact zones between Mexicans and Nuevomexicanos in northern New Mexico brings into question issues of nativity and place and locates a Latino home in the U.S. I suggest that by studying these contact zones in northern New Mexico, U.S. Latino spaces can be envisioned as native Latino homes and U.S. Latino linguistic homes can welcome the co-existence of Spanish and English. Urciuoli explains that “Languages, dialects, and accents are constructs that classify people, as do race, nationality, ethnicity and kinship. Each of these categories assumes a natural boundary… The terms monolingual and bilingual let people assume that words, sounds, and rules come in neatly monolithic packages, that individual speakers are carriers for these packages, and that speaker competence can be neatly gauged in terms of these packages” (Urciuoli, 1996, p. 3). My project has sought to problematize these naturally assumed boundaries. Essentially, by applying the framework of Latinidad within the space of New Mexico I encourage the consideration of the U.S. as always already a Latino/a cultural and linguistic space.
CITED LITERATURE


United States Census Community Survey 2008. Available at: [www.census.org](http://www.census.org)

United States Census 2010. Available at: ([http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35000.html](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35000.html))


December 23, 2011

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Phone: (505) 417-2205 / Fax: (312) 413-1044

RE: Protocol # 2011-0890

“Ethnolinguistic Identity and Language Use Among Mexicans, New Mexicans, and Mixed Mexican-New Mexicans in New Mexico”

Dear Ms. Gorman:

Your Initial Review (Response To Modifications) was reviewed and approved by the Expedited review process on December 15, 2011. You may now begin your research.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:
Please remember to submit a letter of support from all school research sites in New Mexico that outlines the research activities which the schools agree to allow/host and is signed by the school principal. Letters of support must be accompanied by an Amendment form when submitted to the UIC IRB.

Please note that clean, unmarked versions of Spanish translations of permission and consent documents were not submitted with this packet. Also, kindly note that a line upon which the child subject’s name could be printed was not inserted into the Signature section of parent permission documents. These issues are eligible for administrative approval. Please submit these documents at your earliest convenience, but do NOT change the version numbers or dates in the footers.

**Protocol Approval Period:** December 15, 2011 - December 13, 2012

**Approved Subject Enrollment #:** 330

**Additional Determinations for Research Involving Minors:** The Board determined that this research satisfies 45CFR46.404, research not involving greater than minimal risk. Therefore, in accordance with 45CFR46.408, the IRB determined that only one parent's/legal guardian's permission/signature is needed. Wards of the State may not be enrolled unless the IRB grants specific approval and assures inclusion of additional protections in the research required under 45CFR46.409. If you wish to enroll Wards of the State contact OPRS and refer to the tip sheet.

**Performance Site:** UIC

**Sponsor:** None

**Research Protocol:**

a) Ethnolinguistic Identity and Language Use among Mexicans, New Mexicans, and Mixed Mexican-New Mexicans in New Mexico; Version 1; 10/12/2011

**Recruitment Materials:**

a) In-Person Recruitment Script Interview; Version 1; 12/07/2011  
b) Email Recruitment Script Interview; Version 1; 12/07/2011

**Informed Consents:**

a) Consent Form Interview (English); Version 2; 12/07/2011  
b) Consent Form Survey (English); Version 2; 12/07/2011

**Assents:**

a) Assent Form Survey; Version 1; 10/12/2011  
b) Assent Form Interview; Version 1; 10/12/2011

Your research meets the criteria for expedited review as defined in 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) under the following specific categories:
(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes., (7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Please note the Review History of this submission:

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Please remember to:

→ Use your research protocol number (2011-0890) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

→ Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure, "UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"

Please note that the UIC IRB has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 996-2014. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Sandra Costello
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in progress (ABD), Hispanic Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago (expected May 2015)
- Concentrations: Sociology of Language/Sociolinguistics and Latino/a Cultural Studies
- Current GPA: 4.0
- High passed Ph.D. preliminary exams

M.A. in Spanish (Hispanic Southwest Studies), University of New Mexico, 2004
- GPA: 3.94
- M.A. comprehensive exams passed with distinction.

B.A. in Spanish, University of New Mexico, 2001
- GPA: 3.93
- Summa Cum Laude
- Minor in English
- Semester study abroad: Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (Querétaro, Mexico), fall 1999.
  - Conexiones Summer Cultural Study Program in Morelia, Michoacán, México, summer 1998.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

U.S. Latino/a ethnolinguistic identities (particularly in New Mexico and Chicago),
Latino/a cultural studies, language attitudes, language ideologies, language maintenance and shift, Spanish
heritage learners and pedagogies, heritage language development and maintenance, U.S. Latino/a popular
culture, Latino/a literature

DISSERTATION TITLE: “Ethnolinguistic Contact Zones: Identity and Language Use within Mixed Mexican-
Nuevomexicano Families and Communities in Northern New Mexico”

The dissertation project takes an interdisciplinary approach to studying the sociolinguistic landscape of northern
New Mexico through exploring the cultural and linguistic interactions between first and second-generation
Mexicans and native New Mexican Hispanic (Nuevomexicano) communities.

Diss Chairs: Frances Aparicio and Kim Potowski

TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Director, Spanish for Heritage Speakers, University of Illinois at Chicago, IL (2008-2013 & 2014-2015)

Instructor, Spanish for Heritage Speakers, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL (2008-present)

Adjunct Lecturer, U.S. Latino/a Literature, Daley College, Chicago, IL (fall 2012-present)

Faculty, Intensive Spanish Immersion Program for Bilingual Education Teachers, New Mexico Highlands
University, Las Vegas, NM. (2006-present).

Director and Creator, Spanish as a Heritage Language Nicaragua Immersion Program, New Mexico
Highlands University and University of New Mexico; Granada, Nicaragua (2004-2009).
Director of Spanish as a Heritage Language and Visiting Assistant Professor, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, New Mexico. (summer 2005-summer 2007)

Teaching Assistant, Sabine Ulibarrí Spanish as a Heritage Language Program, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of New Mexico. (2002-2004)

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant, Cultura Cubana Seminar. Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of New Mexico & Centro Marinello, Havana, Cuba. (spring 2000)

PUBLICATIONS

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS:


OTHER:

Book Review of Silvina Montrul’s Incomplete Acquisition in Bilingualism: Re-Examining the Age Factor for Heritage Languages Journal, 7:2 (Fall 2010).


UNDERGRADUATE PUBLICATIONS:


“Dos lados de la infantalización del indígena en Balún Canan de Rosario Castellanos y el prólogo a Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia de Elizabeth Burgos.” Best Student Essays of the University of New Mexico 12.2 (fall 2000).

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS


Chicago, IL, July 2014.

“Ethnolinguistic contact zones: Identity and language use within mixed Mexicano-Nuevomexicano families.”
24th Conference on Spanish in the United States, McAllen, TX, March 2013.


“Paisas, bracers, and nacos: Intra-ethnic Cultural Perceptions among Second Generation Mexicans in Chicago.”


“Es como si ya nos conociéramos: New Mexico Spanish heritage language learners in Nicaragua.” New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education, Albuquerque, NM, September 2009.

“Language contact between second/third generation Latinos and recently arrived immigrants in Chicago.”
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) 91st Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM, July 2009.


“Language recontact between second/third generation Latinos and recently arrived immigrants in Chicago.”

“Language recontact between second/third generation Latinos and recently arrived immigrants in Chicago.”
XXII Congreso del Español en Los Estados Unidos, Miami, FL, February 2009.

“Spanish as a Heritage Language: Strategies for Building a Language Community in and out of the Classroom.”
New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education, Albuquerque, NM, spring 2007.

“Building a Language Community in the Spanish as a Heritage Language Classroom: Models and Strategies.”
Politics of Language Symposium and Workshops, Albuquerque, NM, fall 2006.

“Spanish as a Heritage Language: Building Confianza y Orgullo.”
New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education, Albuquerque, NM, spring 2006, and New Mexico Highlands University Deans’ Lecture Series, Las Vegas, NM, fall 2005.

“Expressions of Ambivalence: The Implications of Statehood on Nuevomexicano Cultural Identity.”
NACCS Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM, spring 2004 and Western Literature Association Annual Conference, Houston, TX, fall 2003.

“Ethnic Identity and Language Shift/Maintenance in Spanish as a Heritage Language Learners.”
“A New Mexican Treasure: A New Perspective on the Penitentes.” Ronald E. McNair and Research Opportunity Program Research Symposium, University of New Mexico, fall 2000.

INVITED TALKS

“Ethnolinguistic contact zones: Identity and language use within mixed Mexican-Nuevomexicano families.” Graduate College Abraham Lincoln and DFI Presentation Series, University of Illinois at Chicago, February 27, 2014.


“Why Spanish as a Heritage Language?—Heritage Learner Profiles” Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, November 21, 2011.

WORKSHOPS


“Incorporating Chicano/a Literature into the Heritage Language and Bilingual Classroom.” New Mexico Association for Bilingual Education, Albuquerque, NM, spring 2008.


PANEL PRESENTATIONS


“¿Cómo comenzamos? Starting a Spanish as a Heritage Language Program at the University.” Politics of Language Symposium and Workshops, Albuquerque, NM, fall 2006.


GUEST LECTURES

“Conceptos y teorías importantes en el estudio de lengua e identidad en el contexto de los latinos en Estados Unidos.” Guest lecturer in Spanish 366: U.S. Spanish, University of Illinois at Chicago (fall 2013)

“Qualitative Research Methods in Latino Studies and Sociolinguistics.” Guest lecturer in LALS 301: Research Methods in Latin American and Latino Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago (fall 2013)
HONORS & AWARDS

University of Illinois at Chicago Chancellor’s Graduate Research Fellowship (2013-2014)

Alternate and Honorable Mention for the Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship (2013)

University of Illinois at Chicago Abraham Lincoln Diversity Fellowship (2007-2008 and 2011-2012)

Ruth El Saffar Essay Award, Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago (2011)

Excellence in Teaching Awards from the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies (2009 and 2010 and 2012)

University of Illinois at Chicago Martin Luther King, Jr. Graduate Scholarship Award (2008)

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Spanish for Native Speakers Special Interest Group Scholarship (fall 2007)

Grantee, New Mexico Highlands University Spanish Immersion Grant for Nicaragua Immersion Program. (awarded in fall 2007)


Outstanding Teaching Assistant of the Year, University of New Mexico. (2003-2004)

Grantee, Graduate Research Development, Graduate and Professional Student Association, University of New Mexico. (spring 2004)

Service Award, USDA Public Service Leaders Scholarship Program, Washington DC. (2003)

Spring Farewell Speaker, HACU National Internship Program, Washington DC. (spring 2002)

Graduation Speaker, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of New Mexico. (spring 2001)

Departmental Honors, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of New Mexico. (spring 2001)

Ronald E. McNair Scholar, University of New Mexico. (2000-present)

Presidential Scholar, University of New Mexico. (1997-2001)

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society. (inducted 2001)

Golden Key National Honor Society. (inducted 1999)

Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society. (inducted 1999)

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE


Spanish Language Editor for the manuscript of Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself: Latina Girls and Sexual Identity by Lorena García, Ph.D, University of Illinois at Chicago.
Program Analyst, USDA Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program Office, Washington DC. (summer 2001-summer 2005). Worked on education policy initiatives for Latino students, faculty, and staff at Hispanic Serving Institutions throughout the country.

Project Assistant for *Corridos Sin Fronteras: A New World Ballad Tradition* exhibit, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Washington, DC. (summer 2002)

Program Assistant and Latino Outreach Coordinator, Project Food, Land and People, San Francisco, CA. (summer 2001)

**PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE/ACTIVITIES**

Language in Context Research Group, University of Illinois at Chicago (fall 2013-present).

Abstract Reviewer, Inaugural Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language: Multicultural, Diversity, Multilingualism, Texas Tech University (fall 2013).

Latino/a Graduate Student Association, University of Illinois at Chicago (spring 2013-present)

Mentor, Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Ready to Lead Program, Northeastern University, Chicago, IL (fall 2012)

HACU National Internship Program Alumni Mentoring Program, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. (summer 2012-present).

Career Day Speaker, UNO Charter Schools, Chicago, IL (spring 2011).

Contributor, Materials for Spanish for Spanish Speakers Instruction: Annotated Bibliography, Center for Applied Linguistics (fall 2010).

Abstract Reviewer, Sociolinguistics Section, University of Illinois at Chicago, Bilingualism Forum, Chicago, IL (spring 2009).

Site Curator, *Nuevo México, ¿hasta cuándo?—The Historical Ballads of New Mexico* Smithsonian Exhibition, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, NM (spring 2007).

HACU Scholarship Reviewer (2006-2007)

Organizer, Western New Mexico University and New Mexico Highlands University Spanish Heritage Language Learner Partnership. (spring 2007)

Search Committee Member, New Mexico Highlands University School of Education. (spring 2007)

USDA Scholarship Reviewer, USDA Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program. (spring 2007)

Facilitator, New Mexico Highlands University Spanish Heritage Language Learner Partnership with the United World College Latin American Students. (fall 2006-spring 2007)

Student Advisor to HACU/USDA-HSI Programs, New Mexico Highlands University. (fall 2006)

Member, Southwest Studies Planning Committee, New Mexico Highlands University. (fall 2006)

Speaker, KRZA Public Radio Cultural Programming, Alamosa, CO. (fall 2006)

Interdepartmental Sponsor and Facilitator, NMHU School of Social Work and Chihuahua Escuela de Trabajo Social Exchange Program, Las Vegas, NM. (fall 2006)
Interview Panel Member, USDA Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program Deputy Director Search, Washington, D.C. (fall 2006)

University Advisor for Partnerships with Las Vegas City Schools Dual-Language Immersion Program. (2006)

Committee Member, Master’s thesis committee for candidate for M.A. in Spanish, New Mexico Highlands University. (spring 2006)

Speaker, KNMX Radio Show, Cultural Programming, Las Vegas, NM. (2005-2006)

Speaker, KEDP Highlands’ Highlights Radio Show, Las Vegas, NM. (2005-2006)

Founding member of the Southwest Spanish as a Heritage Language Consortium (2005)

HACU Scholarship Selection Committee, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Washington, D.C. (summer 2004)

Organizer, Bilingual Literacy Project, Chaparral Elementary, Santa Fe, NM and University of New Mexico Spanish as a Heritage Language Program. (summer 2004)

Mentor, California State University at Fresno Ag Summer Bridge Program, Fresno, CA. (summer 2001)

Volunteer Grant Writer, National Institute of Flamenco, Albuquerque, NM. (2001)

MEMBERSHIPS IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

International Latina/o Studies Association
Latin American Studies Association (LASA)
Modern Languages Association (MLA)
New Mexico Association of Bilingual Education (NMABE)
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP)
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
American Studies Association (ASA)
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Student Program Alumni Association (HAA)

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES TAUGHT

Taught and created curriculum for:

University of New Mexico:  
Elementary Spanish as a Second Language 101
Conversational Spanish 103
Elementary Spanish as a Heritage Language 111
Elementary Spanish as a Heritage Language 112
Intermediate Spanish as a Heritage Language 211
Intermediate Spanish as a Heritage Language 212

New Mexico Highlands University:  
Elementary Spanish as a Heritage Language 111
Elementary Spanish as a Heritage Language 112
Intermediate Spanish as a Heritage Language 211
Intermediate Spanish as a Heritage Language 212
Spanish 235: Spanish Heritage Learners in Nicaragua
Panorama of Chicano Poetry: Spanish 320
Advanced Spanish Heritage Language Conversation: SPAN 235/335
Ortografía y acentuación en la escuela: GNED 435/535 (graduate)
La composición en el contexto escolar: GNED 435/535 (graduate)
University of Illinois at Chicago: Spanish for Heritage Speakers 113
Spanish for Heritage Speakers 114

Daley College, City Colleges of Chicago: Literature 129: U.S. Latino/a Literature

Las Vegas City Schools: Community Conversation course for parents of dual-language immersion students at Los Niños Elementary school (fall 2011-spring 2012)

REFERENCES

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