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Spanglish As a Marker of Identification Among Hispanics in the United States: A Case Study of Two Tejano Radio Stations

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
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ABSTRACT

Spanglish As a Marker of Identification Among Hispanics in the United States: A Case Study of Two Tejano Radio Stations

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Although critics believe the language variety Spanglish to be a corruption of one or both of the standard languages with which it is associated as well as a language of inadequacy spoken by the poor and uneducated, this thesis seeks to support the idea that it is used by Hispanics in the United States as a marker of identity. An examination of previous studies shows that it is not associated with a lack of linguistic ability on the part of its speakers. Demographic information provided by two Tejano stations that broadcast in Spanglish, KQQK of Houston and KXTN of San Antonio, demonstrates that listeners, when compared to the national averages among Hispanics, actually live under better socioeconomic circumstances. Interviews with radio station personnel reveal that, in their opinions, Spanglish is related to the identity of the Tejano, differentiating him or her from the Anglo as well as the recently-arrived immigrant.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my family for their unfailing support throughout my scholastic career, without which I would never have been able to achieve what I have. I would also like to thank Dr. Rafael Salaberry for his knowledgeable direction in writing this thesis, as well as the other committee members, Dr. Beatriz González-Stephan, and Dr. R. Lane Kauffmann for their input and support. Thanks also to Donna Collins for the beginning of the idea for this study.
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Chapter I

Introduction

my graduation speech

i think in Spanish
i write in English

i want to go back to puerto rico
but I wonder if my kink could live
in ponce, mayagüez and carolina

tengo las venas aculturadas
escribo en spanglish
abraham en español
abraham in English
tato in Spanish
“taro” in English
tonto in both languages

how are you?
¿cómo estás?
i don’t know if I’m coming
or si me fui ya...

english or spanish
spanish or english
spanenglish
now, dig this:

hablo lo inglés matao
hablo lo español matao
no sé leer ninguno bien

so it is, spanglish to matao
what i digo
¡ay, virgen, yo no sé hablar!
(Tato Laviera’)

According to the census data from the U.S. Census Bureau², in the year

2000, 32.8 million Latinos were residing in the United States. In other words, one
out of every eight people in this country are of Hispanic origin, according to self-classification. These figures do not include Puerto Rico, any Hispanic census participants who did not report themselves as such, nor the many illegal immigrants that live here. So even without the groups that are overlooked by such widespread government measurements, Hispanics make up at least twelve percent of the total United States population, and this percentage is expected to grow due to high birth rates among this sector as well as continued immigration, both legal and illegal. For states such as New Mexico, California and Texas, the Hispanic population reaches the level of thirty to forty percent of the total number of people living in these areas. The city of Houston itself claims that a hefty 37.4% of its residents are of Hispanic or Latino origin, using data from the 2000 census. All in all, this country must face the implications of the existence of such a large minority group, especially one that is growing at such a rate, in numbers as well as in political and social power. One of the factors that such a large group brings to our "melting pot"—or perhaps more appropriately, "salad bowl"—, is that of language difference. The U.S. Census Bureau reported a total of 17,345,064 persons age five and over as speakers of Spanish in the home in 1990 (although not necessarily exclusively). Spanish speakers were not only ranked number one among foreign-language speakers in the United States, they were also rated number one among foreign-language speakers who speak

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2 Available at U.S. Census Bureau website: http://www.census.gov.
3 Available at U.S. Census Bureau Factfinder website: http://factfinder.census.gov.
4 Available at U.S. Census Bureau Factfinder website: http://factfinder.census.gov.
English “less than ‘very well’.” It is obvious that Spanish in some form is very important to a large portion of the population, and therefore, important to all.

One of the points that the census does not cover is the variety of Spanish spoken by these residents. Many studies, as well as observations by Spanish-speakers from outside of the United States, show that the Spanish language spoken in this country is not the same as that spoken in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. A phenomenon that appears in places in which languages come into intimate contact is that of an integration of the language of a powerful majority into that of a less dominant minority, and at times, vice-versa. This is clearly seen in the existence of Hispanic-American Spanish. Whether called Spanglish, español mixtureado, pocho, Cubonics, Tex-Mex or Nuyorquiano, and whether it is found in Texas, Los Angeles, Miami or New York, the debate over the validity of these varieties of the “standard” Spanish spoken in other parts of the world such as Latin America and Spain has been heated and passionate, with defenders of the purity of the Spanish language fighting desperately against those who would allow “the language of Cervantes” to fall into ruin by legitimizing what they consider the distorted and contaminated version of Spanish spoken by some Latinos living in the United States. The threat of this Spanglish, the term I will use throughout this study for lack of a better defined name for this language variety, is one that must be thwarted with the enforcement of the rules and standards of the Spanish sanctioned by the Real Academia, according to opponents of this English-influenced Spanish.
However, I propose that, instead of being treated as a threat to the Spanish language and as a code or argot of the uneducated and poor, Spanglish should be seen as a possible marker of identity within the Latino communities here in the United States, varied though these communities be. According to Fern L. Johnson in *Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States*,

The Hispanic confluence of cultures and languages presents an interesting case study for the United States as a multicultural nation. In the Hispanic peoples of the United States, we see the evolution of a Hispanic culture from separate but interrelated ancestral groups, each with its distinct history and character but all with some commonality in the context of the cultural fabric of the United States. Language issues definitely play a central role in that cultural evolution because of the place of Spanish in the history and ongoing patterns of daily life for the several groups comprising the U.S. Hispanic population.\(^5\)

I believe that although it is true that it is spoken among many Hispanics of a lower socioeconomic and educational level, it is used among them (and also among many educated bilinguals, usually second- and third-generation descendants of immigrants from Latin America) as a representation of the straddling of two cultures that the Hispanic of the United States often faces. The linguistic prejudice that this person often confronts is expressed in the irony of the opening poem by Tato Laviera that addresses the idea that bilingualism is a deviance from the norm, a disadvantage, and that the bilingual has less than a language instead of two or even one.

I would like to present in this thesis a general working definition of Spanglish, an outline of the ongoing dialogue for and against its existence in

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different arenas, and the principles of solidarity and language loyalty as applied to this particular language variety. Because of the widespread use of radio among Hispanics in the United States, I would like to utilize this media type to present a concrete example that supports my thesis. I will do this by offering a case study of two bilingual radio stations in the Houston and San Antonio metropolitan areas that focuses on the usage of Spanglish in their transmissions, and on the attitudes held by their disc jockeys and by their directors toward the variety of language spoken during the radio programming. I will uphold my hypothesis that there is a link between Spanglish and the cultural identity of the bilingual community with the results of the interviews I have conducted. I also will provide examples of research and studies conducted that question the notion of Spanglish as an inferior form of expression, one used by those who know neither “standard” English nor “standard” Spanish.
Chapter II

Spanglish: A Working Definition

Before presenting the argument that Spanglish can be related to cultural identity, it is necessary to establish a definition of this language variety. This is a difficult task, given that there are many different definitions and descriptions applied to this term. According to Antonio Carrido, the director of the Instituto Cervantes in New York (as cited on the “Página del Idioma Español”), “lo único cierto es que nadie sabe a ciencia cierta qué es exactamente el spanglish...seguiremos sin saberlo hasta que alguien nos lo aclare desde un punto de vista científico.” I do not propose to provide a comprehensive description of Spanglish here. Instead, I will first present a few definitions or characterizations offered by scholars, and then suggest my own.

The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary has the following definition for Spanglish: “Spanish marked by numerous borrowings from English; broadly: any of various combinations of Spanish and English.” Encarta’s World English Dictionary also characterizes Spanglish as “Spanish with many English borrowings: a variety of Spanish characterized by numerous borrowings from English.” These definitions could encompass almost any variety of Spanish found in various parts of the world; they are very indefinite. In “It’s the Talk of Nueva York: The Hybrid Called Spanglish,” Lizette Alvarez attempts to give a brief definition by dividing Spanglish into two categories, “borrowing—saying
English words 'Spanish style' and spelling them accordingly" and as the second category, the tendency to "switch back and forth."7 Bill Cruz, Bill Teck, and the Editors of Generation ñ magazine claim in their The Official Spanglish Dictionary that "Spanglish is a strange thing. Like art (and some other stuff), you may not be able to describe it, but you know it when you see it. True Spanglish emerges when one switches from Spanish to English (or vice versa) within the same sentence."8 They also provide an explanation of the three "classes" of Spanglish. The first class is "transliteration", "a phonetic adoption from another language"9 such as "chirro" for sheetrock. The second is "descriptive", words that "attempt to explain some aspect of the object or idea they identify" such as "un raspadito" that is a word used to mean a scratch-off lotto ticket. The third class that they define is "traditional", or "words that need no introduction. As far as we know, they've been around since the dawn of time."10 However, the three "traditional" Spanglish words found in the dictionary seem to have their base in the languages of the peoples of the Caribbean, including traditional Spanish. The authors give the example of "paraguero", meaning an "inept motorist."11 This word supposedly has its root in the Spanish term for umbrella, although the link between "paraguas" and driving is not clearly explained in the definition. I have included

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9 Ibid., p. 33.
10 Ibid., p. 34.
11 Ibid., p. 44.
these somewhat vague and incomplete definitions of Spanglish in order to
establish a representation of the popular idea of what it is, since this thesis is
focused on the attitudes and ideas of the general public, and Hispanics in
particular, with regards to Spanglish and its use as a marker of identification.

From a more scholarly viewpoint, Rose Nash of Inter-American University
offers a more in-depth look at Spanglish, which she claims "has at least one of
the characteristics of an autonomous language: a substantial number of native
speakers." Nash defines Spanglish as being a variety of Spanish influenced by
English, and claims that the division between what is and is not Spanglish is not
always black and white. She excludes ungrammatical utterances such as "No
speak very good the English" that are simply English words placed in the
normal word order of Spanish; however, some utterances in Spanish using
English syntax are seen as Spanglish (for example, idiomatic expressions such
as "volver para atrás"). Nash seems to have discarded the idea of Spanglish as
English influenced by Spanish, firmly establishing Spanish as the only possible
matrix language of Spanglish (it is necessary to note that Nash seems to have
coined a term for Spanish-influenced English spoken as a second language,
"Englañol"; she reserves the term "Spanglish" for English-influenced Spanish as
a first language). Unlike others that have given their own descriptions of
Spanglish, Nash also rejects any switches from Spanish to English that are
deliberately realized for some type of special effect, "unless the switching takes

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place within an utterance in a natural way.” Nash does not, however, clearly establish why such statements are deliberate while other Spanglish speech does not represent a purposeful choice on the part of the speaker to use that form of communication. She divides Spanglish expressions into three types. The first type includes the widespread usage of English lexical items appearing in their original form in utterances that are otherwise Spanish. Nash includes in these lexical items international terminology dealing with science and technology fields (thereby emphasizing areas in which many English words exist that do not have an immediate translation available in Spanish), high occurrence English terms that actually have a counterpart in Spanish (such as “boss” or “shopping center”), and cultural loans that are often “slangy expressions” or “untranslatable English idioms.” She cites “T-shirt,” “hobby” and “hamburgers” as examples of this type of English lexical items. She also includes in Type I of Spanglish vocabulary of commercial America, business names and advertising slogans. For this subcategory she cites the following sign on a store window: “Recurt’s Office Supplies: folders, máquinas de escribir, account books, papelería, sillas, desks.” The second type of Spanglish expression includes English words that have been integrated into a Spanish format, often changing pronunciation and spelling. According to Nash, the nouns and verbs of this type take on the

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13 Ibid., p. 224.
14 Ibid., p. 224.
15 Ibid., p. 224.
16 Ibid., p. 225.
morphological forms and inflections of the Spanish language, she describes them as having lost their “non-Spanish identity.”\textsuperscript{18} Common nouns mentioned include “guachimán” for “watchman,” “carpeta” for “carpet” and “cuara” for “quarter”\textsuperscript{19}; however, there is not a clear difference established in Nash’s definition between these nouns and those from the first category. The addition of letters or changing of pronunciations in these words seems to be a result of the difference in Spanish and English language rules for possible sounds and sound combinations rather than a change in inflectional morphology. Verbs that have been formed from an English word but are then conjugated according to the Spanish verbal system are also included in this category, and clearly have suffered changes in inflectional morphology. Nash offers examples such as “mopear” for “to mop,” “flirtear” for “to flirt” and “tapear” for “to type”.\textsuperscript{20} Nash’s third type comprises calques, syntactic idioms, and “some original expressions that can be recognized as a distinctive new form of Spanish evolving under the influence of English.”\textsuperscript{21} She gives as examples the following: “Él está supuesto a venir,” “El pasado año,” and “Llámame para atrás”.\textsuperscript{22} As for the original expressions that she mentions, she includes “Estás hecho” for “You have it made”\textsuperscript{23} and other phrases that are translations of English idiomatic sayings. Nash offers one of the more detailed definitions of Spanglish in her article, “Spanglish: Language Contact in Puerto Rico” even though she does not

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 226.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 226.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p. 227.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 228.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 228.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 229.
mention Spanglish as a possible language variety in any other region besides Puerto Rico itself.

Jacob Omstein-Galicia describes an array of varieties of Southwest Spanish, claiming that Spanglish is a term increasingly used to signify one of these varieties that has “heavy English interference and borrowing from English, hence applicable to SWS [Southwest Spanish] and the Puerto Rican (Boricua) and Cuban varieties of Spanish.” Rodolfo Jacobson maintains that “Terms like ‘Tex-Mex,’ ‘Spanglish,’ and other similar terms have been used indiscriminately to refer to the fact that some speakers of Spanish and English use the resources of both languages when they wish to communicate to one another, especially in informal situations.” Lucía Elías Olivares uses the term “Español Mixtureado” to describe the linguistic situation among members of the Chicano community, saying,

Lexical items which have undergone the process called relexification, and calques have become a part of the Spanish repertoire of speakers who for the most part do not recognize their English source. When the speaker says la mira (the meter) or la jira (the heater) or Ella me ticha español (She teaches me Spanish) and has no notion of the origin of the word, we no longer have interference but integration. When a speaker says Lo puso patrés (He put it back) instead of Lo regresó a su lugar or Lo volvío a poner en su lugar we are not in the presence of a bilingual who is experiencing interference from English when speaking Spanish but in the presence of a variety which is the habitual system of communication of a number of speakers who sometimes do not speak English. Español

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23 Ibid., p. 230.
Mixtureado ought to be recognized and accepted as an important speech variety for purposes of research as well as for educational purposes.\textsuperscript{26}

Again, Spanglish seems to be a variation of Spanish that, by its regional nature and its lack of a comprehensive and consistent body of written record available for each region, is difficult to define precisely. As is the case with all languages and language varieties, its boundaries are not clear-cut and exact.

Given my intent to determine popular social attitudes toward Spanglish, I have decided to establish a broad definition that takes into consideration the most popular ideas of what Spanglish is. Since the most complete definition described so far has been that of Rose Nash, I will use hers as a base on which to build my own. I believe that her definition can be made more precise and more applicable to Spanglish in all regions of the United States by acknowledging first of all that it is difficult to separate a Spanish influenced by English from an English influenced by Spanish. In other words, I do not believe it is possible to limit the matrix language to either Spanish or English by themselves. For example, if a code-switched utterance of ten words contains five in English and five in Spanish, how is one to decide which language is the matrix language? It does seem that Spanglish is more often thought of as an English-influenced Spanish rather than the reverse; however, I do not think it is possible to rule out either situation.

As far as breaking Spanglish down into categories or types by which it can be defined, I would clarify this idea by suggesting that Spanglish be described at various levels, the lexical level, the morphological level, the syntactical level and the discursive level. For the lexical level, I include Nash’s first type of Spanglish (words directly transferred from English into the Spanish utterance with no change in form or pronunciation), which comprises both terms that do have immediate translations available in each language, as well as those that do not. I also place at this level those lexical items in her second type of Spanglish that seem to have simply undergone changes in spelling and/or pronunciation. Therefore, “guachiman,” “carpeta” and “cuara” fall into this category as well as “troca” or “vacuncliner,” to give other examples. Appearing as another subtype of lexical item are those words that exist in Spanish but evidence some type of semantic change due to English influence (or the other way around). These often have their basis in false cognates, or words that are similar in Spanish and English, but maintain different meanings in the standard versions of each language. For example, the use of the verb “soportar” to mean “to support” instead of “to put up with,” provides an illustration of this subtype of lexical item. Other examples include “ignorar” for “to ignore” instead of “to be ignorant of something” or “acostar” for “to accost or to attack” instead of “to put to bed.”

The morphological level of Spanglish brings in that part of Nash’s second type that encompasses items that have been morphologically integrated into the base language, though they have originated as loan words from the other
language. For example, the verb “loquear” is used to mean “cerrar con llave” and originates from the English verb “to lock.” It is fully incorporated into the Spanish inflectional system, as it can be conjugated: “yo loqueo, tú loqueas, etc.” Other examples include “faxear” and “mopear.”

At the syntactical level we find adaptation of Spanish syntax to an English pattern (or the other way around), often to express idiomatic phrases that occur in English, using Spanish vocabulary. This level corresponds to Nash’s third type of Spanglish, that that comprises calques, syntactic idioms, and original expressions in one language that have been syntactically influenced by the other. Common examples at the syntactical level, besides those of Nash listed above, include “volver para atrás” from the English “to give back” as well as “el tráfico está corriendo lentamente” for “The traffic is running slowly.”

At the discursive level, Spanglish can involve the use of intersentential as well as intrasentential code-switching. Shana Poplack defines code-switching in general as “the alteration of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent.” With intersentential switching, the speaker changes from one language to another within a single discourse, but separates Spanish sentences from English sentences. An example would be, “I’m going to the store today. ¿Quieres venir conmigo?” Intrasedsentential switching consists of a language switch within a single sentence. “Yo voy a la store in a couple of hours si quieres

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"Ir conmigo" illustrates this type of code-switch. Tags also form part of the
discursive level of Spanglish. They are considered emblematic constituents of
style by some researchers, while others classify them as code-switches. "She's
going to the party, no?" includes the Spanish tag "¿no?" while "Wow, ¡no lo
puedo creer!" demonstrates the use of an English tag within an otherwise
Spanish utterance.

My proposed working definition of Spanglish therefore consists of a
mixture of Spanish and English at the lexical level, the morphological level, the
syntactical level, the discursive level, or any combination of the above. The
matrix language of an utterance in Spanglish cannot be limited to either English
or Spanish in every situation, so this language variety can be considered either
Spanish-influenced English or English-influenced Spanish. It is important to note
that there are many varieties of Spanglish spoken in the United States. These
usually vary from place to place and from one Hispanic group to another.
Consequently, a broad characterization of Spanglish, such as the one offered
here, is necessary.

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28 See Poplack, Shana. "Sometimes I'll Start a Sentence in Spanish Y Termino en Español:
Chapter III
The Spanglish Debate

Having established a working definition that will serve the purpose of this paper, I will now address the ongoing discussion of the value of Spanglish that is carried out mainly in the press (although many times these debates found in newspaper articles across the country come from those with positions in academia). There are two principal arguments that have taken the center stage in the opposition to Spanglish. Among its challengers, there is a widespread fear of what they consider the menace that the (in their estimation) imperialistic Americans, and therefore their language, represent. Because of the threat felt by those Hispanics in the minority in the United States and by those in other countries who believe they have suffered from the colonizing tendencies of the U.S. (specifically many of the peoples of the Latin American nations), the second argument is formed as a weapon. It is the assertion of those that perceive themselves as being threatened that Spanglish speakers are somehow inferior and inadequate when compared to speakers of standard Spanish or English.

The first contention attempts to establish Spanglish as a threat to the Spanish language, and therefore to the freedom and independence of Spanish-speaking countries and peoples. It is not only common (the French seem to also feel this menace, evidenced by their laws against using English words in government documents) but it can be considered reasonable. The connection between language and the state or empire is not one that has been established
only recently. In the first grammar book written for a Romance language, Antonio de Nebrija writes to Queen Isabel la Católica in 1492,

Pongo delante los ojos el antigüedad de todas las cosas: que para nuestra recordación y memoria quedaron escritas: una cosa hallo y saco por conclusión muy cierta: que siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio: y de tal manera lo siguió: que juntamente comenzaron, crecieron, y florecieron, y después junta fue la caída de entrambos.29

In 1783, Johann G. Herder writes in his Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität,

Has a nationality anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought domain, its tradition, history, religion and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech is to deprive it of its one eternal good...With language is created the heart of a people.30

With Herder’s essay Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache, published in 1772, he definitively connects language and the nation, linking the very existence of that nation to the existence and maintenance of its language. The following poem by Herder strongly expresses the sentiment behind a nationalistic argument:

And you German alone, returning from abroad,
Wouldst greet your mother in French?
O spew it out, before your door
Spew out the ugly slime of the Seine
Speak German, O you German!31

Thus we find that there is a strong bond between language and the nationalist feeling. There is also, related to this bond, the desire and push for language purity. According to John Edwards in Language, Society and Identity, “The link

29 Nebrija, Antonio de. Gramática castellana (reproduction phototypique de l'édition princeps (1492)). Ed. Max Niemeyer. Germany, 1909, p. a.11.
between linguistic nationalism and language purity and preservation is, unsurprisingly, a strong one; thus, 'protagonists of national languages tend to involve themselves with questions of linguistic purity'.\textsuperscript{32} This is the case with those who argue against Spanglish as a threat to the purity of the Spanish language.

One of the most vociferous antagonists of the "deteriorated" state of Spanish in the United States is Yale professor, Roberto González Echevarría. Interestingly enough, he has edited and introduced the collection of Chicano Literature in \textit{The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature, II: The Twentieth Century}. However, in varied newspaper articles across the country, he is known as one of the most outspoken opponents of Spanglish. According to González Echevarría, Spanglish is "an invasion of Spanish by English."\textsuperscript{33} He also insists that, "Spanglish, the composite language of Spanish and English that has crossed over from the street to Hispanic talk shows and advertising campaigns, poses a grave danger to Hispanic culture and to the advancement of Hispanics in mainstream America" and even more clearly from the nationalistic point of view, "To permit and promote Spanglish—if it actually exists—is to surrender to the globalization and the predomination of English."\textsuperscript{34} Other challengers of Spanglish as a threat to Spanish include Álex Grijelmo, the Spanish journalist who has written a book well-characterized by its title, \textit{Defensa apasionada del idioma}

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{34} Cited in Artze, Isis. "Spanglish: A Hybrid That's Here to Stay." \textit{The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education} 11, 12 (March 26 2001), p. 11.
español. For Grijelmo, Spanish is threatened, “a la manera subliminal...todo aquello que se envuelve en el idioma inglés gana en predicamento y prestigio al hispano, y con efecto indiscriminado, irreflexivo.” He claims that this infiltration of English will cause those that use the mixture of the two languages to think like the “amoral” English speakers he denigrates (by citing, for example, the comparison made by the American media of Clinton’s sexual exploits to Nixon’s Watergate, noting that due to English’s supposed lack of distinction between honestidad and honradez, these two concepts are not understood by those that speak the language). Sam Dillon of The New York Times writes of this attitude of fear shown by these and other scholars and journalists: “The hybridization of Spanish and English into Spanglish is not new, of course. It has been accelerating for half a century, and has often irritated Latin nationalists who see the process as a cultural infiltration from the United States.” Lázaro Carreter himself requests in a letter directed to the government, “mayor protección para el castellano en las comunidades bilingües.” These protests not only show a preoccupation for the state of the Spanish language in the United States, but they also exemplify the kind of apprehension that those in other countries (such as France) feel when confronted with the onslaught of the use of English words, especially in technical vocabulary and other specialized fields.

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36 See Grijelmo, p. 148.
These ideas, so closely linked with the nationalism of the nations and peoples, easily become popular among those who find such protests and reasoning in their daily newspaper. Not only does this thinking appeal to their own sense of national and cultural identity, it also appears to be supported by those in positions of intellectual and social power. As John Edwards points out, “the notion of keeping one’s language ‘pure’ and free from foreign taint…has proved very attractive to some and, as it reflects strongly held views—often those of powerful agencies—its influence is not without interest and historical impact.”

However, Edwards also notes that this notion of a ‘pure’ language “reveals a profound misunderstanding of the dynamics of all natural languages” and shows “naïve, not to say absurd, conceptions of language.” The fact that languages are always evolving and changing does not seem to enter into their theories. Even though Grijelmo recognizes in his book that language is democratic and that changes within a language must come from the mass of people that speak it, what he seems to propose throughout his “defensa apasionada” is the imposition of standards upon these very people who are said to be setting the standards by the way they talk as they go about their daily routines. The notion of linguistic sin or impurity has no basis in fact, as language itself, from a purely linguistic point of view, is arbitrary. Its evolution is inevitable, as shown through every known language’s history. Even Dr. Tarsicio Herrera Zapien, professor of classical letters who is also secretary of the Academia Mexicana admits, “We can’t

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40 Ibid., p. 27.
legislate how people speak." However, the “threat to Spanish” argument leads to what would be an attempt to instigate such a process.

The other central argument against Spanglish appears to find its motivation in the fear of the nationalists who support the “threat” theory. In order to attack Spanglish from a different angle, its opponents endeavor to devalue and condemn its speakers. The idea that there is something inferior about those that speak Spanglish, or Spanglish itself in comparison with other language variations, is one that is widespread. It asserts that the speakers of Spanglish are a group of people that lack something, whether it be a knowledge of standard Spanish, intelligence or even a certain social or economic class. According to Xosé Castro, Spanglish was born from the need to communicate,

pero sólo puede darse cuando existe una carencia de vocabulario en alguna de las dos partes que forman un diálogo. Cuando existe alguna duda o algo que obstaculice la comprensión, se echa mano de la versión inglesa, idioma que ambos interlocutores comprenden, y la comunicación, por fin, se completa.42

In other words, those that switch to English, or use Spanglish according to whatever his definition might be, lack the ability to say what they want to say in Spanish and therefore rely on English as a back up of some sort. Manuel Alvar states in his book on the subject of Spanish in the south of the United States, that “Desde el momento que la propia lengua se empobrece [by the speech of the common public] es que algo la hace insuficiente. No se diga que es la

imposición de otra, sino la ignorancia.}\textsuperscript{43} The ignorance of the "common people" is showcased here as something that makes the language that they use insufficient (although Alvar never points out in what way it is in any manner poorer than the standard to which he is comparing it). Once again, Roberto González Echevarría of Yale pronounces his censure of Spanglish, saying,

\begin{quote}
La triste realidad es que el spanglish es básicamente la lengua de los hispanos pobres, muchos de los cuales son casi analfabetos en cualquiera de los dos idiomas. Incorporan palabras y construcciones inglesas a su habla de todos los días porque carecen del vocabulario y la educación en español para adaptarse a la cambiante cultura que los rodea.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

He also adds that "El spanglish trata al español como si la lengua de Cervantes, Lorca, García Marquez, Borges y Paz no tuviera una esencia y una dignidad propias. No es posible hablar de física o metafísica en spanglish."\textsuperscript{45} It does not seem to be important that, in fact, the language of Cervantes is very different from that of García Marquez, Borges and Paz. Neither does Dr. González Echevarría cite any figures or studies that show that Spanglish is actually spoken only by those that lack education, those that are practically illiterate in Spanish and English.

However, the lack of the presentation of supporting evidence does not keep these ideas from also influencing the public. One article concerning the

\textsuperscript{44} Alvar, Manuel. El español en el sur de Estados Unidos: Estudios, encuestas, textos. Alcalá: Universidad de Alcalá, 2000, p. 46.
attitudes of Mexicans along the border toward code-switching and Spanglish reports the opinion of one citizen of Juárez: “La gente de allá [El Paso, Texas] batalla mucho para hablar el español, o no puede terminar lo que quiere decir, o lo dice todo revuelto. Los adultos nunca pierden el español, pero a los niños y a los jóvenes se les dificulta hablarlo o lo hablan mocho.”46 This Mexican resident is not alone in his thoughts about Spanglish and its speakers. After questioning several members of a Rice University group of Latin American graduate students regarding their ideas about Spanglish, I received some fervent responses. The questions posed were the following: “¿Crees tú que la mezcla de inglés y español que a menudo se llama el spanglish presenta una oportunidad para enriquecimiento o una amenaza al español o al inglés? ¿Por qué o por qué no?” One student who was born in Mexico, but had resided in the United States for eight years, replied, “Definitivamente [es] una amenaza. Prácticamente no encuentro beneficio en usar palabras de Spanglish puesto que prácticamente toda palabra de spanglish tiene un equivalente en español. Usarlas sólo perjudica la calidad del idioma que los hispanos hablamos en este país.” Another student with a Mexican mother and an American father was even more emphatic: “Personalmente, yo creo que el “spanglish” es basura. Es una cosa que no me gusta ni hacer ni escuchar y lo considero una señal de alguien que no domina bien el idioma...la verdad es que creo que es malo para el español. La gente se hace floja y no aprende ningún idioma bien.” The students who replied

46 Ibid.  
were almost unanimous in their criticism of Spanglish, with almost all of them having spent only a small portion of their lives here in the United States.

As mentioned above, the main problem with these two arguments against Spanglish—the one that claims that it is a threat to Spanish and the other that disparages the actual language variety and its speakers—is the lack of solid evidence backing either assertion. While it is true that the spread of English continues to increase, this is not a language problem, but rather a political one. It is not English that is a threat to Spanish; it is (at least in the minds of those that claim this reasoning as their own) the imperialism of the United States of America that presents the menace. The language and the empire, just as Antonio de Nebrija stated in 1492, rise and fall together. However, the language itself is not the culprit, nor should it be seen as having the ability to “threaten” in any way another language. Languages evolve, and Spanish is no different. Just as it has incorporated in its past many words from Arabic, French, and other languages with which it has had extensive contact, Spanish has been and will be affected by its contact with English. Ilan Stavans, a professor at Amherst College in Massachusetts who has written a Spanglish dictionary containing more than six thousand words, comments, “Hablar de mantener la pureza del idioma español en Estados Unidos es utópico. Los puristas quieren mantener un español congelado en el tiempo, como si los idiomas no se transformaran.”

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The second argument remains equally unfounded. Though many make the statement that the Spanglish speaker is ignorant, I have not been able to find any study that shows that all Spanglish speakers use the language as a crutch for a lack of knowledge. There is, of course, a continuum of bilingualism that determines the extent of command a speaker has over each language, in which the balanced bilingual has a fluent ability in both English and Spanish. Other speakers lean more toward Spanish or English, though they make use of both. However, there is no evidence that even those that are not fully fluent in both languages are illiterate and poor. To the contrary, studies show that in order to use both languages as is done in Spanglish discourse, the speaker must have knowledge of both Spanish and English (see chapter V). Instead of being a language born of ignorance and inadequacy, Spanglish may be something else altogether.
Chapter IV

The Principle of Language and Group Solidarity

Just as there is a strong link between language and national identity, there also exists a close tie between language and personal identity. A person's language has been used throughout history to identify him or her individually as well as to group him or her with others of similar language usage. Language is also used as a tool by the speaker to align him- or herself with a particular group for various purposes, or to distance him- or herself from that group.

Andrée Tabouret-Keller explains the dynamics of language and identity, using the example of the Greeks who identified those that did not speak their language as barbarians. This idea stemmed from the sound they thought they heard when the other peoples spoke, the "bar-bar-bar" sound of their language. In other words, foreigners in ancient times and now are identified by their speech and placed into such categories as Spanish speakers, French speakers, Chinese speakers, etc.

Tabouret-Keller offers two reasons for the strong bond between language and identity. The first has to do with human psychology. According to Tabouret-Keller,

Identification processes range all the way from the confluent identification of mother and new-born child by feeding at the breast or, more generally, nursing, to mere imitation of another, and to identification proper where
someone adopts, consciously or unconsciously, a feature or a set of features of another’s behavior.⁴⁸

Language is one of the easiest and most obvious features to adopt in order to identify with someone else. The second reason given by Tabouret-Keller for the close link between language and identity is that of their connection by constitution and law. As institutions are established among a people, they are associated with a language. The legitimacy conferred by institutions such as law, for example, gives the language used by that institution the dimension of an identity. The name of the language becomes autonomous in people’s thinking, and the language itself can become one of the defining social features of the group. Tabouret-Keller notes that, “identification is served by the name of a language that fulfills the symbolic function of representation, at both the social and individual levels, where it represents not only affiliation with a community or group, but all kinds of allegiance...the name of a language serves as the basis of identification by means of a shared element.”⁴⁹

Whereas earlier in this paper nationalism was linked with language, here I would like to draw a similar connection not only between language and the individual, but also between language and the group, specifically the ethnicity of a group. Since language can and does become one of the defining social features of a group, it is necessary to look at the nature of groups, based not only on their national status, but also on their ethnicity. Within almost all nations, and

especially within the United States, while the nation is associated with one official language, there exist inside the larger framework of the country many different ethnic groups that are associated with unofficial or minority languages.

According to William Downes in *Language and Society*, ethnicity is a category that is similar to that of gender. He writes, "It is a shared socio-historical construct based on a putative historical experience which is the genealogy of a 'people'. Internally, it acts as a focus for 'we-feeling' and solidarity. Externally, the ethnic identity of a group can be stereotyped by other groups."\(^{50}\) Joshua A. Fishman identifies ethnicity as that that signifies 'the macro-group 'belongingness' or *identificational dimension of culture*, whether that of individuals or of aggregates per se."\(^{51}\) He also adds that, "The perspectival quality of ethnicity means that its specification or attribution is fundamentally subjective, variable and very possibly non-consensual."\(^{52}\) Therefore, ethnicity is not a concrete feature that is stable as a part of a being. It is not even objective, nor is it always established by the individual himself. However, language is often used to place people within an ethnic group, whether by their own choice or by the categorization of others.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., p. 319.
\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 329.
In situations of bilingualism or multilingualism, such as the one that applies to many Hispanics in our culture, the bilingual speaker is often ethnically identified by his or her use of specific linguistic features that have arisen because of the language contact situation. According to Tabouret-Keller, "In certain situations, this gives rise to feelings of inferiority, discrimination, or exclusion from the dominant group, or conversely, feelings of familiarity, recognition, complicity among those who share the language and / or the contact situation."

I believe that both of these sets of feelings, positive and negative, have arisen within the Hispanic community, specifically within the Spanglish-speaking community. These feelings lead to the mechanics of group identification, of solidarity versus power. Again Tabouret-Keller notes that, "Members of a group who feel their cultural and political identity threatened are likely to make particularly assertive claims about the social importance of maintaining or resurrecting their language." The hegemonic languages in the situation in the Hispanic-dominant areas of the United States are standard English and possibly even standard Spanish, although to a much lesser extent and only in certain situations, as it is not the official language of the state. However, if we view speech as an act that establishes and confirms identity, as does Tabouret-Keller among other sociolinguists, often individuals will opt for the language of solidarity, in this case the variety that is Spanglish, in order to identify themselves with a specific minority group.

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According to Allan Bell, members of a group with a particular social identity will distinguish themselves by their language differences.\textsuperscript{55} Other speakers will then shift their language patterns to or away from that of the members of the group in order to be identified with or differentiated from that group. If a speaker that has the potential to belong to this group chooses power over solidarity, he or she will move away from the non-standard variety or language in order to gain power among the more dominant group. If he or she opts for solidarity with the non-standard language group, language variety will shift towards the less powerful speech. Often individuals choose differently depending on the situation in which they find themselves. Downes notes that in a "status-stressing" situation, such as a job interview, the individual will choose the language of power over the language of solidarity. In a "solidarity-stressing" situation such as a conversation among group members in which they discuss a threat to their group, the language of solidarity will be employed.\textsuperscript{56} As Ronald Wardhaugh comments in the chapter in \textit{An Introduction to Sociolinguistics} on choosing a code, "quite often...local solidarity requires the use of a non-prestige language or variety; it may even require a mixing of two languages."\textsuperscript{57} Based on Labov's research in the Puerto Rican community in New York, Wardhaugh observes the different choices that bilinguals make in order to suit the situation:

\begin{quote}
Bilinguals often switch [codes]...primarily as a solidarity marker and this kind of mixture has become an established community norm in the Puerto
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., pp. 318-319.
Rican community in New York City. However, a speaker who mixes codes in this way in conversation with a friend or acquaintance will almost certainly shift entirely to English when addressing a monolingual English-speaking person or entirely to Spanish when addressing a complete stranger who is obviously of Spanish origin.\textsuperscript{58}

It is therefore not a matter of incompetence that determines the nature of the speech of Spanglish speakers, but often it is the choice of solidarity, or identification with the ethnic group. By choosing in a specific instance of discourse to use a nonstandard language variety that may be unique to a certain group, the group member is (for that moment, at least) electing solidarity with that group over the power of the standard language he or she could use. In the following sections, I will enter into more detail with regards to the choice of Spanglish as related to solidarity and identification with the group rather than a choice that represents inadequacy or a lack of knowledge of Spanish and English. Chapter V will focus on studies that show that code-switching requires a certain degree of competency in both languages involved, while Chapter VI will enter into more detail regarding the usage of Spanglish as a choice of solidarity among Hispanics in the United States.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 108.
Chapter V

Previous Studies on Code-Switching and Language Competence

I have already noted the lack of studies and statistics to back up the argument that insists that Spanglish is a language variety of the poor and uneducated. In this chapter, I will offer a few examples of research showing that Spanglish, in particular the code-switching aspect of Spanglish, does not represent a lack of knowledge, but rather a greater knowledge of both languages. There have been a variety of studies on code-switching in recent years that show that it is not a random, non-regulated style of speaking. It carries its own constraints and unwritten rules that involve the grammars of both languages used in the code-switch, in this case English and Spanish.

Various theories have been proposed to explain the constraints upon code-switching, specifically intrasentential code-switching, as with intersentential code-switching each sentence by definition follows the grammar of its particular language. One of the researchers who has focused on the constraints on intrasentential code-switching is Carol Myers-Scotton. She offers the Matrix Language Frame Model as an option that goes further than describing the data; it attempts also to explain why such constraints exist. According to Scotton, code-switching creates psycholinguistic stresses because of the special coordination it requires: the speaker must deal with two sets of grammar. The code-switching conforms to the grammars of both (or all) of the participating
languages. The explanation of the mechanics of this conformation is included in her Matrix Language Frame Model. The matrix language (ML) of the code-switched discourse is the main language in the code-switched utterances. It is often determined by the number of morphemes from each language. The language that contributes the most is usually the matrix language. According to Scotton’s theory, the ML establishes the morphosyntactic structure of the sentences that show intrasentential code-switching. The other language of the sentence is the embedded language (EL). Scotton classifies three constituents of intrasentential code-switching. The first is the ML + EL constituent, which consists of morphemes of both the ML and the EL and conforms to the morphosyntactic structure of the ML. The second type is the ML island, which is a constituent of only ML morphemes that are, of course, structurally well-formed according to the ML. The third type of intrasentential code-switching is the EL island. It is formed of only EL morphemes, and it is based on the structure of the EL. In the ML + EL constituents, the most common type, the heart of Scotton’s theory is found. She proposes that during the formation of the code-switched sentence in the speaker’s mind, the ML first lays down a frame of system morphemes (usually closed class items such as inflectional affixes) and then the content morphemes (which can then be from the EL) are inserted into the already

laid frame. This extremely simplified explanation of her theory highlights the complexity of thought necessary to produce one single mixed-code sentence.\textsuperscript{60}

Other researchers have suggested various models that do not coincide with that of Carol Myers-Scotton, but they also point out the intricacy of the mixture of two languages. Pieter Muysken claims that intrasentential code-switching is not insertional but rather alternational.\textsuperscript{61} In other words, instead of a frame laid by the ML with EL morphemes inserted into this frame, Muysken indicates that there is an alternation of the language systems involved in the code-switched sentence. He supports his ideas by declaring the following criteria:

(I) when several constituents in a row are switched, which together do not form a constituent, alternation is more likely...

(II) when the switched element is at the periphery of an utterance, alternation is a clear possibility; conversely, when the switched string is preceded and followed by material from the other language, insertion may be more plausible, particularly if the surrounding material is grammatically linked in some kind of structure.

(III) longer stretches of other-language material are more likely to be alternations.\textsuperscript{62}

As far as the actual constraints on the code-switching and where it can take place, he claims that switching is possible in the following situations: when there


is no “tight relation holding between two elements”,63 under conditions of equivalence of the two languages, when the switched unit is morphologically encapsulated and when the word at the place of the switch could be a word in either language. Muysken’s views recognize that there may be multiple mechanisms that play a part in intrasentential code-switching.

Shana Poplack and Marjory Meecham have worked together to offer their own ideas on the subject, which, like Muysken’s, decline the use of Myers-Scotton’s insertion model to explain completely the constraints on intrasentential code-switching. According to these researchers, most code-switching takes place at equivalence sites in the sentence, or sites in which the word order of the two languages are the same. They conclude that the appearance of lone nouns in the other language is not a true code-switch, but rather a borrowing from that code. Of the insertion theory, they claim that, “although insertion has sometimes been proposed as a general model for language mixture...we note that, in contrast to equivalence-based switching, in the languages in which it has been identified empirically, its scope of application is highly limited.”64

Regardless of the theory presented, it is evident that code-switching is more than just a mix of whatever happens to come out of the mouth of the speaker. There are complex thinking processes involved that require a

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63 Ibid., p. 196.
64 Poplack, Shana and Marjory Meecham. “Patterns of Language Mixture: Nominal Structure in Wolof-French and Fongbe-French Bilingual Discourse.” One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross-
knowledge of the systems of both languages used within the sentence in order to form an acceptable utterance. The following researchers have examined code-switching for the purpose of showing that there has to be a reason other than incompetence for which code-switching occurs.

Ana Celia Zentella asserts that "all the data indicate that the most proficient switchers are also the most proficient speakers of both languages." In other words, those that show themselves proficient in Spanglish as I have defined it are speakers that are familiar at least to some extent with the grammar systems of both Spanish and English. Zentella's study focuses on a group of Puerto Rican children. In 77.6% of the intrasentential code changes to English and in 78.0% of the changes to Spanish, the children knew without any hesitation the same terms or phrases in the language from which they switched. They did not need to change to the other language for lack of vocabulary, nor because of ignorance. Zentella notes that the arguments that support the idea of linguistic incompetence as a reason to resort to Spanglish are based on less than 25% of the code-switches that take place among the speakers from the studies that she cites. "The charge that speakers who alternate language are inadequate speakers of both languages has been refuted by the linguistic investigations of


researchers in the Chicano community (Elías Olivares 1976, Sankoff and Poplack 1980), and my own work (1978, 1981a, b, c)," claims Zentella.66

A 1980 study by Shana Poplack examines the language of a community of Puerto Ricans in New York. From the linguistic evidence gathered, she draws the conclusion that "an elementary, but crucial, finding of this study is that there are virtually no ungrammatical combinations of L1 and L2 in the 1,835 switches studied, regardless of the bilingual ability of the speaker."67 Poplack goes on to suggest that her study provides evidence that code-switching in itself could be a "discrete mode of speaking, possibly emanating from a single code-switching grammar of L1 and L2,"68 and she confirms emphatically that her findings "provide strong evidence that code-switching is a verbal skill requiring a large degree of linguistic competence in more than one language, rather than a defect arising from insufficient knowledge of one or the other."69 References to studies of code-switching among Chicanos have produced similar conclusions, showing that the New York Puerto Rican communities are not the only ones to which these assertions apply.70

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66 Ibid., p. 47.
68 Ibid., p. 260.
69 Ibid., pp. 260-261.
Rodolfo Jacobson’s study “Social implications of intra-sentential code-switching” involving Mexican-American subjects of various socio-economic levels also claims that,

The analysis of the examples of true code-switching have yielded some initial evidence that, from the viewpoint of competence, code-switching obeys certain rules of co-occurrence based upon the rules of grammar of the two languages involved in the sense that the code-switching is blocked if it requires the violation of a grammatical rule of either language.\(^7\)

These examples come from seventy-five pages of dialogues recorded and transcribed by fieldworkers interviewing the subjects in informal speech situations. Again, Jacobson, like the other researchers mentioned above, insists that these utterances “reveal a grammar of their own and do not reflect the speaker’s ignorance of either / both languages as has often been suggested.”\(^2\)

Wardhaugh summarizes the attitudes that speakers of only one of the languages in contact often hold toward the mixture of the two languages that produces code-switching and Spanglish:

Monolinguals are likely to be very critical of the new codes that result...Such dismissal of the phenomenon demonstrates serious misunderstanding. What we have here is not just a haphazard mixing of two languages brought about by laziness or ignorance or some combination of these. What we have are conversants with a sophisticated knowledge of both languages who are also acutely aware of community norms. These norms require that both languages be used in this way so that conversants can show their familiarity or solidarity. The ability to mix codes in this way is now often a source of pride.\(^3\)

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 206.
This statement brings me to my next point. Since Spanglish usage is not caused by ignorance or incompetence, there must be another explanation for the choice that bilinguals make to mix the codes that they command. What is the reason for the existence of Spanglish, and what is its purpose?
Chapter VI

Spanglish As a Marker of Solidarity Among Hispanics in the United States

The history of the immigration of Spanish-speaking peoples to the United States is a long one. As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Hispanics are quickly becoming the largest minority in the United States. According to the National Immigration Forum, this country received 131,575 legal immigrants from Mexico alone in 1998.74 A series of articles published in The Washington Post, also in 1998, claimed that projections made by the U.S. Census Bureau predicted that by the year 2050, Hispanics will make up 25% of the total population.75 Not only is the Spanish language brought to the United States by these immigrants; they also bring their cultures. And they do bring more than one culture, despite efforts on the part of media and government to create the existence of a “Latino-American” or a “Hispanic-American.” According to the report published by the U.S. Census Bureau, “We the American…Hispanics”76 issued in 1993, and using figures from the 1990 census, Hispanics that reported themselves as being of Mexican origin made up around 61% of the 22.3 million total. Puerto Ricans made up approximately 12% of the total, Cubans 5%, while Central Americans comprised 6% and South Americans 5%. Spaniards were approximately 4.4% of the whole, Dominicans 2.4% and “Other Hispanic” 3.9%

It is obvious that under the label “Hispanic” or “Latino” fall a number of

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nationalities that, while sharing a language, do not often consider themselves to be similar in beliefs, nor in cultural identities. This Census Bureau report opens with an introductory paragraph that claims to be speaking from the “Hispanic” perspective, saying, “Although our common ancestry and language bind us, we are quite diverse.”

However, as Geoffrey Fox points out in *Hispanic Nation: Culture, Politics, and the Constructing of Identity*,

In contemporary America, ethnic identity is to a large extent another voluntary affiliation. Physical appearance, accent, or some other ineradicable mark may set a person apart and cause him or her to be labeled as Latino or whatever, but the label does not become an identity until it is embraced by the holder. Calling oneself a Latino, Hispanic, Chicano, Boricua, or whatever is a statement of affiliation, of loyalty to and solidarity with that group’s rules and codes. One may have multiple affiliations, which become active in different situations. Thus, it is not surprising that a study found that Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago shifted from describing themselves as Mexicans or Puerto Ricans to calling themselves Latinos when they wanted to create a coalition to demand jobs. Then, when they were back in their respective barrios, they became Mexicans and Puerto Ricans once again. Their ethnic identities were ‘situational’.

So while these culturally different groups do often unite, they still consider themselves to be basically Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadorian, etc. However, as the U.S. Census Bureau points out, their language does tie them together in various ways, as does their status as a minority group attempting to be heard politically and socially in an Anglo-dominant country and culture.

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77 Ibid., p. 1.
Although the laws of the United States generally try to rule out discrimination on the basis of race in the workplace, the fact remains that often members of minority groups hold the lower-paying jobs, such as those in the food service industry, or those in the factories. *The Washington Post* claims that this is due to an ethnic segregation that comes from the continued existence and even strengthening of ethnic enclaves. "In many cities, researchers find sustained 'ethnic niches' in the labor market. Because jobs are often a matter of whom one knows, the niches were enduring and remarkably resistant to outsiders." 79 How, then, can someone recently arrived in the United States, land of opportunity and of the self-made man, actually "make" himself? If that person is an immigrant with little or no English who decides to cling to his or her nationality, language and culture, without allowing any room for assimilation to take place, the statistical patterns predict that he or she will remain in the low-paying jobs and the lower socioeconomic levels of the U.S.

Assimilation to the language and culture of the United States seems to be one of the keys to success in the American tradition. However, there is a valid fear that the processes of adaptation to the United States way of life will take away from the tradition of the immigrant's own culture and language. "Many immigrant parents say that while they want their children to advance economically in their new country, they do not want them to become 'too

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American”⁸⁰ says William Booth, author of “One Nation, Indivisible: Is It History”, one of the aforementioned series of articles in *The Washington Post*. Juan Flores offers the idea in “‘Qué Assimilated, Brother, Yo Soy Asimilao’: The Structuring of Puerto Rican Identity in the U.S.” that instead of the traditional internal colonization pattern of forced incorporation into the dominant society, today’s Nuyoricans, as well as other Hispanic groups such as the Chicanos, are carving out a place for themselves that does not coincide with the Anglo culture, but neither does it remain tightly bound to the homeland ideals and ways of life. This pattern is one “leading neither to eventual accommodation nor to ‘cultural genocide’,”⁸¹ but rather to “a more intricate structuring of ethnicity.”⁸²

It is this segment of society that is bicultural, “embracing both English and Spanish, and drawing pieces of their identity from old and new ways”⁸³ that seems to have embraced Spanglish, not only as a form of communication, but as part of its identity, as an expression of its biculturalism as well as its bilingualism. In this light, therefore, Spanglish would not be a language of inadequacy and ignorance, as its critics often claim, but rather a marker of cultural or ethnic identity and solidarity. Laureano Corces, in his article, “Re-evaluating Spanglish” says of the opponents of this language variety, “These critics of the mix are certainly not considering a multi-ethnic United States in which some Hispanics

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⁸² Ibid., p. 178.
might use Spanglish simply because they choose to, and others might indeed rely on it as the most accurate expression of living in that zone between cultures.\textsuperscript{84}

There are a number of researchers as well as journalists and prominent figures of the Hispanic community that have noted this use of Spanglish, as an expression of an "in-between" culture, or a new culture that belongs specifically to the Latinos who are often more closely bound to the United States than to their own original national origins. These Spanglish speakers are often the younger second- and third-generation Hispanics who, while upwardly mobile within the Anglo dominant culture, have not forgotten and do not desire to forget their ties with their ancestors. Leticia Hemández-Linares of \textit{The Philadelphia Tribune} writes, "Younger Latinos own Spanglish, as well as Spanish, to show that assimilating into a homogenous monolingual culture is not the only way to be successful or to find a voice. It is exciting to see the latest wave of Spanglish speakers take control of the movement and hybridity that define us."\textsuperscript{85} Nely Galán, president of Galán Entertainment, a film and television production company, says, "I think Spanglish is the future...It's the phenomenon of being


The use of Spanglish as a marker of solidarity in the political arena is pointed out by Agustín Gurza of The Los Angeles Times: “During the Chicano Movement of the 1970’s, activists often flaunted homespun Spanglish as part of the distinct identity of Latinos in the United States.\footnote{Gurza, Agustín. “Fractured Spanish and Linguistic Assaults.” Los Angeles Times 1 Feb. 2000, record ed., p. B1.} A study by José E. Limón of the discourse of meetings held by Chicano student activists during the height of the movement on the University of Texas campus shows that Spanglish, or what Limón calls “Folk Spanish”, was used as a tool to show loyalty to the movement, and even to add power to one’s voiced opinions about group activities.\footnote{See Limon, José E. “El Meeting: History, Folk Spanish, and Ethnic Nationalism in a Chicano Student Community.” Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic Aspects. Eds. Jon Amastae and Lucía Elías-Olivares. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp. 301-332.} Those with Spanglish-speaking abilities tended to dominate the meetings and frequently switched from English to Spanglish in order to sway the votes in their favor on important issues. The Nuyorquian poetry, such as that of Tato Laviera’s “graduation speech,” also uses Spanglish, according to Frances R. Aparicio of the University of Arizona, as

a response to the political oppression and discrimination on the part, among many, of the educational institutions in the United States. These Puerto Ricans in the United States, as Third World writers, voice their protest against the negative attitudes of the educated, literate upper classes in a very creative and original way; by using their ‘incorrect’ or
'vulgar' language as poetic discourse and, moreover, within a literary context, as words in print.\textsuperscript{69}

Another Spanglish author, Jim Sagel, reveals in an interview with \textit{Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura} that he believes that “Most people accept that this is a legitimate idiom, at least people who are open-minded enough to realize that language is not something set in cement, but rather a mirror of culture, a mirror reality, and the duality of the reality in this part of United States [New Mexico] is such that language almost has to reflect it.”\textsuperscript{69}

Various researchers of code-switching also recognize within their studies that one factor behind the use of code-switched speech is that of identification with the Hispanic community. Ana Celia Zentella, author of the aforesaid analysis of Puerto Rican children’s code-switching, asserts that code-switching itself “has become a badge of community membership...the key to the dynamic of code switching lies in its reflection of the dual cultural strains in the community. Code switchers are in effect saying to each other, ‘We belong to two worlds, and can function in either, but we are most at ease when we can shift back and forth from one to the other.’”\textsuperscript{91} Carol Pfaff’s article “Constraints on language mixing: intrasentential code-switching and borrowing in Spanish / English” also claims that “A countervailing force [to the standard requiring linguistic “purity”] is found in


the positive roles which code-switching plays, reflecting not only speakers’
desires to appear competent in both languages, but also to establish solidarity as
members of a bilingual community.92

Thus, not only among Spanglish-users but also among researchers,
Spanglish is recognized as a marker of solidarity among Hispanics, as a
language variety used to communicate loyalty and belonging to the group,
whether it be Chicano, Nuyorquiano or Cubano. It is not simply a language of
ignorance, as it requires a knowledge of more than one code. It is not a variety
of the “casi analfabetos” as Roberto González Echevarría argues, as it is “not
defined by class, for people in all social strata, from migrant workers to upper-
class types such as congressmen, TV anchors, and comedians, use it
regularly,”93 according to Ilan Stavans. Spanglish is an expression of the current
situation of the Hispanic in the United States who has not remained tied to his or
her previous culture, but yet has not become fully a part of the Anglo culture. It is
the representation of a place carved out by this individual within a country that is
not such a melting pot after all.

91 Zentella, Ana Celia. “Spanish and English in Contact in the United States: The Puerto Rican
92 Pfaff, Carol W. “Constraints On Language Mixing: Intrasentential Code-Switching and
Borrowing in Spanish/English.” *Spanish in the United States: Sociolinguistic Aspects.* Eds. Jon
93 Stavans, Ilan. “Spanglish: Tickling the Tongue.” *World Literature Today* 74, 3 (Summer 2000),
p. 557.
Chapter VII

Spanglish As a Marker of Identity in Bilingual Radio Broadcasting

In order to further expand on the idea of Spanglish as a representation of the cultural identity of the bilingual Hispanic-American here in the United States, I have chosen to focus on an aspect of the media, Hispanic radio. According to "Hispanic Radio Today," a publication of the Arbitron Company (a firm that records data concerning radio to provide information to broadcasters, agencies and advertisers), out of the almost 13,000 radio stations that currently broadcast in the United States, around 600 are Spanish format stations (this grouping includes bilingual stations such as those in this study). The report goes on to give a general profile of the Hispanic stations' listeners: "Spanish is by far the most popular format among Hispanic listeners. Almost 51 percent of Hispanic Spanish radio listeners are Men 18 years and older, and slightly more than 49 percent are Women 18 years and older. Spanish format stations are popular among all age groups. Popularity peaks among 25- to 34-year-olds, who make up 27.2 percent of the Hispanic audience for this format." Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation, owner of a variety of Spanish format stations throughout the major markets of the country, claims that the number of Spanish format stations has almost tripled in the last fifteen years. Its website also notes that the Hispanic population spends an average of three hours more per week listening to the radio than the total population of the United States, Hispanics

95 Ibid., p. 33.
being tuned into a radio station an average of 25.75 hours each week.

Mediamark Research Inc. states that 84.6% of the 21,359,000 Spanish speakers reported by the 2000 census are radio listeners.\(^9^7\)

The media, specifically radio, obviously reaches a large number of the Hispanic population. It can therefore be a valuable indicator of this population’s preferences and attitudes. It is also often linked with the identity of its user. Oscar H. Gandy, Jr., author of Communication and Race: A Structural Perspective, comments that “one of the motivations for media use could be the maintenance of one’s ethnic identity, and the links to one’s racial or ethnic heritage.” Radio and other media play an important part in various aspects of cultural identification for any group, but the authors of “Hispanic-Oriented Media” claim that,

Through news and other programming services, Spanish speakers in the United States...have many opportunities to maintain ties to their countries of origin, enjoy a diversity of entertainment shows, and take part in the news and cultural developments and events in the United States as well as around the Latin world. This is a dimension that truly distinguishes Latinos from previous immigrants to the United States.\(^9^8\)

According to various studies, increased education and socioeconomic status as well as media use can also lead to a greater awareness of ethnic identity, rather


than a complete assimilation into the host culture. Gonzalo R. Soruco writes about this theory:

This perspective, called 'conflict and consciousness,' suggests that the immigrant can remain loyal to his own culture. It also suggests that education and success raise the immigrant's ethnic consciousness as well as his awareness of the social distance separating him from the dominant group. The argument is that ethnic awareness, intensified by media use, leads to an increase in negative attitudes toward the host culture.\(^{100}\)

Thus we see that media can take an active role by not only reflecting attitudes of its users, but also by contributing toward them.

Since media often use language as the means by which it communicates its messages, there is clearly a close link between language and media. Another way in which media can take an shaping role in the reality of its users is to effect the process of language spread and standardization, something well worth considering with regard to Spanglish used in radio broadcasts as well as other forms of media. Several researchers believe that the media will have great power in determining the future of Spanglish. Opponent of Spanglish Theodore S. Beardsley writes in “Spanish in the United States” that “In this question of Anglicisms, one may lament the use of unnecessary loanwords where Spanish does have an adequate term. Television and the press in each area will probably control the community decisions in each case.”\(^{101}\) And according to Isis Artze, Language Academies Association secretary Humberto Lopez Morales argues

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that “So long as schools and the Spanish-language U.S. media continue to uphold correct grammar, ‘there is no danger’ [to Spanish].”

It may well be that schools are upholding correct grammar according to Lopez Morales’s standards, but Spanish-language U.S. media is increasingly adopting Spanglish as a possible language variety that will reach more of its consumers, as evidenced by the number of bilingual radio stations and even the existence of a fully bilingual television station, Galavisión, as well as the ever-increasing appearance of Spanglish magazines such as Latina, and Spanglish newspapers such as La Voz of Brazoria County and La Prensa of San Antonio here in Texas. If media are indeed able to influence language use as well as the strength of an individual’s connection to his or her ethnic identity, or even if they are simply a reflection of these facets of its users, they are worth examining as an indicator of these characteristics and as a possible factor in the determining of them.

Because of the importance and potential power of media described above, I have chosen to focus on two bilingual format radio stations in major market cities in Texas, in order to test the hypothesis that Spanglish is related to cultural identity rather than linguistic inadequacy. I have recorded morning show broadcasts to extract samples of the language used by the disc jockeys, and then interviewed either these disc jockeys, a director of the radio station, or both in order to ascertain the attitudes and perspectives of those who make the decisions to use Spanglish on the air. I have also gathered demographic

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information about the stations’ listeners to better profile those who identify themselves with the bilingual format of these radio stations. To give some general statistics about bilinguals and radio usage, Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation reports that Spanish format radio reaches 55.2% of bilingual Hispanic adults in the United States, while only 16.7% of bilingual Hispanic adults are reached exclusively by English language radio broadcasting. The same company reports that 48.2% of U.S. Hispanics are Spanish dominant (in language used at home), 34.2% are English dominant, and 17.6% speak Spanish and English equally in the home.

Both stations examined in this study play the same type of music, labeled Tejano. It is a format of music that has its own cultural implications, as it is associated with bilingualism, biculturalism, and therefore, most often with second- or third-generation Mexican-Americans who have not left behind their Mexican heritage. They have adopted various characteristics that make them Tejanos and not Mexicans, according to the Programming Director of KXTN in San Antonio. Hispanic Broadcasting defines Tejano music in the following manner: “Originated in Texas (Tejas), this music is performed by Tex-Mex / Chicanos (conjuntos). It is a cross between contemporary Rock / Ranchera / Country. It can be both Spanish / English.” Jonny Ramirez, aforementioned Programming Director and On-Air Personality of KXTN, claims that Tejano music

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103 Available at Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation website: http://www.hispanicbroadcasting.com.  
finds its basis in traditional Mexican songs, but has had its tempo and
instrumentation changed, adopting some of the pop, country and rock styles
common in the United States. "Now it's ours," he says, speaking of this music of
the Tejanos, Mexican-Americans that are usually the children or grandchildren of
Mexican immigrants. Ramirez calls it a music for those who have "assimilated,"
and claims that "it's more than just a [music] format, it's a style of life." In
contrast, the music format labeled "Regional", played by the majority of the
Spanish-only radio stations of Texas, "caters to the immigrant." It is as if they
were "listening to their culture from Mexico, with the D.J.'s that speak perfect
Spanish," according to Ramirez.

The first station examined is Tejano 106.5, KQQK, a 100,000-watt station
broadcasting in the Houston metropolitan area. KQQK, along with two Spanish-
language Regional format stations, is owned by El Dorado Communications
Corporation, a Houston-based company. Arbitron lists Houston as number six of
the top twenty-five U.S. Hispanic metro survey areas, with a Hispanic population
of 848,400 (twelve years and older). Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation
reports a total Hispanic population of 1,312,000 with a mean household income
of $39,594 and a median age of 26.5 years. The combined Houston-Galveston
survey area is listed by Arbitron having a Hispanic population that is 23.60% of
the total 3,676,600 (twelve years and older). The same Arbitron report

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classifies 52% of the Hispanic population as Spanish primary and 48% as English primary (there is no “equally Spanish and English” category in this “Hispanic Diarykeeper Language Report” that is from the first part of the year 2001). According to reports from this year provided by El Dorado Communications, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M., KQQK reaches 11.6% of all Hispanics age 18-54 in the Houston-Galveston metropolitan area, a reach of approximately 74,604 people. It is the number one Tejano format station in the Houston-Galveston area, with approximately 2% of those listening to radio in the Metro Monday through Sunday from 6:00 A.M. to midnight tuning in for at least five minutes during a fifteen-minute period, according to Arbitron statistics. (To put this percentage into perspective, the most listened-to radio station in Houston only has 7.5% of the radio listeners in any given quarter hour.)

The description of KQQK listed on the website of the Texas Music Office (an official site maintained by the state of Texas) reads as follows:

KQQK (106.5 FM) ‘Tejano 106’ is a 100,000-watt station playing 100 percent Tejano music. We are Houston’s most progressive radio station working closely with the community to satisfy the many diverse needs and tastes of our acculturated and assimilated listening audience both musically and promotionally. Our award-winning bilingual programming recognizes the needs of Houston’s Hispanics and strives to supply ‘the best of both worlds’

The station profile sent to potential advertisers by KQQK gives another description that emphasizes the demographic profile of its listeners: “KQQK, ‘106.5’ is the only bilingual station in Houston. For the past twelve years, this station is the only medium to reach the Tejano and Mexican-American audience
(adults 18-54). KQQK's listener is an acculturated or assimilated Hispanic who has a higher level of education, is gainfully employed, has expendable income and buying power and speaks Spanish and English." The bicultural nature of KQQK's listener is stressed in both descriptions.

In order to partially answer the charge against Spanglish speakers brought by González Echevarría concerning their poverty and lack of education (see chapter III), I would like to offer some demographic information about KQQK's audience, as well as a comparison of this audience with the national averages for Hispanics, to show that these Spanglish speakers are, on the whole, better off than the average Hispanic of the United States. The following charts show that KQQK listeners are, indeed, Hispanics with a higher income, better education, and better socioeconomic circumstances. Chart A compares KQQK listeners with the national averages among Hispanics with regards to household income. Chart B compares the two groups' levels of education, Chart C, their occupation, and Chart D, their home ownership percentages. All information for the national and city figures comes from the U.S. Census Bureau website.109 KQQK provides the information about its listeners, using 2001 data from The Arbitron Company and Scarborough Research Corporation.

108 Available at: http://www.governor.state.tx.us/music/radio.houston-galveston.htm.
109 Available at: http://www.census.gov.
Occupation
Chart C

Home Ownership
Chart D

*Houston totals not available for "Renters" and "Other" categories.
As seen in the charts, the average Hispanic in the United States is usually found in a lower income bracket than a KQQK listener, has a lower level of education, and is less likely to own a home. He or she is also less likely to be found in administrative, executive and managerial occupations, but more likely to be in the service industry or under the category of “laborer.” Overall, the KQQK listener is not the poor, uneducated person to which González Echevarría refers. The listeners are still 60% Spanish primary with regards to language preference, and only 40% English; however, they are, as the station’s description notes, the assimilated Hispanics with higher educations and incomes.

From the recordings made of portions of the KQQK morning show (for two days, from 7:00 A.M. to 8:30 A.M., a period of time in which there are the most listeners as well as the most speech by the disc jockeys), I determined that the disc jockeys spoke approximately 68% Spanish and 32% English on both days (see Chart E).

**Spanish and English Used**

Chart E

- Spanish (68.0%)
- English (32.0%)
To establish these percentages, I tallied the total number of words spoken in English and the total spoken in Spanish and compared the figures to the total number of words in both languages. Spanglish words already adapted into the Spanish syntax, phonological and morphological systems (such as “faxear” for example) were counted as Spanish. There were a total of 184 intrasentential code-switches the first day and 200 the second (although many of these are simply single-word insertions). Spanglish terms and phrases included “acostar” for “to accost” and “el tráfico está corriendo lentamente” for “the traffic is running slowly.” Other characteristics of the disc jockeys’ speech included the use of the imperfect instead of the conditional in Spanish sentences, as well as a marked decrease in subjunctive constructions; these features illustrate some differences that have developed between the standard Spanish and Spanglish (the loss of some subjunctive constructions possibly being from English’s influence). Half of the news is given exclusively in English, and the other half in Spanish. The weather and traffic are always in Spanish. Commercials for the radio station itself or for events it sponsors are in Spanglish, while approximately 25% of the commercials made by other companies to be played on KQQK were in English, 55% in Spanish, and the remaining 20% were in Spanglish (see Chart F).
Most of the Spanglish commercials simply involved code-switching, both inter- and intrasentential. One Spanglish commercial for a lawyer included the following discourse:

If you were injured on the job or in a car accident, don’t wait, don’t hesitate, call now, 713-742-8914 [number in English]. Ese es el número de Attorney Chadrick Henderson. Chadrick Henderson will help you get what you deserve, your monetary benefits, pero tienes que llamar rápido al 713-742-8914 [number in Spanish], si te lastimaste en el trabajo o accidente de auto, no puedes trabajar, necesitas ayuda, llama ahora, 713-742-8914 [number in Spanish]...Te damos consulta gratis y transportación gratis for all new clients...Let Chadrick Henderson fight and win for you.

After observing the language used by the disc jockeys of KQQK, I conducted an interview with them. To give an outline of their linguistic backgrounds, Jay Quintero (actually Joseph Torres) is a Tejano of Mexican heritage. As far as he can remember, his family has been from Texas. In his home as he was growing up, his parents and grandparents spoke approximately 90% English, and Jay claimed that their Spanish was, “a Spanish that Güera would probably laugh at...it's different. They'll just make up words.” Jay did not learn his current level of Spanish, or Spanglish, until working at various Spanish
format radio stations. He is the morning show D.J. who switches the most between English and Spanish, and he admits that his Spanish is not fluent. La Güera (Sara Peña), the other disc jockey of the morning show, is from Saltillo, Mexico, though she has lived in the United States for twenty years. She speaks more Spanish than English on the show, although she also code-switches and uses Spanglish terminology and phrases. When asked how they would describe the language used during the morning show, both declared that they speak Spanglish on the air. Because of the similar percentages of Spanish to English found on both days of recorded broadcasting, one of the questions asked of Jay and Güera was whether the producers of KQQK had at any time urged them to change their language to include more or less of one language or the other. The answer was a definite yes. Jay expressed the fear he had when around two years ago the producers decided to move toward around 80% to 90% Spanish. However, since the station has gone to purely Tejano music (evidently about a year ago), the producers have encouraged a greater use of both languages and are happy with the current situation. In fact, both D.J.'s said that they were selected at least in part for their language backgrounds. With Jay's English and Spanish mix, and Güera's greater Spanish usage, the producers felt they had a good combination. "From what I can remember," said Jay, "I remember that Güera was brought in because of her Spanish. They wanted to actually get more of the Mexican immigrants that were here listening, but at the same time we didn't want to alienate the Tejanos that were already listening, and so that's why she was brought in...that's exactly what they told her." Güera, having worked
with other radio stations that had a purely Spanish format, actually feared that her former listeners, and even friends, would turn their back on her because of her change to a more bilingual format radio station. She also was concerned about winning the acceptance of the Tejanos. However, the show has enjoyed success, and both D.J.'s feel that it is due, in part, to the language combination they use.

When asked if they believe that their listeners like or identify with the Spanglish they speak, Güera replied, "It's not if they like it or not, that's how they grew up." According to her, "Tejas es como un país. Los tejanos, porque hispanos no son, bueno, son hispanos porque son hispanohablantes, porque hablan español también, pero ya son tejanos porque nacieron en Tejas." She went on to say that she feels the differences between her, being directly from Mexico, and the Tejanos, or the later generations of immigrant families: "Ya que estoy aquí, me doy cuenta de que somos parecidos pero no somos iguales. Ellos tienen sus cosas que apegan a sus raíces...es diferente. Son dos culturas con una, pues tienen algo igual, los apellidos." "Aquí la arruinada soy yo," she laughed. When I asked her why she said that, she replied:

Ellos tienen la ventaja de que pueden entender a los anglos, su forma de ser, su forma de vestir, su música, todo, y también pueden entender hasta los mexicanos que apenas vinimos porque es parte de su cultura. Yo no. Porque yo soy cien por ciento mexicana. Yo vine a este país después. Ellos nacieron aquí. Mis hijos ya son como él [Jay], que ellos ya pueden identificarse con los americanos y también con nosotros.
Both Jay and Güera agree that the language they use, along with the music the radio station plays, is an important part in facilitating their listener's identifying with them. Güera gave an interesting illustration of what she believes Spanglish means to the Tejanos, to which Jay added his approval and agreement. She described it in the following manner:

Mira, yo tengo una tradición que se usaba allá en México. Y yo se la enseñé a mi hija...y eso me lo enseñó mi abuelita. Y mi abuelita era...cuando hace unos cien años, no había Nintendo, y los niños inventaban cosas para jugar. Y yo puedo hablar con las letras. Entonces yo se lo enseñé a mi hija. Cuando yo quiero decir algo, que yo sé que hay alguien que habla inglés y español, no le puedo decir algo [a mi hija] en inglés o en español, pero se lo hablo con las sílabas. Entonces esto es una cosa entre ella y yo. Y así es con los tejanos.

So according to both disc jockeys, Spanglish is a code for use between Tejanos (in the case of Texas) just as the syllable game that Güera's grandmother played was something between her and her granddaughter. These Hispanics that live here, that were born here, do not fit into the world of the “anglos”, nor do they completely fit in with the “mexicanos” that have just arrived, as seen by Güera's concern about being accepted into the Tejano community. They have their own traditions that are still related to those in Mexico, but, just as they have Tejano music that is now their own, they also have their own language variety, and this fact is recognized. It is no coincidence that all the Tejano music stations are bilingual, using Spanglish as their form of verbal communication.

Bob Perry, Programming Director for all three stations at El Dorado Communications, also made various statements about Spanglish and the Tejano
in the telephone interview I had with him. I asked him how he would describe the language that the D.J.'s of KQQK use, and he replied without hesitation, "Bilingual." Spanglish as a term is sometimes considered derogatory, so we continued the conversation using the term "bilingual" to refer to KQQK's language usage. Because Jay and Güera had admitted that the producers, specifically Mr. Perry, had at times directed that they increase or decrease their Spanish to English ratio, I asked him on what he bases such decisions. He replied that all such decisions are based on market research. According to him, there is no way to know how bilingual their listeners are, so all important messages (such as those concerning emergency situations) are delivered in both English and Spanish. Another question I asked Mr. Perry had to do with the importance, in his opinion, of the decision to use a bilingual format with regards to the success of KQQK. His reply was, "Very. That's what telegraphs the message to the audience, who we're looking for. It shows the identity of the listeners." According to him, KQQK caters to the bilingual, the Mexican-American that is "more open" to speaking both Spanish and English, while the other Spanish-only stations are tailored more for the Mexican immigrant that only speaks Spanish. I then asked him, "Do you try to have your D.J.'s represent the way the majority of your listeners speak?" His answer reflected the same thinking about the situation of the Tejanos that Güera had expressed. "Yes. People have a tendency to think in categories. Language is the way we send out the message, 'This is who we're for.' People have a comfort level with the language. They consider themselves Tejanos, Hispanic background, born in
Texas. They have a foot in both worlds...they go back and forth. They do not want to be called Mexicans.” Again, Bob Perry, the man who makes decisions about language usage in KQQK’s broadcasts, supports with his statements the idea that the “bilingual” variety used by the disc jockey’s is related to the Tejano identity of those Mexican-Americans who were born in Texas, and have not only a bilingual tradition, but also a bicultural one.

The other radio station considered in this study is Tejano 107.5, KXTN, of San Antonio, Texas. It is a 100,000-watt station broadcasting in San Antonio, the city which is the next largest Metro Survey area after Houston for the Hispanic market, according to Arbitron. San Antonio has a Hispanic population of 702,300 (twelve years and older). KXTN is owned by Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation as part of a group of Spanish format stations in San Antonio. Like KQQK in Houston, KXTN is the number one Tejano station in the city, and it even ranks as number three in the entire market of the Metro, including Top-40 and Urban radio stations that are not geared toward the Hispanic population per se. Approximately 6% of those listening to radio in San Antonio Monday through Sunday from 6:00 A.M. to midnight tune in to KXTN for at least five minutes during any given fifteen-minute period. According to Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation market information about San Antonio, the city’s Hispanic population totals 1,064,700, with a mean household income of $38,757 and a median age of 22.8 years.\(^{110}\) The San Antonio survey area has a 51.8% Hispanic population

\(^{110}\) Available at Hispanic Broadcasting Corporation website: http://www.hispanicbroadcasting.com.
(twelve years and older), according to Arbitron statistics."  Arbitron also reports that only 26% of the San Antonio area Hispanics are Spanish primary, while the remaining 74% are English primary. This somewhat surprising proportion of the population that leans toward English dominant tendencies is probably a result of the fact that the Hispanics of San Antonio are those that have been in Texas longest. Many are from families that have lived there since before Texas joined the United States.

The following demographic information provided by the United States Census Bureaus website and KXTN shows that the listeners of this Spanglish-speaking station are, like the listeners of KQQK, generally better off than the Hispanic population in general. I was unable to obtain information concerning education and occupation from KXTN, although they provided more information on language preference. Chart G compares KXTN listeners with the national averages for Hispanics with regards to household income and Chart H compares home ownership percentages of KXTN listeners with the average for Hispanics in San Antonio. KXTN information comes from 2001 data from the Arbitron Company and Scarborough Research Corporation.

**Household Income**

*Chart G*

- **U.S. Totals**
- **KXTN Listeners**

**Home Ownership**

*Chart H*

- **San Antonio Total**
- **KXTN Listeners**

*San Antonio totals not available for "Renters" and "Other" categories.*
Like those relating to KQQK listeners, these charts show that KXTN listeners generally have higher incomes than the average Hispanic in the United States, and they are more evenly distributed throughout the different income brackets rather than being found mainly in the lower ones. They are also more likely to own homes than the average Hispanic from the San Antonio metropolitan area. Only 17.1% of KXTN’s listeners are Spanish dominant, while 45.4% are English dominant. A significant percentage, 30.8%, are listed as preferring English and Spanish equally. Again the Tejano listeners are generally the assimilated Hispanics in a better socioeconomic situation than the average Hispanic-American.

I made recordings of two morning programs for KXTN, as I did for KQQK, from 7:00 A.M. to 8:30 A.M.. From the information gathered, I established that the disc jockeys spoke a mixture of Spanish and English, but with a significant difference in the proportion of Spanish to English when compared to the radio station in Houston. The San Antonio radio station, keeping with the fact that the San Antonio Hispanics are more English dominant, spoke an average of only 4.5% Spanish and 95.5% English (see Chart I).
These percentages were determined in the same way as were those of KQQK (see explanation above). There were a total of 79 intrasentential code-switches the first day I recorded the program, and 68 the second day. Again, many of these were single-word insertions. Spanglish phrases included “el queque” to mean “the cake” and “¿cómo se watcha el tráfico?” for “How is the traffic looking?” The news on KXTN is given entirely in standard English, as is the weather. The traffic is also in English, but some Spanish is thrown in, often the phrase, “Maneje con precaución,” for example. Commercials for the radio station itself are mostly in English, although again they may have some Spanish or Spanglish phrases. Approximately 76% of the commercials for outside businesses were in Spanish, in contrast to the disc jockeys’ mainly English speech. Of the remaining commercials, around 18% were in English and 6% were in Spanglish (see Chart J).
Again, the Spanglish was a mixture of Spanish and English similar to that found in the example given for a Spanglish commercial on KQQK. However, many of the Spanish commercials mixed one or two Spanglish or English phrases in with the standard Spanish. For example, one of the car dealership commercials used the word “picup” instead of “camioneta” while using the standard words for other types of vehicles. One English commercial included the phrase “mano a mano” to offer some token Spanish for its Hispanic audience.

I interviewed Programming Director and morning show disc jockey, Jonny Ramirez, for KXTN’s perspective on their language usage. After I briefly described the topic as a study concerning the mixture of Spanish and English being used on the radio station, Mr. Ramirez began the interview by stating categorically that I was to remember that I was speaking with a Tejano, and that I would therefore receive the perspective of a Tejano on the issue. Ramirez has worked many years in English radio, and is English dominant, as are many of the residents of the San Antonio area. According to him, the language that the D.J.’s
of KXTN use is "everyday language...how we talk between friends" and also at home. The average listener is fluent in English, but still understands standard Spanish, even though it may take some effort to listen to a Telemundo news broadcast, for example. This person speaks what Mr. Ramirez refers to as a "Tex-Mex" or "incorrect Spanish." According to him, there is no set goal as far as maintaining a certain percentage of Spanish to English, but most of the disc jockeys range between sixty to ninety percent English during their broadcasts (although my recordings proved that they speak much more English, even during Mr. Ramirez's own program). More important than setting a ratio for the mixture of the languages is to find a disc jockey that is "Hispanic, born here in Texas, that understands the difference between Mexicans and Tejanos." Ramirez believes that the decision to use a bilingual format is important in the success of the radio station, since "proper-Spanish speaking D.J.'s wouldn't taste right" to the listener, but he asserts that the Tejano music is even more important as it represents the "style of life" of the Tejanos. He does claim that he tries to have the disc jockeys represent the way the majority of the listeners of KXTN speak, stating that a "large portion of the audience is well-educated but still uses slang" among themselves. Ramirez seemed to be very focused on the uniqueness of Tejanos compared to the Mexican immigrants recently arrived, and on the differences of language and even of way of life that separate the two groups. The Tejano has a definite identity that is tied up with not only language, according to Ramirez, but other cultural factors such as the music that has become popular among those Mexican-Americans born and raised here in Texas.
To summarize the results of the interviews conducted with disc jockeys and programming directors of both KQQK and KXTN, the demographic information shows that listeners of these bilingual format, or Spanglish speaking, radio stations tend to have better socioeconomic circumstances than the Hispanic population as a whole in the United States. There does seem to be a direct correlation between the language used and the identity of the group that calls itself Tejano. This group is made up of mostly second- and third-generation Mexican-Americans that were born and raised in Texas and that have established a bilingual and bicultural tradition for themselves apart from the Anglos, and even apart from the Mexican immigrants that reside in the state. My thesis that Spanglish is a marker of identity rather than a language of inadequacy was supported by the information gathered in the interviews as well as the demographic information provided by the radio stations.

However, this study is limited in its scope, and is intended to describe the specific situation of these radio stations and the attitudes of the people in control of their broadcasts, in order to lead to possible further explorations of the connection between Spanglish and identity. I was not able to survey the stations’ listeners, as I had originally intended, due to an unwillingness to participate on the potential informants’ part. I was also only able to gain the cooperation of two radio stations in metropolitan areas in Texas. The circumstances of the Tejano community are different from those of the other Hispanic communities here in the
United States, and therefore, it is not possible to assume from this study alone that other Hispanic peoples feel the same way about Spanglish, although I referred to various researchers that do support that idea (see chapter VI). While it is significant to know what the directors and disc jockeys of these radio stations think about their use of Spanglish, since they are influential figures within their spheres, they cannot speak for their audiences; they can only respond to market research and individuals' opinions. While it is important to note the possible role of the media in the spread and standardization of Spanglish, the directors and disc jockeys simply serve as a frame of reference to learn about the language attitudes of the communities which they influence and by which they are in turn influenced. It would be worthwhile to investigate radio on a larger scale, as well as the Spanglish usage by other media, such as the briefly mentioned magazine, newspaper, and television industries. Even though this paper is limited in its scope, I believe that it does provide a basis for further research in various related areas.
Chapter VIII

Conclusion

Several points emerge from the research carried out for this thesis. As stated in the previous chapter, I believe that my thesis that Spanglish should be examined as a marker of identity within the Hispanic community in the United States is supported by the investigations referenced in earlier chapters and by the specific information gathered from the radio stations studied. Instead of considering the variation of Spanish that is often found here in this country a deformity of the standard and even a language of poverty and ignorance, we should consider Spanglish as a language variety that has its place firmly entrenched among the Latinos of the U.S. It is the form of communication used by those who have at least partially accepted the culture and language of the United States and who, therefore, enjoy a measure of success here. These same people have not rejected their Hispanic heritage, but have chosen to carve out a niche in which they may remain Hispanic while also being American.

Spanglish is a marker of identity for the Tejano, according to this study, as part of a way of life in the state of Texas (see Güera’s comments and those of Ramirez in Chapter VII). The language has become one of the defining social features of this group that does not want to join the Anglos, yet does not want to be considered Mexican. The situation in Texas specifically is tied to the history of the Mexican presence in this area of the country, as Texas was once a part of Mexico, as well as being an autonomous republic for nine years. The Tejanos
feel that Texas belongs to them, even more so than the Anglos, since they have been established here for a longer period of time. Other major immigrant groups, such as the Puerto Ricans and the Cubans, have different sets of circumstances, both historical and linguistic. However, both populations seem to use Spanglish as a marker of identification among themselves. Zentella states this in her study of a portion of the Puerto Rican population of New York (see Chapter V), and though none of the researchers mentioned in this paper focus on the Cuban population of Florida, the existence of the Miami-based bilingual television station Galavisión as well as the production of the Spanglish Generation ñ magazine indicate a strong presence of the Spanglish language variety among the Cuban-Americans, allowing one to infer that it may play a similar role as an identity marker in that community as well.

Though Spanglish is not yet considered a language of power (see Jay's comments about his parents' language as well as the remarks of KXTN's Jonny Ramirez in Chapter VII) outside of the in-group of Spanglish speakers, it is definitely considered a language of solidarity that is used for identification purposes, and to establish a way to unite the group for protection against threats to its cultural identity and in order to gain political and social power. Even Tejano politicians, for example, do use Spanglish when speaking with their constituents in order to establish a bond with the group, avoiding the standard Spanish (even if they have complete control of it) since the use of that variety can reveal an effort to separate themselves from their Tejano roots.
Because many Hispanic-Americans have elected to form their own bilingual and bicultural groups instead of accepting completely the majority Anglo culture and language, and because of the continuing immigration of Spanish-speaking peoples into the United States (even now, Mexican president Vicente Fox is pushing for open borders between the U.S. and Mexico, while President George W. Bush considers amnesty for illegal Latino immigrants), I predict that Spanglish will not die out as has Yiddish, for example. Instead, it will continue to grow more popular among the people as an identification marker and a rallying point for the Hispanic population of the United States, as evidenced by its growing status in the media and even by its increased usage in literature. Warner Books' recent publication of *A Little Love* by C.C. Medina, the romance novel intended for the main shelves of local bookstores that has characters whose "speech is a Spanglish blend" according to *The Romance Reader* book review,\(^{112}\) shows that even in genres besides poetry, Spanglish is being integrated into written formats as well as oral, though it is still used mainly in dialogues that attempt to represent the everyday speech of the characters. It is therefore possible that it may become a socially legitimate language variety, since even as Alex Grijelmo points out (though he does contradict himself by taking a stance against language change that does not seem suitable to him), the people decide, by the way they speak, how language will evolve.\(^{113}\)

\(^{112}\) Available at The Romance Reader website: http://www.theromancereader.com/medina-little.html.
I am not attempting to justify with this thesis any sort of forced standardization or even any encouragement of the standardization of Spanglish as a socially acceptable language. I must point out, however, that because of the contact between Spanish and English that exists here in the United States, both languages have been and will be influenced by each other. If the Hispanic-Americans continue to speak Spanglish, as I believe they will, it is a definite possibility that Spanglish will become an acceptable language variety, at least within this country. Languages evolve and change, despite efforts to stop this process. It is evident that Spanglish is different from standard Spanish. However, whoever says that it is a "butchered" form of the standard language is simply expressing a value judgment that does not take into account the reality of the linguistic situation of the U.S. Spanglish has no need to compete with Spanish; it serves a different group of people than does the exclusive use of standard Spanish, although this same group may also call on standard Spanish or English, depending on the situation.

The central point of this study continues to be that Spanglish is not an inadequate language variety, but rather a functional form of communication that often serves as an identification marker. It is true that all its speakers are not completely bilingual. However, they all control a system of communication that serves their purposes. Upon choosing Spanglish in a given situation in order to convey their ideas instead of English or Spanish (the majority of Spanglish

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speakers also have fluency in either or both standard English or standard Spanish), the Spanglish speakers are associating themselves with the group that has created a space for itself between the dominant culture and language of this country and those of the Spanish speaking countries of origin. Spanglish is a language variety that not only carries the verbal message contained in its speakers' words, but also a message of social identification with this group.
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