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Roles and values of Spanish and English among Hispanic teens in Miami¹

Andrew Lynch, University of Miami, and
Erica Cerione, Palmer Trinity School, Miami

1 Introduction

The bastion of Cuban exile since the early 1960s, Miami has now become the nation's – and arguably the world's – most dynamic pan-Hispanic metropolis. Hispanics represented 61.3 percent of Miami-Dade County's population in the 2006 US Census American Community Survey, a figure that reached 69 percent in the city of Miami proper and 94.1 percent in the city of Hialeah.² Unlike other urban centers of Latin American immigration in the United States, Miami has experienced a massive influx of highly educated middle and upper class immigrants – Cuban during the 1960s and 1970s, Nicaraguan and Colombian during the 1980s, and pan-Hispanic through the 1990s to the present. Nearly half (46.3 percent) of Miami-Dade's total population was born in Latin America, with concentrations of Cubans (who constituted 52 percent of the County's total Hispanic population in 2006), Colombians and Nicaraguans (each numbering more than 100,000 people), Puerto Ricans (nearly 90,000), Dominicans and Hondurans (slightly less than 50,000 people each). There are also large contingents (more than 25,000 people each) of Venezuelans, Argentines, Peruvians and Mexicans (US Census Bureau 2006). All of these immigrations have mostly been the product of political and economic crises affecting the respective countries of origin (cf. Boswell 1994).

For mainstream America, Miami has become synonymous with Spanish, and most Miamians themselves would affirm that Miami is a bilingual city. Indeed, 62.1 percent of the County's total population 5 years of age and over indicates speaking Spanish at home, and 31.2 percent of those report that they speak English “less than very well” (US Census Bureau 2006).

López-Morales (2003), Lynch (1999, 2000), and Roca (1991) commented on the plethora of social, cultural, and economic opportunities for speakers of both Spanish and English in Miami, highlighting the fully bilingual environment of the metropolitan area and the high value placed on bilingual ability there, a fact borne out in economic data from the US Census (Boswell 2000) and survey studies of area businesses (Fradd 1996; McGuirk 2004). Lambert and Taylor (1996: 490) also observed a great emphasis on Spanish among mothers of middle-class Cuban-American families in Miami, noting that Spanish fluency of the children in these families bore a significant positive correlation not only with children's school performance but also with mothers' self-respect.³

Yúdice (2003: 210) has characterized Miami as the “cultural capital of Latin America,” affirming that “the tendency of culture, particularly Latin culture, and economy to merge... provides greater opportunities for the bicultural and bilingual professional class in Miami than in any other US city.” He argues that:

The new immigrants to Miami fit neither the assimilationist nor the identity politics paradigms familiar to US scholars of race and ethnicity. They maintain ties to their homelands and travel back and forth with frequency, but they have also developed a new spirit of belonging to the city.... Latinness or Latinoness is undergoing a transformation in Miami; it is less rooted to a specific or minority identity. Perhaps this is because of all US cities (indeed, all cities in the Americas), Miami is the only one from which a generalized international Latin identity is possible.

It seems doubtful that the social and economic importance of Spanish in this global city (cf. Sassen 2000) will wane very much in the foreseeable future. In the present study, we explore Hispanic teenagers' perceptions of the social and cultural roles and values of Spanish in the urban bilingual context of Miami. First, a bit about the findings of previous research related to our area of inquiry.

2 Previous studies

Despite the highly dynamic context of bilingualism in Miami and the great social and economic prestige of Spanish there, the findings of most studies do not bode well for the generational legacy of Spanish. In an extensive study of bilingual elementary school children, Eilers, Oller and Cobo-Lewis (2002: 43) noted that “Spanish is extremely prominent in public life in all of South Florida, and its prestige is high... Yet Hispanic children in Miami showed strong signs of rejecting Spanish in circumstances where they had a choice to speak either language.” Likewise, in their reflections on the linguistic situation of Miami Cuban-Americans, Otheguy, García and Roca (2000: 184) affirmed that the “intergenerational maintenance of productive ability in Spanish, especially of full Spanish literacy, is difficult to achieve.” Gutiérrez-Rivas (2007) documented the influence of English in discourse-pragmatic structures of third-generation Miami Cuban-Americans, concomitant with reduced linguistic ability in Spanish, while Hurtado (2002: 162) attributed the use of Spanish among US-born Colombian-Americans in Miami to mostly instrumental motives.

Among 110 Hispanic-background junior high school students (ages 13 to 15) polled in 1988 by Zurer Pearson and McGee (1993: 97), 68 percent reported using “only a few words in Spanish” when talking to friends and 65 percent reported the same when talking to siblings.⁴ English also appeared to be dominant in the mass media consumed by these students, leading Zurer Pearson and McGee to conclude that there are “signs of Spanish being replaced by English to a significant degree” among Miami Hispanics (1993: 100). In a later study, Portes and Schauflier (1996) surveyed 2,843 eighth- and ninth-grade students (not all of Hispanic backgrounds), with an average age of 14.8 years, in inner-city and suburban schools of Miami and Fort Lauderdale regarding their language abilities and use. They observed a general pattern of language shift (i.e. preference to speak English) among all students surveyed, but noted that

only about one fourth of the Hispanic students included in their study reflected “foreign language loss” (1996: 20). This figure dropped to only 11 percent among Cuban-background children enrolled in private schools, leading these authors (1996: 20) to affirm that their results “indicate that Cuban and other Latin American-origin youth in South Florida are mostly bilingual,” an observation also made by Lynch (1999, 2000). Portes and Schaufler (1996: 20) reasoned that:

Retention of the parental language (Spanish) is in part a consequence of the recency of some migrant flows... More significantly, however, it reflects the presence of a large and diversified ethnic enclave where Spanish is the language of daily intercourse for all kinds of transactions. Respondents in private bilingual schools are mostly the children of middle-class Cuban exiles who represent the core of this ethnic economy. It is not surprising that they have the lowest propensity to give up Spanish.

Although we would suggest that “giving up Spanish” is perhaps not the most appropriate characterization of the complex social, linguistic and psychological factors that lead to partial or incomplete acquisition of Spanish language among US-born Hispanics (cf. Silva-Corvalán 2003, 2006), Portes and Schaufler’s point is well taken. As the present study reveals, however, Cuban-origin children do not always constitute the majority of students now enrolled in Miami’s private schools, and their Spanish language abilities do not necessarily outshine those of students of other Hispanic backgrounds. We would also note that many experts on globalization – Sassen (2000) among them – concur that Miami has evolved from an “ethnic enclave economy” during the 1970s and 1980s into a “global city” tied to the economies of Latin America in the twenty-first century, a transformation that will likely have important implications for sociological theory as well as for cultural studies in the coming decades (cf. Fusco 1995; Yúdice 2003).

Amidst Miami’s social, cultural and economic evolution as a pan-Hispanic “global city” since the 1980s and waning solidarity among the predominant Cuban community (Alberts 2005; Lynch 2009a, 2009b), social class seems to emerge as an important factor in Spanish language

acquisition and use. We have already pointed out that Portes and Schauffler (1996) found that the Hispanic students attending private schools reflected somewhat higher rates of Spanish language retention in their data. Additionally, Lambert and Taylor (1996) documented higher rates of parental support for Spanish among middle-class Cuban-American mothers than among working-class mothers.⁵ These authors (1996: 487) reasoned that:

[E]mphasis on the heritage language may well arise because the families of middle-class mothers have been more successful in ‘making it’ in America and therefore feel less pressure to pursue English at the expense of Spanish... [T]he values and expectations of working-class families may encourage them to emphasize English competency over Spanish for their children whereas another set of values and expectations, based more on heritage culture and language pride, may encourage middle-class families to emphasize Spanish more.

We have anecdotal evidence from Miami-Dade public schoolteachers that socioeconomic background has some impact on students’ perception of English and the value of being bilingual, with lower-income families placing greater emphasis on English. Numerous teachers in Miami-Dade’s public high schools have commented to us that a social divide exists between students who have been born and/or raised principally in Miami and those who are more recent arrivals to Miami, Spanish-dominant speakers generally enrolled in ESL/ESOL courses. The former sometimes refer to the latter as “refs” (short for “refugees”) and implicitly maintain a sort of self-imposed social and cultural superiority with respect to them, marking social distance not only through their choice of language (Spanish versus English) in peer interactions but also through particular ways of speaking each of these languages. This division is exacerbated by the reluctance that ESL students oftentimes have to speak English, thus distancing themselves from their US-born bilingual peers who socialize mostly in English. As much as we have been able to surmise, this pattern of social division based on immigration appears most acutely marked in public schools attended mostly by students from lower-income households (cf. Stepick, Grenier,

Castro and Dunn 2003 regarding divisions among Haitian-background students in Miami's public high schools).

In the findings of Lambert and Taylor (1996), as much as in our own personal observations and anecdotal evidence from area high schools, Hispanic adolescents from middle- and upper-class backgrounds in Miami seem to place a higher value on Spanish language than those of lower socioeconomic class backgrounds, and perhaps embrace bilingualism more. In light of this apparent tendency, we chose to explore the roles and values associated with Spanish and English among a sample of middle- and upper-class Hispanic teenagers in Miami.

3 The present study

For the present study, we posed the following questions.

- (1) How do middle- and upper-class bilingual Hispanic adolescents view the roles and values of Spanish and English in Miami?
- (2) What is the relationship of Spanish language ability and use to the roles and values associated with Spanish and English among this sample of the population?
- (3) How do age, gender, and birthplace (US-born versus Latin American-born) condition these issues?

3.1 Setting

Our study was conducted at a prestigious private school located in one of Miami's most affluent neighborhoods, with students hailing primarily from families of educated middle and upper socioeconomic class backgrounds. The school was divided into a middle school (sixth through eighth grades, ages 11 to 13) and an upper school (ninth through twelfth grades, ages 14 to 17)

with a total of approximately 600 students. At the time of our study (fall 2007), 41 percent of the school's students were identified as Hispanic, a figure much lower than in most of Miami-Dade's public schools. The World Languages Department offered classes in Spanish, French, and Chinese, and 94 percent of students (582/600) were enrolled in at least one class offered by the Department at the time of our study. As a graduation requirement, upper school students must earn a minimum of two one-year credits through the third level of a language, though the school strongly encouraged four years of second language study.

At the time of our study, about 65 percent (389/600) of the student body was taking a Spanish class, about 25 percent of whom (95/389) were enrolled in courses designed specifically for native/heritage speakers. The focus of these courses was to develop the student's formal language skills in reading, writing, and speaking through content-based instruction. The school's English as a Second Language (ESL) program consisted of 36 students at the time of our study, all of whom attended English literature, writing and history classes taught by teachers specialized in ESL methodologies. For all other classes, ESL students were mainstreamed with others. Many ESL students reported making friendships outside of the ESL group, especially with mainstream Spanish-speaking students.

The greater part of the school's community was exposed to Spanish on a daily basis in both the academic and social setting. Most students were perplexed when asked by the present author (Cerione) whether they had ever witnessed or experienced prejudice toward a Spanish speaker on the campus. None of the Spanish-speaking faculty felt that they had ever experienced any sort of discrimination toward Hispanics on the school campus. One monolingual English-speaking student commented to the present author (Cerione) that "so many people speak Spanish that you just get used to it; it's just part of the school, something you know you're going to hear

in the hallways.” Students claimed that Spanish was “a part of life” and no social divisions were apparent between Spanish speakers and non-speakers or Hispanics and non-Hispanics.

3.2 Participants

A total of 93 students (48 males and 45 females) participated in the present study, all of whom identified themselves as “Hispanic” or “Latina/o” and were enrolled in a Spanish for native/heritage speakers course. They ranged in age from 12 to 18 years (mean 14.8). Of these 93 students, 62 percent were born in the US and grew up in Miami; 10 percent were born abroad and moved to Miami before they were 5 years old; 18 percent were born abroad and immigrated to Miami sometime between the ages of 5 and 11; the remaining 10 percent immigrated to Miami after the age of 11. Participants’ family origins appear in Table 1. It is noteworthy that although Cubans formed the largest contingent, they were far short of constituting a majority: only 28 percent of students were of Cuban background (plus three other students who were half Cuban, of mixed origins).

Table 1. Origins of study participants (N=93)

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Cuban | 26/93 (28%) |
| Mixed | 13/93 (14%) |
| Colombian | 8/93 (9%) |
| Peruvian | 8/93 (9%) |
| Argentine | 7/93 (8%) |
| Venezuelan | 7/93 (8%) |
| Puerto Rican | 6/93 (6%) |
| Mexican | 5/93 (5%) |
| Central American | 4/93 (4%) |
| Dominican | 3/93 (3%) |
| Spanish | 3/93 (3%) |
| Other South American | 3/93 (3%) |

3.3 Instrument

The present investigation attempted to address issues of Spanish and English language use through implicit means in a questionnaire format. The main focus was on the roles and values that respondents associated with each of the two languages. Participants' responded to the questionnaire (in written format, in English) during a regular class session. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all students willingly agreed to complete the survey.

In the first section of this instrument, students provided information regarding their age and gender, family origin (Cuban, Colombian, etc.), birthplace and time of immigration, and why they did or did not consider themselves as "Hispanic" or "Latina/o." Similar to the method followed in previous survey studies (cf. Lynch and Klee 2005; Potowski 2004), students were asked to estimate their own abilities to speak Spanish and indicate the frequency with which they use Spanish and English with their mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings, and friends based on a Likert scale (with ratings from 1 to 5). They were also asked to estimate the frequency of the two languages in television programs and movies they watch, and in their usual music choices. Students then indicated the degree to which they agreed with a series of 28 statements concerning the social and cultural roles and values associated with Spanish and English in Miami. These responses were based on the following Likert scale: 1= "I totally disagree"; 2= "I disagree somewhat"; 3= "I neither agree nor disagree"; 4= "I mostly agree"; 5= "I totally agree."

3.4 Data analysis

All data were entered by the present authors into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows. As a first step, descriptive statistics and means were obtained to discern general patterns in the data. We carried out a principal components analysis (also referred to as

“factor analysis”) with Varimax rotation in order to reduce the questionnaire items to a smaller number of dependent variables for further analysis. Subsequently, each of the principal components (with Eigen values greater than 1.0) was submitted to an analysis of linear regression (stepwise method) to determine the combined influence of the following independent variables: age, gender, birthplace, self-reported ability to speak Spanish, frequency of Spanish and English use with mother, father, siblings and friends, and frequency of Spanish and English in television/movies and in music choices.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Reported language ability and use

In the present sample, it would appear that ability in Spanish remains fairly strong among US-born Spanish speakers in Miami. As shown in Table 2, 52.5 percent of US-born respondents rated their own abilities to speak the language as “good,” and another 30.5 percent estimated their oral capacities to be either “very good” or “excellent.” Although the self-perceived oral abilities of those students born in the US appear considerably weaker than those of students who were born in Latin America (i.e., 85 percent of the latter rated their abilities as “very good” or “excellent” while only 30.5 percent of the former did so), it is noteworthy that the great majority of US-born respondents (83 percent) perceived their own abilities to be somewhere from “good” to “excellent,” and only two felt that they had “poor” abilities.

Table 2. Responses to the question, “How would you rate your own abilities to speak Spanish?” (N=93)

| | US-born | Born in Latin America | Total |
|--------|------------|-----------------------|------------|
| “poor” | 2/59 (3%) | 0 | 2/93 (2%) |
| “fair” | 8/59 (14%) | 1/34 (3%) | 9/93 (10%) |

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| “good” | 31/59 (52.5%) | 4/34 (12%) | 35/93 (38%) |
| “very good” | 13/59 (22%) | 11/34 (32%) | 24/93 (26%) |
| “excellent” | 5/59 (8.5%) | 18/34 (53%) | 23/93 (25%) |

The dominance of English in interactions with parents, siblings and peers, and in television, cinema and music choices is very clear among our study population. Figures 1 and 2 reflect that the majority of US-born students used mostly English in interactions with their parents; only about 15-20 percent of them used mostly Spanish with parents. The great majority of Latin American-born respondents, on the other hand, used Spanish almost always with their parents. There appeared to be no important differences in the use of the two languages with mothers vs. fathers. With grandparents, the great majority of students from both groups reported using mostly Spanish or almost always Spanish (78.5 percent of US-born and 94 percent of Latin American-born).

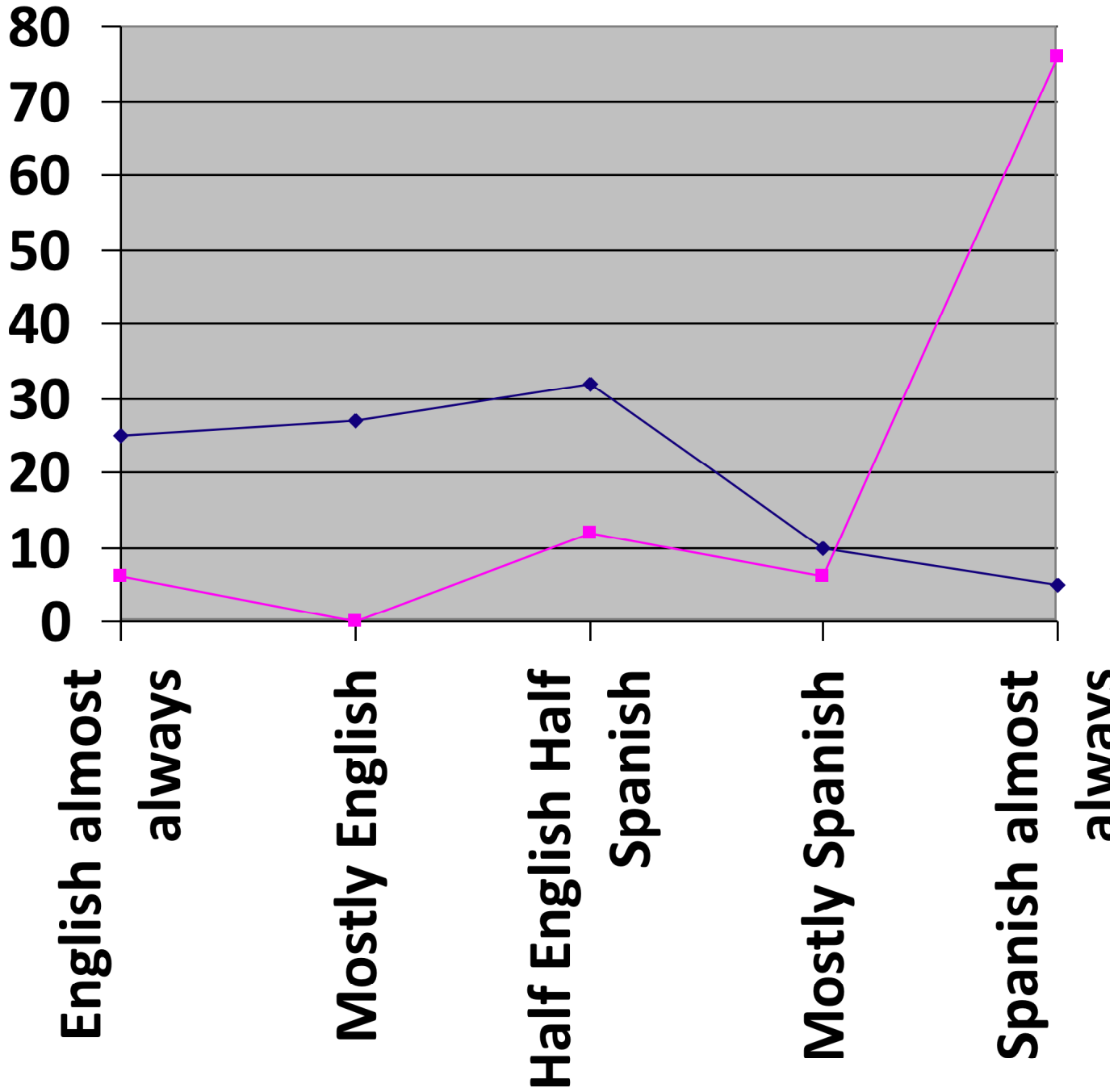


Figure 1. Respondents' estimated use of Spanish and English with mothers (US-born N=59, Latin American-born N=34)

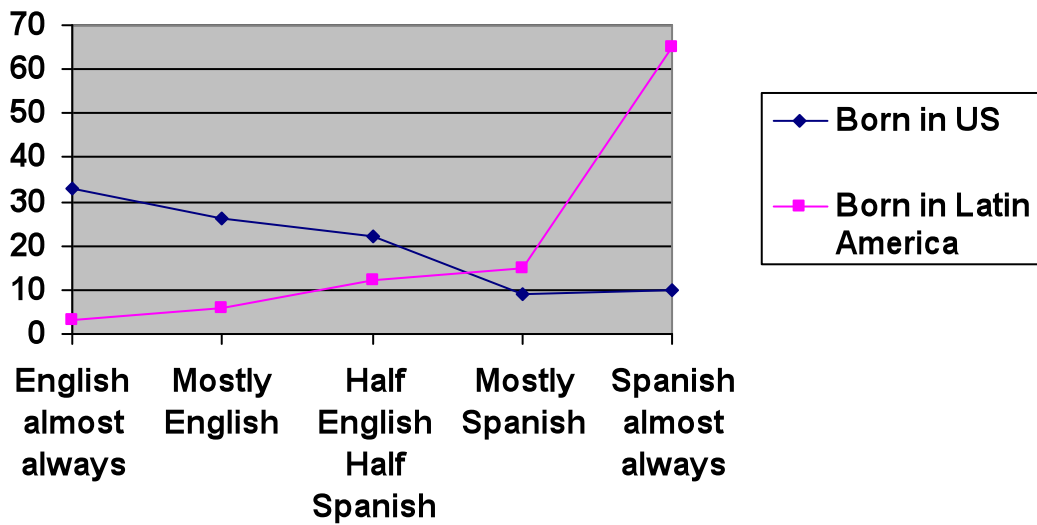


Figure 2. Respondents' estimated use of Spanish and English with fathers (US-born N=58, Latin American-born N=34)

As for language use with siblings and friends, Figures 3 and 4 show that the dominance of English is overwhelming among US-born respondents: 72 percent reported English almost always with their brothers and sisters and 59 percent reported the same in interactions with friends. Although the majority of Latin American-born respondents reported using mostly Spanish with siblings, they too used a considerable amount of English with friends. It is remarkable that only six of the US-born respondents (10 percent) indicated that they spoke half English and half Spanish with friends, and none of them reported using mostly Spanish or almost always Spanish with friends.

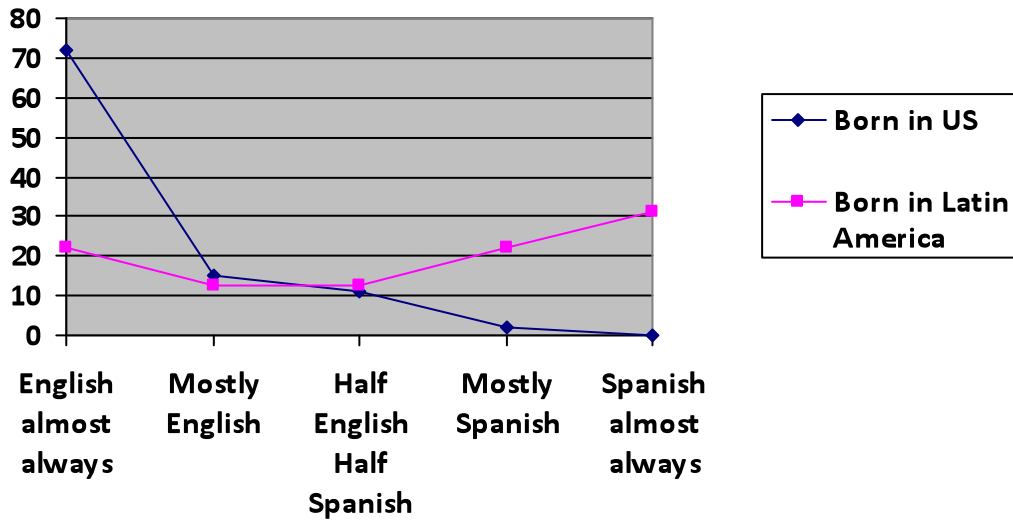


Figure 3. Respondents' estimated use of Spanish and English with siblings (US-born N=54, Latin American-born N=32)

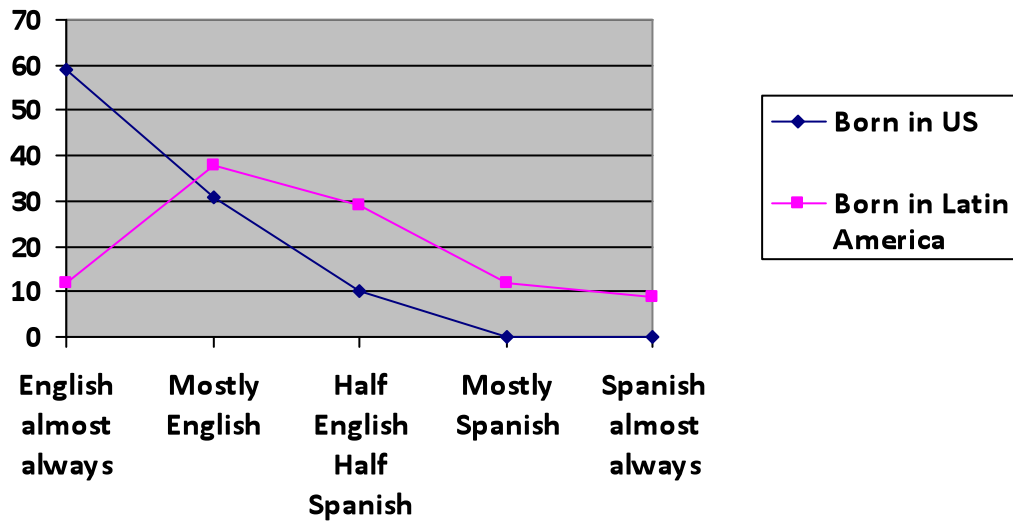


Figure 4. Respondents' estimated use of Spanish and English with friends (US-born N=59, Latin American-born N=34)

These data tentatively suggest that re-contact with the language – through friendships with first-generation immigrants – does not play as vital a role in Spanish language use among US-born teenagers in Miami as it apparently does among US-born college-age and adult bilinguals (cf. Lynch 2000). We would attribute this phenomenon to two principal social factors: (i) the integration of adults in the workplace, where at least some use of Spanish is largely required in Miami (cf. Fradd 1996; McGuirk 2004) and where co-workers are oftentimes first-generation immigrants; and (ii) the fact that adults generally do not participate in the sort of marked and rather restrictive social cliques found in most high schools, cliques that can greatly influence patterns of language variation and use (Eckert 2000).

Although the social transition from adolescence to adulthood appears to lead some Miami Hispanics to assert the value of Spanish (cf. Boswell 2000), their own dominance in English and their preference to use English with siblings and peers means that this language will overshadow Spanish in terms of intergenerational transmission. We would assume that most third generation speakers (i.e., those born to parents who were also born and/or raised in Miami) will likely transmit no more than a rudimentary or emblematic knowledge of Spanish to their own children, who will depend much more on extended family members, community use of the language, and/or re-contact with first-generation immigrants if they are to acquire any degree of fluency. Zentella (1997) reached a similar conclusion in her longitudinal ethnographic study of second- and third-generation Puerto Rican speakers of Spanish in New York City, and Rumbaut, Massey and Bean (2006) highlighted the same pattern in Southern California.

This assumption is further supported by respondents' choices of television programming, movies, and music. In these media, the frequency of English heavily overshadowed Spanish. Figure 5 reflects that the great majority of both US-born and Latin American-born students

reported watching television programs and movies mostly in English. The amount of Spanish in music was more appreciable: among both groups of students a majority reported listening to music in Spanish about half of the time (Figure 6). This pattern of musical choices is similar to the one documented by Potowski (2004) among Hispanic adolescents in Chicago.

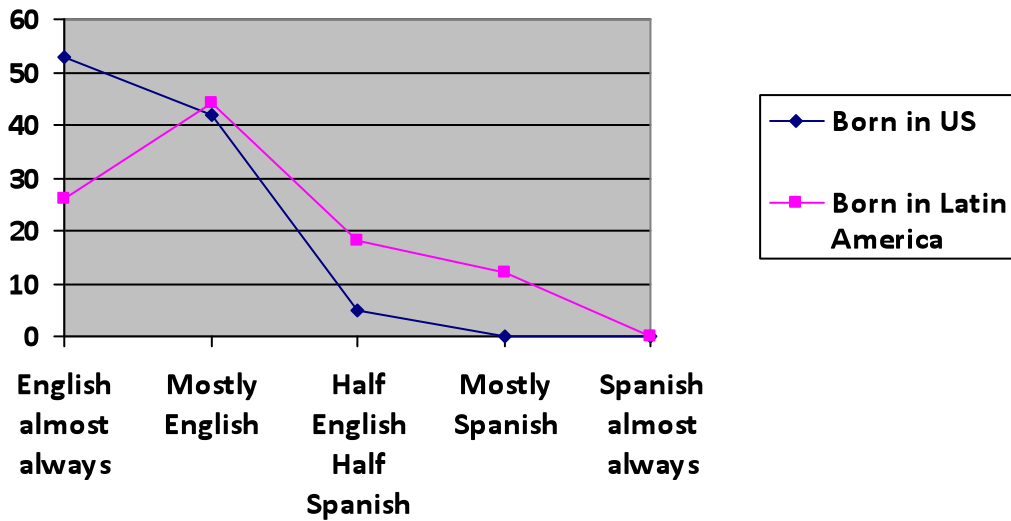


Figure 5. Frequency of Spanish and English in respondents' choices of television programming and movies (US-born N=59, Latin American-born N=34)

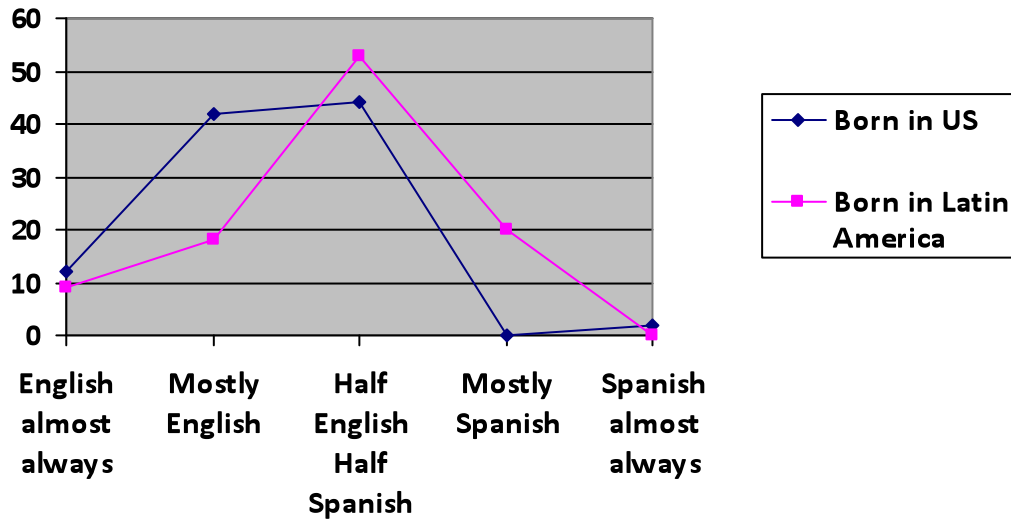


Figure 6. Frequency of Spanish and English in respondents' choices of music (US-born N=59, Latin American-born N=34)

As we will see in the following pages, language in students' music choices had a significant impact on their responses to many of the survey items dealing with the social and cultural roles and values of Spanish in the bilingual urban context of Miami, as did gender.

4.2 Roles and values of Spanish and English

The principal components analysis carried out on students' responses to the 28 questionnaire items related to roles and values of Spanish and English identified ten components, which served to explain 68 percent of the variance in the data. Each of these components and the specific questionnaire items comprising them (numbered as Q1, Q2, Q3, etc.) appear in the Appendix, followed by the results of linear regression analysis for each component.⁶ The loading – or correlation value – for each questionnaire item appears in parentheses preceding each. The mean response to each questionnaire item (based on the given Likert scale, from 1 to 5) is also indicated in parentheses following each. Our ensuing discussion is focused on those independent

variables that, according to linear regression analysis, most significantly conditioned responses to the items under each component. We highlight specific questionnaire items in relation to those independent variables.

We wish to note that our study population, as a whole, was in full agreement that Miami is and should be a bilingual city. For the questionnaire items related to this topic (constituting Principal Component 1, Appendix), there were no significant differences based on any of the independent variables. Almost everyone totally agreed that Miami is a bilingual city (Q4) and everyone mostly disagreed with statements that the public use of Spanish in Miami should be limited or restricted in any way (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q22). With regards to other related questionnaire items, respondents strongly agreed with the propositions that “Being bilingual is a good thing” (Q8) and that “Educated Hispanics in Miami should be fully competent in both Spanish and English” (Q7). They tended to disagree that English is the true language of success (Q28) and agree that Spanish is necessary for a good job in Miami (Q13). In sum, students appeared highly supportive of the use of both languages in the city’s public life. An earlier survey carried out by Lynch and Klee (2005) showed the same pattern among university-level Hispanic students in Miami. We also note that, as a whole, students in the present study appeared neutral (mean response of 3.14) with regard to the proposition that “To be Hispanic or Latino in Miami, you have to be able to speak Spanish” (Q25). This finding concurs with those of prior studies carried out in other regions of the US, which have concluded that US-born Hispanics generally do not see Spanish ability as a cultural requisite for being Hispanic (Attinasi 1985, Zentella 1997, Potowski and Matts 2008).

We now turn to discussion of the most significant independent variables which conditioned responses to the questionnaire: gender, the language of music that respondents

listened to, their self-reported ability to speak Spanish, and the extent to which they spoke Spanish with siblings. Each of these is considered in the respective subsections that follow.

4.2.1 Gender and the social value of Spanish

Participants' gender emerged as a significant variable in linear regression analysis of principal components two (comprising questionnaire items related to the social value of bilingualism), five (social solidarity of Spanish), and six (socialization in Spanish). For component nine (language of friendship), participants' reported language use with father was a significant variable, and for component ten (language of success) language use with mother proved to be significant. The general observation to be made in terms of all of these data is that males appeared more affirmative of the value of Spanish for social purposes than their female counterparts.

Gender was the only significant factor determining differences in the responses to the two items that constituted component five, related to social solidarity in Spanish: (Q18) "On the street in Miami, favors are better asked for in Spanish than in English," and (Q19) "People in Miami are nicer to you if you speak to them in Spanish." Females disagreed with both of these statements more than males did. For Q18, the mean response for males was 3.42; for females it was 2.96. For Q19, the male mean response was 3.29; the female mean response was 2.78. We might conclude, based on these data, that male teenagers in our study population place slightly more emphasis on the role of Spanish in asking for favors in Miami than females do, and they tend to perceive slightly more than their female counterparts that people in Miami are somewhat likelier to treat them nicely if spoken to in Spanish.

In her detailed analysis of the ways in which three generations of Miami Cubans ask for favors, Gutiérrez-Rivas (2007: 145) documented that third-generation males made somewhat

more use of supporting moves and statements of coercion than their female counterparts when elaborating requests for favors in Spanish, a finding that could be related to the present data. It is possible that US-born Hispanic males in Miami view Spanish more as an effective tool for convincing someone to do something than females do. At any rate, both males and females of the third generation in Gutiérrez-Rivas' study appeared equally indirect, relying much more upon an English-based system of negative politeness than their grandparents (first-generation immigrants from Cuba), who demonstrated use of more positive politeness strategies when asking for favors in Spanish.

Again, in the case of component six, males agreed more with statements about the social value of Spanish than females. In response to (Q20) "It would be a bad thing to have a boyfriend or girlfriend in Miami who did not know any Spanish" and (Q21) "It's annoying when people who know Spanish act like they only speak English," males agreed more than females. The greatest difference emerged in the case of Q20, which had a female mean response of 2.0 and a male mean response of 2.4.

With regards to the only item comprising component nine – (Q27) "It's easier to make friends in English than in Spanish" – respondents' reported language use with their fathers was the only significant variable.⁷ Those students who reported using less Spanish with their fathers agreed significantly more with this statement than those who reported using more Spanish with their fathers. Although participants' gender did not prove to be a statistically significant variable, males disagreed somewhat more with this statement than females (mean response of 2.85 for males and 3.11 for females). This tendency concurs with our preceding observations with respect to components five (social solidarity of Spanish) and six (socialization in Spanish), in which males appeared slightly more affirmative of the value of Spanish in garnering favors, being

treated nicely by others, and in interpersonal communication (cf. Klee 1987). Although not significant variables in the regression analysis, language use with mother followed this same distribution, as did language use with friends.

For component ten, also containing only one item – (Q28) “English is the true language of success in Miami” – respondents’ reported language use with their mothers was a significant variable in the regression analysis. Those students who reported using almost always English with their mothers tended to agree more with this statement than those who mix Spanish and English with their mothers. We would interpret this finding in the following way: mothers who use almost always English with their children would be more likely to instill in them – explicitly or implicitly – the notion that English is the language of success and that they must speak it well. In their study of 108 Cuban-American mothers in Miami, Lambert and Taylor (1996: 492–493) found no correlation between the English fluency of middle-class mothers and the English fluency of their offspring, or their performance in school. However, in working-class families, mother’s English fluency was correlated importantly with the first-born child’s English fluency. Among the children of working-class families, English fluency was significantly correlated with their performance in school, a relationship that did not exist among the children of middle-class families. Among the latter, it was Spanish fluency that appeared most significantly correlated with school performance.

Our finding that mothers have a significant impact on their bilingual children’s perception of English as the true language of success leads us to conclude that, at least for the participants of the present study, fathers seem to instill in their offspring a somewhat more positive social orientation toward Spanish, and male children affirm this orientation more than females, significantly so in some cases. Even so, females reported a slightly higher level of oral

ability in Spanish than males in our data (mean reported ability = 3.67 for females and 3.56 for males), and the only two respondents who rated their Spanish ability as “poor” were both males. These findings concur with those of Portes and Schauffler (1996: 24), whose data revealed that “girls have a significantly greater propensity for retaining the parental language than do boys with similar backgrounds.” Zentella (1997) found the same gender-related pattern among New York Puerto Ricans, and Hidalgo (1993) noted it in her study of San Diego area Mexican-Americans as well.

Finally, it is interesting to note that gender differences were significant in the case of items Q5 (“It’s cool when English-language singers like Beyonce and J-Lo do Spanish-language versions of their songs”) and Q6 (“It’s cool when Spanish-language singers like Shakira and Enrique Iglesias do English-language versions of their songs”), which formed part of component two. In the cases of both of these music-related items, females were more receptive of bilingual versions of songs than males: the male mean response for Q5 was 2.88 and for females it was 3.76; for Q6 the male mean response was 2.96 and for females it was 3.89. This is the opposite tendency than that observed above, according to which males seemed to place more emphasis on the value of Spanish in personal interactions. We turn now to the issue of musical influences.

4.2.2 Music and the role of Spanish in urban popular culture and personal interaction

On the whole, the study population was slightly more affirmative that it is “cooler” for Spanish-language singers to do English versions of their songs (mean response for Q6 = 3.41) than for English-language singers to do Spanish versions of their songs (mean response for Q5 = 3.30). This appreciation seems symptomatic of students’ greater dominance in English and their preferred use of this language with peers. Older students (17 and 18 year-olds) disagreed

significantly more with Q5 and Q6 than younger students (13 to 16 year-olds), and students who were born abroad agreed more with Q5 and Q6 (means of 3.59 and 3.56 respectively) than did US-born students (means of 3.14 and 3.32 respectively).

For component four, containing items related to the role of Spanish in urban popular culture, language in respondents' musical choices emerged as a significant variable. The more music in Spanish that students indicated listening to, the more they tended to agree that "Latin culture is what makes Miami such a cool city" (Q16). The linear relationship of language in music to the way that participants viewed the role of Spanish in urban popular culture was clear. Those who reported listening to music almost always in English had a mean response of 3.50 for Q16; those who listened to some Spanish but mostly English had a mean response of 3.64; half English and half Spanish a mean response of 4.11; mostly Spanish but some English a mean response of 4.57. In like fashion, the more Spanish students indicated using with friends the more they agreed with Q16.

The same pattern emerged for Q14 and Q15. The more music in Spanish that respondents indicated listening to, the more they agreed that music in Spanish is better for dancing than music in English (Q14).⁸ The more music in English that respondents indicated listening to, the more they tended to disagree that the best places to have fun in Miami involve speaking or hearing Spanish (Q15). The linear relationship of language in music to participants' views was again clear: those who listened to music almost always in English had a mean response of 2.10 for this statement; those who listened to some Spanish but mostly English had a mean response of 2.35; half English and half Spanish a mean response of 3.11; mostly Spanish but some English a mean response of 4.00. In sum, students' responses to the questionnaire items comprising

component four clearly demonstrate that the music they listen to has a significant influence on their perception of the value of Spanish in urban popular culture.

Like gender, language in music emerged as a significant independent variable in the linear regression analysis for component six. The more music that respondents reported listening to in English the more they tended to disagree with the proposition that “It would be a bad thing to have a boyfriend or girlfriend in Miami who did not know any Spanish” (Q20). Again, the linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable was clear: those who listened to music almost always in English had a mean response of 1.60 for this questionnaire item; those who listened to some Spanish but mostly English had a mean response of 1.97; half English and half Spanish a mean response of 2.45; mostly Spanish but some English a mean response of 2.57.

For Q21 (“It’s annoying when people who know Spanish act like they only speak English”), those who reported listening to more music in Spanish tended to agree more. In response to this statement (Q21), those who listened to music almost always in English had a mean response of 2.90; those who listened to some Spanish but mostly English had a mean response of 3.23; half English and half Spanish a mean response of 3.68; mostly Spanish but some English a mean response of 4.43. Again here, the linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables is quite clear. In sum, language in music had a significant impact on the way that respondents perceive the role and value of Spanish in interpersonal communication.

4.2.3 Reported ability to speak Spanish and the perceived language environment

Respondents’ self-reported ability to speak Spanish emerged as the only significant independent variable in the linear regression analysis for component seven, which was formed by two

questionnaire items related to respondents' perception of the language environment. These items were: "People give you more respect in Miami if you speak to them in English" (Q23), and "It would be strange to live in a city where people did not speak Spanish" (Q24). Group differences in the case of these two propositions were rather curious, in that those students who rated their ability to speak Spanish as either poor (1 on the given Likert scale) or excellent (5) disagreed with both of them more than those who rated their ability somewhere from fair (2) to very good (4). The lowest mean responses to both of these questionnaire items were among students who rated their ability to speak Spanish as "poor" (mean response of 2.00 for Q23 and 3.00 for Q24), and the highest mean responses were among students who rated their ability to speak Spanish as "very good" (mean response of 2.88 for Q23 and 3.79 for Q24).

These data are difficult to interpret at first blush, and each item seems to warrant a separate explanation. We would venture the following explanations, which merit further exploration in future studies. In the case of Q23, it seems reasonable that those with "poor" or "fair" oral ability in Spanish would likely never use Spanish in attempting to gain someone's respect, and hence they would not be aware of any possibly differential treatment if they used that language rather than English. On the other hand, those with excellent ability in Spanish (i.e., those most likely to have excellent ability in both languages) would likely perceive themselves as having little trouble gaining someone's respect in either language, so they would not have much reason to agree with this statement either. Those who indeed used both languages but perceived themselves as less capable in Spanish (with "good" or "very good" ability) would logically have more reason to agree with this statement, because actual experience may have lead them to such conclusion, i.e., that they "fend for themselves" more effectively in English.

In the case of Q24, once again it stands to reason that those with “poor” or “fair” oral ability in Spanish would likely never use Spanish in the urban environment, and so they would be more apt to disagree that it would not be strange to live in a city where no one spoke the language. In the case of those with “excellent” ability in Spanish, the idea of an English monolingual environment may not seem so strange given their comfort to speak either language. In other words, more fully balanced bilinguals may be more likely to perceive themselves as having the liberty to speak either language, and hence they may be less disturbed by the proposition of being immersed in an environment where only one language was used.

These findings seem limited, and our explanations are tentative. The issues raised here constitute quite compelling questions for future studies in bilingual settings.

4.2.4 Language use with siblings and the instrumental value of Spanish

The only independent variable that yielded significant differences in the linear regression analysis for component three – comprising five questionnaire items related to the instrumental value of Spanish in Miami – was reported language use with siblings. Those respondents who indicated using almost always Spanish with their siblings agreed most with the proposition that “Spanish is necessary to be truly successful in Miami” (Q9).

For Q10 (“Hispanic teenagers in Miami who refuse to speak Spanish are sell-outs”), those respondents who indicated using almost always Spanish with their siblings agreed significantly more (mean response = 4.10) than did those students who indicated speaking almost always English with siblings (mean response = 2.65). Likewise, students who spoke almost always English with siblings agreed less with the statement that “People in Miami who don’t know Spanish are missing out on a lot” (Q11) than those who mixed Spanish and English or who

spoke almost always Spanish. And those who spoke almost always English with siblings disagreed significantly more with the proposition that “If you don’t know any Spanish you should get out of Miami” (Q12) than did students who spoke mostly Spanish or almost always Spanish with their siblings.

In sum, we can surmise from the responses to these two items that the more Spanish the study participants used with their siblings, the more likely they were to view the language as having high instrumental value in the bilingual context of Miami. Cross-sibling influence was also found to be a significant factor in Lambert and Taylor’s (1996) study of Cuban-American families in Miami. Their data revealed statistically significant correlations between the language abilities of children, “suggesting a flow of influence from first-borns to second- and third-borns, and from second- to third-borns” (1996: 494).

5 Conclusions and directions for future research

By way of conclusion, we would first remind the reader that 83 percent (49/59) of the US-born respondents in our study claimed to have “good” to “excellent” oral abilities, and only two students out of 93 surveyed felt that they spoke the language “poorly” (Table 2). This finding might suggest that language preference is a separate issue than actual language ability. For example, in a study of 64 Mexican-origin children in northern California, Pease-Álvarez, Hakuta, and Bayley (1996: 147–148) concluded that, in their data, degree of exposure to Spanish did not bear a simple linear relationship to the degree of competence acquired in the language. In other words, some children who had only minimal exposure to Spanish through family interactions demonstrated high levels of oral competence in the language. The relationship between parental language use, language preference and actual language ability requires more careful empirical

research in the future, particularly as the fourth generation of Cuban-Americans (i.e., the great grandchildren of those who immigrated to Miami as older adults in the 1960s) grows in the coming decade. The social forces of a highly dynamic and bilingual “Latino” urban environment could intervene to some extent in the process of cross-generational transmission, a phenomenon already noted by Lambert and Taylor (1996) more than a decade ago.

The value that respondents perceived Spanish as having for social purposes (e.g., asking for favors, being treated nicely by others, making friends, having a boyfriend or girlfriend) and its role in urban popular culture (e.g., having fun in Miami, dancing, going out) are related to two major factors that were both statistically significant for several of the components identified by factor analysis: gender and language in music. We pointed out that males in this particular study population placed a somewhat higher value on the role of Spanish for social purposes than did their female counterparts. We also observed that the more music teenagers listened to in Spanish, the more they tended to view Spanish as having a vital role in urban popular culture. Future studies should explore both of these factors (gender and music) from ethnographic and cultural perspectives, and researchers of sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology and cultural studies should explore more carefully the relationship of social class, gender, and music choices to patterns of Spanish language acquisition and use among US-born Hispanics.

Notes

1. Throughout this chapter we use the term “Hispanic” rather than “Latino/a” since the former is the most commonly used and widely accepted within the cultural context of South Florida. We realize, however, that “Latino/a” may be preferred in other contexts of the US, particularly in areas of the Midwest and West.
2. Hialeah comprises much of the northwestern area of metropolitan Miami. Hialeah reflected the nation’s most Spanish-speaking urban area in US Census 2000: 92 percent of homes there indicated speaking Spanish (US Census Bureau 2003).
3. Lambert and Taylor’s (1996) study was based on interviews with 108 Cuban-American mothers of families of lower- and middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds in Miami.

4. 30 percent of students polled by Zurer Pearson and McGee (1993: 96) were born abroad; 55 percent had been born in the US to parents who were born abroad; the remaining 15 percent had at least one parent who was born in the US.
5. Amastae (1982) revealed a similar pattern among Hispanic-background college students in South Texas nearly three decades ago.
6. The numbers assigned to survey items do not correspond to the original order in which they appeared in the questionnaire, but rather the order in which they loaded onto respective components.
7. We would like to point out that most of the independent variables were significant in One-way ANOVA tests carried out for Q27 with each one of the variables taken by themselves: birthplace ($p=.001$), ability to speak Spanish ($p=.001$), language use with mother ($p=.002$), language use with father ($p=.000$), language use with grandparents ($p=.032$), language use with siblings ($p=.022$), language use with friends ($p=.035$), and language in music ($p=.008$). Clearly, however, language use with father was the most significant of all of these ($p=.000$) and it was the only one that emerged as significant when all of the variables were weighed in relation to each other in the stepwise linear regression analysis.
8. It is interesting to note that even those respondents who indicated listening to music almost always in English did not disagree at all with Q14: their mean response was 3.20.

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