

**Language Socialization  
in Bilingual and Multilingual Societies**

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# **Language Socialization in Bilingual and Multilingual Societies**

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**Robert Bayley and Sandra R. Schecter**

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# Preface and Acknowledgments

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*Language Socialization in Bilingual and Multilingual Societies* grew out of our joint research on family language use and children's bilingual development in California and Texas (Schechter & Bayley, 2002). Although our work extended over a number of years and focused on two distinct communities, we knew that a single research project could not capture the breadth and depth of language socialization research in bilingual and multilingual communities. At the same time, in our own work, we became increasingly concerned about the limits of language socialization theory as traditionally conceived (Schechter & Bayley, in press). We therefore decided to produce an edited volume that would explore language socialization from multiple theoretical perspectives in diverse bilingual and multilingual contexts. We were extremely gratified by the responses of many fine colleagues who agreed to join us in this enterprise. The result is a volume that explores language socialization from very early childhood through adulthood, not only in often-studied communities in Canada and the United States, but also in Australia, Bolivia, Egypt, India, and Slovakia. The global perspective gained by the inclusion of studies of communities representing every inhabited continent will, we hope, provide readers with an indication of the richness of the field as well as a guide for future work. The breadth of the collection, in particular, with chapters focusing on language socialization at different stages in the lifespan in well-known communities including Mexican-Americans in the United States and Francophones in Canada, as well as in communities that are less familiar to many readers, such as the Aymara in Bolivia or minority Hungarians in Slovakia, makes this volume a suitable text for upper-division and graduate courses in bilingualism, language education, second language acquisition, and sociolinguistics.

We thank all of the contributors for entrusting their work to us and for their goodwill in responding to our editorial requests. We hope that *Language Socialization in Bilingual and Multilingual Societies* justifies their faith in our ability to bring out a coherent and timely collection that will prove useful to both students and scholars.

We acknowledge the usual assistance of our institutions in providing an appropriate home for academic activity, even for editing the work of others. We also thank Noe Gonzáles for assistance with the combined bibliography. We are grateful to Colin Baker and Nancy Hornberger for including this book in their series on Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. We are pleased to be in such good company. Special thanks to Tommi Grover, Ken Hall and the staff of Multilingual Matters for their care and attention in the production of this book. Finally, as always, we thank our respective families for their understanding, or tolerance, throughout the various stages of this odyssey.

Robert Bayley and Sandra R. Schecter

## Introduction

# Toward a Dynamic Model of Language Socialization

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ROBERT BAYLEY AND SANDRA R. SCHECTER

Traditionally, language socialization research has focused on very young children acquiring their first language (e.g. Ochs, 1988; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1995; Schieffelin, 1990; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986b) and on the relationships between culturally-specific patterns of language socialization and school achievement, particularly in the primary grades (e.g. Heath, 1982b, 1983; Michaels, 1986; Philips, 1983). In recent years, however, the study of language socialization has broadened to include how older children, adolescents, and adults acquire knowledge of the interpretative frameworks of their own and other cultures in which they must function (e.g. Eckert, 2000; Hoyle & Adger, 1998). Much of the more important inquiry in this tradition has focused on the dynamics of language socialization in bilingual and multilingual settings. This work attends closely to patterns of meaning suggested by the use of different linguistic codes in speech and literacy performances, as well as ideologies concerning the symbolic importance of different languages.

Among other topics, language socialization research in bilingual and multilingual settings has documented the difficulties of maintaining minority languages, whether Inuktitut in the far north of Quebec (Crago *et al.*, 1993), Taiap in rural Papua New Guinea (Kulick, 1992), or Spanish in cities in the United States (Schechter & Bayley, 1997, 2002; Vasquez *et al.*, 1994; Zentella, 1997). Research has examined children's developing competence in various speech and literacy events, such as teasing and other forms of verbal play (Eisenberg, 1986), reading Spanish language advertising flyers in Latino communities in the United States (Bayley *et al.*, 1996), and simultaneous translation (Pease-Alvarez & Vasquez, 1994). This line of research has also documented the wide range of linguistic resources available in bilingual and multilingual communities and the ways in which children, adolescents, and adults learn to choose among these resources for their symbolic value. Recent studies in bilingual and multilingual contexts have also examined language mixing

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in linguistically and ethnically diverse working class adolescent peer groups in Britain (Rampton, 1995), family and community roles in language socialization among the Aymara of Bolivia (Luykx, 1999b), and language socialization in the increasingly multilingual workplaces of Canada and the United States (Duff & Labrie, 2000; Goldstein, 1997b).

The chapters in this volume, selected to illustrate language socialization practices in a wide range of bilingual and multilingual contexts as well as among different age groups, contribute to this developing line of research. The volume brings together established and new scholarly voices to examine how children, adolescents, and adults in fluid bilingual and multilingual contexts are socialized by and through language into new domains of knowledge and cultural practice. Contexts range from Latino communities in the United States and Francophone communities in Canada to indigenous communities in both North and South America, minority Hungarians in Slovakia, lesbians in Egypt, and college students in southern India. Other chapters focus on diverse immigrant communities in Australia, Canada, and the United States. The book is organized into four main parts that address language socialization processes in the home, at school, in peer groups and communities, and in the workplace. Individual chapters focus on language socialization at different stages of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. The essays address critical topics in the role of language in multilingual contexts: for example, the influence of parental patterns of language choice on indigenous language maintenance, socialization of immigrant students into academic subject matter discourse in secondary schools, the roles of speech and silence among Chinese immigrant students in Canada, parameters of "lesbian" identity in different language varieties, and differentiated talk in the workplace.

The chapters in Part 1 focus on the home and family, the traditional domain of language socialization research. Lucinda Pease-Alvarez draws on a rich body of data gathered in a seven-year study of language socialization in a Mexican-immigrant community in northern California. She documents the changing attitudes of parents representing different immigrant generations towards their children's bilingual language socialization, as well as the changing roles that Spanish and English play in family life. In the second chapter, Aurolyn Luykx examines Bolivian children's bilingual language socialization in Spanish and Aymara (one of the two main indigenous languages of the Andes) in the small community of Huatajata, located about two hours from the capital city of La Paz. Luykx pays special attention to the ways in which "the processes of language socialization both structure and are structured by gender roles and relations" (Chapter 2). She argues that by examining the relationship between gender and language socialization in bilingual communities, "we are addressing questions central to the human condition" (Chapter 2).

Chapter 3 moves from the broad description of parental attitudes toward and beliefs about bilingual socialization and the interplay of a dominant language, an indigenous language, and gender in children's socialization to a detailed examination of a single literacy event in a Mexican-immigrant family in south Texas.

María de la Piedra and Harriett Romo pay special attention to the important influence of siblings in their analysis of the ways in which language and literacy are socially constructed in a non-mainstream immigrant family. In the final chapter in this section, Patricia Lamarre and Josefina Rossell Paredes, drawing on Bourdieu's (1985, 1986) ideas of linguistic marketplaces, of language as a form of capital, and of "ethos" and "habitus," examine how young immigrant trilinguals in Montreal acquired their linguistic repertoires, how they use languages in their everyday lives, and how attitudes towards languages are constructed within immigrant families. Taken together, the chapters in this section, like the chapters in other sections, emphasize language socialization as an interactive process, in which those being socialized also act as agents rather than as mere passive initiates.

Part 2 focuses on language socialization at school. Unlike many of the earlier studies (e.g. Heath, 1983), however, four of the five chapters in this section focus on the experiences of adolescents and young adults. The section opens with Linda Harklau's detailed account of how four immigrant young people, representing different national origins and social class backgrounds, were socialized into the linguistic and cultural practices of a high school in western New York. Harklau explores how "texts, curricula, and face-to-face interactions served to maintain certain images ... of immigrant students" (Chapter 5) and the complexity of the communication patterns of multilingual adolescents. She found that immigrant students in the school were socialized through communicative practices that reflected simultaneously three different images: a color-blind representation, an idealized "Ellis Island" image, and an image of cognitive and linguistic deficiency. In Chapter 6, KimMarie Cole and Jane Zuengler continue the exploration of language socialization and adolescent identity formation, here within the context of a science class in an inner-city high school in the midwestern United States. On the basis of a remarkable corpus of longitudinal data, Cole and Zuengler examine how a select group of linguistically and ethnically diverse "Cyber Academy" students participating in a community-based science project, the Asthma Project, were positioned and positioned themselves as "good students," "real scientists," and "child laborers." In Chapter 7, Gordon Pon, Tara Goldstein, and Sandra Schecter examine the complex and seldom-studied issues of silence and speech in a majority Chinese urban high school in the Toronto area. Pon and his colleagues find that the immigrant Chinese at the school, mostly but not exclusively Cantonese speakers from Hong Kong, face "linguistic double binds." Their silence in class was perceived by Canadian-born students, both Chinese and non-Chinese, as a threat to the quality of their education because the immigrant Chinese were reluctant to contribute to class discussions or assume leadership roles in small group projects. The immigrant students, however, provided a different perspective on silence. Many seldom spoke, because they feared that their English would be ridiculed, while others maintained silence because they did not want to be perceived by members of their own group as "show offs." On a theoretical level, Pon *et al.* show how the ideology of Orientalism (Said, 1979) underpins assumptions about Asians as a "model minority" and offer a critique of the community-of-practice framework employed

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by Langman and Bell in their chapters in the later sections on language in peer groups (Part 3) and on communities and language in the workplace (Part 4).

The final two chapters in Part 2 concern language socialization in two different age groups and contexts: heritage language schools in the United States, and a college in India. Chapter 8, by Agnes Weiyun He, examines language socialization in four Chinese language heritage classrooms. A great deal of the earlier research on language socialization portrays a seamless process in which novices are conceived of as “passive, ready, and uniform recipients of socialization” (He, Chapter 8). By contrast, He concentrates on the crucial role of the novice (in this case the young children attending the heritage language classes) and their differential participation in activities designed to socialize them into particular linguistic and literacy practices such as the correct order of writing the strokes of Chinese characters. Much of the earlier research in language socialization also focused on how access or lack of access to standard English and other socially-dominant language varieties affected children’s academic success in the early years of schooling. In Chapter 9, Dwight Atkinson extends this work to higher education. He examines the role of the acquisition and use of English in students’ academic success in “All Souls College,” a formerly elite English-medium institution in a predominantly Tamil-speaking area of southern India. Of particular interest in this chapter is Atkinson’s analysis of the process of “dys-socialization” among local students who have been educated in Tamil, and hence are less proficient in English (the language of instruction) than are the traditional students drawn from a wide area. Atkinson shows how Tamil-educated students are developing social identities that militate against the acquisition of English and the consequent socialization into the traditional culture of the college.

Part 3 is devoted to four studies of language socialization in peer groups and communities. The chapters in this section cover a broad range of international contexts including Quebec, Slovakia, Australia, and Egypt. In Chapter 10, Donna Patrick explores language socialization and second (and third) language acquisition among the Inuit in the multilingual community of “Sandy Point” in Arctic Quebec, where both Cree and Inuktitut are spoken alongside English and French. Patrick shows how language attitudes, including notions of linguistic complexity and time required for acquisition, combine with patterns of language use to restrict language learning, particularly of third languages, even in a community where multilingualism is favorably viewed.

Questions of language and national and ethnic identity have come to the fore in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe, particularly in the states that have emerged since the end of the Cold War. In Chapter 11, Juliet Langman examines Hungarian language socialization and identity formation among a group of young Hungarians in Slovakia. Using a community-of-practice framework (Lave, 1991; Lave & Wenger, 1991), Langman examines the formation of a Hungarian identity, centered on questions of language and preservation of cultural traditions, by members of the “Rock Crystal Dance Group” on the Hungarian/Slovak language border in eastern Slovakia. She shows not only how dance group members come to



define themselves as Hungarian by creating a protected space for speaking Hungarian and by practicing traditional dance, but also how they distinguish themselves through negative identity practices from those they identify as “half Hungarians” (minority Hungarians who are becoming assimilated into Slovak culture and who no longer speak Hungarian).

Heather Lotherington (Chapter 12) continues the focus on language use and identity. Rather than studying an indigenous or long-established community, however, Lotherington examines the literacy practices of Cambodian and Vietnamese immigrant youth in “Springvale,” a suburb of Melbourne, Australia that is home to a growing population of Southeast Asian immigrants. She illustrates the conflicting demands that non-European immigrant youth face in their efforts to forge a new Australian-Asian identity in a country that has only within the past generation allowed a substantial number of Asian immigrants to obtain an adequate Australian education. Finally, in the concluding chapter in this section, Didi Khayatt also explores the question of socialization into a new identity. Khayatt examines how one becomes socialized into a lesbian identity in a society in which the main language offers no word to describe that identity, at least not as it is commonly understood in Europe and North America.

The concluding three chapters concern language socialization in the workplace, the site where, as Christopher McAll observes (Chapter 14), most people spend most of their adult lives. McAll distinguishes between “language workers” (e.g. engineers, managers, salespeople) for whom language is central to work, and others (such as wood workers and metal workers) for whom the transformation of materials is central, and who often work in conditions that render sustained and frequent verbal interaction impossible. Drawing examples from his research on language use in the aerospace industry in Montreal, McAll shows how language difference remains a key instrument in maintaining inequality between speakers of a dominant language and speakers of a subordinate language over whom they exercise power. Thus, even in Montreal, where legislation has greatly expanded work opportunities for Francophones, McAll finds that English remains the dominant language of the engineering sector of the aerospace industry.

While McAll provides a broad view of the role of language in the workplace, in the following chapter Jill Bell focuses on a linguistically diverse group of unemployed workers participating in a job retraining program based at an Ontario community college. Like several other contributors, Bell adopts a community-of-practice approach and explores how individuals who have been socialized into one identity, that of worker, confront the challenge of acquiring a student identity in a situation in which both they and their instructors are viewed as marginal to the main purposes of the institution. Finally, Sylvie Roy examines the challenges faced by minority Francophone residents seeking employment in a bilingual call center in southern Ontario. Roy shows how the local vernacular French was regarded by management as insufficiently standard to satisfy the demands of the workplace. Thus, an ideology of language purity came to replace the community’s earlier pride in the vernacular.

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The chapters in this volume, with their focus on diverse communities, contexts, and age groups, provide illustrations of language socialization as a lifelong process in which those being socialized often, indeed normally, exhibit considerable agency. That is, socialization by and through language is not simply a process in which experts in a particular community pass on ways of understanding and acting in the world to novices. Rather, even young novices, as shown, for example, in He's chapter on language socialization in Chinese heritage schools, differ in what they draw from socialization activities. Indeed, the role of the novice is particularly important in the kinds of bilingual and multilingual contexts examined in this volume where, as Langman shows, for example, young people are defining themselves at least partially in opposition to older identities, or where, as in the chapters by Lotherington about Southeast Asian immigrant youth in Australia or by Khayatt on lesbians in Egypt, the identity being formed is not one that has previously been available.

In addition to illustrating language socialization as a process that occurs throughout the lifetime and in which those being socialized, particularly in contexts where more than one language is involved, also have opportunities for choice, many of the chapters gathered for this volume incorporate recent discourse about identity into a language socialization framework. As we have argued elsewhere (Schechter & Bayley, 2002), the bilingual persona in fluid societal and situational contexts may indeed have an ephemeral quality. In such environments, despite what official characterizations may imply, identity is not a fixed category and, as the chapters by Harklau, Cole and Zuengler, Atkinson, Lotherington, Bell, and others show, individuals choose among (and sometimes resist) the identities offered to them, and at times construct new identities when the circumstances in which they find themselves do not offer a desirable choice.

Finally, we suggest that the chapters in this volume, as well as recent research in bilingual and multilingual communities by scholars such as Kulick (1992), Norton (2000), and Zentella (1997), offer a more broadly representative picture of language socialization than studies that examine language socialization in contexts where only a single language is involved. As Luykx (Chapter 2) observes, in language socialization, as in other areas of language studies, monolingual contexts constitute the esoteric field. For most of the world, language socialization takes place in bilingual or multilingual settings that change across the lifespan. The focus on such settings, which is shared by all of the authors whose work is included here, will, we hope, contribute to the development of a more dynamic model of language socialization than heretofore available.

Part 1

# **Language Socialization at Home**



## Chapter 1

# Transforming Perspectives on Bilingual Language Socialization<sup>1</sup>

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LUCINDA PEASE-ALVAREZ

Recent accounts of immigrant parents' perspectives on their bilingual children's language education and socialization have been the subject of much discussion among those engaged in debates about the role that minority languages should play in schools and classrooms in the United States. By focusing on a restricted range of topics related to parental perspectives on language and schooling, recent research and media portrayals of parents' views about bilingual education provide us with a very narrow view of the way parents conceptualize language, bilingualism, and learning (Krashen, 1999). Moreover, these accounts, which tend to portray parental perspectives on bilingualism and bilingual education as monolithic and unvarying, contribute few insights into the processes implicated in the way these perspectives develop and change. Instead they are simply described as supporting or countering one side or another in national and state debates about bilingual education.

In contrast, researchers adopting a sociocultural approach to the study of language development have expanded our understanding of how the constitutive relationships among language, learning, and culture play out in the language socialization process. Building on traditions of scholarship that embed learning in the practical activities of communities (Heath, 1983, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Ochs, 1988; Rogoff, 1990;), scholars have shown how the different ways parents conceive of and participate in their children's language development both construct and reveal cultural practices and values. For example, Ochs (1988) and Heath (1989) have described how parental roles, dispositions, and identities are constructed and revealed through the everyday engagements that involve their children.

When considering the case of Mexican-descent families residing in the United

States, researchers who rely on sociocultural frameworks have contributed to our understanding of how parental perspectives on bilingual language socialization develop within the context of a complex and dynamic sociocultural ecology that comprises shifting cultural, institutional, and structural practices and circumstances. Perhaps not surprisingly, research has demonstrated that the language socialization practices of this group are varied, even in the case of those families committed to pursuing similar goals (Schechter & Bayley, 2002; Vasquez *et al.*, 1994). For example, Schechter and Bayley (2002) describe how historical and ecological variations in the experiences of Mexican-descent parents living in California and Texas help to explain the different ways in which they pursue their common goal of making sure that their children maintain Spanish.

Building on the lines of scholarship referred to above, the research reported here also contributes insights into ways that the thinking of Mexican-descent parents about languages, bilingualism, and learning relates to different aspects of their experience, including their histories, cultural practices, and social positioning. What distinguishes this account from others is the attention paid to the way parents' views change over time. The chapter, then, provides a perspective on bilingual language socialization that is often missing from other accounts.

### Studying Parental Attitudes and Perspectives Over Time

This chapter is based on a seven-year study conducted from 1991 to 1998. The study investigated native language maintenance and shift toward English in a group of 63 Mexican-descent youngsters and their family members residing in Eastside (a pseudonym), California. To capture the way that generation and time spent in the United States affect bilingualism, parents were grouped according to increasing strength of family ties in this country. Based on a survey of all of the parents of third graders in the four Eastside schools, three groupings were identified:

- (1) Parents born in Mexico; immigrated at age 15 or older.
- (2) Parents born in Mexico; immigrated at age 10 or younger.
- (3) Parents born in the United States.

To assess the related phenomena of language maintenance and shift at a variety of levels, parents and their children from these different groups participated in interviews and activities designed to investigate their language proficiency, attitudes, and choices. The interviews included a variety of question formats to elicit information about parents' attitudes toward English, Spanish, bilingualism, and native language maintenance. Parents were also asked about their views concerning appropriate and inappropriate bilingual language practices and socialization strategies, their opinions regarding the role parents and schools should play in Latino youngsters' language socialization, and their expectations regarding what constituted appropriate or correct language practices and ability. Sixty-three parents, mostly mothers, participated in the first cycle of interviews in 1991 and 1992.

**Table 1.1** Parents interviewed by immigration group

<i>Immigration group</i>	<i>1991–92</i>	<i>1996–98</i>
Parents born in Mexico; immigrated at age 15 or older	40	26
Parents born in Mexico; immigrated at age 10 or younger	13	6
Parents born in the United States	10	7
Total number of parents	63	39

Thirty-nine of the original group of 63 parents participated in the second cycle of interviews, which took place from 1996 to 1998. Table 1.1 shows the distribution of parents across the three immigration groups during the initial and later interviews.

### The Community Context

Although Eastside is home to individuals from many ethnic backgrounds, people of Mexican descent are the majority. Most parent members of Mexican-descent Eastside families are from working class backgrounds with no more than a few years of grade school education, usually acquired in Mexico. While most parents in the sample worked in service-related jobs (e.g. gardeners, tree pruners, housekeepers), a handful of parents who had finished secondary school and, in some cases, at least a few years of college, had middle-income jobs (e.g. teachers, paralegals, computer technicians). Three families owned their own businesses – a marble works, a car repair shop, and a bakery.

Spanish is used throughout Eastside. It is widely used in the commercial sector by employees and patrons of stores and restaurants. Social service agencies, clinics, and some private businesses employ Spanish speakers as office and clerical workers who have the added responsibility of communicating with monolingual Spanish-speaking clients. In addition, the Catholic churches that most families attend conduct services in Spanish. During the course of the study (prior to the passage of Proposition 227), Spanish was also widely used by teachers and children in the four Eastside elementary schools, particularly in the early grades.<sup>2</sup> As is the case among many bilingual educators in the United States, the directors of bilingual education in the Eastside Elementary School District reasoned that their program enabled young children to establish the linguistic and academic foundation in their native language that would ultimately facilitate their acquisition of English and academic content in that language. Hence, most limited-English-proficient children enrolled in Eastside schools who were native Spanish speakers had access to native language instruction in at least kindergarten through second grade. By third grade, however, English had become the main language of the classroom.

Over the past 20 years, the use of Spanish by Eastsiders has been the subject of a great deal of criticism. Many European Americans who live in surrounding communities view Eastside as an enclave of monolingual Spanish speakers who are

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not interested in learning English or assimilating into the American mainstream. The press has repeatedly portrayed the linguistic circumstances of Eastsiders as a liability. Indeed, authors of several newspaper columns and articles attributed the low academic achievement of Eastside youngsters to their inability to speak English.

### **The Benefits of Bilingualism**

The interviews revealed that parents held extremely positive opinions about English, Spanish, bilingualism, and native-language maintenance, and these views remained constant from 1991 to 1998. Thus, in the closed-response sections of both the earlier and later interviews, most parents' said that they regarded it as "important" or "very important" that their children's teachers and school principal know Spanish. Parents gave even stronger responses when asked how important it is that their children know Spanish, that they know English, and that they be bilingual. In both interview cycles, all the parents except two answered that they thought it "very important" for their children to know both languages and to be bilingual. In addition, when responding to open-ended questions, parents said that Spanish/English bilinguals should continue to use and develop their Spanish as they learn English. In elaborating upon these views, they commented that Spanish/English bilinguals enjoy economic and social benefits that are not available to monolinguals, including the greater likelihood of obtaining high-paying jobs in the United States and Mexico, communicating and interacting with a wide variety of people, and having access to knowledge sources both inside and outside their communities. Hence, similar to the findings reported by Lambert and Taylor (1987), the concept of bilingualism that seems to be most commonly upheld is one that emphasizes the importance of Spanish as well as English. Nevertheless, while parents appeared to endorse an additive view of bilingualism, they also revealed transformations in their thinking about children's bilingual language socialization. The following sections focus on the nature of these transformations.

### **Language Socialization and Identity: Oppositional Tensions and Orientations**

The link between Spanish language and Mexicano/Chicano identity was a theme that characterized the majority of conversations with Eastside parents during both the earlier and the later interviews. Parents expressed this connection in a variety of ways. For most parents, regardless of immigration group, Spanish is a valued feature of their heritage that comes with being born in Mexico or having Mexican kin. Viewpoints that reflect strong relationships between Spanish language and Mexican identity are conveyed in the following excerpts from the interviews with both Mexican and US-born parents. When describing what it meant for Mexican-descent parents to have children who have lost their ability or desire to



speak Spanish, parents from both groups told us that such a loss would imply a loss of the children's Mexican identity. For example, Ms Guarin, born in Mexico, commented:

*Es una pena si pierden el español porque ya traes tus raíces en español o sea es tu idioma y perderlo, no aprovecharlo, no seguirlo, yo creo que no. Después yo creo que se van a lamentar. Es importante para ellos que sigan nuestras raíces, la cultura y que se sientan orgullosos de nosotros y de ellos porque ellos son mexicanos. No son nacidos aquí.*

(It's a shame if they forget Spanish, because you carry your roots in Spanish and it's your language and to lose it, to not take advantage of it as you grow, I think not. Later I think they will regret it. It's important for them to continue their roots, the culture and that they feel proud of us and of themselves because they are Mexican. They aren't born here.)

Another mother, US-born Ms Duran, associated language loss with cultural loss. She commented: "In my experience when I've seen people who have lost their Spanish maybe their deep rooted values are still you know kind of Latino or whatever but their culture, like a lot of it is lost."

Yet, while much of parents' thinking about identity focuses on their heritage or family history, they also define themselves and others in ways that take into account the various structural forces and conditions affecting their lives in the United States. This was most apparent in the second cycle of interviews, during which the majority of respondents interpreted the passage of recent initiatives, including California's Proposition 187 and 209, as forms of discrimination directed against Latinos. During these interviews, parents across immigration backgrounds described ways in which discrimination and related differential perspectives on language status are implicated in the Spanish language socialization of children of Mexican-descent.<sup>3</sup> For example, when asked about a recent court case involving a judge who prohibited a Latina mother from using Spanish with her five-year-old daughter (a much-publicized and widely-discussed event in the Eastside community during the time of our second set of interviews), parents across immigration groups told us that the judge's decision emanated from racist views toward Latinos.

During both interview sessions, immigrant parents were highly critical of the decisions of parents of Mexican-descent to abandon the use of Spanish with their children, which they cited as the leading cause of language loss in their community, claiming that these decisions emanated from parents' desires to adopt English monolingual norms and Anglo values in an effort to improve their social status in this country. Ms Marti expanded upon this viewpoint when she told us that parents who no longer speak Spanish with their children are to blame for their children's loss of Spanish. She attributed their decision to what she described as the misguided belief that "*Ya son muy altos y no quieren hablar español porque ya son de aquí*" ("Now they are very high class and they don't want to speak Spanish because they are from here"). Similarly, Mrs Ramos argued that language loss occurs "*por causa de los papas*" ("because of parents") who no longer use the language with their children.

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She chastises these parents, saying, "*Que no se te olvide que uno viene de raíces, que uno es latino*" ("Don't forget that you have roots, that you are Latino"). Ms Cornelio conveyed similar sentiments, further arguing that all Spanish-speaking parents, even those who are married to non-Spanish speakers, are responsible for making sure that Spanish is used and learned in their homes:

*Ahorita hay niños que sus papás son hispanos y no hablan nada de español. Es una vergüenza porque si son hispanos por que no les hablan... Yo conozco a muchos hombres en el trabajo y les digo, "Oiga señor su niña es española. Bárbaro. Enséñale. Algn da te lo va a agradecer." "No, pero su mamá no habla español." "Eso que importa."*

(Now there are children whose parents are Hispanic and who don't speak any Spanish. It's a shame because if they are Hispanic why don't they speak to them (in Spanish). I know many men at work and I tell them, "Listen, mister, your daughter is Spanish. How shocking. Teach her. Some day she will thank you." "But her mother doesn't speak Spanish." "That doesn't matter.")

The juxtaposition of this prevailing view among immigrant parents with the views of US-born parents revealed both consistencies and discrepancies. Some parents who were born and/or raised in the United States since childhood mirrored the perspectives of their Mexican-born counterparts, describing Mexicans who abandoned their language and culture as having done so in order to enjoy the benefits that come with becoming or being American. For example, Ms Ochoa conveyed this viewpoint in the following description of her brother:

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

Ms Ochoa, along with the other parents born or raised in the United States since childhood, claimed that she was making sure that her children maintained or recovered Spanish as a means of preserving the children's Mexican identity. The efforts of these parents included using more Spanish in the home and/or seeking opportunities for their children to develop Spanish in educational settings (e.g. second and foreign language classes, exchange programs).

Yet several US-born parents described the difficulties they had experienced growing up in homes where their own parents insisted that they use Spanish. For example, when recounting her own childhood experiences living in a home where her father insisted that his children use Spanish, even in interactions that didn't include him, Ms Menez expressed resentment toward a practice that is supported by many Mexican-born parents. Although Ms Menez wants her two children to maintain their Spanish, she refuses to follow her father's example of insisting that Spanish be the exclusive language of the home. As she describes below, living in a home milieu in which children are obligated to use and maintain their language stifles growth:

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

Like Ms Menez, Ms Duran, another US-born parent, also resented her parents' efforts to insist upon the use of Spanish in conversations with their children. She explained that her own decision to use English in her interactions at home with her parents and siblings grew out of her desire to resist her parents' wishes. In the following excerpt, she describes how renewed interest in Mexican culture and Chicano Power during her late teens and early twenties contributed to transformations in her own language-choice practices:

*Yo no entendía las razones porque yo me sentía enojada de que mis padres me obliguen a aprenderlo. Pero luego cuando entre a la escuela intermedia y la secundaria el movimiento chicano era muy fuerte. Yo recuerdo el orgullo de los afro-americanos y el orgullo del los chicanos. Era un clima político diferente. Así que yo creo que escuche a diferentes personas en la comunidad y reconocí que yo no debía avergonzarme de hablar español. Yo no sabía de donde venía y finalmente reconocí que tenía que venir de las escuelas. ¿Por qué es malo aprender chino? No lo es. ¿Por qué es malo aprender italiano? No lo es. ¿Por qué es malo aprender español? ¿De dónde viene esta actitud? Entonces me enfurecí, y con muchos de mis amigos también era lo mismo. Así que nos juntamos y fue como que regresamos a nuestra comunidad y comenzamos a ir a bailes mexicanos en la iglesia y ver películas mexicanas y cosas así. Fue como que nos sumergimos nuevamente en ella, y fue lindo. Y nos sentimos orgullosos y realizamos, "Ok nadie nos puede quitar ésto." Así que después de enojarse uno, uno regresa y hace lo que uno tiene que hacer para sentir la riqueza de nuestro idioma y la cultura nuevamente. Después uno está libre para escoger uno o el otro.*

(I didn't understand why I felt mad at my parents who obligated me to learn Spanish. But later when I went to middle and secondary school, the Chicano movement was very strong. I remember the pride of the African-Americans and the pride of the Chicanos. It was a political climate that was different. I heard different people in the community and I realized that I shouldn't be ashamed of speaking Spanish. I didn't know where it came from and finally I realized that it had to come from the schools. Then I got mad. And with my friends it was the same. So we got together and returned to our community and began to go to Mexican dances at church and to see Mexican movies and things like that. We submerged ourselves once again in the culture and it was beautiful. And we felt proud and we realized, "Okay, no one is going to take this from us." So after one gets angry, one returns and does what one has to, so that once again, we feel the richness of our language and our culture.)

Contrary to opinions expressed by the majority of immigrant parents, a shift toward English language usage among second- and third-generation households

does not necessarily symbolize the abandonment of Mexican identity. Ms Suarez, a US-born mother married to a man who is a fourth-generation Mexican-American and a monolingual English speaker, focused on the importance of her Mexican origins when describing her views about native-language maintenance and loss. Despite living in a household where family members use English almost exclusively in their dealings with one another, she feels that it is important that her children learn to speak and understand Spanish well “because that’s their native origin. I think it is important that they maintain that.” Yet, her discussion of how her monolingual English-speaking husband considers himself to be Mexican suggests an awareness that the preservation and maintenance of ethnic identity need not be tied to the maintenance and continued use of Spanish.<sup>4</sup> Thus, as indicated by Ms Suarez’s remarks (as well as those of four other US-born parents of children who speak little or no Spanish), Spanish language usage is considered to be an important, though not essential, feature of cultural identity among those who have experienced a shift to English in their language-choice practices and proficiencies.

### **Roles, Responsibilities, and Relationships in the Language Socialization Process at Home: From Parental Obligation to Parental Overload**

Work done in the Eastside community has portrayed the strength of parental influence on children’s Spanish language development, particularly in the early years (Vasquez *et al.*, 1994). Interviews with immigrant and non-immigrant parents reinforce this view, and underscore the role that their use of Spanish plays in language maintenance. Conversely, language loss is attributed to parental decisions to abandon the use of Spanish with their children. Immigrant parents, in particular, reason that the shift toward greater use of English among parents and Spanish-speaking children is linked to the interest of the parents and the children in becoming American, which they view as a subtractive process entailing the abandonment of Mexican cultural traditions and identity.

In addition, parental views about their role as Spanish-language socialization agents emanate, at least in part, from their belief that parental influences are the most important to children’s overall development. Ms Gamarra, Mr Cardona, and Ms Gutierrez believe that parents should bear the burden of responsibility when it comes to children’s academic and intellectual development, including the maintenance and further development of their native languages. All three have adult-centered views of learning and teaching in which they direct the course of their children’s development via lesson-like encounters that they claim to have made routine events in their homes (e.g. assigning extra homework and engaging children in recitation activities focused on a particular skill).

Although most parents said that they were key contributors to their children’s and, in some cases, grandchildren’s ethnolinguistic futures, several mothers discussed the difficulties associated with trying to make sure that their children continued to use and learn Spanish at home. As she implies in the following excerpt,

Ms Cardona feels her influence over her children's actions and development has diminished with age: *"No puedo decirla ya vaya atrás para la escuela [a estudiar español]. Ya es una mama. Y tiene la responsabilidad para su niña. La cosa es que no más ella haga el esfuerzo. No puedo decir mucho"* ("I can't tell her to go back to school [to study Spanish]. She's a mother now. She has the responsibility of her daughter. She has to make the effort. I can't tell her much").

Ms Duran conveyed a similar viewpoint when she spoke of the futility of forcing her child to use Spanish at home. From her vantage point, her daughter Frida must both want and decide to use and learn Spanish. Frida has responded to past efforts to enforce the use of the language at home by getting angry and refusing to use it – something that led to family tensions that Ms Duran felt were unhealthy.

Even Ms Oso, a US-born parent committed to the use of Spanish as a vehicle for language recovery, will not enforce the use of the language in her household despite her own decision to speak to her children exclusively in Spanish. In her discussion of the difficulties associated with enforcing a Spanish-only policy in the home, she brings up the challenges of maintaining a home that is conducive to the maintenance of Spanish. Instead, she holds the view that parents should develop ways to make the use of Spanish at home attractive or appealing to children, rather than an obligation:

*Me ha tocado ver a algunas personas que ya no es una cosa importante si no que es una obligación. Qué les dicen a sus hijos "Tienes que hablar español." También así me tocó con la abuelita de mis hijos. Que ella les decía que cuando ella estaba que era mala educación hablar inglés delante de ella. Yo pienso que no debe ser obligación si no solamente decirles que es importante por ellos mismos.*

(I have seen some people for whom it [speaking Spanish at home] isn't important, but an obligation. What do they tell their children. "You have to speak Spanish." Also I had this experience with my children's grandmother. She told them that when she was around it was rude to speak English in front of her. I think that it shouldn't be an obligation if you can only tell them that it is important for their own good.)

During the 1996–98 interviews, several mothers spoke of how the economic challenges that they faced prevented them from taking active roles in their children's Spanish language socialization. For example, in her first interview in 1992, Ms Garrido shared her belief that she should be the primary language-socialization agent available to her children. While she felt teachers could offer some support, she considered herself to be the one adult ultimately responsible for making sure her five children continued to develop and maintain their Spanish. Subsequently, however, economic circumstances (in part due to the disappearance of her husband) had worsened, making it necessary for her to do two jobs outside the home. Although she described her efforts to further her children's Spanish language maintenance (trips to the library, purchase of Spanish language books), she was adamant that schools also needed to make sure that Latino children continued to develop and maintain Spanish. This was especially important, given that women like herself were no longer available to assume full-time care-giving roles.

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Although the sentiments conveyed above may also be shared by the fathers of some of the youngsters, the mothers interviewed for this project felt that they were the ones most responsible for making sure that their children learned or recovered Spanish. This was particularly clear in the case of those households headed by a single mother or by a mother who was the only Spanish-speaking adult family member at home. (No households were headed by a single father.) Two complained that the task was difficult, given their heavy work demands. Ms Suarez, the only Spanish-speaking adult living in her household, describes how the need to work has hindered her efforts to help her children recover their Spanish:

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

Ms Colon, who is married to a man she describes as a monolingual Spanish speaker, also clearly felt that it was her responsibility to make sure that her children "got their Spanish back," despite the fact that she feels more at ease using English in her conversations with them. During her first interview, she mentioned that she was relying mostly on English in her conversations with her children. But during the second interview she said that she was making an effort to use more Spanish with her younger children, saying that she had realized that it was up to her to change her language practices in order to ensure that her children would continue using and developing their Spanish. From her vantage point, her tendency to use English with her children had contributed to their loss of Spanish and to a rift in their relationship with their father, which she felt contributed to her daughter's decision to run away from home:

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

Mothers may feel particularly compelled to play a pivotal role in their children's native language maintenance and development as a result of cultural expectations



about their role in the socialization process. These expectations may exert a level of pressure on them that is not felt by fathers (Griffith & Schechter, 1998). While parents were not systematically asked to compare the child-raising responsibilities of mothers and fathers, we do know that gendered patterns of responsibility associated with child raising operate in the Eastside community (Vasquez *et al.*, 1994). Moreover, many mothers spoke of the difficulties they had making sure that their children were adequately cared for while they were at work, thereby conveying their understanding that they were their children's primary caretakers.<sup>5</sup>

### Shifting Expectations about Schooling and Language

Despite the beliefs of parents that they should assume an important role in their children's native language socialization, most of the parents interviewed also felt that Spanish should play a role in some aspect of the schools' curricula. When making this point, some parents argued that life circumstances made it difficult for them to find time to teach their children Spanish, thereby revealing their own sense of obligation regarding who should take on the responsibility of supporting their children's Spanish language development. Ms Arana, a single mother and full-time machinist working a swing-shift schedule (from 3pm to 11pm) said that it was difficult for her to spend time with her children engaged in activities that she feels would support their development of Spanish, particularly literacy. Like many other parents, she reasoned that schools could take on some of this responsibility even if it took the form of a single hour-long class each day.

Quantitative findings from these interviews revealed some change over time in parents' views on this topic. In particular, a smaller percentage of parents in the 1996–98 interviews considered it important or very important for their children to have teachers and principals who spoke and understood Spanish than in the initial interviews in 1991–92. When responding to the question regarding which language, if any, they wished were emphasized in their children's schools, during the second interviews a larger percentage of parents favored English than during the initial interviews. Yet during both interviews, the majority of parents felt it was appropriate to initially place monolingual Spanish-speaking children in instructional settings where they could communicate with their teachers and receive at least some content-area instruction in a language they understood. When explaining this view, they cited two reasons: young children feel more comfortable at school when they can use their native language, and they are better able to engage with the academic curriculum.

Parents who had changed their opinions across interview sessions were asked to explain why during the second set of interviews they advocated a greater role for English in their children's schools than they had previously. Some parents explained their shift in views by telling us that Spanish need not occupy such an important role in their children's schooling and classrooms now since their children had learned enough English to be able to participate in an English-only or a

primarily-English curriculum. Others said that it was time for teachers and schools to emphasize English because they were worried that their children had not learned enough English in previous grades to succeed in the English-medium curriculum that would be available to them once they reached middle and/or high school.

Still other parents had changed their views about bilingual education based on their children's experiences in bilingual classes. The most frequently-voiced concern focused on the teachers' lack of Spanish language ability. Several parents claimed that their children's teachers spoke "*un español mocho*" ("a broken Spanish") and were not proficient readers and writers of Spanish, citing the errors that teachers made in the notes they sent home, or the comments they wrote on children's papers. Ms Santos, a proponent of the district's bilingual education policy, raised this concern and its implications for students' academic achievement. She felt that teachers' inadequate Spanish language abilities contributed to the difficulties that children of Mexican descent were experiencing in Eastside schools. Ms Alponete reflected similar sentiments when she said that her children will never attain through bilingual education classes taught by Anglo teachers who are not proficient in Spanish the native levels of Spanish language proficiency that she values and wants for them. Consequently, she feels it makes more sense for these teachers to teach in English and to support the children's English language development – a goal more in line with what she perceives to be the teachers' own linguistic abilities.

Some parents also expressed the view that the bilingual classes in the Eastside district did not focus on the skills and subject matter that they felt constituted a strong academic program. When voicing their concerns, they made comparisons with the kind of education available in Mexico, and argued that the curriculum in Eastside schools was less rigorous than that found in Mexican schools or that Eastside teachers did not expect Mexican children to do well in school. Ms Ortiz, for example, said that, unlike schools in the western sector of the school district where the Latino population was less prevalent, Eastside schools are academically "lower" because "they are trying to concentrate on the English-Spanish part while they're not getting the math and the real other things." Mr Cardona and Ms Gamarra, the only two parents who described themselves as opponents of bilingual education, concurred with this line of reasoning. They took it a step further when they argued that bilingual education was racist because it was based on the assumption that Mexican or Latino children could not learn English.

Despite these shifts toward attaching a somewhat greater importance to English in the curriculum, in the later interviews a higher percentage of respondents than in the earlier interviews said that they wanted their children to receive at least some instruction in Spanish. A similar pattern emerged regarding parents' responses to whether or not they felt the school should play a role in preventing the loss of Spanish among Latino children. Several advocated the inclusion of special Spanish language classes in the curriculum as a means to further development of the language as well as to combat its loss. When describing these classes, parents referred to them as a dedicated period of time during the school day, usually no



more than an hour, when teachers would focus on Spanish reading, writing, and/or grammar. Even parents opposed to bilingual education felt that their children as well as those of other Latinos should have access to Spanish language classes.

### **A Sociocultural Perspective on Parental Views**

In contrast to recent media portrayals of parental views on bilingual education, research that draws on a sociocultural perspective on learning has yielded a complex and multifaceted account of bilingual language socialization. Because this view of learning acknowledges the complex dynamic that exists between social context and experience, it situates individuals' within a web of macro and micro practices and ecologies that constitute the materials that they use to construct, transform, and express their beliefs and understandings.

Conversations with parents revealed how changes in their everyday experiences, personal and collective histories, and structural forces and conditions converge and combine to define and shape their perspectives on their children's bilingualism and bilingual language socialization, thereby providing a better understanding of how changes in cultural practice and perspectives emerge. Not surprisingly, the interviews reveal that transformations in parents' perspectives on language accompany changes in their own lives and in the social contexts in which they live. For instance, upon their arrival in this country, immigrants draw on their past histories to interpret and construct new ways of participating in families and communities, a process that is reflected in their reference to Mexican cultural values and structural forces. As they experience life in US communities characterized by different institutional constraints and accompanying social relationships, some parents construct new dispositions toward language and learning. In some cases these transformations emerge through a negotiation of past histories and ongoing experiences. For example, over time the commitment of several parents to their Mexican heritage has been intensified through their experiences as members of subordinated groups in the United States. For some, language socialization practices that favor the continued use and maintenance of Spanish are interpreted as a means of resisting a social milieu that they feel disparages the Spanish language and Mexican culture.

Other transformations occurred across the generations in response to what parents themselves experienced in their homes growing up in Eastside or in other communities in the United States. Most noteworthy are reports by US-born parents of the frustration that they felt living in homes where their parents attempted to enforce Spanish-only policies. Interestingly, two of these individuals have decided not to follow the language socialization practices of their parents, citing a variety of reasons centered on their dissatisfaction with the ensuing family dynamics and relationships that they felt contributed to such a strictly enforced policy. In contrast, one parent is making deliberate efforts to use more Spanish with her children in