

Intra-ethnic attitudes toward language maintenance within a Hispanic community in the South

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Organization of Presentation

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Literature Review
- ▶ Motivation and Research Question
- ▶ Methodology
 - Participants
 - Data Collection Instruments
- Results
 - Quantitative
 - Qualitative
- ▶ Discussion and Conclusions
- ▶ Limitations / Future Research

Language Attitudes

- ▶ Fasold (1984)– ‘Language attitudes reflect attitudes toward speakers of a particular language or dialect as well as attitudes toward the language itself.’
- ▶ A current example
 - Testimony in Texas
- ▶ And this is an area with a long history of Spanish influence, contact, and immigration!
 - What about other areas?

Literature Review

- ▶ Early Work – Structural in Nature
 - Elías-Olivares (1976) – Spanish and English in contact areas can be considered a continuum of structures and components.
- ▶ Social Psychology
 - Carranza and Ryan (1975) and Ryan and Carranza (1975, 1977) found that English (esp. w/o accent) was more positively perceived
 - Flores and Hopper (1975); Solé (1977); Amastae and Elías-Olivares (1978) investigated Chicano reactions to Mexican, Chicano and Anglo varieties –
 - Similar findings to above cited work, although w/ variation to degree of negative perception
 - Brennan and Brennan (1981) had similar results with accented speech
- ▶ Perception of bilingualism, attitudes, and language shift
 - Orstein 1974; Barker 1975; Hernández Chávez, Cohen and Beltramo 1975; Sawyer 1975; Carranza 1982; Sánchez 1983
 - Negative attitudes toward Spanish and these encouraged language attrition and shift

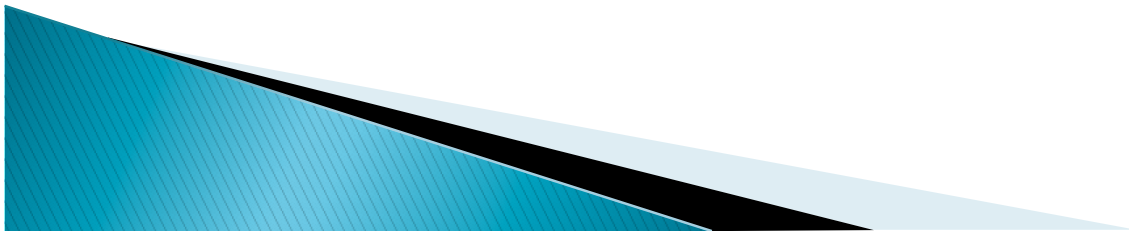
Literature Review

► Sociolinguistic

- Elías–Olivares (1976) also included attitudinal aspects
 - Attitudes change with successive generations, with great variation
- Peñalosa (1980) and Ornstein–Galicia (1987) both found similar results with attitudes toward Caló and ‘popular’ Spanish
- Zentella (1981, 1990) found differences in lexical choice in NYC, due in part by attitude toward Spanish and other Hispanics
- Galindo (1987, 1991, 1993, 1995) found that there were inter– and intra–ethnic negative perceptions, although with variation
- Rivera–Mills (2000) found an increase in negative perceptions in 2nd and 3rd generations, as well as less allegiance to Spanish

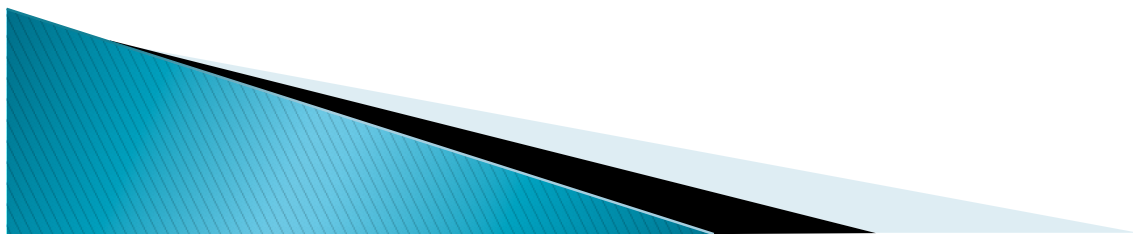
Literature Review

- ▶ The majority of findings show that negative perception of Spanish and Spanish Accented English exists
 - Increases with generational change and social class
 - Increases language attrition and shift (although this is variable)
 - Stigmatized intra- and inter-ethnically
- ▶ The clear majority of research was performed in “Traditional” Areas
 - Southwest, West, Florida, Metropolitan Areas (e.g. NYC, Chicago)
- ▶ What about other regions?



Motivation and Research Questions

- ▶ There are no studies in “Non-traditional” Areas
 - Areas with limited historical Spanish contact, influence, and immigration
- ▶ From 2000–2010, Hispanic population in SC rose by 148%, according to 2010 Census data (Free Times, Issue 24, May 2011).
- ▶ Yet, no studies on linguistic attitudes have been carried out in the Southeast of the US (North, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia)



Undocumented Population in S.C.: Small and Declining



Since 2007, according to a Pew Hispanic Center study released in February, the state's undocumented immigrant population has fallen 21 percent. Undocumented immigrants account for just 1.2 percent of the state's population.

- ▶ Undocumented portion of Hispanic population accounts for 1.2% of SC's total population (over 4.5 million)
- ▶ That portion has decreased by 21%

Taken from Free Times (Issue 24, "Adiós, Amigos," May 2011)

Motivation and Research Questions

- ▶ Research Questions:

1. How are intra-ethnic linguistic attitudes expressed within a group of 1st-generation Hispanic immigrants in the Columbia, SC metropolitan area?
2. How are inter-ethnic linguistic attitudes expressed within a group of 1st-generation Hispanic immigrants in the Columbia, SC area?
3. Is there a difference in attitude toward language maintenance between parents and participants without children?

Methodology

- ▶ Questionnaires
 - Participant Observers – distributed after working for almost an entire term as tutors/conversation partners
- ▶ Questions
 - General Demographic Information
 - Likert Scale Attitude Questions
 - Example: Para mí, es importante que mis hijos aprendan español.
 - Open-Ended Questions
 - ¿Por qué?
 - Multiple Choice
 - En casa, prefiero hablar: español, inglés, no tengo preferencia

Methodology

▶ Participants

- Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced ESL students at a community program in Columbia, SC
- N= 27 out of original pool of 32
- 8 male, 19 female
- Mean age: 30
- ESL levels:
 - n=10 beginners
 - n= 7 intermediates
 - n= 10 advanced
- Countries of origin: Mexico (16), Guatemala (4), Honduras (1), No response (6)
- Average length of time in USA: 7.4 yrs

Results

- Quantitative
- Qualitative

Question 8

See Handout

Qualitative Data

#8, N=22 Prefer Sp>Eng

Affective reasons: dislike English, Spanish is my language.	53.3%
Spanish skills are good. English skills are not good.	46.7%

Affective reasons: like English, want to learn English.	57.2%
Instrumental reasons: English is necessary	42.8%
Language skills	0%

Participants who responded 'yes'
n=15

Participants who responded 'no'
n=7

Question 10

See Handout

Question 12

See Handout

Qualitative Data

#12, N=27 (Lang. maint)

Importance of being bilingual	33.3%
It's my language, part of my identity	29.2%
Wish for children to maintain Spanish	20.8%
Opportunities to "make it" in the US and around the world	12.5%
Important upon return to country of origin	4.2%

Participants who agreed/strongly agreed
n=24

You don't need Spanish in the US	66.7%
Indifferent	33.3%

Participants who were indifferent or disagreed
n=3

Question 13

See Handout

Qualitative Data

#13, N=27* (some gave more than one answer)

Want children to learn Spanish

Want them to be bilingual	33.3%
Because they are from _____; it's part of their heritage/language	29.6%
Important for their future (job, education)	22.2%
To communicate with family members back home; for when they move back home	14.8%

Participants who agreed or strongly agreed
n=24

It's just important to speak other languages	33.3%
Indifferent; no children	33.3%
Children already speak Spanish at home, so prefer that they learn English	33.3%

Participants who were indifferent or disagreed
n=3

Question 14

See Handout

Qualitative Data

#14, N=27 Prefer for children Eng > Sp

Prefer that children speak both languages	50%
Better job opportunities	25%
Because this (USA) is where we live	25%

Parents can teach Spanish to children, so English takes precedence	75%
Prefer that children speak both languages	15%
Indifferent, no children	5%
Because this (USA) is where we live	5%
Better job opportunities	0%

Participants who agreed or strongly agreed
n=4

Participants who were indifferent or disagreed
n=20

Question 16

See Handout

Qualitative Data

#16, N=21 Is your Sp better?

Depends on level of education.	50%
To each his own	33.3%
Some speak in a dialect	16.7%

Indifferent	53.8%
We speak the same	46.2%

There's just other ways of saying things	100%
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Participants who
were indifferent
n=13

Participants who
agreed or strongly
agreed
n=6

Participants who
were disagreed or
strongly disagreed
n=2

Question 21

See Handout

Qualitative Data

#21, N=17 Is Sp > Engl

Both are <i>important</i>	33.3%
In Spanish I am able to convey my message better	66.6%

Both are <i>important</i>	75%
Spanish has fewer homonyms	25%

Participants who
were indifferent
n=4

Participants who
agreed or strongly
agreed
n=3

Both are <i>important</i>	70%
English is more important even in my own country	20%
Spanish is a worse language because it was colonized by Spain	10%

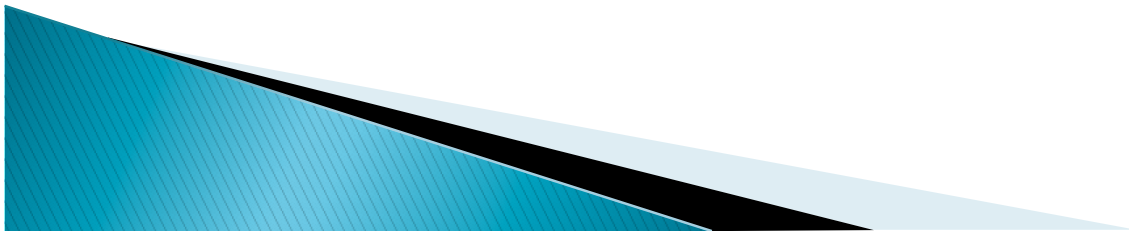
Participants who
were disagreed or
strongly disagreed
n=10

Conclusions

- ▶ Preference for a language (#8): affective reasons *and* instrumental reasons.
- ▶ Language maintenance (# 10, 12, 13): favored it for instrumental reasons and as identity marker.
- ▶ Inter-ethnic attitudes toward English (#14, 21): inconclusive results. Approx 21% mentioned importance of bilingualism for children.
- ▶ Intra-ethnic attitudes (#16): The majority was neutral or did not think there were better or worse varieties.
 - Those who mentioned a difference between varieties spoke of education as a determining factor.

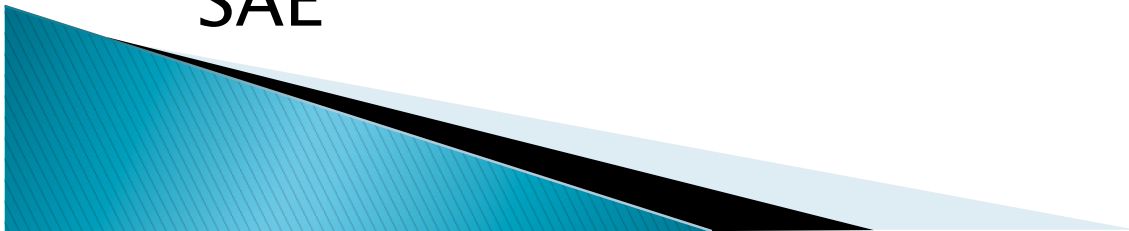
Discussion

- ▶ Those with children seem to be more aware of the necessity of English, yet also desire a maintenance of Spanish
 - Internal conflict?
- ▶ Comparison with past studies
 - Identity and Maintenance – Carranza 1982
 - Inter-ethnic Attitudes – Galindo 1995
- ▶ Differences with past studies
 - Intra-ethnic – Rivera-Mills 2000



Limitations / Future Research

- ▶ Small pool of participants
- ▶ Interviews to follow up, triangulate information and collect more accurate data.
- ▶ Length of time // different generations
- ▶ Difference between English proficiency levels
- ▶ Different pool of participants (e.g. 2nd generation, different age group)
- ▶ English Speaker's reactions to Spanish and SAE



Thank you!

Any questions?

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