

# Intergenerational Spanish language maintenance within two Hispanic families in Salinas, California

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# Abstract

In this linguistic research we study the maintenance of Spanish between two Spanish-speaking families living in the city of Salinas California, with a specific focus on the descendants of the second and third generation.

- Linguistic Factors
- Social Factors
- Political Factors
- Socioeconomic Factors

# Significance of study



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# Objectives of the study



(Google,2019)

This study was conducted with two goals:

1. To demonstrate if Spanish is really being lost in the third generation (grandchildren) as the linguist Philip Carter proposes.
2. "The pattern of the third generations" (Carter, 2018, p.120)

# Previous studies

## **Spanish in the United States**

- 37 million people speak spanish at home

## **Spanish in Monterey**

- 117. 456 of the 387 residents speak spanish at home

- **Social Pressure:** The need to adapt to U.S. culture
- **Languages in contact:** Frequent contact between spanish and english
- **The code change:** Alternating Spanish with English when speaking

# Previous studies

- 1981 “English Only” (Senator S.I. Hayakawa)
- 1998 Proposition 227, “English Initiative in Schools” (California Ballot Propositions 1998)



(Google,2019)



(Google,2019)

# Research Questions

1. Do two families in Salinas California maintain spanish between their three generations?
2. How does the maintenance of Spanish compare in the two families?
3. What factors seen to affect the maintenance of Spanish?





# Frame exposition

- Salinas is a city located in Monterey County
- Population: 156, 811 (Census, USA, 2016)
- 77.2% are Hispanic or Latin (Census, USA, 2016)
- 64.4 % of the population speak spanish (Census, USA, 2010)



(Worldatlas.com,2019)



(cityofsalinas.org,2019)

# Methods

**Interview:** The present study was conducted through 30- minutes interviews in spanish with two families and their descendants in the city of Salinas, California.

**Analysis:** The questions were formulated with the aim of obtaining linguistics behaviors and personal experiences that influenced their maintenance of spanish.



# Participants

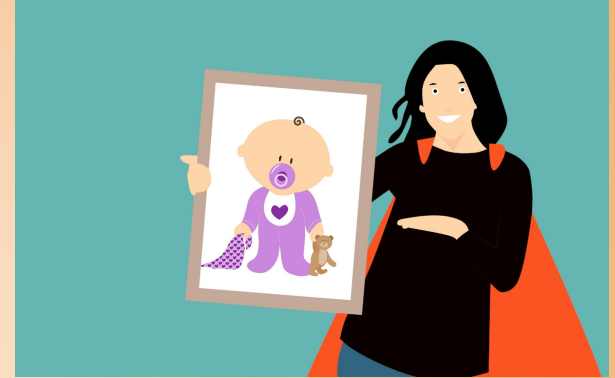
## Family #1:

1. Juvenal Ibarra, father (G1)
2. Maria Ibarra, daughter (G2)
3. Blanca Ibarra, granddaughter (G3)
4. Eden Ibarra, grandson (G3)

(G1)- First generation

(G2)- Second generation

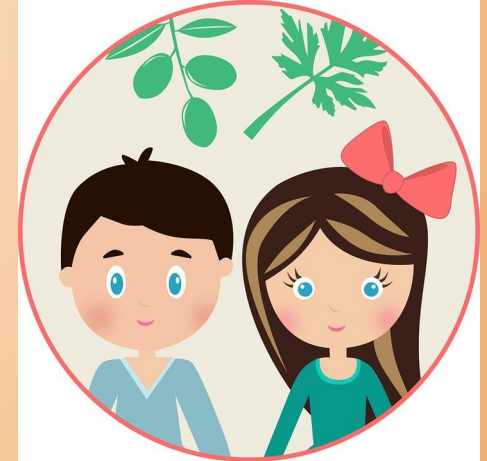
(G3)- Third generation



(pinterest.com,2019)



(pinterest.com,2019)



(pinterest.com,2019)

# Participants Cont.

## Family #2

1. Francisco Martinez, father (G1)
2. Carmen MArtinez, daughter (G2)
3. Kayla Romero, granddaughter (G3)



(thegamegal.com,2019)



(thegamegal.com,2019)

# Analysis- Juvenal Ibarra

- "I think schools do badly by removing bilingual education" (Ibarra, interview)
- "All of us who are children of Latino parents, we must preserve Spanish" (colloquial language)
- "We had to find a babysitter to take care of the children" (Code change)
- "Our language should not be lost" (Syntax, Gender Concordance)

# Analysis- Maria Ibarra

- “I didn’t finish high school”
- “I was bullied in school”
- "I think I do not speak either Spanish or English very well"  
(Incomplete acquisition of a language)
- “At home the kids speak more English than Spanish”
- “Public schools do very little to support bilingual programs”
- “Children need more support from their parents”
- “I’ve heard some children say that they do not want to speak Spanish because they do not want to be associated with immigrants”

# Analysis - Blanca Ibarra

- “I can speak and read Spanish, it’s just that I have more difficulty writing Spanish, I imposed myself to speak more English than Spanish”
- “I prefer speaking English rather than Spanish”
- “I enjoy listening to more music in English”
- “With my younger siblings I speak more English, but sometimes I try speaking Spanish to them, they still answer me in English, though”
- “I constantly speak Spanish when I’m around my parents and grandparents”
- “It’s good to speak another language to communicate with others instead of just speaking English”

## Analysis - Eden Ibarra

- “Yes and no”
- (Complete silence, the interview continues in English)“My parents don’t speak English, so the majority of the time I’m speaking Spanish to them, but in reality I don’t speak to them much and I feel more comfortable speaking English”
- “I feel more comfortable speaking English”
- “It’s good, that way they can speak to everyone”



# Analysis - Francisco Martinez

- “When I was in school I had the opportunity of improving my Spanish”
- “I know how to write and read in Spanish very well”
- “I have taken Spanish courses in a community college”
- “I am the eldest of my siblings, I had to work to support them”
- “I didn’t have the opportunity to study here, until time later, that is one of the reasons why I included my daughters in education”

# Analysis - Carmen Martinez

- “I have studied Spanish since I was in middle school, high school and college”
- “My parents have involved me in Spanish since I was very young”
- “At my workplace, the majority speak Spanish, we have to speak Spanish!”
- “Being bilingual is necessary! How I see it at work, we have to speak Spanish, English, including Filipino”
- “And better pay”
- “My daughter’s professor is American and he is learning Spanish”

# Kayla Martinez

- “Yes and No”
- “I prefer speaking English, at my house everyone speaks English”
- “I’m not very fluent in Spanish”
- “The children were separated by a fence”
- “They had to move to a concentration camp” “The child thought it was a farm” “I have many things to do during my free time”
- “Their father was working for Hitler”
- “We ordered the food to-go”
- “At the house I have a fish tank, dogs, and cats”

# Results

- **First Generation:** Both parents maintain Spanish without much change.
- **Second Generation:** The daughters as well maintain Spanish without much change, with one difference that Maria Ibarra (Family # 1) did not take Spanish classes and Carmen Martínez, (Family # 2) has taken Spanish classes.
- **Third Generation:** The grandchildren of both families, Eden Ibarra and Kayla Martinez, show some wear and tear and changes in their speech, they often mix Spanish with English.

# Conclusion

- **Educational Factors:** Educational difference between Mr. Juvenal Ibarra and Mr. Francisco Martínez, determines the maintenance of Spanish in the descendants.
- **Socioeconomic Factors:** Difference between the number of children influences the support to the academic development of the children.
- Lack of attention coming from the schools of the children.



## Conclusion (Cont.)

- Spanish is not being lost in the two families of Salinas, it simply experiences some wears and tears, especially in the third generation.
- They frequently mix Spanish and English or resort to the use of words taken from English.
- A few times they used their creativity to create new words that begin with English; uber = Uberto, quiet = quallate.

# Limitations and Future Investigations

- Include the 4th generation
- Increase the number of families (since in our research we only interviewed two).
- Include professors and teachers in the study

# Implications of the Study

- **Lack of support to bilingual programs in schools:** We lack bilingual professors.
- **Social Pressure:** Forces immigrants to forget their mother tongue.
- **Educational policies against:** They try to remove language education in schools, colleges and universities.
- **Socio Economic problems:** Children have to leave school.



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QUESTIONS?

