

LANGUAGE CHOICE IN EL PASO, TEXAS

By

KAREN YVETTE CHAVIRA

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Thesis Approved:

Dennis Preston

Thesis Adviser

Gene Halleck

Ravi Sheorey

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Name: KAREN YVETTE CHAVIRA

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Abstract: A complex language pattern exists in El Paso Texas: bilingual residents are capable of manipulating Spanish and English and a combination of the two, a code known as Spanglish. Attitudes to these different codes vary widely in the community. The present study compares men and women, two different age groups (18-25 and 55-87), and the working and middle classes by means of a questionnaire that included 21 scenarios identifying interlocutor identity and asked the respondents to select English, Spanish, or Spanglish or any combination of these three for the language they would choose for each scenario. The results show that, although English is dominant, many participants selected the combination of English and Spanish (in twenty scenarios). The Spanish only option was selected in eighteen of the scenarios, and Spanglish was selected, although very infrequently, in seventeen. Overall, the participants demonstrated that they use both Spanish and English only in some scenarios but a combination of both languages equally in others. The details of language choices for specific scenarios and for the demographic groups are considered in detail.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The goals of the study

Bilingualism continues to be an important public concern throughout the United States. At the individual level, many bilinguals often use two (or more) languages, and many may not even realize that they insert words or phrases from the one language into the other. Many factors play a role in an individual uses the languages he or she knows, ranging from the bilingual's ability in each of their languages to the types of situations they find themselves in, the focus of this study. Gal's (1978) study of language choice (Hungarian and German) in eastern Austria is the model for this study, which attempts to learn the language choices (Spanish, English, Spanglish) residents of El Paso, Texas, make when they come in contact with different individuals in their everyday lives. Specifically, this study seeks to determine what interlocutor identities will cause respondents to prefer Spanish, English, or Spanglish (or any combination of the three).

I chose El Paso, Texas, because it is my hometown and because it is one of the largest border towns between Mexico and the United States. I grew up acquiring both languages and struggled with the language norms of the community and constantly wondering what my own cultural identity was. My father was very strict and insisted on

my speaking only one language at a time — never mixing them. I often brought home notes from school that were translated into Spanish, and my father and I would sit down and count how many words were translated incorrectly. The idea of speaking proper Spanish was very important to him, and this meant that introducing English into my Spanish was not acceptable. This mentality is shared among many other residents of El Paso, so it was not odd that I grew up with the notion that mixing Spanish and English was taboo and signified that one was not well educated. As I grew older, I began to see that at times it was inevitable that one would use both languages in the same situation and with the same interlocutor. My friends and peers were doing it; I even noticed it among teachers and other adults. I began to realize that it was important to know when it was acceptable to use English, Spanish, Spanglish and combinations of the three.

I especially became interested in the use of Spanglish. Although Spanish and English are the dominant languages in the community, as a member of this community, I knew that Spanglish was also widely used. Although most of the residents of El Paso have been exposed to Spanish and English in one way or another, Spanglish has in some way become the unofficial language of the city. Even if a few individuals chose not to use Spanglish, someone close to them certainly was using it; it was unavoidable. As a result, I have become especially interested in discovering the perception people have when they use or hear someone using Spanglish.

I also want to know how the members of the community feel about the constant presence of Spanish associated with immigrants coming from Mexico. El Paso has had not only an increase of residents from the other side of the border, Ciudad Juarez, but also a constant increase in tourism from central Mexico, some of whom go to El Paso to shop

or visit family.

I also want to explore whether language choice affects the identity of the bilingual community in El Paso. If because El Pasoans speak Spanish, English, and Spanglish in a variety of scenarios, do they feel that they are part of one culture more strongly than the other, or do they rather feel they have created their own culture due at least in part to this linguistic variation. I believe the roles of status and age will be important in such considerations. Finally, just as in Gal's work, I want to compare men and women to help confirm the idea that El Paso shares the attitude about the superiority of one language over another, as is obviously the case in the German-Hungarian bilingual area Gal studied in eastern Austria.

Since I have been a member of this community for at least 18 years, I have life-experience information regarding different scenarios in which the participants could alternate or combine languages, and I also adapted some of the scenarios used in Gal's study. I provided the subjects with a 21-question survey that included these different scenarios with the option of selecting English, Spanish, Spanglish, or any combination of the three. After the survey was completed, I interviewed each of the participants to have them elaborate on their answers and to clear up any misunderstandings that arose during the completion of the survey.

My hypothesis before conducting the study was that the younger generation would admit not only to a greater use of Spanglish but also to a greater use of any combination of Spanish and English, unlike the older generation, which I thought would condemn not only the use of Spanglish but also any kind of code-switching. I also suspected that the older generation would blame the younger generation not only for

using Spanglish but also for any changes that have taken place in Spanish itself. As for status, I assumed that the working class would report a more frequent use of Spanglish and code-switching, unlike the middle class, who would prefer the use of one language at a time and avoid the combination of the two. I also believed that the younger generation would report more English use, although as suggested above, not exclusive use, in most of the scenarios presented since Spanish is not being taught intensively in the local schools; as a result, the older generation is more likely to prefer Spanish in most of the cases because Spanish continues to be their dominant language. I also believed women would prefer to keep both languages separated due to the usual agreement among sociolinguists that women prefer standard or prescriptively oriented speech. Overall, I expected only a few of the participants would select Spanglish.

B. Cultural background

In this section I briefly outline language use in the Southwest of the United States and how bilingual speakers are affected by the norms for such use. In addition, I give a short history of code-switching and the effects it has had on the border town community of El Paso. I then elaborate on Susan Gal's German-Hungarian study as the basis of my study. In addition, I describe the method I used to select and develop the categories that were included in the survey, show why each was essential for the survey and explain how each of the subjects was selected and give a brief biographical information about each one.

I go on to discuss how the data was analyzed and show comparisons of the results for both the individual scenarios and demographic groups, using individual graphs to illustrate the answers that all the participants gave for each of the scenarios. I include a

discussion of the post-task interviews, remarking on what some of the participants had to say when they were interviewed about their language preferences and confronted about what appeared to be inconsistencies in their survey responses. Finally, I focus on the roles and uses of English, Spanish and Spanglish and the impact it has on the community.

1. Historical and general literature review

a. Spanish and English

The large number of immigrants constantly coming to the United States may help maintain the high levels of preservation of Spanish, and this may indicate that language shift does not begin to occur until the first generation of Hispanics is born in the United States. In their 2000 study, Garland, Hudson, & Hernandez Chavez's main goal was to find the correlation between the incidence of language maintenance in Spanish used at home and the proficiency level of English. The study demonstrated an inclination towards Anglicization even in the first generation. "In the immigrant generation, however, Spanish claiming remains consistently high while English proficiency increases dramatically" (p.26). These results illustrate the fact that the shift from Spanish to English occurs early on, even within the immigrant generation, although claiming that Spanish is spoken at home does not provide enough evidence to confirm early language shift for the immigrant population (2000). Another study, by Hudson-Edwards and Bills, shows that the lack of proficiency in one language can demonstrate fair proficiency in the other. However, other findings show that if the person is dominant in English language and uses it frequently, this can indicate low proficiency in Spanish (1982). In short, the exact status of Spanish-to-English transfer among US Hispanics is not known.

Even if Spanish is preserved, a question about its identity can be asked. Otheguy, Zentella, & Livert (2007) conducted a study that analyzed dialect contact in New York among Spanish speakers from six different groups. The main group consisted of Caribbean speakers (Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and Cubans), but there was also a mainland group that included Mexicans, Colombians, and Ecuadorians and of these groups frequently interact with one another in New York. The researchers speculated whether the different dialects in the city became weaker over time or simply blended together and

“...demonstrate that both dialect contact and language contact play a role in forming the special character of Spanish in NYC by leveling its dialectal differences and shifting its pattern of promoting the formation of a New York Spanish speech community in the second generation” (Otheguy, Zentella, & Livert, 2007, p.771).

In spite of such uniqueness, Spanish still displays a linguistic unity; i.e., it has not yet broken down into unintelligible dialects (Ornstein, 1970). Olstad points out that a local Spanish speaker from El Paso del Norte can clearly communicate with a Spanish speaker from Tierra del Fuego and that the main difference would be lexical in nature (1973). The same may be said for the Spanish of El Paso; although it does not have varied dialect input, it differs only marginally from the linguistic unity of the language suggested above.

It is more difficult to determine the English dialect that is spoken in many bilingual Spanish-English communities. Children living in the Southwestern US learn the language from their parents and others in the Mexican-American community who speak an English dialect that reflects regional patterns. In the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez-Las Cruces area, the dialect spoken there is referred to as “border English” and “this is not to imply

that border English is the same as the dialect found in Tucson, although it may have elements in common” (Redlinger, 1976 p. 44).

Although it is often difficult to clearly identify the local dialects of both Spanish and English in such communities, the main sociolinguistic problem may be to identify the difference between the individuals’ language and what the community accepts. Clyne states that the problem is to “... differentiate between a regular part of an individual’s language (idiolect) and something that is shared by the whole community (sociolect)” (1972, p.11). Determining the degree of acceptance of the varieties in the El Paso community is one of the goals of this study.

Regardless of the specific variety used, Spanish immigrants to urban areas like Los Angeles facilitate the use of Spanish there (Garcia, 2003). In addition to this, the economic power that the Spanish speaking immigrants have in the US has promoted services in Spanish that allows them to communicate with each other without having to learn English (Lynch, 2008). In a study conducted by Villa and Villa (2005) in border towns in the United States, they concluded that 88% of the businesses hire bilingual employees to attend to the customers who speak Spanish.

b. Code-Switching and Spanglish

When one language appears in or appears to influence another, this is referred to as “interference,” which Weinreich defines as “... instances of deviation from the norm of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language” (1963, p.1). In recent times, there has been movement away from the term “interference” because of its negative connotation (Fishman, 1971).

Clyne, for example, uses the term “transfer,” which he defines as “adoption of elements from another language” (1967, p. 19). “Borrowing” has also been suggested, and Haugen (1972) defines the term as “... an attempt to reproduce in one language, patterns that have previously been found in another” (p. 75). Although many suggestions have been made to replace the term “interference” Weinreich insists on differentiating between borrowing and a case of actual interference of one language on the other (Redlinger, 1976). On the other hand, code-switching is “distinguishable from the category of transference in that it involves an unassimilated word phrase, sentence, or paragraph introduced into a speech event” (Redlinger, 1976), or it is simply “the alternation of two languages” (Valdes, 1976 p. 53). Gumperz divided the phenomenon into two different types: situational and metaphorical switching. *Situational switching* occurs when there is “...a simple almost one-to-one relationship...” (1982, p. 61) between the code and the nonlinguistic features (i.e., the situation broadly defined). *Metaphorical switching* is not predictable from these nonlinguistic features and seems to involve speaker choice, often one that even seems contrary to the code choice demanded by the situation. It most likely serves identity and in-group versus out-group establishing functions.

Haugen (1956) believes, however, that code-switching is indicative of a process — the first part of the three stages of diffusion; after code-switching, interference follows and concludes with integration. Many (e.g., Bullock and Toribio) believe that code-switching can possibly influence language: “that is, that the structure produced when bilinguals engage in CS may reflect small but significant linguistic changes relative to their own monolingual productions” (2008, p. 190). They also argue that the two languages that a bilingual uses to communicate cannot be expected to be invariable as in

a monolingual system. Instead, both languages can work together and demonstrate a larger repertoire of forms. They go on to state that bilinguals' language practices "...are probably not reducible just to differences in proficiency or language dominance" (p. 190).

Code-switching can be intersentential or intrasentential. Toribio (2001) illustrates this in the following:

(1) *Erase una vez una linda princesita blanca como la nieve. Her stepmother, the queen, had a magic mirror on the wall.*

Translation: Once upon a time there was a beautiful princess as white as the snow. Her stepmother, the queen, had a magic mirror on the wall.

(2) Por la noche, los siete enanitos found her on the ground, seemingly dead.

Translation: At night, the seven dwarves/found her on the ground, seemingly dead" (Toribio, 2001, p. 404).

In (1) the switch between Spanish and English is intersentential; in (2), it is intrasentential, but studies have demonstrated that the apparently "disrupted" grammar of intrasentential code-switching is rule-governed and systematic. Jacobson (1977, p. 229) explains that "utterances containing elements from two languages follow specific patterns of co-occurrence and display the same rule-governed behavior that we normally associate with unilingual code." Bilinguals are not educated on how code-switching works grammatically, but just as monolinguals in any language, they have intuitions about correctness or incorrectness. Bhatia and Ritchie state that the challenge in the research for code-switching "...is not whether or not it is subject to grammatical constraints but how best to capture these constraints and how to make deeper claims about human language in

general and bilinguals' mixing competence and their language acquisition in particular" (1996, p. 645).

One byproduct of code-switching in some communities would appear to be a third code. Hispanic citizens who live in the United States may use what is often called Spanglish to communicate with one another (Otheguy & Stern, 2011), and the distinction between code-switching and "Spanglish" is not an easy one to make. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2013) states that Spanglish is "Spanish marked by numerous borrowings from English; *broadly*: any of various combinations of Spanish and English." On the other hand, the Oxford Dictionary (2013) defines Spanglish as "a hybrid language combining words and idioms from both Spanish and English, especially Spanish speech that uses many English words and expressions" and labels Spanglish "informal." In Lipski (2004), states that the constant leak of languages in a bilinguals speaker life is inevitable because of the constant contact that junk Spanish and American culture have with each other, making Spanish difficult to study in the United States and to determine the definition of Spanglish (p. 16). My El Paso participants gave their opinion about their identity of Spanglish, and that is the important fact here, regardless of linguistic determinations, for example, a 25 year old male stated "Spanglish to me is speaking English and going into Spanish in every other word," a clear indication that he believes that the variety is something like intrasentential code-switching. A 75 year old male was asked what Spanglish was and responded "that's what we speak in the border" perhaps indicating his belief that it is a different variety. Many female respondents described Spanglish as the "mixture of Spanish and English," while a 74 year old participant proudly said "that's my language I guess" and "speaking both in English and Spanish in

one sentence,” apparently with no difficulty in believing that intrasentential co-switching constituted a different variety. I will stick to that local definition (in spite of Lipski’s characterization) since the belief that Spanglish is a separate variety is obviously common in the El Paso community: perhaps even more importantly, my respondents did not hesitate in answering my questionnaire in terms of the label “Spanglish” indicating that from them the use of the term to indicate a choice among ways of speaking in El Paso was a valid one.

However, people often are ashamed of admitting that in fact they use Spanglish. According to Otheguy and Stern, the term Spanglish is “used to refer to popular forms of the language of many Hispanics...a misleading term that sows confusion about the Spanish language and its speakers” (2011, p.85). The authors also describe how Spanish itself in the US is often seen as having a “hybrid character,” in contrast to the picture of linguistic unity described above. This view of US Spanish as characterized by its mixing with English ultimately separates its speakers from other Spanish speakers in the rest of the world, marking them as speakers of what many consider a undesirable variety.

It is important to mention that Spanglish, whatever its exact linguistic composition, is not used in written form; its main use is for “...casual oral registers, especially though not exclusively when used by Latinos who seldom or never use Spanglish for writing” (Otheguy & Stern, 2011, p. 86). Nevertheless, Spanglish can be seen positively by Hispanics when trying to identify with one another, perhaps particularly for solidarity, although it must be admitted that it is a major source of ridicule, and Hispanics in the United States often reluctantly admit to not speaking proper Spanish and only speaking Spanglish: “It is commonly assumed that Spanglish is a

bastard jargon: part Spanish and part English, with neither gravitas nor a clear identity” (Stavans, 2000b, p.7). In short, in spite of Zentella’s claim that Hispanic people in the United States often use Spanglish with pride and for solidarity; most would rather say they speak Spanish instead of Spanglish. “Using the word Spanglish is an unfortunate way to deprive the Latin American community of an important path to advancement: the potential to master formal spoken and written Spanish, an outcome that is far more likely if one conceives of one’s own language as a local form of Spanish rather than as a different language called Spanglish” (Otheguy & Stern, 2011, p. 86).

In addition to English-Spanish bilingualism and Spanglish, a number of families in the Southwest are bilingual in only a transitional way; that is, their children may only learn Spanish temporarily until going to an English dominant school. These children become dominant English speakers and soon monolinguals. Texas school systems encourage minorities to quickly learn English but do not encourage the continuation of the mother tongue. On the other hand, this situation does not always apply to the border towns in the Southwest because of the “continued immigration from Mexico and on private social networks rooted in extended families and Mexican-American colonias” (Pletsch De Garcia, 2006, p.1). In some parts of the US Spanish is passed on to a third generation due to the constant use at home and their surroundings. Nonetheless, “in most cases the language is a greatly diminished flame, and in others, mere embers of the speech-ways that their grandparents brought with them to the USA” (Otheguy & Stern, 2011, p. 86). This is known as the pattern of displacement, in which the first generation is monolingual in one language, Spanish, the second generation is bilingual, Spanish and English, and the third generation is monolingual English speakers. Displacement of

language has been characterizing previous communities of immigrant speakers, completing the cycle with the third generation.

On the other hand, a study conducted by Poplack (1980) of Spanish and English in a Puerto Rican community in East Harlem shows how it appears to be a stable bilingual community on the basis of a circulatory pattern of constant migration and has not transitioned into a monolingual English community. According to Poplack, if Spanish language and culture were to survive in the United States, it would be in close communities which exclude all other ethnicities. In what follows I will discuss these characteristics of Spanish, English, Spanglish, and language maintenance and attrition in the Southwest and El Paso.

c. Studies related to the Southwest and El Paso

In the Southwest Spanish speakers are less influenced by the local culture and language and have been able to maintain their own for almost four centuries (Christian, 1966). Four factors that Redlinger (1976) describes that are significant to the strong persistence that immigrants have in the Southwest are these: 1) the proximity this area has to Mexico, 2) the idea that some immigrants come for a short period of time and refuse to learn English during their stay, 3) a close relation with family members that continue to live on the other side of the border, and 4) the insistence by both Anglos and Mexican-Americans on maintaining traditions separate from one another, preventing understanding between the cultures or the assimilation of either group.

According to Haugen (1972, p.66) “A bilingual comes into being because he is subject to linguistic pressure from speakers of two languages rather than one.” In the case of the residents of the Southwest, they receive pressure from their home culture, Mexico, and from the U.S. Mexican-Americans are constantly debating whether to maintain their culture or assimilate to Anglo culture, and speaking English and clearly communicating with Anglos pressures Mexican-Americans to learn English and often devalues the preservation of Spanish for future generations. However, some Mexican Americans in the Southwest have fought to maintain Spanish, at least in a spoken form, in the face of Anglo discouragement and at times even prevention of the use of it.

The language maintenance or the shift of Spanish in the southwest among the Hispanics is based on the language spoken at home and the numbers reported by the U.S. Census. Garland, Hudson, & Hernandez Chavez reported that in “Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, not only are there large numbers of Spanish speakers, but also that the rate of Spanish language use in the home by Hispanics is quite high” (2000, pp.11-12). It is reported that around 12 million people in these five states are Hispanic and 10 million report speaking Spanish at home. In Texas around 89.9% are from a Hispanic origin and 3,444,106 speak Spanish at home, which gives some evidence that Spanish is being maintained.

According to Teschner (1995) El Paso is a linguistic island for a great percentage of the Mexican-Americans who must learn English but at the same time cannot afford to lose their Spanish. At the present time, it would be unrealistic to suppose that the use of one language will exclude the use of the other in El Paso. Although it seems that Spanish has been displaced, it does not appear that English has become the only language used in

El Paso. In fact some studies suggest that the use of both languages has become more stable and better managed over time (Amastae, 1982). A study conducted by Anderson Mejias (2005) in south Texas analyses five generations of Mexican-Americans and concludes that the continuation of Spanish from generation to generation is a complex process affected by social factors.

In the 2000 Census, El Paso is listed as number seven of the top ten cities in the United States with the most Spanish speakers. 68.9% of the population speaks Spanish at home, 76.6% are Hispanic, and 63.8% are Mexican. For the 2010 Census, 80.7% of the population is of Hispanic or Latino origin. Languages other than English spoken at home from 2007-2011 is set at 72.2%. The total population in 2011 for El Paso is 665,568 compared to the population from 1990 estimated at 591,610. A complication with the census numbers is the fact that the surveys conducted do not measure the proficiency the residents have in Spanish or English.

As noted above, residents that live at the border between Mexico and the United States are constantly faced with the burden to identify as a Mexican or American. Most of the residents of these border towns grow up with Spanish being part of their lives in one way or another, and they constantly mix English and Spanish in their discourse.

Gafaranga states that when two languages interact within the same conversation it “has always been a very noticeable phenomenon for lay people and linguist alike, even though bilingual speakers themselves may not be aware of it while talking” (2007, p. 10).

Speaking both English and Spanish in the same conversation and knowing that the person will understand what you are trying to communicate, brings bilinguals in such places as El Paso closer with each other in an unspoken bond.

On the other hand, Pletsch De Garcia, states that in the border town of Laredo, which is similar to El Paso, monolingual English speakers use derogatory phrases to refer to people who mix English and Spanish, calling them and their languages names like “Pocho, Mocho, Spanglish, Border Spanglish, Border English, Chicano English, and very rarely, TexMex or even MexTex” (Pletsch De Garcia, 2008, p.2). This shows the negativity that bilingual speakers who often mix both languages receive from monolingual speakers in the community. Speaking English only has become the norm for many in the United States, and Mexicans who are also monolinguals insist that those who are bilinguals should avoid mixing Spanish and English. In contrast, in places like Laredo, Texas, “attitudes toward bilingualism and the use of TexMex among self-identified bilingual Laredoans are positive: 94% and 86% respectively” (Pletsch De Garcia, 2008, p.2). Nevertheless, Pletsch de Garcia concludes that it is difficult for people to admit that TexMex is a legitimate linguistic variety because they are accustomed to labeling the language as bad. However, there may emerge a more formal use in the community for TexMex, that could be considered one day to be a “high” variety and could share the prestige that English or Spanish has, but to reach that point will be difficult. Pletsch de Garcia believes that speakers of TexMex find it to be “deficient,” and the monolingual speakers or members of other communities mainly perceive it negatively. The negativity that TexMex speakers must encounter from monolinguals in Laredo can sometimes affect them; nevertheless, the majority of her students and community members “commented that they take for granted the fact they can effortlessly shift between English, Spanish or TexMex in any given conversation within the community” (Pletsch De Garcia, 2008, p.13), and they see this as a positive outcome of

being bilingual but are also aware of how difficult it is to establish a bilingual identity, especially when speaking TexMex is seen so negatively. Heller (1988, p.93) states that when a speaker is capable of using two languages it “permits people to say and do, indeed to be two or more things where normally a choice is expected.” Being able to speak two languages is more than just being bilingual in the Southwest, it also means that the members of the community have their own unique culture (Pletsch De Garcia, 2008). This appears to be the case in El Paso.

d. Background history of El Paso

On April 30th, 1598, Juan de Oñate, a rich Creole from a rich mining family from Zacatecas married Isabel Tolosa Cortes Moctezuma, the great granddaughter of Moctezuma the II and Hernan Cortez, crossed the Chihuahuan desert and took possession of El Paso del Norte (“the pass to the North”) for Phillip II of Spain. In 1659, the first mission of the area was established in what is now downtown Ciudad Juarez. According to the records of the Chamber of Commerce in El Paso:

In 1848 the United States military post that later became Fort Bliss was established. El Paso was incorporated as a city in 1873, and, with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1881, the future of the community was assured. Today, El Paso is rated as one of the fastest growing cities in the nation. (Americatreveling.net).

As the land in the Southwest became property of the Anglos and English began to become the dominant language, previous residents, mainly Mexicans, were forced to learn English and ultimately become bilingual (Redlinger, 1976). El Paso is located in the

extreme west part of Texas, bordering Ciudad Juarez Mexico. The two are sister cities, separated by the Rio Grande, and the border towns of El Paso and Juarez “form the largest international border community in the world. In addition to their location, strong manufacturing base, inseparable economies, culture and histories, these cities are a natural transition point between both countries” (*El Paso: Deep in the Heart of NAFTA*, 24). It is difficult to identify who is a resident of El Paso and who is a resident of Juarez. People cross the border back and forth on a regular basis, and, according to the Greater El Paso Chamber of El Paso, “El Paso boasts an abundant work force, due in great part to the rapid population growth caused by migration into the area and a higher than average birth rate. Sixty-one percent of the work force is bilingual” (El Paso: Community Profile).

El Paso has a strong influence of Spanish as a result of bordering with Ciudad Juarez Mexico, and there is a constant flow of immigrants who visit El Paso and can only speak Spanish. Although El Paso is part of the United States, it is necessary to know Spanish as well as English in order to communicate with others in the community. Employers now require their employees to be bilinguals or to have a certain level of proficiency in Spanish because of the high number of Spanish monolinguals in the community. Even non-Hispanics who come to El Paso realize that speaking Spanish is essential in the community, and they often try to learn basic Spanish. Residents in El Paso cannot avoid the contact with Spanish because it is always present, from local stores, to schools and even in government jobs. Forms are always translated into Spanish and when a local official says something in English a translation always follows. Avoiding Spanish in El Paso is not possible.

However, people from El Paso often feel that speaking Spanish can be seen as negative by English monolinguals. Even though many people are bilinguals they frequently prefer to initiate a conversation in English and then switch to Spanish if the other speaker does not understand English. Spanish is most commonly used at home, with family members or close friends, since the environment is nonthreatening. Nevertheless, Spanish is still seen as a lower class language, and speakers when not speaking with family and close friends frequently avoid it. However, when their cultural identity is being questioned and they want to be seen as part of the community, they do not hesitate to speak Spanish (and Spanglish) to validate their heritage. Even if an El Pasoan is predominantly English speaker, they will insert Spanish words in their sentences or use common phrases to let the other members of the conversation know that they still belong to the community and have not forgotten their heritage or completely denied their language. People from El Paso have to maintain an image, not only as Americans, but also as proud Mexicans.

The distribution of language in generations can be a complicated situation in El Paso; some grandparents can reside in Ciudad Juarez (Juarez) or in other parts of Mexico. Other older relatives migrated to El Paso and became full residents but never adopted the culture or the language, believing that they would betray their culture and seeing English as the enemy. This is a similar situation for parents who have recently migrated to El Paso and are Spanish monolinguals, many of whom have dedicated their time to imbue their kids with Mexican culture. This helps their kids become aware of not only the culture, but also the language; these are often kids who are full bilinguals and can read, write, and speak Spanish. In many cases after families have resided in El Paso for several

generations, however, the need to communicate in Spanish with the older generation is not there anymore; all the existing generations speak English and thus create no need for learning Spanish. The fluency of Spanish declines, and all there is left is the desire to speak fluent English. When the younger generations begin to mature and enter the real world, however, they notice the importance that Spanish has in the community and blame their parents for not teaching them Spanish while they are young.

In regards to the school system, the kids are admitted to bilingual classes only if they do not have any previous education in English and only Spanish is spoken at home or have recently migrated from Juarez or any other part of Mexico. The ESL programs consist of different levels, from beginner to advanced; the students are tested each year to evaluate their English proficiency. However, in the elementary levels, the teacher is capable of recommending the students to move up a level or continue until further evaluation. Although some parents insist on their kids being enrolled in bilingual classes in order for them to properly learn Spanish, the school system denies them this opportunity and leaves the parents no choice but to enroll their kids in English classes only. This prevents new generations from properly learning Spanish at school and ultimately being able to communicate with others using Spanish.

In the community the interaction with Spanish speakers is inevitable; it is in fact difficult for residents to immediately guess who speaks Spanish or English only or who is bilingual. People can go to the store and have the cashier speak to them only in Spanish but they may guess that they are not fluent English speakers. In hospitals nurses and doctors address patients in Spanish at first because they find it easier to assume they understand Spanish, and, if they are not, they will switch to English. Many people in such

positions do not want to offend clients by assuming they do not speak English but cannot be sure in this varied community.

On the other hand, when speaking with familiar bilinguals, people do not hesitate to speak English and Spanish as well as Spanglish. On the other hand, the older generation has very strict rules about mixing English and Spanish, and this is certainly one of the occasions in which speaking Spanglish is not allowed. Other than that, in all informal scenarios the bilingual speaker may switch between English and Spanish or speak Spanglish without even noticing they are doing so. Members of the community manipulate their languages and determine on-the-fly as it were which variety(ies) to employ. When speaking Standard English, El Pasoans demonstrate that they are well educated and capable of holding a job, but if they choose the wrong situation for this variety, they can also be interpreted as looking down on others. Standard Spanish on the other hand can mean that the resident lived in Mexico for part of their life or that they are from there and unable to have a job that requires the English language, and may create social distance between the speakers. But this can also mean that the resident is well educated because they can speak Standard Spanish. In short, code choice in El Paso can have several meanings.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

A. Background

In her article, *Peasant men can't get wives: language change and sex roles in a bilingual community*, Gal (1978), studies the differences between men and women's speech in a bilingual community in Austria. This study determined how language choice was affected the bilingual community and how it forced women to switch from speaking Hungarian and German to speaking only German. There has been a contrast between German and Hungarian language in the community that is advancing alongside with the social class in Oberwart, Austria. Gal suggests that women were responsible for the language change that was affecting the community, forcing speakers to reject the use of Hungarian. "In accordance with the sociolinguistic assumption that speech differences reflect the social distinctions deemed important by the community of speakers, sexual differentiation of speech is expected to occur whenever a social division exists between the roles of men and women – that is, universally" (Gal, 1978, p.1).

Specifically, Gal points out that young women are significantly more advanced in language shift compared to older people and younger men. Similar to this, previous correlation studies have shown that women are responsible for using more advanced forms more frequently compared to men. However, "newly introduced forms used

mostly by women are sometimes prestigious (Trudgill 1972) and sometimes not (Fasold 1968)” (Gal, 1978, p.2). Gal analyzes how the manner of speaking of both women and men reflect the linguistic choices in society and how they are linked to social change. German is the community language with higher social status and women prefer speaking more German because of their desire to establish a higher status social identity. Men on the other hand, are accustomed to a more traditional community; in this case an agricultural one.

Oberwart was one of the five largest communities in eastern Austria with strong Hungarian use, but gradually bilingualism in German and Hungarian became the norm. The village grew from 600 residents to 5,000 people, and the new residents were mostly German monolinguals. Oberwart had a constant flow of German immigrants from villages that surrounded the area within a time frame of 30 years. The participants in Gal’s study were indigenous bilinguals who had been focusing on peasant agriculture until recently. In 1972, only one third of the bilingual community continued to work in agriculture. Gal states “bilingual communities provide a particularly salient case of the linguistic heterogeneity which characterizes all communities” (Gal, 1978, p.3). “Bloom and Gumperz (1972) have argued, alternate codes within a linguistic repertoire are usually each associated with sub-groups in the community and with certain activities” (Gal, 1978, p.4).

Gal argues that in her study the codes are related to social status and the activities of the community. If the speaker chooses one language over the other it is because they want to project a different social status, at least for the particular situation. Speaking Hungarian in Oberwart is associated only with peasant industry, which gives it a negative

connotation among young residents. This mentality can also be associated with the Spanish that is spoken in El Paso, especially if a non-standard form is used. It is common for young bilingual speakers to admit that only old residents use Hungarian to communicate, and they do not deny the fact that they speak it as well and can accurately report on when they use both of the languages. Similar to this, Spanish is associated with the older generation in El Paso and bilingual younger speakers do not use Spanish as often. Young bilinguals in Oberwart strive to speak German and become workers instead of peasants, and by doing so, elevate their social status.

In regard to their identity, the people of Oberwart consider themselves Austrians and not Germans. Being able to speak German symbolizes the ability to acquire a job that provides more money and brings prestige, which is not available to peasants. This is the same for Spanish in El Paso; if a resident does not speak English, it is difficult for them to have a job that provides a good salary and social status. If a child is born into a family with only one bilingual parent, it is likely that the child will never learn how to speak Hungarian. The main goal of the residents of Oberwart is to speak German without any interference from Hungarian; bilingual speakers strive to speak German without a trace of Hungarian in their speech. However, young bilinguals do not completely disregard Hungarian; they in fact use it to their advantage when they want to be seen as peasants. Gal describes, “three factors which must be known in order to predict choices and to describe the changes in these choices are the speaker’s age and sex and the nature of the social network in which the speaker habitually interacts” (Gal, 1978, p.5).

Gal’s study explores the respondent-claimed uses of German, Hungarian or both in eleven different scenarios. All the speakers in the study were bilingual and part of the

community. She devised a questionnaire that was constructed from categories that were important for the members of the community. Every speaker in the study stated that they used either Hungarian or German in at least one of the scenarios; some also chose both German and Hungarian for some of the scenarios.

Figure 1. Language choice pattern of women in Oberwart (Gal 1978:6)

TABLE 1. *Language choice pattern of women*

Informant	Age	Social situations (identity of participant)										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A	14	H	GH		G	G	G			G		G
B	15	H	GH		G	G	G			G		G
C	25	H	GH	GH	GH	G	G	G	G	G		G
D	27	H	H		GH	G	G			G		G
E	17	H	H		H	GH	G			G		G
F	39	H	H		H	GH	GH			G		G
G	23	H	H		H	GH	H		GH	G		G
H	40	H	H		H	GH		GH	G	G		G
I	52	H	H	H	GH	H		GH	G	G	G	G
J	40	H	H	H	H	H	H	GH	GH	GH		G
K	35	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	GH	H		G
L	61	H	H		H	H	H	H	GH	H		G
M	50	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H		G
N	60	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	GH	G
O	54	H	H		H	H	H	H	H	H	GH	H
P	63	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	GH	H
Q	64	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
R	59	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H

No. of informants = 18

Scalability = 95.4%

- 1 = to god
- 2 = grandparents and their generation
- 3 = bilingual clients in black market
- 4 = parents and their generation
- 5 = friends and age-mate neighbors
- 6 = brothers and sisters

- 7 = spouse
- 8 = children and their generation
- 9 = bilingual government officials
- 10 = grandchildren and their generation
- 11 = doctors

G – German, H – Hungarian, GH – both German and Hungarian.

“linguistic pattern is best understood by considering the social meaning of the available languages and the strategic choices” (1978, p. 15).

Gal’s language choice task is the one used in the present study.

B. Description of Subjects

For this study, 40 bilingual speakers of Spanish and English were selected, from two different age groups. The first group consisted of young adults ranging from 18 to 25 years of age, while the second group was an older generation of ages 55 to 87. The main goal was to have an even number of participants, 20 from each age group, as well as 20 males and 20 females. There were actually 21 males and 19 females, and the age group was also slightly uneven; for the 18-25 age group, there were 19 participants and 21 for the 55-87 age group. Social status was also taken into consideration: 20 participants were from the middle class and 20 from the working class. All of the participants had to be residents of El Paso and capable of speaking both English and Spanish.

The subjects were recruited in a variety of ways. Being part of the El Paso community, it was easy for me to contact friends and family members that fit the description of each category, and when I began to talk to the participants they would suggest their own friends or family members for the study. I was invited to a local senior center to interview the members who were happy to help (but were more excited to share their personal stories with me).

C. Questionnaire

The questionnaire included demographic questions regarding the participant's age, years lived in El Paso, sex, native language, and the occupation to determine social status.

There were a total of 21 questions (See pp. 35-36) regarding their language preference that were included in the questionnaire that each of the participants completed. Each of the questions was selected to determine the language that people prefer to use in each of the scenarios provided. The participants had the choice between English, Spanish, and Spanglish or the combination of any of the three choices for each of the questions.

The first scenario addressed the language choice used when speaking with their parents, followed by scenario number two that asked what language was used when speaking to people the same age as their parents. This scenario was included to determine if the participants used the same language they use when speaking to their parents or the language choice is different. If in fact the language choice was different a follow up question was asked to determine why different language was used in this same generation. Scenarios number three and four were similar to scenarios one and two but instead of parents, three was about brothers and sisters and four was about people the same age as their siblings. These scenarios were included to determine whether the participants tend to use a different language than that used with their parents. This would signal that different languages are spoken at home with different members of the family. Scenario five asked to identify the language that was used when speaking in class and with teachers during school. The goal of this scenario was to determine if the participants feel comfortable using anything other than English in the school system. Most

importantly, to determine if teachers allow students to use any combination of Spanish and English while they are in school.

Scenario six asked the participants to identify the language that they use when speaking with their friends; this was included because of the comfort level the participants feel with their friends allowing them to use perhaps a combination of languages without worrying of what they are going to think. Similar to this was scenario seven, when asked what language they use when speaking to their boyfriend/girlfriend or spouse. This was done because of the comfort level that exists between the two allowing them to speak the language they are more comfortable with. Although the answers for scenario eight and nine were predictable, it was important to determine what language was spoken to grandparents and people the same age as them. The scenario would help determine if this generation consisted predominantly of Spanish speaker or if this generation was becoming bilingual and Spanglish users.

Opposite to this, scenario ten asked the language used with a younger generation to determine if English was mostly used because of the lack of Spanish being taught. Scenarios eleven and twelve were related with each other trying to determine what language choice was used when attending church and speaking to God. This was included because some of the families in El Paso only attend church in Spanish although they are bilinguals, but speaking to God is not restricted to only one language. It was important to determine whether the participants spoke one language over the other because of the language that was used during church. Or was the language choice influenced on the emotions they would feel at the time when speaking to God. The following scenario asked the participants to select the language choice when speaking to

their pets; this was included because people who are bilingual speak to their pets depending on the language they are thinking making them think that their pets are bilingual and are capable of understanding.

Scenarios fourteen and fifteen asked the participants to select the language used when they are at a department store and at a local market. These two were separated because at the local markets in El Paso the participants are more likely to encounter an older generation that is associated with Spanish whereas at a department store, a younger generation is more likely presented. Included in the questionnaire, scenario sixteen asked the participants to select the language they used when speaking to the doctor followed by scenario seventeen, language used when speaking to a person in a government position. These scenarios were included to see if the participants spoke another language other than English when speaking to someone in a higher status job.

Similar to this was scenario number nineteen asking them what language they speak when addressing their boss. However, unlike their boss, the participants always feel more comfortable speaking to their coworkers who can often become their friends giving them more freedom to use the language they prefer, this is scenario eighteen. The final two scenarios included the language spoken when attending a party/fiesta; this was included in the questionnaire because of the combination of guests that attend the parties. If it is a family party, the participant can encounter people who speak English, Spanish or a combination of both, giving them the freedom to speak whatever language they please. However, in some parties they are restricted to speak one language because of the type of guests that attends the gathering. This scenario was structured to determine the language the participant is most likely to use when attending parties. Finally, the last scenario

aimed to see if the participants could determine the language they speak when dreaming. It was expected that some of the participants would not know the language; this helped see how a bilingual mind worked when sleeping.

When the participants had completed the questionnaire, I conducted a recorded interview with each of the participants. During the interview, I asked the participants to give me a short background information regarding the language they spoke, asking them when they learned their second language, whether they had proper schooling in both of the languages, and if they had ever lived in Mexico. Then, I went over each of the answers that they selected to make sure that they understood what the scenario was asking. This was when I discovered that some of the participants were not being honest with themselves and me. Since some of the participants were personal friends, I knew when they use Spanglish but was not selected, this was when I formulated questions that made them think and change their answers. In other situations, when I elaborated on each of the scenarios and explored every possibility, some of the times the participants added a language or changed their answers completely.

I also asked the participants to give the definition of what they believed Spanglish was; most had a basic idea and others hesitated to define Spanglish. The common definition for Spanglish given by the participants was speaking English and Spanish in the same sentence or in the same conversation. Others mentioned that Spanglish involved making English words into Spanish for example *parkiar*, which means to park. Words like this are commonly used by bilingual speakers when they do not know the word in Spanish or sometimes in English. The average time of the interviews were around ten minutes and all of the people elaborated on their selections for each scenario

presented. As the interview continued, the participants became more relaxed and often forgot about the recoding and would even gave examples. In addition to this, some participants had a change of attitude and were less hostile towards speaking Spanish and began to admit the use of Spanglish.

Each questionnaire was numbered in the order in which they were completed; the participant was given an alias in the order they were completed, and the data were entered in an Excel spreadsheet. This spread sheet included the alias, age, sex, and class status of each participant to allow separation into the following eight subgroups: young males (middle and working class), young females (middle and working) class, older males (middle and working class), and older females (middle and working class). Each language choice for each scenario that was made by the participants was numbered as follows: English=1, English and Spanglish=2, English, Spanish, and Spanglish=3, English and Spanish=4, Spanglish=5, Spanish and Spanglish=6, and Spanish=7, an attempt to move from the most uniquely English to the most uniquely Spanish choice, although that scale does not work perfectly in the middle since the Spanish and/or English content of Spanglish is not a uniform view in the community.

The questionnaire

Please answer these questions with the most likely language or languages you would use. If questions do not apply to you, please leave them blank. Please assume that in all these questions that the other person I am talking about can speak both English and Spanish. **Circle as many languages as you like.**

Age_____ Female Male
Occupation_____ Native language_____
Parents' Occupation_____ How long have you lived in El Paso_____

1. What language do you use when speaking with your parents?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
2. What language do you use when speaking with people of the same age as your parents?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
3. What language do you use when speaking with your brothers/sisters?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
4. What language do you use when speaking to people of the same age as your brothers/ sisters?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
5. What language do you use in classes and with your teachers?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
6. What language do you use when speaking to your friends?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
7. What language do you use when speaking to your spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
8. What language do you use when speaking to your grandparents?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
9. What language do you use when speaking to people of the same age as your grandparents?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
10. What language do you use when speaking to people a lot younger than you, for example your grandchildren?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
11. What language do you use at church during services?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
12. What language do you use when praying or speaking to God?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
13. What language do you use when speaking to your pets?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
14. What language do you use when you go shopping at a mall or department store?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
15. What language do you use when shopping at a local market or small store in your neighborhood?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
16. What language do you use with your doctor?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
17. What language would you use with people in official positions? For example, a police officer or city hall employee?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
18. What language do you speak with your co-workers?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
19. What language do you use when speaking with your boss?	English	Spanish	Spanglish

20. What language do you use at parties/fiestas?	English	Spanish	Spanglish
21. What language do you dream in?	English	Spanish	Spanglish

After the data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, men's and women's responses, older and younger participants' responses, and working and middle class responses were identified by coding. The interviews were examined for additional information that helped explain why some of the language selections were made, since the participants elaborated on their choices and often changed them once they began to think of the scenarios more carefully.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

It is clear that the participants preferred to use English, Spanish, or English & Spanish in most of the scenarios (see Figure 3). However, the participants demonstrated the use of other language combinations in many scenarios, clearly showing that English and/or Spanish are not the only choices. Nevertheless, the other combinations were not as popular as English and/or Spanish, in many cases because the participants avoided selecting Spanglish. Many did not want to admit that they used Spanglish at all, although later on in the interviews they often admitted to using Spanglish in many situations.

Figure 4 shows each of the scenarios with the percentage of each choice for each scenario selected by the participants. Percentages rather than numbers are given for the discussion here since the participants had the option not to respond to a scenario if it did not apply to them. For example, in Scenario 8, where they were asked to select the language they use when speaking to their grandparents, many of the participants did not respond because their grandparents were deceased. The order of the scenarios in Figure 4 are arranged from left to right according to the highest percentage of selections made for English; this allows us to see the scenarios that go from most English to most Spanish. Arranging the scenarios in this manner, in the manner of the implicational scaling order

used in Gal's work, helps determine patterns that can be associated with the language choices made by the participants and various subgroups of them.

Figure 3. Numeric results for all scenarios, all respondents

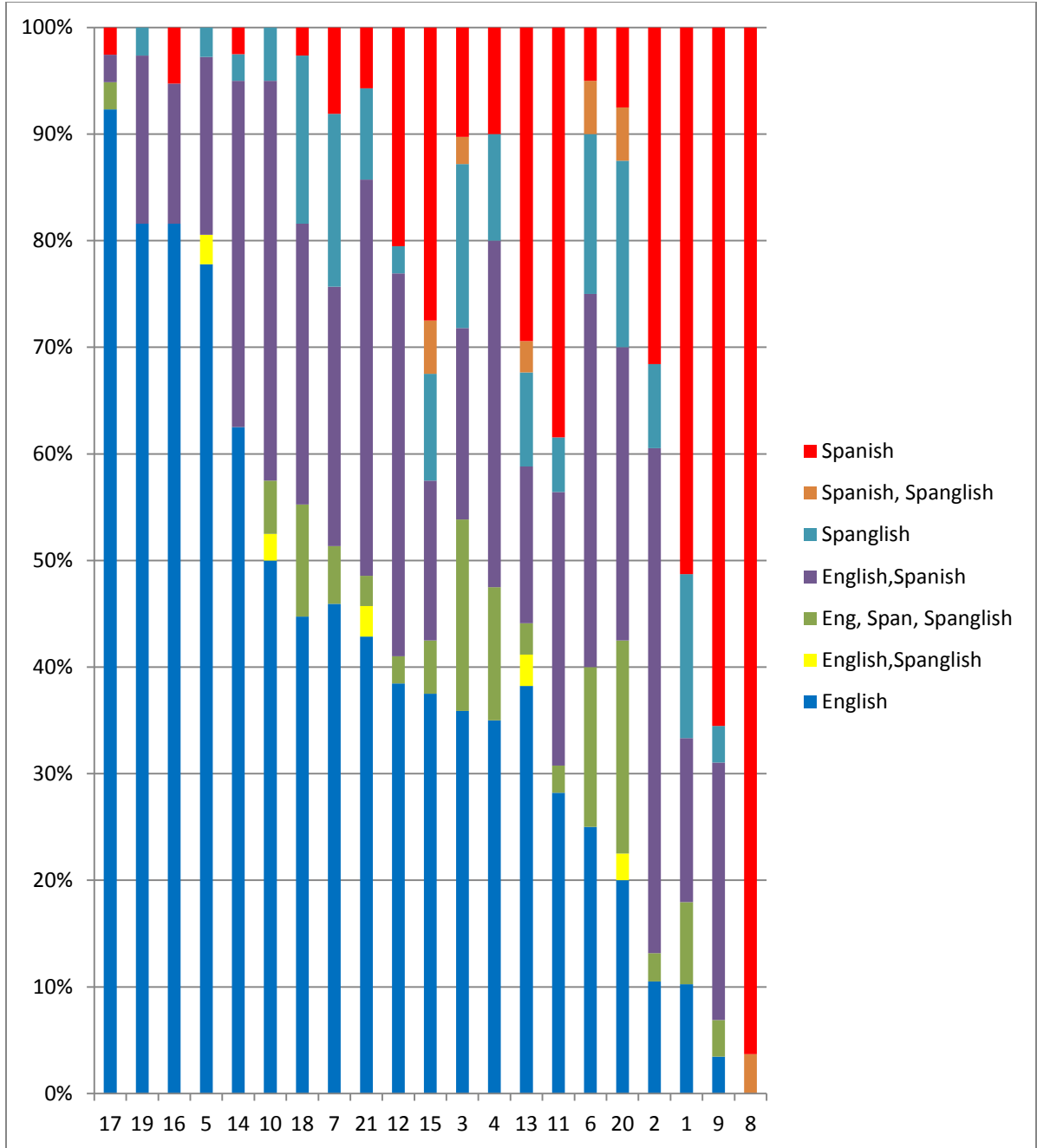
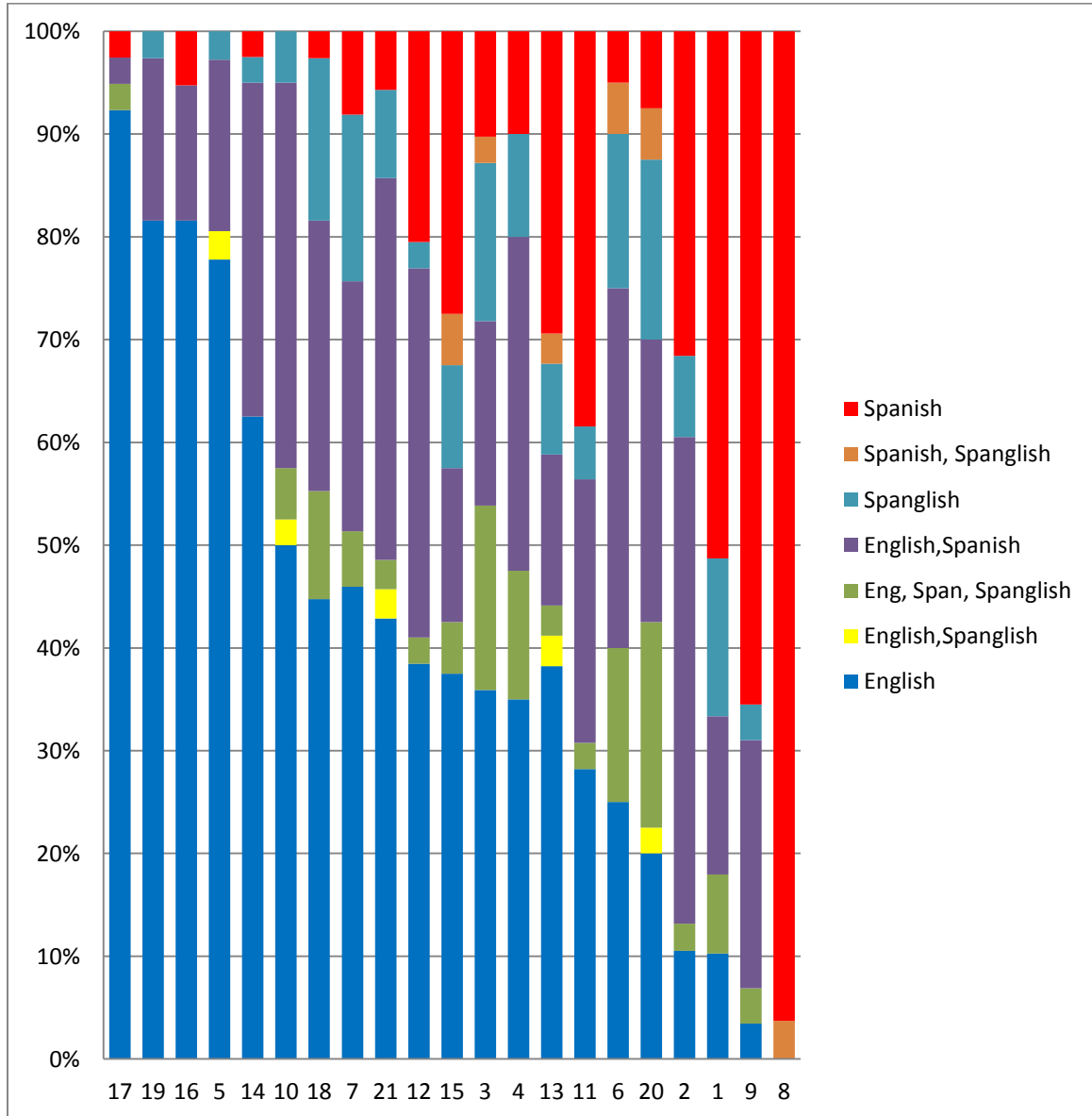


Figure 4. Percentages for all respondents and all scenarios



All of the scenarios (except #8 & 9, grandparents) had at least a five percent selection of English only. However, this was not the case for Spanish; in addition to three

scenarios (#19, #5, & #10) that did not select Spanish at all, four more (numbers 17, 16, 14, and 18,) had choices below the five percent level. The combination of Spanish and English (ES) was also a popular choice; five percent or more selected it in 19 of the scenarios (failing to select it in only Scenario 8, the question about language use with grandparents, where Spanish — and very rarely Spanish and Spanglish — were the only choices). Other selections were not as frequent and were less evenly distributed in the scenarios, although ESG (English, Spanish, and Spanglish) is frequently chosen (at least by 10% of the respondents) in several scenarios (#s 18, 4, 3, 6, and 20). In what follows I will examine specific scenarios and the distribution of choices.

Scenario 17 has the highest percentage of English only (nearly 90%). This scenario asked the participant to select the language used when speaking to a person in a government position, which perhaps illustrates the “High” status of English in the community. Participants mentioned that when addressing a police officer, one must speak English even if the police officer spoke Spanish. Others also stated that if they wanted to negotiate with the police officer it had to be done in English because they did not feel comfortable speaking Spanish, although one participant mentioned that government officials in El Paso are expected to speak Spanish to those who are more comfortable in that language. Overall, however, the interviews showed that the participants believed that speaking English only to government officials showed respect and avoided conflict.

Similar to #17 are Scenarios 19 and 16, which ask what language is used when speaking to bosses and doctors respectively, and most of the participants selected English as their only choice (over 80% in both cases). Some later mentioned that their boss or their doctor did not speak Spanish, but others said that speaking Spanish with their boss was unprofessional or was not common in the workplace. On the other hand, close to 15% of the participants selected English and Spanish and mentioned that they would follow in the language the boss initiated in the conversation. In speaking with a doctor, several participants mentioned that they prefer to speak English with their doctor because they do not know the terminology in Spanish. Nevertheless, 20% of the participants chose Spanish or the combination of English and Spanish for this scenario.

Scenario 5 was the first that showed more variety in the selections. When asked what language they use at school when addressing their teachers and during class, over 70% selected English, even stating that they were not allowed to speak any other language and were punished if they did so; others mentioned that some teachers did not speak Spanish.. Others selected both English and Spanish but later revealed that they were thinking of Spanish classes or when they attended school in Mexico. However, zero participants mentioned that they used Spanish during school.

For #14, 60% of the participants selected English as the language they use when they are at a shopping mall, but a substantial number selected the use of both English and Spanish 30%, which may be attributed to the fact that there are many Spanish speakers in

the area as well as the people who speak only English. Only one person admitted to speaking Spanglish at a mall and only one other to speaking Spanish. In one specific follow up question, I asked all the participants if the cashier addressed the person in front of them in English but then addressed them in Spanish whether they would be offended. The majority answered that they would be, although they are all bilinguals and would have had no problem understanding what the cashier said. Others stated that they would not be offended at all and would answer back in Spanish, but a few of them later changed their minds after thinking about it and were even surprised by their earlier answer. Apparently the assumption that one does not speak English may be interpreted negatively.

As predicted for Scenario 10, close to 50 % of the participants chose English for addressing a person younger than them. When asked why, several stated that it was because younger people in the community are not learning Spanish. On the other hand, over 30% selected English and Spanish when speaking to a younger person, making this scenario one of the highest selections with the combination of English and Spanish.

In Scenario 21, more than 45% of the participants said that they dream in English, but 35% chose English and Spanish. Apparently, some of the selections made were guesses because the participants said they could not recall or were not even aware of what language they dreamed in. (A few of the participants who did not answer this scenario actually contacted me later because they said that they had finally figured it out.)

In Scenario 7, speaking to a spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend, over 40% of the participants use English only, once again stating that some of their spouses or boyfriends/girlfriends do not speak Spanish, forcing them to speak English; substantial numbers of the participants chose the combination of English and Spanish and even Spanglish; a few chose Spanish and the combination of English, Spanish, and Spanglish. This is the first of several scenarios that show not only considerable variation but also a greater balance among the choices.

In Scenario 18, fewer than 50% selected English as their choice for addressing coworkers. Some stated that it is rude to speak Spanish if not all of the coworkers are bilingual. A substantial number of the participants selected the combination of English and Spanish when addressing their workers, and even a few chose Spanglish.

Scenario 12 (praying or speaking to God) is the first in which the selection of English is almost even with another selection — the combination of English and Spanish. Participants mentioned that when addressing God, they did it in the language they were thinking in at the moment; others mentioned that God was bilingual and understood both languages equally (although it is perhaps not surprising that Spanglish was never chosen here). Several participants selected Spanish only, mentioning that speaking Spanish to God sounded more genuine and sincere.

The participants speak to their pets (Scenario 13) using all the selections possible. 38% said that they only use English, but over 30% use only Spanish, more than 10% use

English and Spanish. The rest of the combinations have one or two participants, making this a very diverse scenario. Interestingly, two of the participants who were related chose different responses. One said that they speak English to their dog, while the other assured me that everyone speaks English and Spanish to their dogs at home. I also asked the participants what language they used when they were mad at their pets, and some who had answered English responded that they use Spanish when scolding. Although this question may seem silly, it shows that such scenarios as the ones selected here must be supplemented by qualitative information for a fuller understanding of language choice. Apparently, at least for these speakers, Spanish is a “better” or more available language for certain kinds of emotional expression in certain situations.

Going to a local super market (#15) has a complete by different outcome from the choice of languages at a mall. Many people in local markets may not speak English well or perhaps prefer to speak Spanish. This may explain why only 35% chose English. On the other hand, 30% chose Spanish, and 15% the combination of English and Spanish. The local markets are very different from Wal-Mart or Target; there are many small, local markets around the city that are more accessible to the community.

When addressing people the same age as their siblings (#4), thirteen chose English making it just a little less than 34% of the selections made. More than 25% chose English and Spanish, and quite a few participants chose English, Spanish, and Spanglish

and only Spanish, demonstrating that the participants are more comfortable using more combinations of languages when speaking to people the same age as their siblings.

Scenario #11 (church) is the first described here that had Spanish as the highest selection, with one-third of the participants selecting it. 31% selected English, while 25% chose both English and Spanish. Several participants mentioned that, even though they are bilinguals, they have never attended church in English because they have always gone to church in Spanish, but they note that when speaking to other church members they can use English, perhaps indicating a difficulty in the question itself.

Over thirty percent selected English only for addressing their siblings (#3), but they seem to prefer combinations of languages in this scenario. 19% selected English and Spanish and English, Spanish, and Spanglish. 13%, however, chose Spanglish only and a few others the combinations of Spanish and Spanglish and English and Spanglish. This setting seems to promote choices involving Spanglish, as only a few others did.

In Scenario 6, when speaking to their friends, over 30% of the participants use the combination of English and Spanish, making it the highest selection made, but this was immediately followed by English with (20%). English, Spanish, and Spanglish had over 10% with six participants selecting this option; others selected Spanglish, Spanish, and Spanish and Spanglish. As in the previous case, these results can be explained by the comfort level the participants have with their friends, allowing them to use different language combinations when speaking to them.

Fiestas/parties in El Paso (Scenario 20) are always full of people with different language preferences. Some may speak only English or Spanish, while others code-switch to accommodate all the participants. This is reflected in the variability of language choices. Close to 30% of the participants said that they speak a combination of English, Spanish, and Spanglish, the highest choice for this scenario and the highest choice for the three-way combination in any scenario. The next highest choice was the combination of English and Spanish, further reflecting the diversity offered by this scenario. English only has fallen below 20%. Making this the scenario with every selection made in close to equal distributions.

For Scenario 2, the participants were asked to indicate the language they use when speaking to people the same age as their parents. In this scenario, over 35% of the participants selected Spanish and for the first time the combination of English and Spanish has the highest selection with almost 40% ; this could be because the participants in general associated people of that age with being able to speak only Spanish, perhaps because they have parents who speak both English and Spanish; only four participants selected English. Interestingly, in spite of the age difference implied by the question, three participants selected Spanglish and two the combination of English, Spanish and Spanglish.

Similar to but slightly different from this is Scenario 1, in which participants were asked to identify the language they use when addressing their parents. Over 50% chose

Spanish but less than 10% English. Many of the parents for many participants were or are monolingual Spanish speakers. However, several participants chose Spanglish and the combination of English and Spanish respectively when speaking to their parents and three even selected the combination of English, Spanish, and Spanglish.

For the last two scenarios, Spanish had the highest percentage because the participants were asked to select the language they use when speaking to an older person. In Scenario 9, over 60% of the participants said they spoke Spanish only when addressing people the same age as their grandparents. Several said they use both English and Spanish, but only two claimed to use English. Nine participants did not answer the scenario; perhaps some younger speakers chose not to answer because of the infrequency of their interaction with this age group. I have suggested above that some older speakers might not have answered since the generation in question is no longer alive for them to interact with.

Scenario 8 asked the participants to select the language they speak when addressing their grandparents. Only 27 participants answered this scenario, for reasons given just above. 95% of those who did answer selected Spanish. Some stated that their grandparents did not speak English or that, even though they were bilingual, speaking Spanish showed respect. Some participants said that if they used Spanglish their grandparents would get mad at them or judge them for not being able to speak properly

(although one respondent oddly chose English and Spanglish, a rare choice in the entire survey).

In what follows, I will investigate differences in the sex, age, and status groups.

As illustrated in Figure 5, women only, the order from most English to most Spanish is similar to the order in Figure 4. Most of the scenarios stay in the same position or switch only one or two positions to the right (more Spanish oriented) or to the left (more English oriented). Scenario 6 moved four spaces to the left, suggesting that women more frequently selected English when speaking to their friends. A scenario that also made a similar move was #12 (language with God). English was much less frequently chosen by women than in the overall data.

Women's and men's responses are compared in the following.

Compared to women, men (Figure 6) had fewer scenarios that changed places from the overall data. Scenario 13 regarding pets, moved seven spaces to the left, signaling that men selected English in this scenario much more frequently than women, a choice I cannot explain.

Another scenario that moved two spaces, also to the left, is #3, showing that men use more English only when addressing people that are the same age as their parents. The rest of the results were similar to the overall percent.

Figure 5. Women's responses

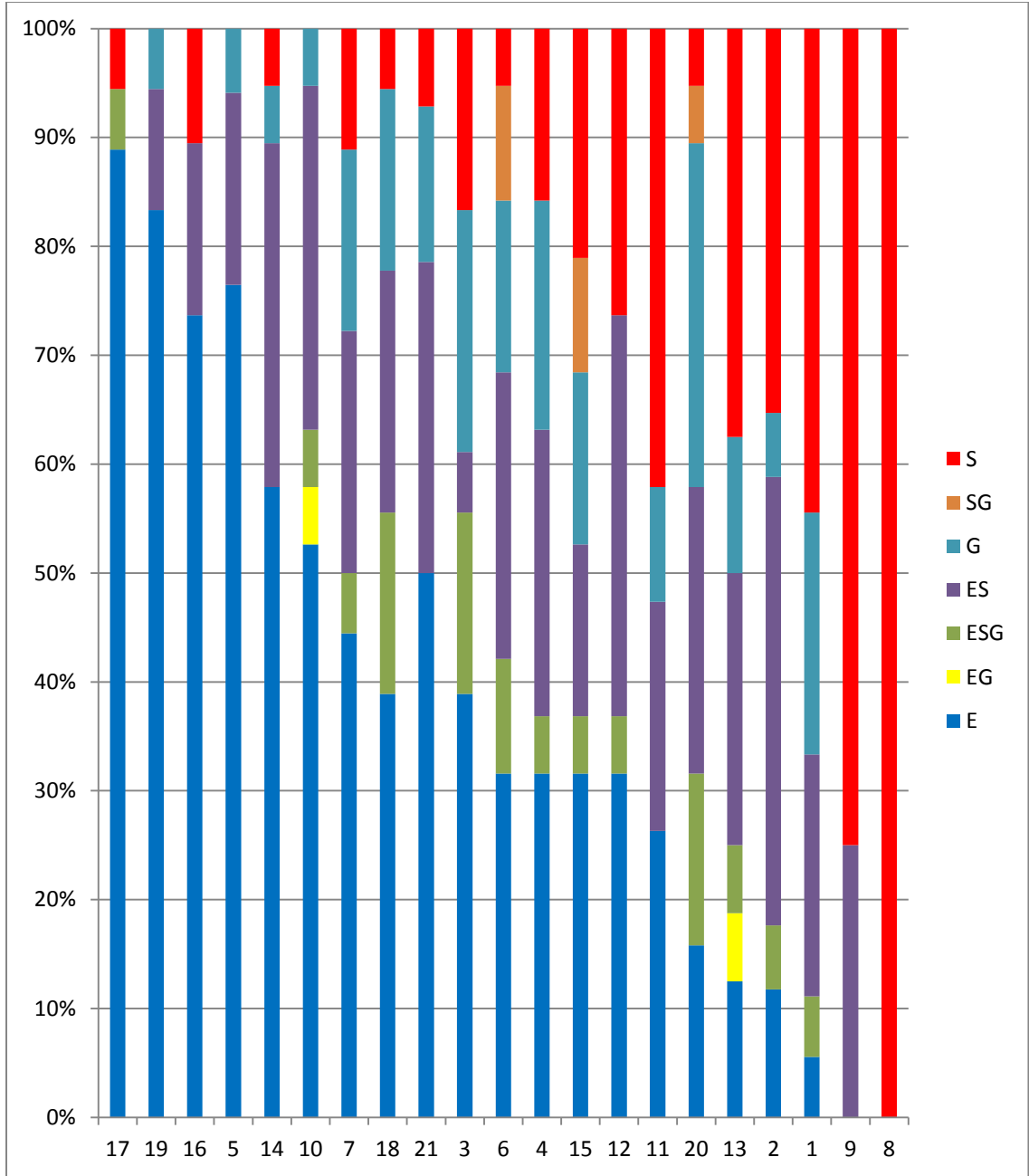
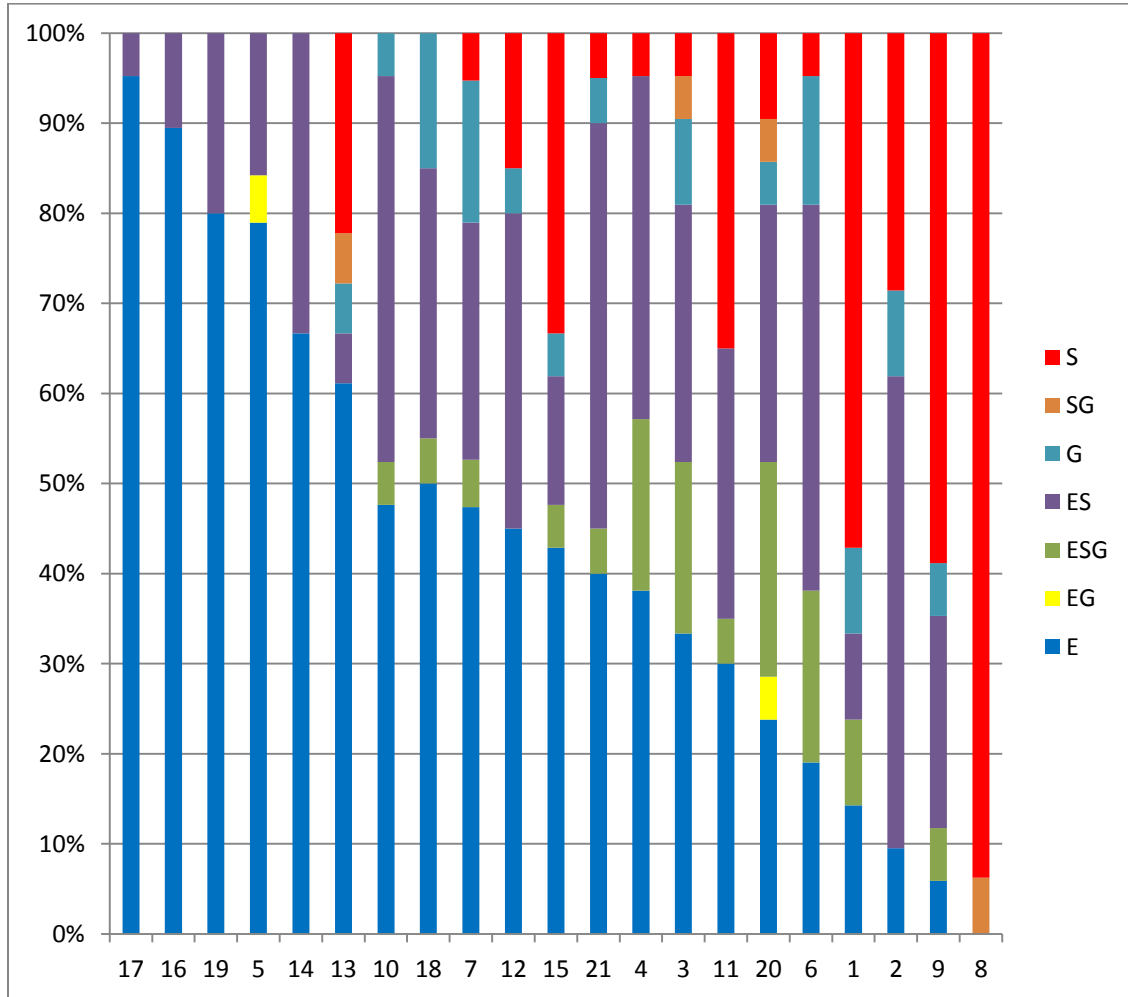


Figure 6. Men's responses



In the following section I address age differences.

The younger participants (18-25 years old) (Figure 7) clearly selected English only in more scenarios than overall, having at least ten percent in 19 of the scenarios. Nine scenarios have 50% or more of English only, making this more than half of the

scenarios (compared to only six overall). This suggests that the younger generation relies more on English only. Fifteen scenarios show the selection of Spanglish and only twelve scenarios have Spanish only. For the first time, in Scenario 17 for younger speakers, English as the only selection; although Spanish was the only option for women in Scenario #8.

For the first time, in Scenario 17, we see English as the only selection; we had seen Spanish as the only option for women (in Scenario #8). Again, as with sex differences, most of the scenarios are consistent with the overall results; only three show a dramatic move either to the right towards Spanish or to the left towards English. The first of these is #4 that asks the participants to select the language they use when speaking to people the same age as their siblings. This scenario moved seven spaces to the left, suggesting that more young participants selected English as their main answer, with close to 60% of the selections (compared to slightly under 35% overall). Scenario 10, which asked the participants to identify the language they use when speaking to their siblings, is interestingly the opposite. The scenario moved six spaces to the right and showed that the young participants use more language combinations to speak to their siblings. English was chosen by less than 50%, and 40% chose the combination of English and Spanish. This finding may suggest that the participants are more comfortable with code-switching in a family situation. Scenario #6 also moved six spaces to the left suggesting that young participants speak more English with their friends. This is understandable since their friends are likely to be their age and fluent English speakers.

Lastly, Scenario 3, language used when speaking to siblings, moved four spaces to the right. Similar to the language that is spoken with friends, the participants are likely to speak more English only with their siblings. Also, zero participants selected Spanish only but 50% selected other language combinations. Close to 20% selected the combination of English and Spanish, equally to this was Spanglish with 20% and finally over 10% the combination of English, Spanish, and Spanglish.

Figure 7. Responses for participants 18-25 years old

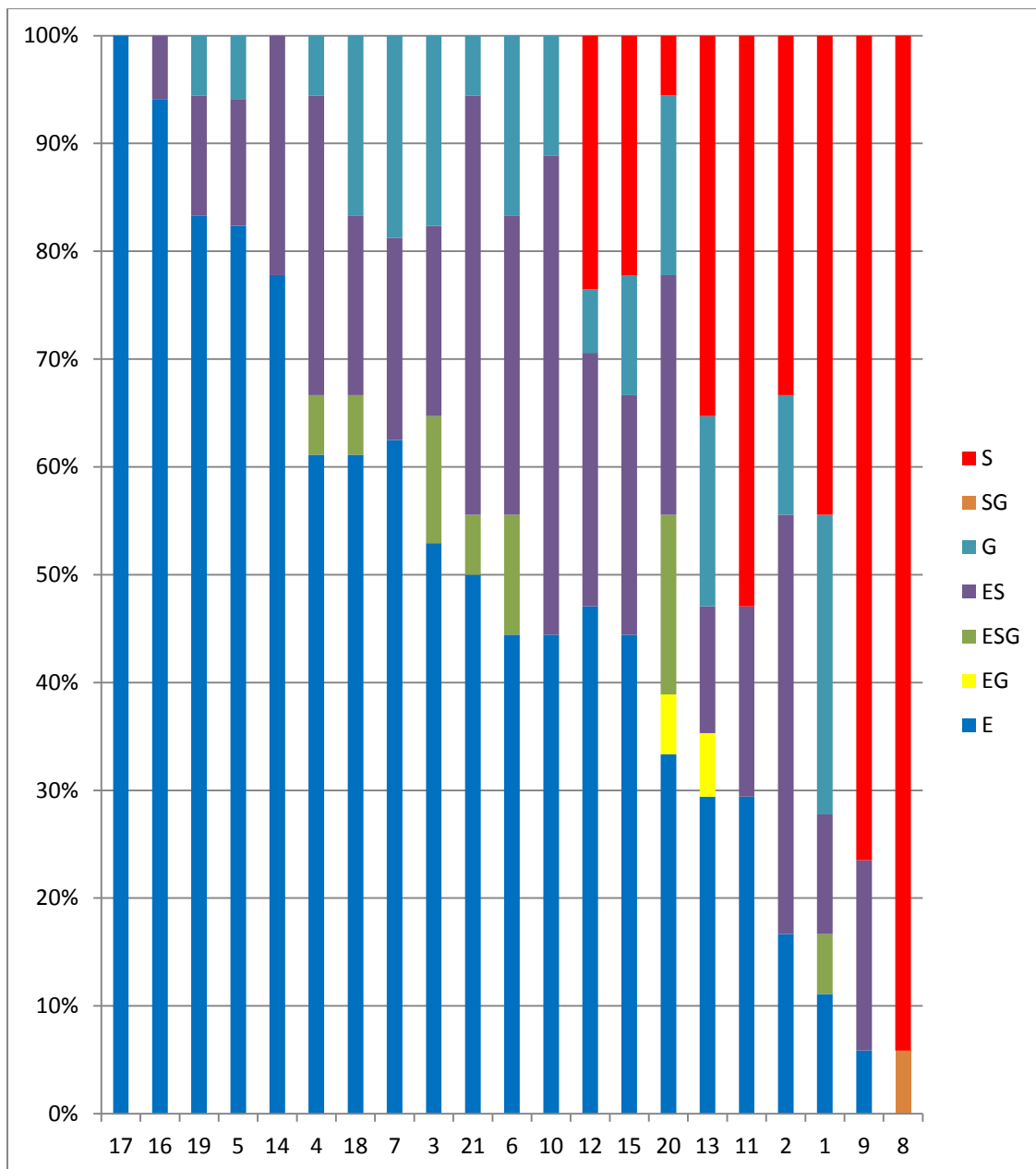
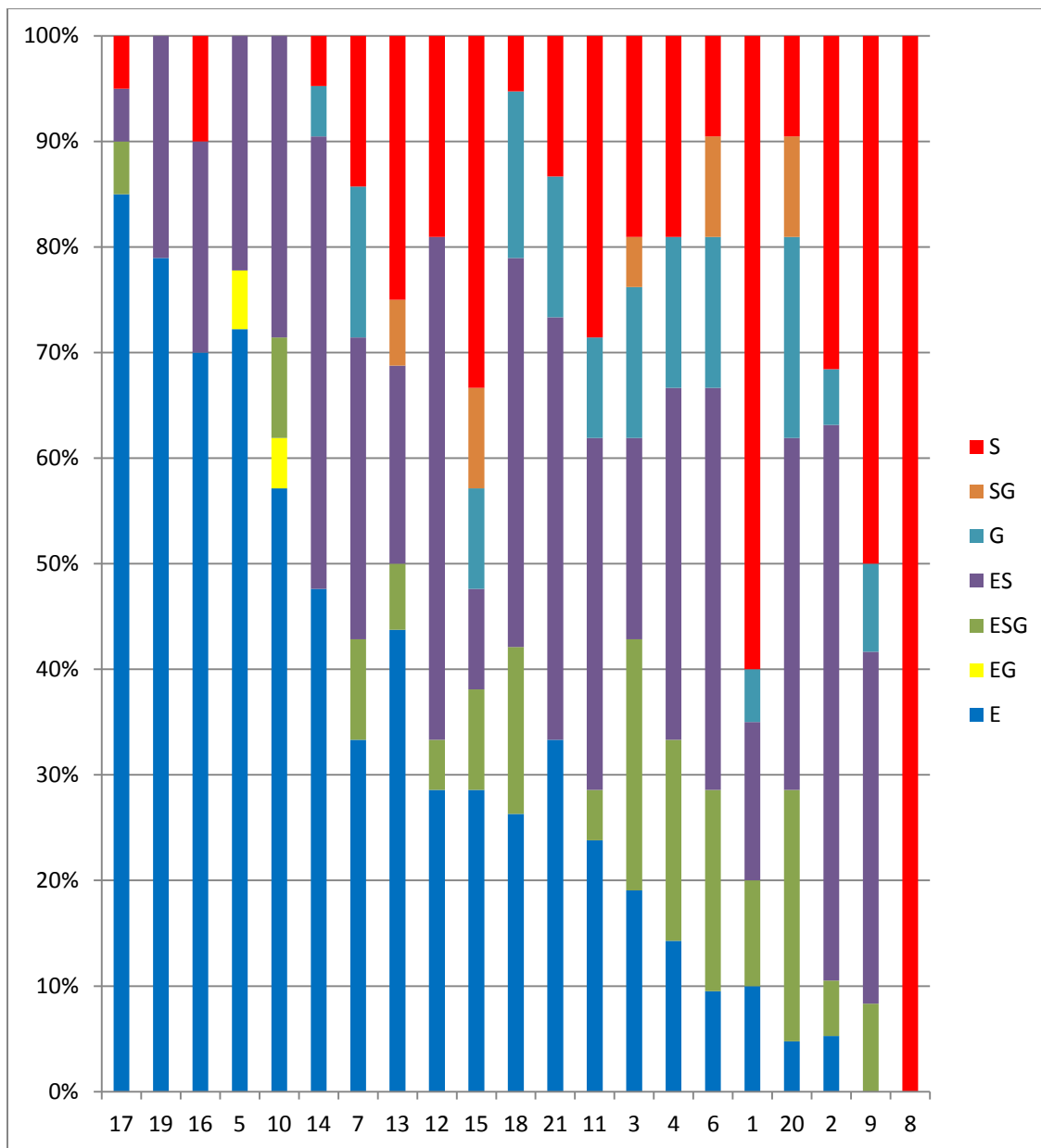


Figure 8. Responses for participants 55-87 years old



Curiously, these findings do not seem to demonstrate that the younger generation is very much more inclined to use English only as their only choice, although, as the next section will show, they prefer it more often than their elders do.

Unlike the younger generation, the older generation (55-87 years old) had fewer English only selections and included more variety in the language selections they made in each of the scenarios. Several of the scenarios in Figure 8 had major changes from the overall positions. More importantly, compared to Figure 4 (overall) where there were nine scenarios that chose over 50% of English, older respondents only had five scenarios that met that criterion; the majority of the scenarios fell under the 30% mark or lower, and Scenarios 8 and 20 did not have any selections of English at all.

Once again Scenario 13 showed a major change, the older generation moving it six spaces to the left when compared to the overall chart, with 40% of the participants selecting English only as their choice when speaking to pets. Scenario 4 (talking to persons the same age as ones siblings) also showed a shift, two spaces to the right (less English) and with a greater variety of selections. Scenario 1 (to parents) oddly moved two spaces to the left, the result of two of the older participants selecting English as their method of communicating with their parents.

Overall, it is clear that the older generation had more variety in the language selections that they made compared to the younger generation. The older generation had a total of 135 English only selections, 112 selections of the combination of English and Spanish, and only 76 selections of Spanish in all of the scenarios. This indicates that the older generation does not make a clear distinction in language preference when addressing others in the community; instead they feel comfortable speaking English and

Spanish only or a combination of both. On the other hand, the younger generation had 181 selections of English compared to 67 selections for Spanish only, making it the most frequent choice. This proves the hypothesis that the younger generation uses less Spanish and relies more on English; however, the older generation does not rely on Spanish so exclusively as predicted and often prefer the combination of both languages.

When it comes to social class in El Paso, there is more differentiation. First of all, for the middle class (figure 9), the first three scenarios (#17, 16, 19) have above 90% English only as their main selection and have the combination of English and Spanish as their only other option; Scenario 5 follows close behind with over 75% English only. A total of six scenarios have over 50% English as their main option and only two scenarios had no participants selecting this option. Next most frequently middle class participants chose the combination of English and Spanish, having at least one participant choose this option in 20 scenarios. The middle class had a total of 169 English only selections, 113 selections of the combination of English and Spanish, and only 64 selections of Spanish. This shows that the middle class relies less on the use of Spanish only and prefers the combination of English and Spanish, and English only as their main choice when speaking to members of the community.

The middle class also exhibited some major shifts compared to the overall numbers. Scenario 7, that asks the participants to select the language they use when speaking to their spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend, moved three spaces to the left, indicating

that more people use English as their main selection here (over 60%). Once again, Scenario 13 is on the move, seven spaces to the left, making English the main language people use when speaking to their pets. The middle class in Scenario 10 (addressing younger people) uses less English and more of the combination of English and Spanish, making it over 50% of their answers. Scenario 3 (addressing siblings) had a drastic shift, moving three spaces to the left, making English their most popular answer. Finally for Scenario 21, middle class people believe that they use the combination of English and Spanish more when they are dreaming than any other language choice, which makes this scenario shift five spaces to the right (away from English).

It is clear that middle class participants do not rely on Spanish only as was predicted. Do they try to move away from Spanish as much as possible, or is this due to the prestige of bilingualism of English and Spanish? They do not, however, avoid the use of Spanglish altogether.

Figure 9. Responses from the middle class

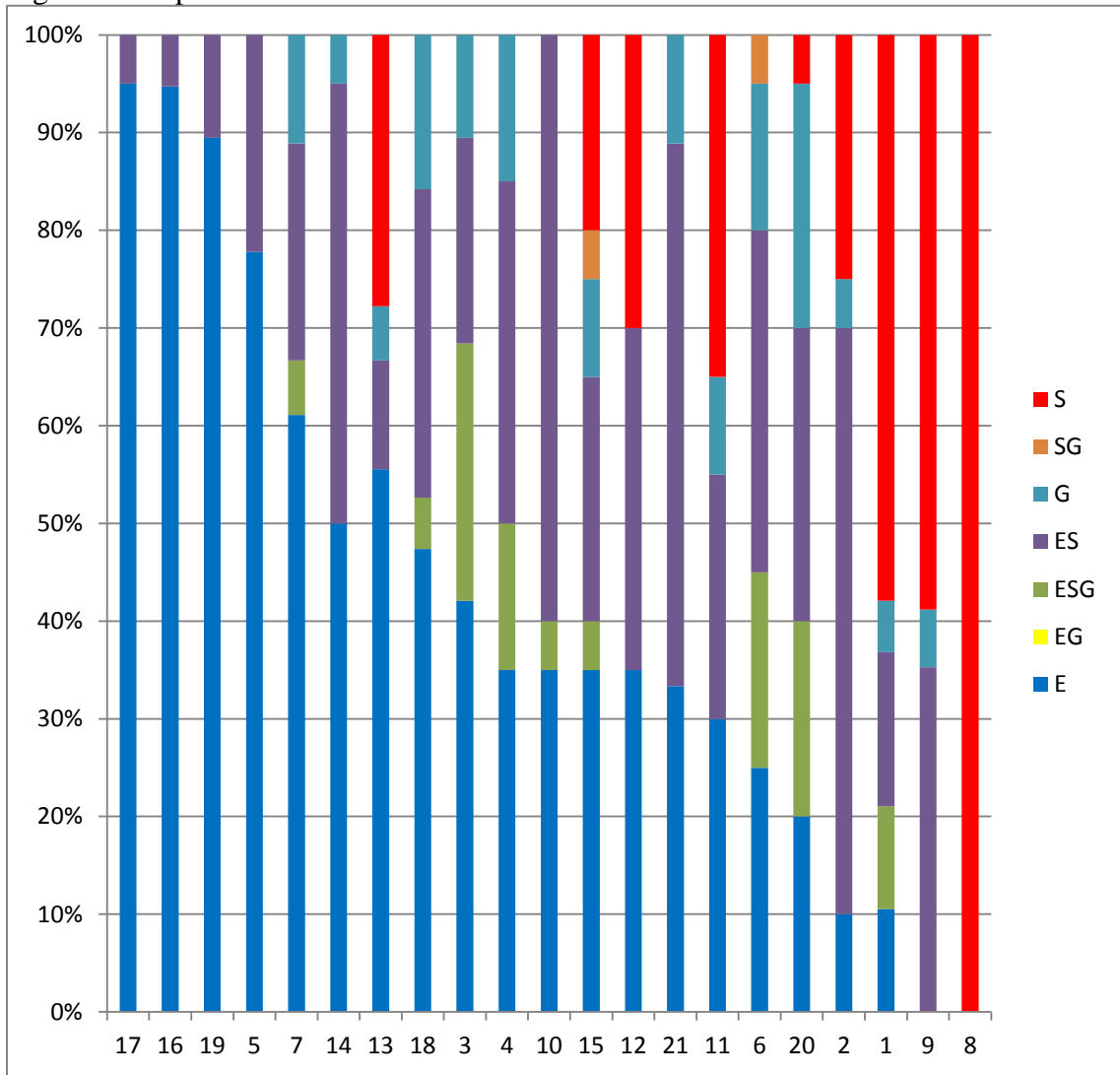
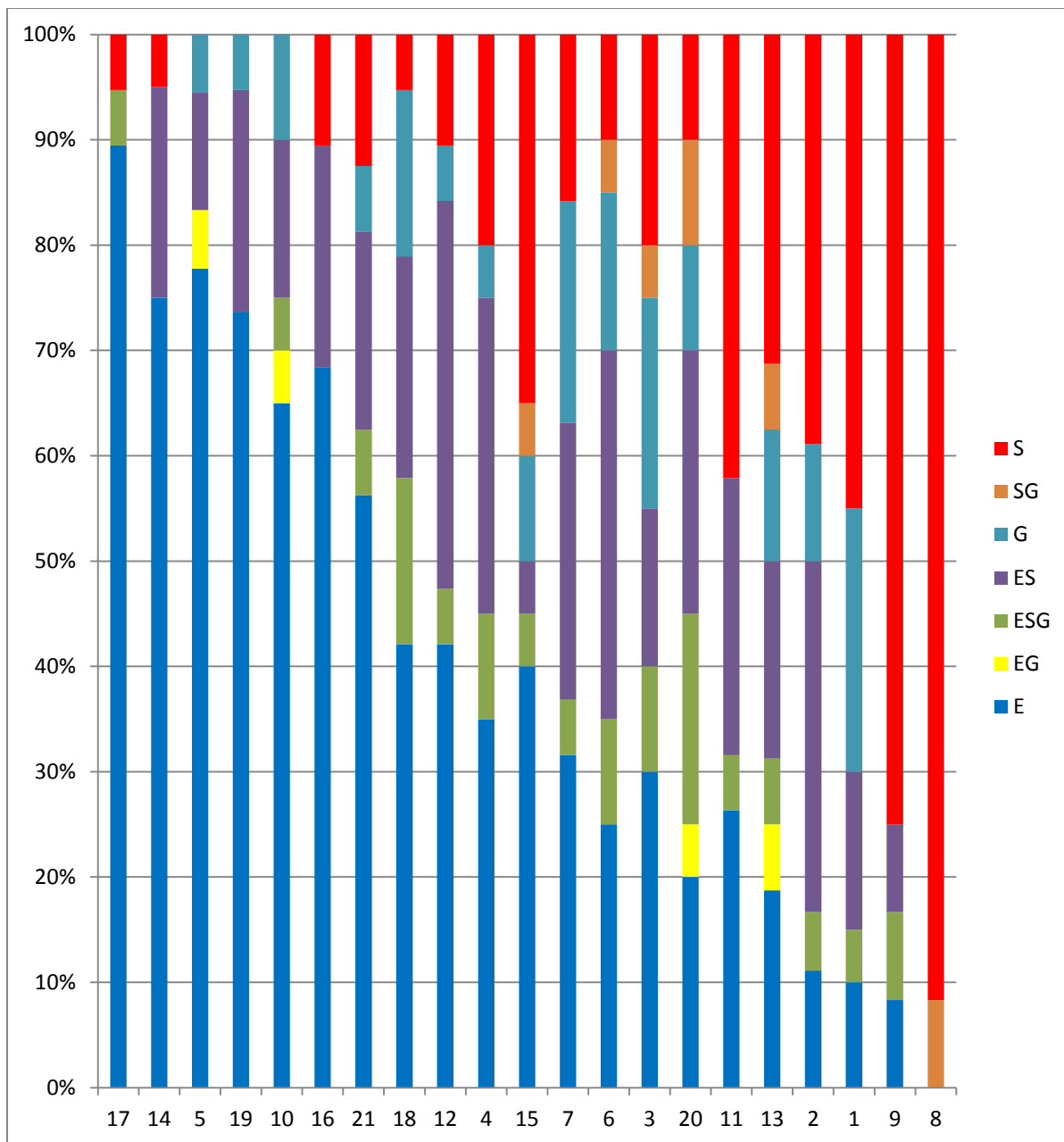


Figure 10. Responses from working class



The working class (figure 10) has a total of 160 English only selections compared to 169 by the middle class. For the combination of English and Spanish, the working class has a total of only 76 selections, and the middle class has 113, making a difference

of 37. Finally, the working class chose Spanish 80 times, whereas the middle class chose only 64 times. This shows that the working class is behind the middle class in relying mostly on English as their main selection, and a comparison of the percentages in Figures 10 and 11 confirms that; the working class uses Spanish only in most of their scenarios in contrast to the popularity of the combination of English and Spanish for the middle class.

Figure 10 displays that for the working class seven scenarios have English with only 60% or more, six scenarios between 30 and 50%, and only one scenario with no selections of English. On the other hand, only two scenarios (19 and 5) did not have any Spanish selections, and similar to this was the combination of English and Spanish with only two scenarios (17 and 8). Only two of the scenarios in the working class chart showed major shifts, Scenario 7 (addressing spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend) moved four spaces to the right and displays a variety of selections among the choices available compared to the overall preference for English. The now famous pet scenario (13) has shifted three spaces to the right, making Spanish their main selection.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

As it appears to be in other border towns around between Mexico and the United States, the bilingual community in El Paso continues to interact in Spanish as well as English. Although they predominantly use English, this does not mean that the use of Spanish is diminishing; on the contrary, it has been combined with and used at the same time as English. Bilingual speakers now claim to use the combination of English and Spanish more than Spanish only in these scenarios. What the citizens of El Paso seem to avoid stating is that in fact they speak Spanglish, at least more than they would like to admit. Spanglish is still a taboo that carries a negative connotation in the community and although people know they speak Spanglish they do not want to admit to it, although I encountered more choices of Spanglish in their responses than I had expected.

This study also shows that while Spanish is still being used in the community, the younger generation speaks Spanish less often. They rely on English and the combination of English and Spanish to communicate with one another. Although the older generation uses Spanish only in most of the scenarios presented, English only is just as strong as is

the combination of English and Spanish. Gender on the other hand is not a significant factor as it was in Susan Gal's (1978) study; both men and women appear to have similar results in the language patterns they use when communicating in El Paso. Women appear to use more Spanish only in more scenarios than men and less of a combination of English and Spanish. This could be because they are stricter in combining the languages and prefer to continue to use the language they began the conversation with.

Social class also has a similar result, contradicting the prediction made previously that the working class participants would choose mainly Spanish only, while the middle class would prefer to use English only and less of the combination of languages. Instead, both classes have a high selection of English only but also admit to the use of other combinations. The middle class had a high use of the combination of English and Spanish as well as a frequent use of Spanish only. On the other hand, the working class has a higher level of Spanish only compared to middle class but a less significant selection of the combination of English and Spanish. The main difference between social classes is that working class uses more combinations of languages, while the middle class relies on English and Spanish only and the combination of both.

It is clear that the bilingual residents of El Paso are relying more on English and less on Spanish, but this does not mean that Spanish is going to stop being used. I believe that as long as El Paso continues to border Juarez and people have the constant contact with Spanish speakers, then bilingualism will still exist but in a new form. Perhaps El Pasoans will admit to using even Spanglish and embrace even more fully the new language choices that are already being used. Time will tell.

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APPENDIX A

List of participants and categories

Pseudonym	Age	Sex	Class	Native Language
Martha	87	Female	Working	Spanish
Ben	87	Male	Working	Spanish
Sandra	82	Female	Working	English
Sara	80	Female	Working	Spanish
Maria	77	Female	Working	Spanish
Omar	75	Male	Working	Spanish
Rosa	74	Female	Working	Spanish
Lizbeth	69	Female	Middle	English
Carlos	69	Male	Working	Spanish
Andrea	67	Female	Working	Spanish
Paco	63	Male	Middle	Spanish
Francisco	62	Male	Working	English
Luis	60	Male	Middle	English
Daniel	59	Male	Working	Spanish
Berenice	59	Female	Middle	English
Consuelo	58	Female	Middle	Spanish
Fernando	58	Male	Middle	Spanish
Jorge	55	Male	Middle	Spanish
Manuel	55	Male	Middle	Spanish
Natalia	55	Female	Middle	Spanish

Samantha	55	Female	Middle	Spanish
Alejandro	25	Male	Middle	Spanish
Javier	25	Male	Middle	Spanish
Alberto	25	Male	Working	English
Ingrid	25	Female	Middle	Spanish
Tomas	24	Male	Working	Spanish
Arturo	24	Male	Working	Spanish
Felipe	24	Male	Working	Spanish
Esmeralda	24	Female	Middle	Spanish
Camila	24	Female	Working	Spanish
Pepe	24	Male	Working	Spanish
Miguel	23	Male	Middle	Spanish
Mario	23	Male	Middle	Spanish
Jimena	22	Female	Middle	English
Daniela	22	Female	Middle	Spanish
Elvia	22	Female	Working	Spanish
Ana	21	Female	Working	Spanish
Eric	21	Male	Working	Spanish
Patricia	19	Female	Working	Spanish
Jesus	18	Male	Middle	Spanish

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

ADULT CONSENT FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

PROJECT: The Languages of English and Spanish and its Limitations: An Examination of the Incidence of using One Language or the Other in Various Domains:

INVESTIGATORS: Karen Y. Chavira, Oklahoma State University

PURPOSE: For the purposes of this study, I will explore whether English or Spanish is being chosen by looking at the incidence of the use of one language or the other (or mixtures of the two) in various domains of use.

PROCEDURES: The participant will be asked to answer the questionnaire, and then I will also record a short interview, which simply asks the participants to elaborate on their answers.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION: There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION: If you are interested, we will send you a copy of the results of the study when it is finished."

CONFIDENTIALITY: After collecting the data, it will be placed at the Linguistic Laboratory (211A Morrill Hall) in a locked, secure place along with the transcription of each recording. I will personally transcribe each of the interviews and store the transcription with the recordings in the Linguistic Lab. Only my professor, Dr. Preston and I will have access to the interviews transcriptions. I might want to consult the tapes and surveys at a later time. The person's identity will be delinked from the recording and the questionnaire immediately. If I were to go back to them, I would not know who the participants were. The data will be then analyzed by

COMPENSATION: There is no compensation for filling out the survey.

CONTACTS : You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study: Karen Y. Chavira, MA Student Morrill Hall 205, Department of Arts and Sciences Oklahoma State, Stillwater, OK 74078, 915-497-9770. Dr. Dennis Preston Morrill Hall 112B, Department of Arts and Sciences Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3631

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS:
I understand that my participation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved <u>5/1/12</u>
Expires <u>4/30/13</u>
IRB # <u>12-12-09</u>

APPENDIX: C Consent Form

7/17/13

AS-12-49 approval.pdf

CONSENT DOCUMENTATION:

I have been fully informed about the procedures listed here. I am aware of what I will be asked to do and of the benefits of my participation. I also understand the following statements:

I affirm that I am 18 years of age or older.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form will be given to me. I hereby give permission for my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Print Name

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date



VITA

Karen Yvette Chavira

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: LANGUAGE CHOICE IN EL PASO, TEXAS

Major Field: English- TESL/ Linguistics

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in your major at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2013.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of /Arts in Spanish at Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas in December, 2009.