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Los Angeles

Dialect Contact
among
Spanish-Speaking Children in Los Angeles

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

Belén MacGregor Villarreal

2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Dialect Contact

among

Spanish-Speaking Children in Los Angeles

by

Belén MacGregor Villarreal

Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Claudia Parodi-Lewin, Chair

As an immigration hub for a diverse group of Spanish speakers, Los Angeles lends itself to research on dialect contact and leveling. Studies regarding the Spanish spoken by natives of Los Angeles reveal considerable homogeneity with respect to pronunciation, vocabulary and terms of address. This uniformity is notable because two different dialect classes are represented in the

Spanish-speaking population of Los Angeles: the so-called *tierras altas* dialects, which include Mexican varieties, and the *tierras bajas* dialects, such as those of Central America. This dissertation is motivated by the desire to provide quantitative and qualitative data regarding the principal phonetic, lexical and attitudinal characteristics of Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles and the effects that their home dialect classification and school neighborhood might have on these. As the offspring of foreign-born parents, these children are in a position to illuminate the processes by which native youth adapt to a linguistic norm that differs from that to which they are exposed in the home.

160 Mexican and Central American Spanish-speaking fourth and fifth graders (ages 9-11) attending public elementary schools in several regions of Los Angeles County completed three sets of linguistic tasks while speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect was unknown to them. In such a situation, it was surmised that subjects would accommodate to what they identify as the prototypical linguistic behavior of their community with respect to three dimensions of their dialect use: vocabulary, pronunciation and attitudes. The results of the production tasks demonstrate that all of the subjects employ a majority of features of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish, regardless of their national origin. The findings from the attitude tasks indicate that, children of both Mexican and Central American origin are able to articulate a conscious preference for Mexican Spanish over Salvadoran Spanish. Neither home dialect classification nor school neighborhood was found to have a significant effect on subjects' dialect use. The data obtained in this dissertation suggest that the speech of young Angelenos undergoes a leveling process that favors features of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish, a variety that these children likely identify as the linguistic norm of the community.

The dissertation of Belén MacGregor Villarreal is approved.

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Verónica Cortínez

David López

Claudia Parodi-Lewin, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

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Vita

Belén MacGregor Villarreal received a Bachelor of Arts summa cum laude in Spanish with a minor in Professional writing from the University of New Mexico. Following her graduation in 2002 she was accepted to a graduate program at the University of Texas at Austin in Hispanic Linguistics. During the summer of 2004 Belén participated in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) internship program and spent 2 months in the Foreign Languages Unit of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation translating documents to and from Spanish. While at UT she focused on sociolinguistics and completed a thesis titled "The Role of Language in Manito Identity: An Examination of the Vernacular Spanish of New Mexico Based on a Linguistic Analysis of Literary Texts" under the guidance of Dr. Frederick Hensey. She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in May of 2005 with a Master of Arts in Ibero-Romance Philology and Linguistics. After receiving her Master's degree, Belén spent a year in Uruapan, Michoacán, México, teaching English to students of all levels at a language center. Upon her return to California she worked as a substitute teacher at Clairbourn School for one year.

Belén was accepted to the doctoral program in Hispanic Languages and Literatures in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UCLA in 2007 and was an active participant in her department since her first year. She was a member of two research groups directed by Professor Claudia Parodi: the Centro para los Estudios Coloniales Iberoamericanos (CECI) and the Centro para los Estudios del Espanol de los Estados Unidos (CEEEUS). She also formed part of the organizing committee for the VII Annual Departmental Graduate Student Conference, held in 2010. Belén served as editor-in chief of both the graduate student proceedings and the second

issue of *Voices*, a graduate student journal founded by members of CEEEUS, as well as by forming part of the editorial boards of *Mester* and of *Voices*.

I. Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish

Los Angeles is known as one of the largest hubs of immigration of Spanish speakers in the United States. Nevertheless, studies regarding the features of the Spanish spoken by native born Angelenos who participate in the Hispanic community reveal considerable homogeneity with respect to pronunciation, vocabulary and terms of address. Such uniformity has attracted the attention of linguists, however, because two different dialect classes are represented in the Spanish-speaking population of Los Angeles: the so-called *tierras altas* dialects, which include Mexican varieties, and the *tierras bajas* dialects, of which the Spanish of Central American countries forms part. While a demographic profile of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles reveals that Mexicans clearly outnumber Central Americans, it nevertheless shows that Salvadorans, Guatemalans and Hondurans constitute the second-largest group and have established a presence in the area, creating islands of Central American culture amid the predominantly Mexican community. Although newly-arrived Central American adult immigrants maintain these dialect differences, it has been observed that their Angeleno offspring do not (Parodi 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009a, etc.). Rather, they speak a Mexican variety of Spanish. The variety that is spoken by the children of Central American immigrants does not appear to differ from that used by children of Mexican or other Spanish-speaking immigrants who are raised in Los Angeles and from part of the Hispanic community. As will be seen in subsequent sections, this type of Spanish is further characterized by other features, the unique combination of which distinguishes it from other varieties. The bundle of characteristics that comprise the Spanish spoken by individuals raised in Los Angeles is referred to as Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish (LAVS).

The dialectal uniformity of LAVS described here is a fact that is often overlooked in descriptions of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles. Why? The reason is because the Spanish spoken in the United States has, in large part, been characterized primarily in terms of language attrition, or loss, and the related processes of simplification, overgeneralization and analysis. The studies on which such analyses are based have focused on morphosyntactic features like the loss of tense, mood and aspect variation among members of the third generation or beyond. Few, however, examine the Spanish spoken by first and second generation speakers whose language has not yet experienced any type of shift. While it is important to recognize that, in general, minority languages tend to be lost beginning as early as the second generation (Lopez 1978; Alba 2004; Mora et al. 2006), it is also crucial to understand that the Spanish that is being spoken prior to the onset of any type of shift will be characterized by a particular set of features. Furthermore, these features will be representative of the dialect of a certain group of speakers. Inevitably, in an area like Los Angeles, there will be the need to handle the arrival of immigrants whose speech (among other factors) differs from that of the Spanish spoken in the area. While this may seem like a rather insignificant issue, the ubiquity of language, as well as the intimate relationship that exists between language and identity, brings this issue to the forefront as one that directly impacts dynamics between Spanish-speakers of various generations coexisting in the same community.

This main goal of this dissertation is to lay the groundwork that will allow researchers to examine children's acquisition of LAVS. While previous studies have observed that native Angelenos speak a variety of Mexican Spanish, it is important to note that there is little information regarding the details of this process because this data was obtained for research conducted with adult subjects, not children. The goal of the study presented here is to obtain

speech samples from children, not adults, in order to begin to analyze the Spanish that they speak. Since little is known about the Spanish spoken by native Angeleno children, it is premature to determine their acquisition of LAVS. This dissertation was designed so as to provide much-needed information regarding children's linguistic production and evaluation. It is expected that the initial research described in subsequent chapters can serve as a foundation on which future studies can build, providing baseline values for children's production of particular phonetic features and offering concrete data regarding their vocabulary use and language attitudes in a specific age range. A secondary, but equally important, goal of this research is to contribute to the growing body of evidence in support of classifying the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles as a systematic variety of the language, distinct from monolingual Spanish, yet complete from the perspective of universal grammar due to its status as a natively-acquired variety.

A study on the Spanish that is spoken by Angeleno children must begin with a thorough understanding of the historical, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the adult Spanish that has contributed to the linguistic mixture encountered in Los Angeles. This chapter presents a discussion of the evidence that motivates linguists to entertain the classification of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles as a dialect in its own right, referred to from this point forward as Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish (LAVS). Often subsumed under the labels of Southwest/Chicano/Mexican-American Spanish, the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles has traditionally been analyzed as part of a larger linguistic whole that also includes the Spanish spoken in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, southern Colorado and the rest of California. Most of the foundational studies on this variety refer to the above-mentioned varieties rather than LAVS in particular. An examination of some of the seminal works on the subject, on one hand, provides valuable linguistic and sociolinguistic information regarding the use and features of this variety

with respect to both standard Mexican Spanish and English but, on the other hand, fails to do so with respect to other dialects of Spanish due to very practical reasons, i.e. such contact had not yet taken place when these works were written. Once the general features which characterize this variety have been identified, I will turn to a discussion of the methodologies and theoretical assumptions underlying this literature. I will then examine Parodi's (2004) affirmation that considering additional crucial factors regarding the situation of Spanish in Los Angeles, such as the observation that children raised in LA acquire this dialect natively and the diglossia that exists with respect to LAVS and other dialects here, will provide a different profile of this dialect than the traditional one. Next, I will continue with an inventory of the features of Los Angeles Spanish, incorporating information both from the earliest known studies as well as more recent data from the most recent research done from the dialect contact perspective. Finally, I will conclude with a detailed description of the koineization perspective and a discussion of the evidence that supports an analysis of LAVS as a koiné of Mexican dialects.

1.1. DEFINITIONS. Before continuing any further with this discussion of Spanish in Los Angeles, it is necessary to explain some of the terminology and linguistic concepts that will be employed in this dissertation, beginning with that of a dialect. As Parodi (2011: 219) explains, the terms Mexican dialect or Salvadoran Spanish refer to abstract idealized linguistic entities which are composed of clusters of properties that, taken as a whole, distinguish them from other, similar, dialects. Such groups of features are normally established by considering the characteristics typical of the most populated or prestigious parts of a country, as is the case with Mexican standard Spanish, which is based on the speech of the educated capital-dwellers of Mexico City, rather than that of the inhabitants of the more remote and less prestigious areas. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the bundle of features associated with any particular dialect can vary

according to numerous social factors such as gender, socioeconomic level, level of education, etc. as well as the contextual and prosodic factors related to the setting and interlocutors involved and even idiosyncratic characteristics of a speaker. Although it is clear that much information is lost when making such sweeping generalizations, it is also important to recognize their value when it comes to making comparisons, identifying patterns of change and developing linguistic theories. The particular nature of these distinguishing features varies considerably, the relevant features being morphosyntactic or phonological in the case of some dialects, but phonetic or lexical in the case of others. As will be explained in more detail later on, I am using the term Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish to refer to the idealized linguistic entity that is spoken in the Los Angeles CMSA[1] and that is characterized by a particular set of phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical and intonational features as well as by a certain set of linguistic indicators, markers and stereotypes, as explained by Labov (1972). The population of LAVS speakers is restricted to individuals raised in the Los Angeles area that were either born there or arrived there before the age of eight (cf. Parodi 2004). Counted among the many Spanish speakers in the United States who maintain their native language, these are people who use Spanish in the home and in public on a daily basis in conversation with family, friends and members of the local community. They lack formal education in this language and, though they speak and understand Spanish, and even read it well, they often cannot write standard Spanish, lacking knowledge of the rules of spelling and punctuation. Speakers of LAVS are often bilingual as a result of being

[1] Given the need for further research regarding the geographic extension of LAVS, I am using the pre-established boundaries of the LA CMSA, which encompasses the following five counties: Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside and San Bernardino.

educated in this country in English, and tend to be dominant in English. A more detailed description of LAVS will follow in subsequent sections of this chapter.

The term Standard Mexican Spanish is used to refer to that variety more commonly referred to by Hispanic linguists and philologists as the NORMA CULTA MEXICANA, which contrasts with the HABLA POPULAR. The NORMA CULTA of any language is an idealized version that individuals aspire to when they 'speak or write well' and is considered the prestige variety (Lope Blanch 1995: 240-241). As Lipski explains, the norma culta refers to the linguistic usage of educated speakers of large urban areas (1994: 155). The Mexican *norma culta* corresponds in most aspects with the ideal Hispanic norm, defined by Lope Blanch as '[e]l ideal de lengua que los hablantes cultos de cualquier región hispánica [en este caso, México] tratan de practicar' (2004: 8). Thus, the Mexican *norma culta* is *seseante* and *yeísta*, conserves consonant clusters such as *kt, bst, nst* and rather, rejects as coarse or vulgar simplified pronunciations of these consonant groups (2004: 7-8). Moreover, it maintains the /s/ phoneme in all dialect zones except for a few of the coastal regions (2004: 8). As Lope Blanch explains, the features in which standard Mexican Spanish varies from the pan-Hispanic norm are actually quite few: diphthongization of the hiatuses /ea/, /eo/, /oa/, /oe/, weakening and loss of vowels, especially in contact with /s/, assibilation of /r/ before a pause and occasional pronunciation of the voiced palatal fricative /y/ as a voiced palatal affricate /ʤ/ as in the first sound in the English word *jump*, in the realm of phonetics (2004: 8-9). Morphosyntactic variation from the pan-Hispanic norm includes agreement between third person clitics *lo/la* and the plural indirect object (e.g. *El libro, se los di* for *El libro, se lo di a tus padres*), use of *desde* and *hasta* to indicate not only the initial and final limits of a durative action but also a perfective or punctual action (e.g. *Se casó hasta los 40 años*), personalization of the verb *haber*, leading to agreement in number with its

subject (*Hubieron muchas fiestas*) as well as *dequeísmo* and *queísmo* (Lope Blanch 2004: 10-11) . Equally as important to the definition of standard Mexican Spanish as the features that its speakers produce are the social evaluations that they assign to others. Santa Ana and Parodi (1998) explain that standard Mexican Spanish speakers assign a stigma to elements of the 'lexical, phonological and morphological remnants of the old American Spanish koiné,' the contact dialect of Peninsular Spanish that developed in the American viceroyalties in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as *haiga* 'there is' subjunctive*, mesmo* 'the same' and *fueron (*pronounced ['xwe.ɾon]) 'they went.' (Parodi 2003: 31; Parodi 2004: 30; Parodi 1999b; Santa Ana and Parodi 1998: 35-6).

1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW, Since the Spanish of Los Angeles has traditionally been subsumed under the labels of Spanish of the Southwest, Chicano Spanish and Mexican-American Spanish, a thorough review of the literature must not only discuss the research done on this variety under its various guises but also examine the theoretical assumptions underlying each one and determine the extent to which these have influenced its study and the conclusions reached. I will begin this review of the literature with the major works on Southwestern/Chicano/Mexican-American Spanish. Before delving in, however, it must be noted that, although Los Angeles forms part of Southern California, and, by extension, the Southwest, this large urban metropolis differs rather significantly from the small, mainly homogenous, rural communities where this variety is typically spoken. This discrepancy, though rarely remarked upon by scholars researching Southwest/Chicano Spanish, is nevertheless reflected in the fact that most fieldwork regarding this variety is generally conducted in the small towns of New Mexico, Arizona, Southern Colorado and Texas. A few exceptions to this trend include data collection done by Lope Blanch (1990) in San Jose, California, Lastra de Suárez' (1975) study regarding the

Spanish of children attending an East LA elementary school, Beltramo's and de Porcel's (1975) description of lexical characteristics of San Jose Spanish and Phillips' (1967) dissertation, 'Los Angeles Spanish: A Descriptive Analysis,' which will be discussed shortly in much greater depth. Classifying LA Spanish together with the Spanish spoken in these other regions is not a surprising choice. The Spanish of Los Angeles has generally been subsumed under the Southwest Spanish label due, not only to its geographical location, but also to the fact that its Spanish speakers have their roots in the same country: Mexico. As will be seen later on, however, the Los Angeles setting presents a number of significant differences which beg a novel analysis.

1.2.1. SOUTHWEST SPANISH FEATURES. In general, studies the Spanish of the Southwest have focused on the two most striking aspects of this variety: its archaic nature and the great amount of influence it receives from English. These are the very features, in fact, that Spanish linguists and language purists alike, both today and in the second half of the twentieth century, cite and cited as examples when justifying their characterization of this variety as 'deficient' or 'corrupt.' A closer examination of both, however, reveals different sides of the same coin, namely, the forces that motivate linguistic change. Let us turn here to a brief explanation of these aspects of SW Spanish before continuing with a review of the literature on this variety. Better understanding not only the linguistic processes that have given rise to such features, but also the biased and prescriptivist perspectives that have condemned such characteristics should help the reader to understand the motivation for many of the works that will be described in the next section as well as current attitudes towards SW Spanish in general and LA Spanish in particular.

As many scholars of Southwest Spanish affirm (Espinosa 1909; Barker 1972; Ornstein 1975; among others), the dialects found in this region of the United States exhibit phonological,

morphosyntactic and lexical archaisms, features present in the Spanish of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the Spaniards introduced to the American viceroyalties. In the area of phonology, the most notable of these is the pronunciation of /f/ as [x] when it occurs before the diphthongs ['we] and ['wi] (e.g. ['xwe] for *fue* or ['xwis.te] for *fuiste*. Among the morphosyntactic archaisms are found preterit first person forms such as *vide* and *truje*, the use of *–ba* as the ending for irregular verbs such as *traiba* and the addition of *–s* to 2nd person preterit forms as in *fuistes, vistes*, etc. Lexical archaisms include terms such as *ansina, muncho, en veces* and *mesmo*. Although *archaism* is the term commonly used to refer to such features, it should be noted that the use of such a term is based on two biases that often color the study of the Spanish of the Americas, and Spanish of the Southwest in particular. To begin with, it should be noted that a feature can only be archaic with respect to another more modern one. In the case of New World Spanish, the linguistic point of reference is assumed to be peninsular Spanish. Yet, as Lope Blanch (1972) remarks, many of these supposed archaisms abound in the speech of Andalusia as well as rural areas throughout Spain. The reason this is so, he explains, is that the Castilian norm has erroneously been equated with the peninsular norm, and this is a serious mistake. One central error lay in assuming that peninsular Spanish as a whole could be characterized as conservative. The speech of any region or country, he states, is constantly subjected to two opposing forces of linguistic change: the innovative, promoted by the masses, and the conservative, promulgated by the educated elite (1972: 36). Rather than considering an archaic classification a linguistic sin, he explains that such a categorization is only accurate and useful when one specifies the norm against which it is compared, whether it be the peninsular, the American, the Hispanic, etc. (1972: 42). Similarly, Lope Blanch also reminds readers of the heterogeneity of American Spanish, which is neither unified nor uniform (1972: 42-3) and states that a second error consists

of considering as representative of this variety as a whole the rural or uneducated speech of the New World (1972: 44).

Contact with English further distances SW Spanish from standard Mexican Spanish. The resulting changes, most evident in pronunciation and lexicon, but also present in morphosyntax, often attract the attention of monolingual Spanish speakers, and lead to ridicule of US Spanish speakers and comments that their Spanish is *mocho*, uneducated or poor. The inclination that these speakers have for code switching, incorporating English words into a sentence in Spanish or vice versa, also distinguishes them from monolingual speakers of Mexican Spanish. While the tendency is to attribute such differences solely to contact with English, many scholars (Hernández-Chávez, Cohen, & Beltramo 1975; Sánchez 1983, Ornstein 1975, etc.) have affirmed that the influence of English on the Spanish spoken in the Southwestern United States is actually quite minimal when compared with that of other factors. Elías-Olivares (1976) maintains that, 'All the phonological changes present in this variety [SW Spanish] … are features that this variety shares with varieties of informal Spanish throughout the Spanish-speaking world' (6).The same can be said of SW Spanish syntax and morphology, which resemble rather closely those of popular Mexican Spanish.

While English influence is most evident in the SW Spanish lexicon and, clearly cannot be denied, several observations must, nevertheless, be made. First, the fact must be acknowledged that no dialect of Spanish, from the Mexican border to Spain, has remained unaffected by the influence of English. The differentiating factor in this case, however, is not only the quantity of borrowings that have been incorporated but also the proportion of these which form part of the lexicon of the native speaker of this dialect (i.e. those words like *troca,* which most US Spanish speakers would consider to be pure Spanish). Second, as Elías-Olivares (1976) notes, many

forms commonly attributed to English influence have undergone a process of relexification by which they 'become a part of the Spanish repertoire of speakers who for the most part do not recognize their English source' (8). Fernando Peñalosa (1980) also points out that the location where anglicisms were accepted into the language (Spain, Mexico or the United States) and degree to which they are used by monolingual Spanish speakers are also relevant when attempting to assess the influence of English on SW Spanish. Words and phrases incorporated in Spain or Mexico and subsequently brought to the United States or used throughout the Spanish-speaking world should be excluded from an inventory of SW Spanish anglicisms, given that they are not unique to this variety of Spanish (Peñalosa 1980: 19).

Among the first major works to characterize the Spanish of the Southwest as a dialect distinct from standard Mexican Spanish is *El lenguaje de los chicanos* (1975), a compilation of articles edited by Hernández-Chávez, Cohen and Beltramo. The dialectal features found in this variety, they state, are not unique and, in fact, can be found in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world. They further explain that, '[W]hat serves to distinguish the dialects are the proportions and combinations in which these features are found' (vii). In some cases, like that of the labiodental pronunciation of the phoneme /b/, features are considered dialectal, i.e. particular to the Spanish spoken in the United States due to the strong English influence to which it is subject. Others, however, like use of *–ates* for *–aste*, are considered to 'have their roots in the development of earlier periods' (vii). Mainly descriptive in nature, this anthology also addresses, although not in great depth, topics such as language and education, children's acquisition of SW Spanish and the social functions of language in the community. Unlike other studies being produced in the same decade or the previous one, none of those printed in this anthology state that the Spanish spoken in the Southwest represents deviations from the standard. Rather, they

treat it in terms of variation which itself can vary according to a number of contextual and stylistic factors. Such a perspective is evident in the following description of the focus of this volume, as indicated in the introduction written by the editors: ‘a considerable regional diversity in the use of Spanish but also a range of variation in the use of both languages that mirrors the multidimensional social dynamics of Chicano communities’ (xiv). The authors of the articles in this volume acknowledge and, in many cases, explain the pivotal role that historical factors play in the development of phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical variation that is so characteristic of Southwest Spanish. Several of the authors featured in this volume, such as Donald Lance, actually state that the main motivation for their studies is to demonstrate that the Spanish spoken in the Southwest is not ‘corrupt’ but, rather, that ‘it is very much like that of other people who have not received the amount and kind of education required to instruct the children of the speech community in the proper use of the King’s or Academy’s language’ (1975: 38). Although mostly based on systematic collection of data, primarily obtained through dialect questionnaires, ethnographic observation and systematic data collection obtained by means of a variety of interview types, it must be noted that, for the most part, the goals of the studies reported in this volume are descriptive rather than explanatory. Consequently, theory, linguistic or otherwise, is generally minimized.

Following the publication of *El lenguaje de los chicanos*, Bowen and Ornstein (1976) produced a collection of ten articles entitled *Studies in Southwest Spanish,* which reflect an awareness of the importance of using quantitative methodology and detailed linguistic description to characterize this dialect. Part of a series in sociolinguistics, the book presents profiles of a variety of aspects of Southwest Spanish, the first four of which are based on a corpus obtained using a sociolinguistic survey developed at UTEP in 1968. The Sociolinguistic

Background Questionnaire which was used consisted of questions pertaining to demographic and attitudinal information as well as language use for both Spanish and English, an open-ended interview whose purpose was to assess linguistic competence in both languages and a writing task. Subjects completing the survey were members of the UTEP student body, selected through stratified sampling. Due to the fact that the questionnaire resulted in both an oral and a written corpus, it is important to note that, though the phonological analysis is based on the recordings which resulted from the questionnaire, the lexical and grammatical analyses stem from examination of the written corpus. The studies which form the second half of the book are based on oral tasks/interviews which were taped and transcribed. Among these works we find Phillips' article entitled 'The Segmental Phonology of Los Angeles Spanish,' a condensed version of the phonology section of his dissertation on Los Angeles Spanish. Considering the fact that this is one of the few works which is dedicated exclusively to the study of Spanish as it is spoken in Los Angeles, it deserves a separate discussion which can be found immediately following this section on Spanish of the Southwest. Of the remaining four monographs, two focus on the linguistic production of Mexican American children at the elementary school level. Concerned with looking at the grammatical structures produced by Chicanos enrolled in a bilingual program, Cohen carries out a longitudinal study of the speech of Mexican American students grades K-2 who are enrolled in bilingual programs versus those that are not. Results from his research lead him to conclude that all three of the factors initially hypothesized to lead to deviations from the standard, child language, interference and nonstandard dialect, did, in fact, do so, although the last of these was deemed to be the least influential. Child language was found to account for most of the deviations in English and Spanish. With respect to the effects of bilingual schooling, Cohen (1976) states that 'whereas bilingual instruction doesn't appear to

have affected interference from Spanish in speaking English, it may have encouraged interference from English in speaking Spanish' (164). Vallejo conducts interviews with 5 to 6 year old Mexican American children in order to 'construct a profile of the language use of Mexican-American children of San Antonio' (175). He concludes that these children's language development is deficient and attributes such an outcome to 'a lack of language stimulation in [the] home environment and the economic demands placed on Mexican-American families for mere subsistence' (180).

Chicano Sociolinguistics: a Brief Introduction, written by Fernando Peñalosa in 1980, is a work whose main purpose is, as the author states in his introduction, to present 'a description and interpretation of the Chicano from a sociolinguistic perspective' (3). Supporting all of his affirmations with empirical evidence obtained from academic studies as opposed to mere anecdotal observation, Peñalosa attempts to correct misconceptions regarding the Chicano and his language use and attitudes. In addition to citing academic studies, he also points out areas that have received little or no attention and urges fellow scholars to focus on these as topics for future research. Present throughout the book is the notion that the Chicano's language practices are perfectly normal and fall within the range of typical behavior of bilinguals regardless of what languages they speak. Beginning with a history of both Spanish and English, Peñalosa's book provides a comprehensive yet concise discussion of every aspect of the Chicano's language use and attitudes including a discussion of the polyglossia that characterizes their language use on the societal level, the linguistic features of the Spanish and the English that they speak, the domains in which Chicanos use each language, the attitudes that influence such use and the changes that have resulted and can be expected to arise in the future. The section on the private domains of language use focuses on language use among family and friends and discusses the

language acquisition process, while the chapter devoted to public domains of language use examines issues related to language use outside of the intimate, familiar circle and addresses topics such as language policy and education.

Rosaura Sánchez' 1983 book, *Chicano Discourse*, presents a comprehensive discussion of the Spanish spoken by Mexican-Americans in the Southwest. Beginning with an explanation of Mexican-Americans' minority status in terms of not only their social, economic and political position but also linguistic standing, she explains how their language use is directly related to factors such as income status and nativity (14). The analysis she presents is based on a Marxist model according to which 'verbal interaction within a broad context where relations between sign and referent are examined as reflections of stratified social relations determined by a specific economic structure' (81). Central to her explanations of Mexican-Americans' language use and maintenance are the assumptions that the 'language interaction in the Chicano community [should be] treated as a whole' and, furthermore, that this requires an interdisciplinary approach that combines different areas of study and examines how they relate to one another and the impact that they have on verbal interaction (92). The description that Sánchez provides of Mexican-American Spanish is presented in terms of 'the characteristics of the speakers, the context of communication and the socio-semantic objectives of the communicative act' (99). She defends the status of Chicano Spanish as an authentic Spanish variety because all of the features which it presents are found in peninsular and Latin American Spanish (98). Sánchez explains that the variation that this code presents with respect to standard Spanish conforms to the possibilities dictated by the rules of Spanish grammar and, furthermore, is due to processes of convergence or interference from English (99).

As Sánchez explains in Chapter 3, Theoretical Assumptions, linguistic varieties cannot be separated from the historical contexts in which they are spoken, given that these shape speakers' social interactions (68). This premise is crucial, as can be seen in the basic proposition of her work, the belief that 'language is a social product used for social interaction' (68). Identifying verbal interaction (i.e. discourse) as a 'manifestation of social interaction' (70), she then illustrates how sentences can be separated into speech acts, such as requests, insults, etc. and functions, such as challenge, acceptance of a challenge, etc. Given that discourse is based on social interaction, it is pivotal for her to outline the social organization of the society in which Chicanos function. In order to do so in a way that recognizes the importance both of the social structure and the individual, Sánchez employs an integrative theoretical approach which combines the field of discourse analysis with interactionism, which examines how human behavior and communication are negotiated by the use of symbols whose meaning is not fixed, and ethnomethodology, which involves 'the study of daily interaction in natural field settings' (81). Of great importance to her analysis is the Marxist economic model which recognizes the importance of social structure as well as of the individual within social interaction (81). As regards methodology, Sánchez chooses to follow interactionist precedent and collect 'taped interviews, taped family conversations, two small surveys and a lifetime of participant-observations' (82). Analysis of the material collected is guided by theories of semiotics, the study of signs, as well as both micro- and macro- sociolinguistics, the former being concerned with language on a more individual level, and the latter focusing on language as it is used in the greater social context (85-6).

Of the works focusing on the use of Southwest Spanish within a Hispanic community, one of the first and most insightful is George Barker's (1972) description of the social functions

of this variety in the Mexican-American community of Tucson, Arizona. Concerned primarily with identifying those social factors that can account for variations in the linguistic behavior of 'bilinguals having the same general cultural background and living in the same general community,' Barker carries out systematic fieldwork which involves informal observation of language use, informal interviews with prominent members of the community and questionnaires completed by a group of schoolchildren. In order to assure the representativeness of his sample, he collects data on a cross-section of the community's social system, noting in particular the social relations between interlocutors and how language use varies according to the social situations in which they find themselves. He identifies four linguistic variants: Arizona Spanish, standard Mexican Spanish, Pachuco and the Yaqui dialect of Spanish. In addition to the lexical and morphosyntactic archaisms which previous scholars cite as characteristic features of Southwest Spanish (referred to as Arizona Spanish in this study), Barker also cites the use of what he calls pochismos such as 'tuvieron un buen tiempo,' the tendency to use mainly informal forms of verbs (i.e. *tuteo*) in situations that would normally require the more formal *ustedeo*, as well as use of a particular intonational pattern referred to as a *sonsonete* which is 'very similar to that of northern Sonora' (26). Barker's results reveal that the following factors influence interlocutors' language choice: the type of interpersonal relationship involved, the subject context (i.e. the topic being discussed) and the social context, a term which is used to cover not only the type of social setting (home, place of business, etc.) but also the presence or absence of members of a particular ethnic group (33). Family structure is also found to affect language choice, in particular 'the ethnic generation of the parents and the pressure of the extended family' (Barker 1972: 38). In short, Barker treats Arizona Spanish as a linguistic variant as opposed to a deviation from the standard, providing us with valuable insight regarding its social function

within the community, as well as helping us to identify those factors that determine its use. Furthermore, his study presents a list of additional features, such as a tendency to use only *tú* forms and an intonation pattern similar to that of Sonora, which can be used to distinguish this variety from standard Mexican Spanish and other variants of Spanish in the United States.

Another study of the Spanish spoken by Mexican Americans in the Southwest that focuses on the Arizona is Rogelio Reyes' (1978) Studies in Chicano Spanish. Serving as his own informant, Reyes, a member of 'the Chicano community of Miami, Arizona from birth until the age of eighteen' (1), presents a detailed description of aspects of Chicano linguistics related to vowel sequences, paradigmatic regularity and the verb from the perspective of generative phonological theory. He also includes a discussion of language mixing that, according to him is based 'mainly on recordings I have made of conversations between myself and other bilingual Chicanos' (84).

Lope Blanch's (1990) *El español hablado en el suroeste de los Estados Unidos* presents a compilation of transcripts of half hour-long conversations with informants from San Marcos, Texas; Mora, New Mexico; Tucson, Arizona and San Jose, California as well as subjects' responses to a linguistic questionnaire originally developed to create a linguistic atlas of Mexico. As he explains in his introduction, Lope Blanch makes a conscious decision to omit recently arrived Mexican immigrants from his informant sample and, moreover, interviews only individuals of third generation (the grandchildren of immigrants) or beyond. Although using a questionnaire not specifically designed to study the speech of Spanish speakers of the southwestern US, his choice of methodology, using 'dialectal questionnaires to collect systematic [speech] samples,' allows him to make direct comparisons between the speech of these individuals and both the educated and popular varieties of Mexican Spanish. He observes a

strong relationship between the nature of southwestern Spanish and the polymorphism of the bilingualism that exists among its speakers and the various factors that influence the dominance that one language has over another. Acknowledging the importance that formal schooling plays in language maintenance, Lope Blanch (1990) comments that, 'Este polimorfismo tan intenso, se debe, sin duda alguna, y entre otras razones, al hecho de que no exista en cada localidad o región una norma escrita de prestigio ejemplar, ni tampoco una norma culta conocida a través de la enseñanza escolar' (14). One could say that the variation he found is due to the existence of different geographical variants of SW Spanish in the United States.

Published in 1967, Phillips' dissertation, "Los Angeles Spanish: A Descriptive Analysis," and subsequent article, "The Segmental Phonology of Los Angeles Spanish," which forms part of *Studies in Southwest Spanish* (1976), are some of the few works on the Spanish of this area that acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds of the speakers of LA Spanish.[2] Referring to this region as a 'sort of *Chicano* "melting pot,"' Phillips explains that these speakers were born not only in Los Angeles, but also in other parts of the Southwest and in Mexico (1976: 74). Based on a sample of 31 informants, Phillips' research includes data from native as well as immigrant Angelenos. Not only do his studies exhibit an awareness of the role of Los Angeles as a setting of dialect contact (though not expressed in so many words), but they are also some of the first on SW Spanish to include some sociolinguistic information in addition to purely linguistic description. His profiles of speakers include their gender, age, social class and dominant language. In addition to providing extremely thorough descriptions of the allophonic variation

[2] Phillips is also the author of "Variations in Los Angeles Phonology," which forms part of *El lenguaje de los chicanos* (1975). The current literature review, however, does not include this article because it is an exact copy of the following sections of his dissertation: 1.1.2 up to spectrograms, 1.1.7 up to spectrograms and 1.4.).

present in LA Spanish and its distribution, Phillips also incorporates an extensive knowledge of Mexican Spanish and often notes when cases of variability in LA Spanish have counterparts in the Mexican dialects. Again, it must be noted that he is one of the few scholars of SW Spanish to acknowledge the need to consider the influence that idiosyncrasies of Mexican Spanish (as opposed to just English) may have on this variety of Spanish.

Phillips' article, basically a summary of the phonological features of LA Spanish, presents a discussion of each phoneme and its allophones. As he explains, the data on which such an analysis is based are, for the most part, obtained by means of elicitation of words and supplemented by conversational data when necessary. His preference for non-conversational data is logical when one considers that this study is meant to be quantitative. With respect to consonants, Phillips identifies 17 consonant phonemes which are grouped into the following categories: voiceless stops (/p t k/), voiced stop-fricatives (/b d g/), affricated stops (/č ǰ/), voiceless fricatives (/f s h/), nasals (/m n ñ/), vibrants (/r rr/) and one lateral (/l/)/ (1976: 75). The vowel phonemes of LA Spanish are five: /a e i o u/. Overall, his systematic and quantitative study of the phonology of LA Spanish reaffirms the status of this variety, which he considers to be a type of Southwest US Spanish.

Mainly descriptive in nature, the earlier works on SW Spanish focus primarily on two types of features that set this variety apart from standard Mexican Spanish: its archaic nature and the great amount of influence in receives from English. By situating the study of SW/Chicano Spanish in the larger context of sociolinguistics, taking into consideration the natural phenomena that occur in situations of bilingualism and by examining the social functions of SW Spanish in light of its particular sociohistorical context, authors such as Reyes (1978), Peñalosa (1980), and Sánchez (1983) go so far as to identify SW Spanish as a systematic variety. The research on

which all of the abovementioned studies are based was conducted at times when Mexicans comprised the only Spanish-speaking population of great magnitude in the Southwest. Although this Mexican population undoubtedly hailed from many different regions of the country, virtually no mention is made of dialect differences.[3] In a large number of US Spanish studies, said variety is assumed to be deficient, not only based on the large amounts of English influence that are attested but also because the scholars who wrote them assumed that they had their origins in standard Mexican Spanish. Although the number of studies on Spanish *habla popular* pale in comparison with those that examine the *habla culta*, these show clearly that the popular varieties spoken throughout the Spanish-speaking world differ from the educated varieties with respect to a number of aspects including lexical, morphosyntactic and phonetic features. Anyone who fails to take this into consideration runs the risk of misinterpreting some of the very characteristics that define US Spanish.

Nearly 30 years separate the publication of Phillips' 1967 study of Los Angeles Spanish and the beginning of the first wave of more recent research on this variety from a perspective of dialect leveling and koineization. Within these almost three decades, the Hispanic population of Los Angeles changed considerably, a consequence of the multiple waves of Central American immigration that began as political unrest escalated in countries such as Guatemala and El Salvador. The resulting diversity in terms of Spanish dialects spoken in Los Angeles has revealed data that had, until that time, remained concealed. Recognizing that the differences between Mexican and Central American Spanish correspond with the *tierras altas* and *tierras bajas* system of dialect classification, Claudia Parodi (1999b) was the first to outline the primary

[3] Phillips includes city of origin in sociolinguistic questionnaires but does not discuss their regional dialects or any bearing that these might have had on their realization of particular phonemes.

features of LA Spanish and to present important data regarding the use and acquisition of this variety. The aforementioned dialect dichotomy classifies standard Mexican Spanish and LA Spanish as *tierras altas* dialects, while grouping Central American Spanish with *tierras bajas* dialects. Consequently, Los Angeles is not only home to a diverse group of Hispanic immigrants, but is in a unique position as a setting of dialect contact between varieties that exhibit clear lexical, phonological and morphosyntactic differences. Such a situation gives linguists the opportunity to examine the dynamics that are in operation as well as to identify the social and linguistic factors involved. Regarding the case at hand, in which two groups of immigrants of relatively similar social status live and work together in the same communities, one would not unreasonably expect to see some mutual linguistic influence. However, both casual observations, as well as recent linguistic research, reveal quite the opposite situation. The Spanish that is spoken in Los Angeles is undoubtedly *tierras altas* and offers little evidence of having incorporated features of *tierras bajas* dialects. Moreover, studies have shown that speakers of this variety assign negative social evaluations to morphological features of Central American Spanish, as well as to regional lexical items, such as *pacha* and *piscucha,* which are unique to Central American *tierras bajas* dialects (Parodi 1999b, 2003, 2011 among others). Both the social and linguistic dynamics of the situation at hand are relevant when it comes to determining the outcome that obtains in Los Angeles.

Turning the focus now to the Spanish that is spoken in Los Angeles, I will begin the following section by tracing briefly the history of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles and then present a demographic profile of this population, followed by a description of the resulting settlement patterns of various groups. I will then move on to a discussion of the status of Spanish

in LA as an ethnic language and the diglossic relationship that obtains between English and Spanish.

1.3. Spanish in Los Angeles

1.3.1. Origins of Spanish in Los Angeles. Understanding the origins of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles provides insight into the geographic distribution of Hispanic immigrants as well as the status that Spanish has with respect to English. Without a doubt, Mexican presence in the area now known as Los Angeles has always been strong. Leaving aside for the moment the sizeable population of Mexican immigrants currently residing in this city, one has only to recall the large wave of Mexican immigrants that began arriving around 1910, after the Mexican Revolution. As Allen and Turner (1997) point out, 'A sixfold increase in the Mexican population of Los Angeles in the decade after 1910 was followed by a tripling of the city's Mexican residents during the 1920's' (94). These were later followed by the braceros, the young male farm workers brought into the United States to carry out agricultural labor, first, in the period between 1918 and 1930 and then again between 1942 and 1964 (Lipski 2008: 79; Parodi 2014: 1537). The status of Mexicans in the society, however, has fluctuated and, with it, the prestige of Spanish with respect to English. Although many different regions of Mexico were represented in the aforementioned waves of immigration, the majority of the newly-arrived Spanish-speaking population hailed from the Bajío region of the country comprising of individuals from central-southern Mexican states such as Michoacán, Guerrero and Guanajuato (Lipski 2008: 79). Often lacking in formal education, these immigrants spoke not the standard Spanish but rural varieties characterized by archaic phonological, morphosyntactic and lexical features such as use of *haiga, mesmo,* 1st person plural ending *–mos* as opposed to *–nos*, and pronunciation of *fue* as ['xwe].

1.3.2. THE LOS ANGELES SETTING. Home to immigrants from all over the world, Los Angeles attracts large numbers of Hispanics, in particular, and is the county of the United States with the highest Hispanic population, estimated at 4,687,889 according to 2010 Census figures (US Census Bureau 2010). Among these, the most numerous by far are individuals of Mexican origin, numbering 3,510,677; followed by Salvadorans at 358,825; Guatemalans, whose numbers reach 214,939; Hondurans, Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans at 42,901; 37,205; and 9,365; respectively (US Census Bureau 2010). Considerably smaller are the numbers of South Americans such as Colombians, Argentinians, etc. as well as Spaniards. While it is true that not all Hispanics are Spanish speakers, almost all of the newly arrived immigrants are, as well as members of the first generation or two born in the United States.[4] These numbers, combined with the undeniable abundance of radio stations, television channels, advertising and even print publications in Spanish (Silva Corvalán 1994: 10; Parodi 2011: 239) attest to the strong presence of this language in Los Angeles.

Certain parts of Los Angeles host greater concentrations of Spanish speakers than others, a result of the settlement patterns established by the first sets of Mexican immigrants. As Allen and Turner (1997) explain, correlations between particular occupations and geographical location have led to the development of ethnic enclaves, which have associated members of certain ethnic groups with specific jobs. As immigrants have clustered in those areas near a particular factory or other places of employment, they have created tight-knit communities that keep them grouped together and, in turn, promote the maintenance of various cultural traditions, including language.

[4] An important exception to this generalization are the speakers of indigenous languages of Mexico and Central America, including Zapotecs, Mixtecs and the Kanjobal Mayans.

The original ethnic enclaves established in Los Angeles by Mexican immigrants have maintained their status as such, even to the point of spreading into areas like South Central Los Angeles, which were not Hispanic to begin with (Allen & Turner 1997). Although some more recently-arrived immigrants have settled in these areas, they have also formed new communities, while at the same time maintaining divisions of national origin.[5] As a result, neighborhoods with high concentrations of Hispanics can be categorized both with respect to national origin and generational membership. The distinctions between generational groups as they are used in this dissertation are outlined in the table below. Foreign-born individuals who arrive in the United States after the age of eight belong to the first generation, while those who reach the country prior to that age or were born in the United States to at least one foreign-born parent comprise the second.[6] The third generation consists of children whose parents were both born in the United States.

Generation	Description
1st	Immigrant born abroad
2nd	Child of immigrant parents (either one or both born abroad) Either born in US or arrived in US prior to age 8
3rd	US-born child of two US-born immigrant parents
4th	US-born grandchild of two US-born immigrant grandparents
5th	US-born great-grandchild of two US-born great-grandparents

TABLE 1. Generational Groups

[5] This is not surprising considering the great differences between Mexican and Salvadoran cultures, which include varying tastes in food and music as well as diversity in secular traditions, and observance of religious holidays.

[6] It has been observed that some foreign-born individuals who arrive in Los Angeles between the ages of 8 and 14 often become bi-dialectal speakers of LAVS and the regional dialect of their country of origin (Parodi 2004: 282). This phenomenon, however, needs to be studied in greater depth.

As pointed out in the previous paragraph, Central Americans are relative newcomers to the area. Consequently, the area with a high concentration of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans and Nicaraguans consists of members of mainly the first and second generations. The neighborhood where they tend to live is located 'just west of Downtown' (Allen and Turner 1997: 110). Referred to as Westlake, this mainly Salvadoran and Guatemalan enclave includes, to the south, the intersection of Pico and Union Boulevards and is centered on MacArthur Park. It also extends into some of the surrounding areas, as Allen and Turner explain, pointing out that '[t]o the northwest of Westlake one Central American Settlement extends into the eastern part of Hollywood; another extends westwards from Pico-Union and the University of Southern California into an area known as West Adams' (110). Mexican neighborhoods, on the other hand, include enclaves the majority of whose members are of third, fourth or even fifth generation. Among the more established areas that are home to large numbers of immigrants of Mexican descent is the area known to as the Eastside, the core of which includes 'the Boyle Heights part of Los Angeles and East Los Angeles' (Allen and Turner 1997: 94). More recently-arrived Mexican immigrants, while also settling in areas like East Los Angeles, have clustered in neighborhoods such as Vernon, Huntington Park, Bell and South Gate, which offer employment in nearby factories and food processing plants.

The differences that exist between Mexicans and Central Americans in Los Angeles due to numbers, national origin, culture and longevity in the area have led to rivalries between members of said groups. Competing for similar jobs and other resources also makes for tension, particularly among the two largest groups, Chicanos and Salvadorans. Superficial similarities in the physical appearance of Mexicans and Central Americans in general and their shared language have led to the use in Los Angeles of the term *Mexican* as a blanket term for all Spanish

speakers, not just those of Mexican origin. The aforementioned rivalry is evidenced by terms used by both groups to refer to the others. Mexicans call Salvadorans *salvi*, *bayunco* and *guanaco*, while Salvadorans have assigned the term *mexi* to Mexicans. As the most numerous and those with most seniority, third, fourth and fifth generation Mexican Americans look upon Central Americans and other non-Mexicans as outsiders or intruders encroaching on their territory. As a Guatemalan worker states in 'Central Americans in Los Angeles: An Immigrant Community in Transition,' ' … los mexicanos creen que ellos son los dueños de Los Ángeles, e insultan a los centroamericanos' [the Mexicans think that they own Los Angeles and insult the Central Americans] (Chinchilla, Hamilton and Loucky 1993: 66). Attitudes of disdain on the part of Mexican Americans towards Central Americans for differences in the speech of the latter have been documented in Parodi's (2011: 229-229 and 2009b: 57) studies on Salvadoran/Mexican dialect contact in Los Angeles and in Villarreal (2012: 118-119). Informants taking part in spontaneous sociolinguistic interviews made negative comments regarding Salvadorans' language use and personal characteristics. One participant said that, 'They [Salvadorans] don't know how to say words,' and 'mispronounce' them and another said that Salvadorans 'have an accent or something,' citing in particular the example of the *voseo* imperative ¡*Sentáte*!, which, she stated, 'sound[s] weird to me.' With regard to Salvadorans as a group, these same informants explained that 'Salvadorans think they're all that…they think they're the world.'

1.3.3. PROFILE OF LAVS SPEAKERS. In spite of the denomination Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish, it is important to realize that not all Spanish speakers in Los Angeles are speakers of LAVS. As will be described in greater depth in subsequent sections of this dissertation, a number of social and linguistic criteria must be met in order for one to acquire LAVS as a native variety.

Social class, migration type and interaction with the Hispanic community are all important factors that determine whether an Angeleno will speak LAVS or not. LAVS speakers are, in general, of working class origin. Middle and upper middle class Spanish speakers, often having attained higher levels of education than those of the working class, tend to reject LAVS on the assumption that it is uneducated and improper. The working class Spanish speakers that arrive in the US often form part of large waves of immigration from Mexico or the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Consequently, this is another important criterion for LAVS speakers. Immigrants who arrive on their own, it should be noted, often have more education and economic means than the aforementioned groups and do not always integrate into the Hispanic neighborhoods of Los Angeles and interact with the their residents, the third social criterion for acquiring LAVS. Such integration is crucial, as it ensures that individuals will receive the necessary exposure to said variety. The importance of the interaction that an individual has in the Hispanic community can be seen in the case of both individual informants who grow up in non-Hispanic communities and fail to acquire the dialect, as well as entire groups, such as Cubans or Argentines, 'que suelen vivir en zonas de la ciudad separadas de los demás hispanos. En estos casos, la primera generación de hablantes no habla español chicano, sino el español del grupo al que pertenece, por ejemplo el cubano o el argentino [that tend to live in parts of the city that are separated from the rest of the Hispanics. In these cases, the first generation of speakers does not speak Chicano Spanish but rather the Spanish of the group to which it belongs, for example Cuban or Argentine]' (Parodi 1999b: 926).

As regards linguistic criteria, research conducted by Parodi (2004: 283-7; 2011: 220) demonstrates that both age of acquisition and the previously mentioned exposure are significant factors in the acquisition of LAVS. In her 2004 article titled 'Contacto de dialectos en Los

Ángeles: español chicano y español salvadoreño,' all of the subjects of Central American descent who speak LA Spanish are either born in the area or arrive before the age of eight (283-4). Such a finding is not surprising given the fact that other linguists have identified age eight as the limit of the critical period for dialect acquisition (Chambers 1992; Krashen 1975). The third factor which plays a pivotal role in whether or not one learns LA Spanish is that of attitude towards Chicanos and their way of speaking. Those individuals who view the dialect and its speakers in a negative light tend to resist the process of dialect acquisition that naturally takes place and rather preserve the speech of their parents' country of origin (Parodi 2004: 289). In summary, LAVS speakers are members of the working class, who arrived as part of a large wave of immigration from a country such as Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras or Guatemala. They are either born in Los Angeles or arrive in said city before the age of eight. Additionally, they interact frequently in the Hispanic community and have a positive attitude towards Chicanos and their way of speaking.

1.3.4. ETHNIC LANGUAGE STATUS OF LAVS. Since the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and California's subsequent transition to statehood, Spanish in the Golden State has been demoted from being the official language of the country (at the time, Mexico) to having only an ethnic language status. As such, it was no longer taught in schools, and formal instruction in Spanish was replaced by the natural acquisition that takes place in the home (Lamar Prieto 2013: 14). Although Spanish continues to have a strong presence in Los Angeles, as indicated by data from the Census and other demographic records, an important distinction should be made between Spanish as a foreign language and Spanish as a native language in the United States. However, The Spanish that is acquired by native Angelenos who were either born

and raised in Los Angeles or have spent their formative years in said city is an ethnic language, similar in many ways to African American Vernacular English (AAVE) or most indigenous tongues. A nonstandard oral variety, it receives no formal recognition and is not taught in elementary schools. Rather, it is learned in the home by word of mouth. Results of such restricted use include knowledge of registers that vary from those of monolingual Spanish, different discursive and pragmatic parameters and limitations when it comes to reading or writing the standard language. Its speakers tend to employ the same informal register when addressing interlocutors of various ages and social statuses because the use of this form is limited to familiar contexts, primarily, the home. The aforementioned situation arises as the result of the coexistence of English and Spanish in the United States and, crucially, the diglossic relationship that obtains between the two. First conceived of by Ferguson in 1959, the term DIGLOSSIA was initially employed to describe a situation where the contexts of language use and acquisition are determined by its social function. Although originally used to describe the relationship between classical and vernacular Arabic, two different varieties of the same language, its use has been expanded to include two different languages (Fishman 1967). In either case, one finds two linguistic varieties with different functions that are also learned in different environments. Parodi, who has applied the concept in the Los Angeles context, defines diglossia as 'una situación sociolingüística por la cual dos o más lenguas, de igual o distinto origen, tienen diferente valor social, siendo una de ellas de mayor prestigio que las otras, aunque a veces haya superposición parcial de dichas lenguas o variantes' [a sociolinguistic situation in which two or more languages, of the same or different origins, have different social valuations, one of them being of higher prestige than the others, although sometimes there is partial superposition of said languages or linguistic varieties' (2011: 238) H, the 'high' variety, is the prestige form that is

used in formal contexts for official purposes and is learned in the schools. The 'low variety,' L, is reserved for use in informal contexts, such as the home, and is learned, natively, in the home. It is important to note that diglossia refers to a linguistic relationship that characterizes a society as a whole, as opposed to individuals, and can be conceived of as a type of 'societal bilingualism.' Heritage language instruction in Spanish, it should be noted, has developed to address precisely the diglossic situation present in Los Angeles, one in which students speak and understand the language with ease but have difficulty reading or writing it and lack the formal registers used in the academic and professional spheres.

Within the less formal contexts to which LA Spanish is relegated, it must be noted that this variety holds more prestige among members of the working class than any other dialect of Spanish (Parodi 2011: 239). Evidence of such high esteem for this variety is found in the fact that the Central Americans arriving in Los Angeles adapt their speech to the Mexican dialect spoken in this metropolis, eliminating as best they can the non-Mexican features and adopting the Mexican *tú*, vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. As Parodi explains in another article, 'Normatividad y diglosia en Los Ángeles: un modelo de contacto lingüístico,' 'Este paso es resultado de la necesidad de supervivencia económica, pues el español chicano no sólo goza de prestigio en la comunidad hispana de clase trabajadora en Los Ángeles, sino que quien lo habla tiene movilidad y aceptación social en dicha comunidad' (2009b: 57). Those non-Mexican Spanish speakers who assume the LA Spanish features have the added advantage of avoiding the ridicule and teasing to which their non-accommodating compatriots are subject (57). Thus, many of them become bi-dialectal, giving preference to their original dialects within the intimacy of their own homes or in intragroup situations.

1.3. 5. DIALECT CLASSIFICATION: *TIERRAS ALTAS* AND *BAJAS*. Before continuing on to describe the complexities of the linguistic situation in Los Angeles, it is necessary to pause for a moment to present the model that will be used in this dissertation to distinguish one class of Spanish dialects from another. Proposed by Pedro Henríquez Ureña (1921) and further discussed by Max Wagner (1924), Angel Rosenblat (1962), and Menéndez Pidal (1962) in the field of Hispanic dialectology, this system of classification employs phonetic features to categorize dialects as those of interior, mainland regions, *tierras altas* dialects, or those of the coastal areas, *tierras bajas* dialects. The resulting dichotomy was used as evidence to provide support for a theory of dialect differences due to greater or lesser degrees of Andalusian influence. Like all generalizations, such a classification faces significant challenges when held up to scrutiny. Some features, like aspiration of implosive /s/, are common to most but not all *tierras bajas* dialects. Nonetheless, the general insights which originally motivated this dialect division, i.e. the fact that the dialects of the original Spanish settlers in coastal vs. inland regions differed significantly, remain useful in a variety of situations, and the field of Hispanic dialectology has yet to provide a more comprehensive system of dialect classification. As can be seen in the comparison of features in the table 2 below, the features in question are in complementary distribution in the two dialect classes.

As stated earlier, LA Spanish is a *tierras altas* dialect, based mainly on Mexican Spanish of the Bajío (central) region of the country (Santa Ana and Parodi 1998; Parodi 2003; Parodi 2004; etc.). In general, this class of dialects can be characterized by strong consonants and weak vowels, since consonants do not undergo typical dialectal processes such as aspiration, in the case of sibilants, or velarization, in the case of nasals. A glance at table 2 below, which contrasts a selection of the main features of these two dialect classes, serves to illustrate this point.

Feature	Example	Tierras altas Spanish	Tierras bajas Spanish
Aspiration of /s/	['lah.'treh] ‘las tres’	No	Yes
Velarization of /n/	['kan.taŋ] ‘cantan’	No	Yes
Loss of /d/ between V[7]__V	[ka.'ya.ðo] ‘callado’	No	Yes
Epenthesis of /y/ between 'i__ a	['di.ya] ‘día’	No	Yes
Loss of /y/ between i, e ___ V	['e.a] ‘ella’	No	Yes

TABLE 2. Major Phonetic Features of *Tierras Altas* vs. *Tierras Bajas* Dialects (Adapted from Parodi 2004: 280)

The distinction between these two dialect classes is further reinforced by other types of linguistic features. Morphology, in particular, the use, or lack thereof, of the pronoun *vos* and its accompanying verb forms, also corresponds to the *tierras altas* and *tierras bajas* dialect class distinction. Except for a few rare exceptions[8], some form of *voseo* is used in most Latin American countries with the exception of the Carribbean and most of Mexico while *tuteo*, the use of *tú*, is the norm in *alteño* varieties.

1.3.6. DIALECTS AND PRESTIGE. In addition to the diglossia that exists among the Latino population in Los Angeles, there is a factor of dialectal prestige. As mentioned earlier, the second-largest group of Spanish speakers in said city, Salvadorans, speaks a *tierras bajas* dialect, which contrasts markedly with the *tierras altas* dialect of LAVS with respect to the principal characteristics listed in Table 3 below.

[7] The abbreviation V will be used throughout this dissertation to represent any vowel.

[8] *Voseo* is found in the state of Tabasco as both Williamson (1986) and Gutiérrez Eskildsen (1941) affirm.

Feature	*Tierras altas* Mexican Spanish/ LAVS	Salvadoran Spanish
Aspiration of /s/	No	Yes
Velarization of /n/	No	Yes
Epenthesis of /y/ between 'i__ a	No	Yes
Loss of /y/ between i, e__ V	No	Yes
Weakening/loss of atonic vowels	Yes	No
Voseo	No	Yes
Aspiration of /x/	Yes	Yes
Mexican lexicon	Yes	No

TABLE 3. Major Features of LAVS vs. Salvadoran Spanish

As Parodi (2009b) explains, the diglossic situations that obtain among Spanish speakers in Los Angeles can result in two different prestige varieties, depending on the social class of the speakers in question, among other factors. Among members of the working class, two different outcomes can obtain when Spanish speakers of *tierras bajas* dialects come into contact with LAVS: total or partial acquisition of this form. Spanish speakers of *tierras bajas* varieties who acquire this variety completely replace not only the phonetic features of their original dialect with those of LAVS but also adopt lexical items from this variety and abandon the use of *voseo*. Those who maintain their *tierras bajas* dialect frequently become bidialectal, using said variety in informal contexts with family members and fellow speakers of *tierras bajas* Spanish, nevertheless employing LAVS when speaking with non-Central Americans at work and in other social settings. The high prestige that bilinguals accord to LAVS can be attributed to a number of different factors including the numerical dominance of the population of Mexican descent, its seniority, citizenship status and English skills. Salvadoran immigrants participating in

sociolinguistic interviews compiled by Parodi (2009b) reported modifying their speech in order to avoid being teased and ridiculed by coworkers and acquaintances of Mexican descent (57).

Speakers of *tierras bajas* dialects who belong to the middle and upper middle classes also adapt to the speech of the Mexican majority in Los Angeles with respect to features such as neutralization of /r/ and /l/ in the case of speakers of Caribbean dialects (2009b: 59). However, most of them accommodate to the standard Mexican dialect rather than to LA Spanish (2009b: 58). Argentinians comprise a notable exception to such accommodation. As Parodi states, this rejection of the LA variety stems from the stigma they attach to 'los rasgos del español chicano que coinciden con el español rural americano' [the features of Chicano Spanish that coincide with rural American Spanish] such as *haiga, mesmo*, etc. (2009b: 58). She further explains that, unlike their working class counterparts, they accept *tierras bajas* features such as aspiration of /s/ and velarization of /n/, as well as other features like *voseo*. Consequently, standard Mexican Spanish is the dialect of choice when these bidialectal speakers are in formal contexts such as a university setting, during a church service or political function (2009b: 59). A recent case study involving two second generation Argentines born and raised in the San Fernando Valley suggests that living in a non-Hispanic neighborhood, combined with having limited contact with the Mexican community, is another factor that may affect the outcome of dialect contact. A *tierras bajas* dialect, Argentine Spanish features aspiration of /s/ and *voseo*, and the subjects of the aforementioned study, preserved these linguistic characteristics, rather than eliminating them.

Turning to the diglossic situation that arises in the middle and upper-middle classes between LA Spanish and standard Mexican Spanish, it must be noted that the standard dialect maintains its privileged position as the high variety and, as such, is the dialect of choice in formal contexts whose public consists of the general Hispanic community such as political

speeches, religious sermons, academic conferences and news reports (Parodi 2009b: 59). LA Spanish, in particular, the features of the old American Spanish koiné, is stigmatized in such circles while the *tierras bajas* features mentioned earlier, such as aspiration of implosive /s/ and velarization of syllable- and word-final /n/, are not.

1.4. Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish

1.4.1. Dialectal Features of LAVS. The features of Los Angeles Spanish can be divided into four main categories, each of which can be further subdivided according to the linguistic module which it involves (phonology, syntax, morphosyntax, etc.). As can be seen in Table 4 below, these four categories are labeled as rural, evaluative, general Mexican and contact. The term rural, as will be discussed shortly, refers to those characteristics which are 'common in the speech of rural areas of Latin America as well as some parts of rural Spain' (Parodi 2014: 1543). Such features are often referred to in the literature by a variety of terms such as archaisms and informal features (cf. Elías-Olivares 1976). These are the same features, it must be noted, that most scholars of Southwest Spanish allude to when mentioning archaisms and are actually remnants of the old American Spanish koiné, the dialect that arose in the American viceroyalties in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries due to contact between several dialects of Peninsular Spanish. The evaluative category of features refers to the social evaluations that speakers of this variety assign to particular features or groups of features. The linguistic features of LA Spanish that are typical of Mexican Spanish but are neither evaluative nor of rural origin can be found in the general Mexican category. Finally, the contact features are those that have arisen as the result of English influence.

	LA Spanish Feature	Example
General Mexican Phonological	*Tierras altas* features	

General Mexican Lexical	Mexican lexicon	Órale, ándale, cuate
Evaluative	*Tierras bajas* phonetics and lexicon stigmatized *Voseo* stigmatized Archaic Spanish features accepted as normal	
Rural Phonological	Pronunciation of /f/ as [x] before ['we]	['xwe] (cf. *fue*)
Rural Morphosyntactic	Generalization of –s to 2nd sg. preterit Imperfect 1st person pl. ending in *-nos* Change of stress in 1st plural subjunctive	dijistes (cf. *dijiste*) andábanos (cf.*andábamos*) téngamos (cf. tengamos)
Rural Lexical	*haiga, mesmo, ansina, agora, trujo,* etc.	

TABLE 4. Main Features of Los Angeles Vernacular Spanish (LAVS)
(Adapted from Parodi 2011)

Looking at the table above, one can see that the rural category is further subdivided according to the linguistic modality affected. Probably the most noticeable and most widely commented upon of these features are the lexical ones. Among the more common rural features found in the LA Spanish lexicon, Parodi includes *mesmo, dende, andenantes, haiga, trujo, agora* and *ansina* (2003: 25). As will be discussed in the following section regarding evaluative features, it is not only the use of these features that characterizes this dialect, but also the complete acceptance its speakers have of them. Rural morphosyntactic characteristics of this dialect can be found in Table 5.

Feature	Example
Use of *-s* suffix on 2nd person plural preterit	fuistes (cf. *fuiste*)
Use of *-nos* vs. *–mos* on 1st person plural imperfect	comíanos (cf. *comíamos*)
Change in stress on 1st person plural present subjunctive	hágamos (cf. *hagamos*)

TABLE 5. Rural Morphosyntactic Features of LAVS

Like the other archaic features just mentioned, the rural phonetic features present in LA Spanish are common to the rural speech of just about any Spanish-speaking country. Consequently, it must be reiterated at this point that in no way is the claim being made that such features are unique to LA Spanish. Rather, the uniqueness of this dialect lies in the use of all of the aforementioned features as a bundle, and, most importantly, the particular social evaluations that speakers of this variety assign to them. That being said, the phonetic characteristics presented in the following table are commonly found in the speech of Angelenos and must be included in this inventory of LA Spanish features.

Feature	Example
Diphthongization of hiatus	['ljon] (cf. *león*), ['pjoɾ] (cf. *peor*), ['twá.ya] (cf. *toalla*)
Aphaeresis (loss of initial syllable or vowel)	['ta] (cf. *está*), ['i.ɾa] (cf. *mira*), [a.'ma] (cf. *mamá*)
Apocope (loss of final syllable or sound)	['pa] (cf. *para*)
Syncope (loss of middle sounds)	[ne.si.'ta.βa.mos] (cf. *necesitábamos*)
Metathesis (change of order of sounds)	[swi.'ðáð] (cf. *ciudad*)
Contraction of article before vowel	l'avena (cf. *la avena*), l'alfalfa (cf. *la alfalfa*), l'espada (cf. *la espada*)
Simplification of consonantal groups	[do. 'tóɾ] (cf. *doctor*), [e.'klí.se] (cf. *eclipse*), ['sé.ti.mo] (cf. *séptimo*), [e.'le.tɾi.ko] (cf. *eléctrico*)
/f/ pronounced as [x] before diphthongs [we], [wi]	['xwe] (cf. *fue*), ['xwi] (cf. *fui*)

TABLE 6. Rural Phonetic Features of LAVS
Adapted from Parodi 2009b: 51, cuadro 2

Anyone familiar with the phonetic features typically associated with Southwest Spanish, especially those of Texas or New Mexico, will notice that not all of these appear in Table 6. Conspicuously absent, for example, are aspiration of /s/ and fricative realization of /č/ as [š]. Turning to Phillips' (1976) article, 'Segmental Phonology of Los Angeles Spanish,' one can see

that the /s/ phoneme tends to be pronounced as the voiceless sibilant [s]. He explains that, ‘when the /s/ is before a juncture, a vowel, or a voiceless consonant, it is realized as the voiceless [s]’ (78). Though the speech samples Phillips obtains are not completely devoid of aspiration of /s/, it must be noted that its frequency is extremely low and that it only occurs in very limited environments: before a voiced consonant in allegro speech during conversation (as opposed to responses to the phonetic checklist) and before the voiced, non-apical alveolar grooved fricative [ɹ]. One other exception to the lack of aspiration of /s/ in LA Spanish is its aspirated realization in the lexical item *nosotros*, as attested by one of Phillips’ informant’s consistent pronunciation of this word as [no.ˈʰo.tɾos] (1976: 77). As MaryEllen García and Michael Tallon (1995) point out, a historical explanation has been posited for this lexicalized aspirated pronunciation. Originally two words, *nos* and *otros*, the final sound of *nos* would have been the apicoalveolar voiceless phone typical of Castillian Spanish. In some cases, such as that of *nosotros*, this apicoalveolar sound could have been reanalyzed as the prepalatal voiceless fricative, [ʃ], which afterwards became the velar fricative, /x/. The resulting similarity in pronunciation of these two phonemes could have led to sporadic use of one sound for another. The realization of /x/ could have come to resemble an aspirated pronunciation of /s/. García and Tallon’s study of San Antonio Spanish also reveals a particular case of aspiration that is most likely an instance of morphological, rather than phonological, variation: that of *estar*. The high frequency of ‘*stá* that they observe in their data, when taken into consideration with the high retention rates of /-s/ that they find, lead them to maintain that, ‘Because there is no evidence to treat this as an /-s/ aspirating or deleting dialect, any variability in the stem is due either to other phonological processes, or is morphological and only incidentally phonological.[9]

[9] Assuming that phonological variation would result in an implicational scale by which *estar* reduced gradually, as

Although their research indicates that instances of aspiration and deletion of /s/ are not completely absent from the speech of Spanish speakers in San Antonio, García and Tallon provide ample evidence for classifying this variety of Spanish as a dialect characterized by /s/ retention rather than aspiration/deletion. While it is not possible to say that tokens of sporadic aspiration are never attested in LAVS, a review of the findings shows that this dialect clearly groups with *tierras altas* dialects given the extremely low frequency of the aspiration that is found, the very limited number of contexts in which it occurs and its tendency to be lexical or morphological rather than phonological.[10]

Another feature frequently associated with Southwest Spanish is the fricative realization of the affricate /č/. Research done by both Phillips and Parodi on the phonological aspects of LA Spanish documents the affricate realization of the /č/ phoneme rather than the fricative. As Phillips (1976) states, 'The /č/ usually is realized as a voiceless, pre-palatal affricated stop [č]. It is very uncommon in L.A. to hear it pronounced in any other way … There was almost no deviation, in any environment, from the [č] pronunciation' (76-7). The lack of these two features generally attested in Southwest Spanish can be interpreted as further evidence that it is Mexican

in *estar* > *ehtar* > *e'tar* > *'tar,* García and Tallon state that, 'Viewed as stages, each of the intermediary forms could be expected to be produced in greater frequency than the last in a community' (147). Thus they interpret the fact that *'stá* occurs more frequently than *'tá* as additional evidence that such a variant should not be attributed to phonological variation.

[10] It is also important to note that social factors are also thought to play a role in the aspirated pronunciation of *nohotros* in dialects not characterized by aspiration of /s/. For instance, in her article "Aspectos fonéticos del habla de Múzquiz, Coahuila," Lourdes Gavaldón (1970) mentions that examples of intervocalic aspiration in words like *nosotros* occur with greater frequency in the speech of uneducated and middle class speakers (233).

Spanish of the Bajío rather than of the northern part of the country,[11] that serves as the basis for the LA Spanish dialect.

Before describing the evaluative features of LA Spanish, it is necessary to describe briefly the social evaluations that speakers of standard Mexican Spanish assign to the following groups of features: archaic features, *tierras bajas* phonology, regional Central American lexicon and *voseo*. Recalling that the term standard Mexican Spanish is being limited to refer to that variety of the language that is spoken by the middle and upper classes and is taught in the schools, the fact that its speakers assign a stigma to archaic features, especially lexical ones, comes as no surprise (Parodi 2009a: 3). As Parodi explains, 'the features that these native speakers stigmatize are usually old Spanish forms that were common in the Spanish American koiné spoken in colonial times in Latin America, during the 16th to 18th centuries' (2008: 202). People who use words like *haiga* or *mesmo* or say things like *fuistes* or *téngamos* are considered lower class and uneducated. The prescriptive rules that cause such words to be frowned upon are not unlike those which shun the use of words like *ain't* or *reckon* or the use of two consecutive modals like *might could* in English. All of the above mentioned examples are used in informal speech by native speakers. The prescriptive rules that condemn their use are only transmitted by means of formal schooling. Turning now to the different types of *tierras bajas* features, it should be noted that these are considered regionalisms and, consequently, neutral features that are assigned neither stigma nor prestige. Again comparing them to English examples, we see that they fall into the same category as words and pronunciations of, say, New Zealand English. They may sound odd or different to speakers of US English. However, speakers of US English, who

[11] The Spanish spoken in northern Mexico is known for a fricative realization of the /č/ phoneme (Alvar 1996: 88).

are unfamiliar with the speech of this region, refrain from assigning a social stigma to these linguistic features.

As Parodi (2009a) explains, the social evaluations that speakers of LA Spanish assign to both LA Spanish and *tierras bajas* Spanish features differ significantly from those of standard Mexican Spanish speakers. Examining the attitudes towards the archaic features of LA Spanish, she states that, rather than being stigmatized, as they are by standard Spanish speakers, these features are completely accepted (Parodi 2011: 224). Regional lexical items from countries other than Mexico, such as *guagua* for *bus* or *camión* and especially use of *voseo*, on the other hand, are stigmatized (Parodi 1999b: 924; Parodi 2011: 223-224). The phonology of *tierras bajas* dialects, which includes features such as aspiration of /s/ and velarization of /n/, is accepted by LA Spanish speakers, but with reticence (2011: 223).

1.4.2. CONTACT PHENOMENA. Until this point, the inventory of LAVS features described has been restricted mainly to those features that demonstrate clearly that this is a systematic dialect of Spanish. While limiting the inventory of LA Spanish features to these only would avoid many of the complications associated with examining the impact that English has on this dialect, it would also neglect a critical aspect related to the social context in which this variety is used and evaluated. The following section presents those features of LA Spanish that are considered contact phenomena. As can be seen in Table 7, these are grouped into lexical, phonetic and syntactic categories:

	LAVS Contact Phenomena	Example	Attested in monolingual Spanish?
Phonetic	Aspiration of /x/ as [h]	['ka.ha] *caja*	Yes
	Weakening of /y/ to [j]	['po.jo] *pollo*	Yes

	Contact phenomenon	Example	
	Neutralization of single and multiple vibrants to r with two taps: [ŕ]	['ba.ŕjo] *barrio*, [ko.'meŕ] *komer*	No
	Addition of [v] allophone for /b/	['va.ka] *vaca,* [úva] *uva*	No
	Palatalization of [k] before /e, i/	[kʲe.'re.mos] *queremos*	Yes
Syntactic	Redundant use of subject pronoun	Yo dije que yo iría al cine contigo.	Yes
	Pronominal duplication of direct objects	Usted me **lo** dejó **el mensaje** con Juan.	Yes
	Pronominal duplication of possessives	Esa es **su** canción **de usted**.	
	Lack of grammatical agreement, especially with collective subjects	Muchos de nuestra gente no llegaron.	Yes
	Re-analysis of learned masculine words as feminine	Hay una serie de **problemas** que queremos que ustedes **las entiendan**.	Yes
	Lack of agreement between subject and predicate in relative clauses	Es importante decirle lo **bonito** que es **ella**.	Yes
Morpho-syntactic	Generalization of –s to 2nd sg. preterit	dijistes (cf. *dijiste*)	Yes
	Imperfect 1st person pl. ending in *-nos*	andábanos (cf. *andábamos*)	Yes
Lexical	Semantic extensions	carpeta for *carpet* (cf. *alfombra*), apología for *apology* (cf. *disculpa*)	No
	Borrowings	*troca, bil, yarda, marqueta*	No
	Code switching	Trabaja en los fields. Me prometió que he would come right away.	No

TABLE 7. LAVS Contact Phenomena
Adapted from Parodi 2009a, table 4

Several of these features, it should be noted, occur in the dialects of native Spanish speakers throughout the world, indicating that they could be considered internal developments of the language (i.e. valid variations found within the system of monolingual Spanish). In order to

maintain a clear separation between the effects of English influence and the purely Spanish elements of this dialect, however, the decision has been made to consider as an English influence any feature that also occurs in English, regardless of whether or not it is found in monolingual Spanish. Discussion of such ambiguous features, however, will include an acknowledgement of the questions and doubts regarding their origin as well as a mention of the monolingual dialects in which they have been attested.

PHONETIC FEATURES. Contact features of LAVS include the pronunciation of the voiced oral bilabial phoneme /b/ as the voiced oral labiodental fricative allophone [v] in both occlusive and fricative articulations, the voiceless oral velar fricative /x/ as the voiceless oral glottal fricative [h] and the voiced oral palatal fricative /y/ as the voiced oral palatal semi consonant [j] (19). English influence is posited in each of these cases because the allophones pronounced are all present in the phonological inventory of this language.

Furthermore, LAVS consists of a number of characteristics that have traditionally been analyzed as contact features but can also be attributed to internal tendencies, i.e. they represent the natural development of propensities already evident in the system of Spanish regardless of whether they have been attested in bilingual varieties of the language. Such features include palatalization of the oral voiceless velar stop /k/ when it occurs before the palatal vowel /e/ and the neutralization of the multiple trill /r/ and single tap /ɾ/ into a single phoneme, pronounced as [ɾ́], with two taps (19). With respect to syntax it is observed that there is redundant use of subject pronouns and direct object pronouns as well as a restructuring of the subjunctive mood (19-20).

The first two phonetic features listed in table 7, aspiration of /x/ to [h] and the weakening of /y/ to [j], are both attested in Central American dialects, the former being generalizable to the whole geographical region (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama) and the

latter typically found in Guatemala and the central part of Costa Rica (Alvar 1996: 103). Other parts of the Spanish-speaking world where a weakening of /x/ to [h] is found include Southeast Mexico and the gulf coast (Canfield 1981: 61-2), the Dominican Republic (Canfield 1981: 45), Colombia (Canfield 1981: 34), Puerto Rico (Canfield 1981: 76) and Venezuela (Canfield 1981: 91). Use of the labiodental, voiced fricative [v] as an allophone of /b/, especially in intervocalic positions, is not attested in monolingual varieties of Spanish. Neither is neutralization of single tap and multiple trill /r/ into a single /r/.[12]

SYNTACTIC FEATURES. A number of the syntactic features listed in Table 7 have been attributed to English influence due to the differences that both languages exhibit with respect to the pro-drop parameter set forth in Chomsky's Principles and Parameters framework of generative grammar. Using this framework, languages are classified as pro-drop, those which allow omission of a pronounced subject pronoun, and non-pro-drop, those whose sentences become ungrammatical when such an omission is made. Spanish, which allows sentences such as '*Es mi hermano*,' is classified as a pro-drop language, while English, in which a sentence such as *'Ø Is my brother'* is ungrammatical, is considered non-pro-drop. Although the grammar of Spanish allows the use of an overt subject pronoun in cases of emphasis or contrast and requires it when a coordinating conjunction is used, these cases are few and far between. In general, the Spanish of

[12] A similar phenomenon is, however, found in the so-called vestigial dialects of US Spanish of the Río Sabinas regions of Texas and Louisiana. Lipski explains that, '[s]e neutraliza parcialmente la oposición entre los fonemas vibrantes /r/ y /rr/ en favor de la variante simple [r]. Esta neutralización también tiene lugar en otros dialectos vestigiales y acriollados del español, pero no es característica de los principales dialectos del español mexicano [the opposition between the two vibrant phonemes /r/ and /rr/ is partially neutralized in favor of the simple vibrant [r]. This neutralization also takes places in other vestigial and creolized dialects of Spanish, but it is not a characteristic of the main dialects of Mexican Spanish' (1987: 122).

monolingual native speakers lacks subject pronouns. The term redundant use of subject pronouns is used by Parodi to refer to pronunciation of an overt subject pronoun for non-emphatic, non-contrastive purposes, in essence, obeying the linguistic principles that govern non-pro-drop languages such as English. As with the phonological features mentioned above, however, it must be noted that use of redundant subject pronouns has been documented in the speech of both mono- and bilingual Spanish speakers of countries other than Mexico.

Pronominal duplication of direct objects and possessives is another feature that Parodi identifies as characteristic of LAVS. She finds that first generation informants living in Los Angeles had higher percentages than monolingual Spanish speakers, and those of second generation subjects were higher still (21). In the case of the pronominal duplication of direct objects, this phenomenon involves the use of an additional clitic pronoun to refer to a direct object that is explicitly mentioned in the discourse and, in that of possessives, the addition of the preposition *de* plus a pronoun to a sentence utilizing a possessive pronoun. Examples of the former construction include *Usted me* ***lo*** *dejó* ***el mensaje*** *con Juan* (Parodi 2009a: 5) and *Yo* ***los*** *visité* ***los jardines*** *en San* Francisco (Parodi 1999b: 921). The latter syntactic structure is exemplified by the sentence *Esa es su canción* ***de usted***. Both of these pronominal constructions are considered redundant from the perspective of generative grammar since they involve extra pronouns that must share a theta role with their antecedents. Like several of the phonological features mentioned earlier, both phenomena discussed here are attested in monolingual dialects of Spanish, although not in the same ones. Pronominal duplication of direct objects is found in a number of varieties of Latin American Spanish: the River Plate dialects of Argentina and Uruguay, and Bolivian, Ecuadoran, Peruvian and Mexican dialects (Zagona 2002: 69). Pronominal duplication of possessives is also attested in monolingual Spanish, as evidenced by

Gili y Gaya's explanation that 'el idioma se vale, desde antes de la época clásica, del recurso de añadir a *su* el nombre del poseedor, o el pronombre que lo representa, acompañado de la preposición *de*, siempre que pueda haber duda' (240). A lack of grammatical agreement with collective subjects is another syntactic phenomenon cited in Gili y Gaya's *Curso superior de la sintaxis española*. He affirms that, 'Los colectivos como *gente, muchedumbre, número, multitud, infinidad, pueblo, vecindario,* etc., a causa de la idea de pluralidad que encierran, cuando están en singular pueden concertar con un adjetivo o verbo en plural [The collective [nouns] like *people, crowd, number, multitude, infinity, town, neighborhood,* etc., due to the concept of plurality that they incorporate, can agree with an adjective or verb in the plural when they are in the singular]' (30). According to Cotton and Sharp (1988), re-analysis of learned masculine words is '[w]idespread in the Spanish of the Southwest, as in all of Latin America,' (281).

MORPHOSYNTACTIC FEATURES. Many scholars have observed that the tense-mood-aspect morphology of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles is greatly simplified and mainly characterized by loss. Silva Corvalán's (1994) *Language Contact and Change: Spanish in Los Angeles*, for instance, documents loss of tense-mood-aspect morphology, extension of the copula *estar,* omission of complementizer *que*, and a tendency to place subjects preverbally, among other features. Reduced use of the subjunctive and the absence of certain verb tenses (the conditional perfect as in *habría mirado*, the pluperfect as in *había mirado*, the perfect infinitive as in *haber mirado*, etc.) from a speaker's repertoire, among other features, are also cited as evidence of the compromised integrity of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles. Such affirmations are based on speech samples acquired from Spanish-English bilinguals with varying degrees of proficiency across several generations of the same family. While Silva-Corvalan's data undoubtedly speaks to the language loss that affects several generations of speakers, a few words of explanation are

in order. First, the reader should be reminded that the author's goal is to 'attempt to characterize and explain processes and stages of language attrition' and not to provide a description of the morphosyntactic features of LAVS (Silva-Corvalán 1994: 7). This is immediately apparent when one sees that the proficiency of Spanish-speaking subjects ranged from completely fluent speakers to some who 'spoke … mainly in English and sporadically produced a few passages of spontaneous Spanish' (Silva-Corvalán 1994: 16). Although completely suitable informants for a study on Spanish language attrition, using the data produced by such informants would hardly serve as an appropriate corpora on which to base a description of the morphosyntactic features of LAVS. Furthermore, as seen in the description of the origins of Spanish in Los Angeles, LAVS is derived from rural Mexican Spanish, rather than the standard. Consequently, the comparisons that are made with monolingual Spanish, such as those stated in Silva-Corvalán (1994), can also distort the characterization of LAVS morphology.

LEXICAL FEATURES. As early as the first decade of the 1900s, scholars such as Aurelio Espinosa (1909) have remarked on the influence of English on US Spanish lexicon. Not surprisingly, categorization of the various manifestations of this phenomenon has lacked uniformity, leading to the use of multiple terms for the same concept. In this paper I will adopt the classification of borrowings, semantic extensions and code switches that Parodi employs in her 2011 article, 'El otro México: español chicano, koineización y diglosia en Los Ángeles, California.' Borrowings are divided into two different classes depending on how generalized and permanent the borrowed items are. LAVS, she maintains, is characterized by borrowings that are both permanent and generalized, such as *bil* for *cuenta* 'bill', *aseguranza* for *seguro* 'insurance', *rufo* for *techo* 'roof', *norsa* for *enfermera* 'nurse' and *brecas* for *frenos* 'breaks'. All of these borrowings are pronounced in Spanish and none of them form part of the mental lexicon of the monolingual

Spanish speaker. The second class of borrowings Parodi discusses is neither generalized nor permanent. Typically pronounced in English rather than Spanish, these borrowings are assigned the term MOMENTARY BORROWINGS and can be considered a special class of code switching. The term semantic extension is used to apply to those Spanish words whose meaning is changed or extended by virtue of contact with English. Such items often become what Parodi refers to as BICULTURAL SIGNS, words that have different meanings in each culture and, consequently, acquire a stigma in the other culture for failing to form part of the speaker's mental lexicon. Examples of semantic extensions include *argumentar* for *discutir* 'to argue', *introducir* for *presentar* 'to introduce', *parientes* for *padres* 'parents' and *apología* for *disculpa* 'apology'. Code switching, which Parodi identifies as 'mezcla[r] el inglés y el español en una misma oración o en un mismo párrafo [mix[ing] English and Spanish in the same sentence or in the same paragraph],' is another lexical contact feature that characterizes LA Spanish (17). Countless scholars, among them, Espinosa, Ornstein, Peñalosa, Sánchez and Barker, have remarked on the use of code switching by speakers of US varieties of Spanish. Research carried out by Parodi shows that second-generation speakers used more switches than did those of the first and realize them with English pronunciation. First generation speakers, on the other hand, switched less and, when they did so, adapted words to Spanish phonology and morphology (2011: 233).

Although the linguistic pressures exerted on Spanish in the US by the English language are undeniable, it must also be recognized that the variety of Spanish upon which it is acting is not one homogenous dialect. Rather, it is a mixture that reflects the many linguistic varieties spoken in the city where it is spoken. Acknowledging this situation is important because it can free linguists to examine US Spanish from a perspective other than that of structural loss or

attrition. Considering the constant waves of Spanish-speaking immigrants that continue to arrive in this country, it should not be surprising that the linguistic situation here is much more complex than initially appears. The somewhat recent immigration of Central Americans to Los Angeles, for instance, has created the ideal conditions for studying the dynamics of dialect contact.

In the final section of this chapter I will turn to a discussion of the koineization perspective of LAVS, which offers an explanation for the many of the features of this variety that are not influenced by English. Koinés are linguistic forms that arise when speakers of different dialects coincide and must communicate with one another, often as a consequence of immigration. The resulting linguistic forms referred to as koinés are characterized by two important linguistic processes: simplification, which can be defined as an increase in regularity, and levelling, which involves the elimination of marked forms. Like any linguistic variety, the main features of a koiné are further determined by various linguistic, social and historical factors. As will be seen in the following section, the situation in Los Angeles provides strong evidence for a koineization perspective. Much research, however, still remains to be if scholars wish to demonstrate that LAVS is a regional dialect, the result of leveling processes.

1.4.3. THE KOINEIZATION PERSPECTIVE. At first glance it may seem that the difference between the language loss and koineization perspectives, both of which result in simplification and reduction, is slight and, most likely, irrelevant. This is not the case. Scholars of LA Spanish have noted that this variety exhibits a number of features that cannot have developed due to contact with English. Among these are found the use of phonetic, lexical and morphosyntactic forms that are considered rural and stigmatized in standard monolingual Mexican Spanish, the negative social evaluations assigned to linguistic elements characteristic of Central American Spanish and the absence of phonetic realizations (pronunciations) that typically occur in the speech of

Mexicans from the regions that are more than amply represented[13] in the population of Mexican immigrants that have settled in Los Angeles. This observation, paired with knowledge of the sociohistorical context of the LA region, as well as familiarity with dialectology in general and the linguistic features of Mexican and Central American Spanish in particular, strongly suggests that the situation at hand goes well beyond a simple instance of attrition.

The literature on koinés has characterized these varieties in terms of their linguistic features, functions and origins. Particular social conditions, such as the mixing of groups of various nationalities and the need to come together 'in order to strengthen a new common identity,' (Tuten 2001: 329) have been identified as necessary but not always sufficient requirements for the formation of a koiné. One of the most commonly cited types of koinés is the immigrant koiné, described by Siegel (1985) as a situation in which 'contact takes place in another location where large numbers of speakers of different regional dialects have migrated' (364). Although linguists have by no means reached a consensus regarding all of the features of koinés, it should be noted that the following characterizations are generally agreed upon: 1) linguistic features of koinés have been simplified and reduced, 2) koinés have 'stabilized enough to be considered at least informally standardized,' 3) rather than a mere reduction of some features, they are a true mixture of linguistic varieties, incorporating elements of the contributing varieties or, in some cases, present a novel feature unknown to any of the contributing dialects and 4) similar to pidgins, they can become the native language of children born into the new immigrant community (Siegel 1985: 363). As will be explained in the following paragraphs, LA

[13] Such regions include Mexico City, Michoacan, Jalisco and northern Mexico. For more information, see Parodi 2014: 1541.

Spanish presents all of the above-mentioned characteristics, several of which cannot be explained by a language loss perspective.

Understanding better the reasons that motivate an analysis of LA Spanish as a koiné rather than simply another case of language loss due to English influence must begin with a quick review of information regarding the origins of the first Spanish-speaking immigrants and those of subsequent groups. Although the first large wave of Spanish-speaking immigrants to arrive in Los Angeles was Mexican, these individuals came from different regions of Mexico, thus fulfilling one of the fundamental requirements for the formation of an immigrant koiné: contact which takes place in a center of immigration between groups of speakers of different regional dialects have settled 'takes place in a new location where large numbers of speakers of different regional dialects have migrated' (Siegel 1985: 364). As many linguists observe, however, such a condition is not always sufficient to motivate the formation of a koiné. Certain sociolinguistic conditions, such as living and interacting together in the same community and having to unite in the face of a dominant group (in this case, anglos), must also exist. Although all of these requirements are met in the case of the Spanish that was brought to Los Angeles, the extremely subtle nature of the differences that their dialects underwent as the koineization process took place make it difficult to provide convincing evidence that the resulting dialect is, indeed a koiné. Consequently, linguists must consider employing another method to determine whether the phenomenon of LA Spanish could be a koiné. Stronger evidence in favor of the status of LA Spanish as a koiné stems from observations based on a radical change that took place in the demographic profile of Hispanic immigrants in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At this time large waves of Central Americans, primarily of Salvadoran, but also of Guatemalan, Honduran and Nicaraguan descent, began arriving in Los Angeles, fleeing the civil wars and

political unrest that were arising in their countries. Despite the geographical proximity of these countries to Mexico, the Central American Spanish that their citizens speak differs significantly from the *tierras altas* dialect spoken in Los Angeles, creating an ideal situation for observing the results of such dialect contact. Of particular interest is the linguistic behavior of the first generation[14] of Central American children born in Los Angeles. This is due to the fact that the final step of the koineization process is nativization, the acquisition of this variety as the first language of subsequent generations. Research done on precisely such subjects provides data to suggest that the Spanish they speak is a *tierras altas* variety of Mexican Spanish rather than the Central American dialects spoken by their parents. Not only do their phonetic and lexical production match those of other Spanish speakers born in LA, as opposed to that of their parents, but their language attitudes also coincide with those of LA Spanish speakers, a telling fact, considering such attitudes stigmatize the Spanish that their parents and other family members speak. Parodi explains that '…cuando los hablantes del español chicano están en contacto con hablantes procedentes de otros países de América Latina, les asignan a los dialectos de estos hablantes valores lingüísticos distintos de los que dominan entre los hablantes de español estándar monolingüe [when speakers of Chicano Spanish are in contact with speakers who come from other Latin American countries, they assign different linguistic valuations to these dialects than those that dominate among speakers of standard monolingual Spanish]' (2011: 223). Since the differences between the home dialect of such children and that spoken in Los Angeles are quite clear cut, the data obtained from a language attitude study could, theoretically, serve as a

[14] The linguistic behavior of the first generation of Spanish-speaking immigrants to be born in Los Angeles, most of which were, Mexicans is equally as significant as that of the first generation of Central Americans to be born in the new immigrant community when it comes to identifying LA Spanish as a koiné. The very subtle nature of the differences between the dialects of the first group and those of the second, however, have prevented most people from even considering the notion that a koiné could have been formed.

reliable diagnostic for situations of dialect contact and subsequent mixing. Furthermore, LAVS speakers' acceptance as normal of features of rural Mexican speech such as *haiga, naiden, fuistes,* etc. further distinguishes them from their monolingual standard Mexican speaking counterparts. While the aforementioned features are highly stigmatized among educated monolingual Mexicans, it should be noted that Spanish speakers raised in Los Angeles use them with no reservations (Parodi 2011: 224). This is true even of members of the middle and upper middle class who are highly educated in English. There are a number of phonetic features that occur in the regional Mexican dialects whose speakers have immigrated to Los Angeles that are not attested in LAVS. Among these we find the assibilated word-final [ŕ] and the loss of atonic vowels [e o] of Mexico City, the raised word-final mid vowels [e o] of Michoacan, and elimination of the nasal glide that often follows an /s/, such that *pues'n* becomes *pues* (Parodi 2014: 1541). All of these missing features, it must be noted, fall into Labov's classification of indicators—features that are identified by native speakers as indicative of a particular regional dialect but are not stigmatized at all (Labov 1972). Consequently, their absence from LA Spanish cannot be attributed to a lack of prestige. According to Parodi, this situation is easily explained by the concept of 'natural selection' as it is applied to dialects, by which 'ciertos rasgos dialectales se aceptan y otros se rechazan [certain dialectal features are accepted and others are rejected]'. (2011: 222). Since the aforementioned features do not form part of the dialects that had the greatest numbers of speakers and were first to arrive, they are more likely to be eliminated.

One of the primary criticisms the koineization perspective faces comes from proponents of the language loss perspective and other skeptics who believe that the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles is simply a transitional variety, with too much English influence to be considered a

variety of Spanish. At least two different types of linguistic evidence, however, can counter this claim. To begin with, there is ample data to demonstrate that the grammatical knowledge of LAVS speakers is neither deficient nor impaired in any way. Although as yet undocumented in formal linguistic studies, LAVS speakers are able to acquire standard monolingual Spanish with ease. This fact strongly suggests that the inconsistencies that they may present in terms of grammatical agreement, for instance, are simply that, inconsistent superficial realizations of their grammatical knowledge. If the concept of agreement were absent from their mental grammar, they would be unable to speak standard Spanish as easily as they do after being exposed to it for a relatively short amount of time. To put it in terms of Universal Grammar, the concept of agreement is present in the core grammar of a LAVS speaker but fails to be realized consistently in performance until the individual has been exposed to a monolingual variety of Spanish. Second, the pragmatic limitations that are also evident among LAVS speakers are not unlike those of uneducated speakers of rural monolingual Spanish. This type of knowledge, which is characterized as peripheral within the framework of Universal Grammar, is not innate to any native speaker of any variety, monolingual or bilingual, of a language and must be acquired in an educational institution. As LAVS is a nonstandard oral dialect that is not learned through formal instruction, it should not be surprising that its speakers may lack such knowledge.

1.5. SUMMARY. Taking into consideration the sociohistoric context of Los Angeles as a setting for dialect contact, it is clear that the language loss perspective of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles is unable to account for the phonetic features of this variety. Rather than being considered anglicized Spanish or a milestone on the way to language loss, there is much evidence to suggest that it is actually a rur-urban koiné, the result of leveling of various regional dialects of rural Spanish of central Mexico, which is now used in an urban setting. Our

understanding of the features that characterize this variety of Spanish is based in large part on the research conducted on SW Spanish, which focus on its preservation of so-called archaic features and the influence of English, as well as more recent studies that examine it from a koineization approach and expound upon its *tierras altas* phonetic features, attitudinal elements and use of Mexican vocabulary.

II. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will open with a discussion of the phenomenon of dialect contact and the situations that give rise to it. The two distinct but related outcomes of dialect acquisition and koineization will then be defined and described in detail, and theories accounting for them will be explored. Next, the data regarding dialect contact among children will be reviewed, as will the assumptions that inform the studies from which such information was obtained. This section will conclude with a three-part examination of the dialect contact that takes place among the Spanish-speaking population of the United States, in particular, that of Los Angeles. Opening with an overview of Spanish dialect contact in the United States, it features a detailed presentation of the complexities of the dialect contact situation among Spanish speakers in Los Angeles in particular and will end with a discussion of the ways in which this linguistic phenomenon can be examined using quantitative methodology.

2.1. DIALECT CONTACT. Common opinion, which is founded on the widespread understanding of a dialect as simply a linguistic subsystem, might lead one to discard as redundant the study of a phenomenon such as dialect contact, given the abundance of literature on the related topic of language contact. However, the assumption that dialect contact is basically language contact but on a much smaller scale, is incorrect. A careful comparison of the two phenomena reveals significant differences which will demonstrate the merit of studying dialect contact as an area of study in its own right. Not only the linguistic differences (e.g. dialects are mutually intelligible varieties while languages usually are not), but also the unique group dynamics that exist between speakers of different language varieties (intragroup competition but also intergroup unification

with respect to other ethnic groups) lead to phenomena that differ considerably from situations of contact among speakers of varieties that are not mutually intelligible.

The term dialect contact tends to summon up images of nebulous linguistic entities that have somehow happened to collide with one another in the vast cosmos of mutually intelligible language varieties. Adopting this view, it would appear that contact between two dialects of the same language could have a number of equally plausible results: dialect A could adopt features of dialect B, dialect B could take on features of dialect A, acquisition of features could be mutual or each could remain completely unaffected. Precisely which features are transferrable and details such as the order in which such a transaction takes place are assumed to be dictated by the natures of the linguistic subsystems of the dialects in question. It is believed that these are, in turn, determined by the fundamental properties that govern all linguistic systems. In real cases of dialect contact, however, none of the aforementioned results occurs. This is because dialects are always linked to the people who speak them, and it is not technically dialects that come into contact with one another, but rather, the speakers of said dialects. Recognizing this allows one to see that group dynamics play just as important a role as the principles that govern language when it comes to situations of linguistic contact. Not only are the systematic tendencies or inclinations of a language relevant, but also the characteristics of a group that compel conformity to their (linguistic) behavior. Dialect contact is a phenomenon that often arises as the result of immigration. As is clearly seen in the case of primarily Latin American Spanish speakers arriving in the large urban centers of New York, Miami and Los Angeles or in that of South Americans settling in Spain, for example, the social dynamics that develop among residents and newcomers can be complex. Sometimes characterized by internal conflict, these situations tend to be accompanied by dilemmas relating to issues of racial discrimination, education, and even

economic affairs that affect not only the immigrant groups in question but also the citizens of the wider surrounding area. Studying such a phenomenon and learning more about its linguistic and, in turn, social repercussions can benefit not only those groups directly involved in a situation of immigration but also the greater society.

2.1.1. DIALECT CONTACT AND ACCOMMODATION THEORY. Understanding the importance that social pressures play in this type of linguistic encounter requires embracing concepts from more socially-oriented disciplines, such as psychology, in order to attempt to explain or comprehend the outcomes of dialect contact situations. Howard Giles' accommodation theory offers a promising explanation to account for why certain features or groups of features may persist while others may be eliminated. Employing a logic that runs along the lines of the age-old saying that imitation is the highest form of flattery, Giles and Powesland maintain that a speaker modifies her speech to approximate that of her interlocutor in order to 'reduc[e] the dissimilarities between them,' thereby 'induc[ing the other] to evaluate [her] more favourably' (233). Accommodation theory is often employed in the study of dialect contact because immigration situations frequently lead to a need, on the part of the newcomers, to fit in. Just like the new kid at school who wants to avoid sounding different, it is assumed that newly-arrived immigrants change their way of speaking as part of a larger process of making themselves 'more acceptable' to those they address, be they future employers, coworkers, neighbors, prospective mates, friends, etc. The resulting linguistic convergence can be attributed to a desire of one group to establish unity at least on a superficial level. This theory of accommodation can also be inverted, and dialect divergence, the maintenance or even exaggeration of differences could be interpreted as indicative of a desire for one group to separate itself from another or establish a separate identity. As Otheguy and Zentella (2012) point out, probably the most well-known example of

such a case would be Labov's (1963) study of the English spoken in Martha's Vineyard, a small island off the coast of Massachusetts. Labov found that year-round Vineyarders pronounced vowels with a more open pronunciation in order to distinguish themselves from the summer tourists whose values and lifestyle differed greatly from their own. According to this reasoning, one would expect that the linguistic features that survive a dialect contact situation will be those that are found in the speech of the group whose social approval the other group desires. If neither group cared to be accepted or evaluated positively by members of the other, then it might be expected that the features used by each group are those that most differentiate one from another.

Existing literature on the topic of dialect contact has identified several different situations in which speakers of one variety may find themselves faced with those of another. The possible outcomes are often attributed to a speaker's desire to either associate or dissociate herself from her interlocutor, as well as the strength of norm enforcement mechanisms operating within said speaker's speech community. If she wants to maintain separation, the result is divergence, a phenomenon by which differences between the dialects in question are maintained or even exaggerated. Such a situation may give rise to stable multidialectalism of the type that obtains in Oaxaca, Mexico, in which many different dialects of indigenous languages such as Zapotec are maintained within a small area, distinguishing members of one village from another. The opposite, convergence, obtains when a speaker wants to be evaluated positively by his interlocutor. In this case, the nature of the contact and its scale are additional factors that will determine the outcome of a dialect contact situation. If an encounter is the result of contact between individuals that does not occur regularly and most likely will not be repeated, e.g. a conversation between a tourist and a local, the concept of short-term accommodation is employed 'to characterize an individual's modifications of accent and dialect as a direct response

to a particular interlocutor in a particular setting' (Chambers 1992: 675). As the name implies, this is 'transitory linguistic behavior' and is expected to disappear once an individual is no longer in the presence of the foreign interlocutor (Chambers 1992: 675). When the contact between individuals is regular, often the result of immigration, accommodation can become permanent and will occur regardless of the particular setting of an interaction. Referred to as long-term accommodation, this phenomenon consists of linguistic modifications that, although at first were made exclusively in the presence of an interlocutor of a different dialect, have now become internalized in an individual's speech and can no longer be suppressed. An example of changes of this nature would include a Spanish immigrant in Mexico who begins adopting seseo at first only in the presence of Mexicans but then ends up suppressing the distinction between /s/ and /ɵ/ with all interlocutors, not just Mexicans. Following the lead of Trudgill (1986), Chambers makes a qualitative distinction between short-term and long-term accommodation. He maintains that the latter, which can be considered accommodation, is essentially dialect acquisition. As evidence of such an affirmation he offers the observation that, when speaking with him in an informal setting, his six Canadian-born subjects produced some features of Southern England English (SEE). Assuming that these were features which the children could no longer suppress, one arrives at the conclusion that the linguistic modifications that were at first made exclusively in the presence of a SEE interlocutor have since become internalized and are now a permanent part of his subjects' speech.

It has also been argued that accommodation 'may not be in response to a particular interlocutor, but to images, or stereotypes, of the group the interlocutor belongs to' (Kerswill 2000). As Kerswill points out, this is the natural conclusion one will reach when considering the outcome of accommodation studies in which subjects modify their speech in the presence of a

speaker of a different dialect but fail to use the same features as their interlocutor. Gallois and Callan (1991) suggest that this is what occurs among immigrants, who 'may converge to a norm, or a perceived norm, in the new community' (248). As will be seen later on, this is an assumption that provides a convincing explanation for children's language use as reported in this dissertation.

Contact that occurs on a societal rather than an individual scale, can lead to the development of a compromise dialect, also known as a koiné. In his 1985 article 'Koines and koineization,' Siegel (1985) defines a koiné as 'the stabilized result of mixing of linguistic subsystems such as regional or literary dialects' that 'usually serves as a lingua franca among speakers of the different contributing varieties and is characterized by a mixture of features of these varieties and most often by reduction or simplification in comparison' (1985: 363). He further classifies koinés into two different types: immigrant koiné, which arise, as Kerswill and Williams (2000) explain, 'following the mass settlement of a rather sparsely populated area' (66), and regional koiné, 'where the new variety exists side by side with the contributing dialects' (66). An example of an immigrant koiné can be found in a situation such as that of the new towns, newly established communities in England that attract English-speaking immigrants from various regions of the country, all of whom are newcomers to the area (Kerswill and Williams 2000). As Siegel (1985) explains, the variety of Greek that developed as a result of mixture of the Attic dialect with 'many elements drawn from Ionic and some from other dialects' and later became the 'lingua franca of the Eastern Mediterranean' is an example of a regional koiné (358).

2.1.2. LINGUISTIC PHENOMENA RELATED TO KOINEIZATION. The process of koineization is believed to entail several linguistic phenomena, including mixing, leveling, reallocation and

simplification. As its name implies, mixing consists of the 'survival in the resultant koiné of features from different contributing varieties' (Tuten p. 328 from Trudgill's model). Due to the nature of language to eliminate redundancy as well as to the human tendency of a majority group to impose its ways on the few, mixing is often followed by a process of leveling. Dialect leveling occurs when features of a dialect that are considered marked or unusual are eliminated, usually in favor of those of the majority. The criteria that inform this process are often defined along both linguistic and social dimensions. Explaining why leveling occurs in one direction as opposed to another can be a complex and rather subjective matter. The features that undergo leveling are often those that are identified as marked, unusual or typologically rare. While one might expect markedness to be based on purely objective criteria, it is important to note that the definition of *markedness* will be relative, depending on factors related to the particular contact situation at hand such as size of the various groups and their levels of education and social class, among others. Furthermore, determinations of markedness can vary according to a number of linguistic factors including the style being used, the speed of speech, the context, be it phonetic, morphological, etc. For example, a pronunciation that is marked in slow, highly monitored speech, such as the realization of *preparado* as [pre.pa.'ra.øo], ceases to be so in rapid speech.

Leveling is another phenomenon that can form part of the koineization process. Dialect leveling can be conceived of as a type of linguistic 'evening out,' in which features that are less common with respect to the speech of a group that comprises the majority in a particular time and place are replaced, either wholly or partially, by those of the linguistic majority as opposed to coexisting with said features. It is important to note that leveling does not necessarily imply the complete loss of a feature. In fact, Hinskens (1998) states that 'dialect levelling may manifest itself as a statistically significant decrease in the use of features which distinguish a dialect from

surrounding dialects or from the standard language' (40). In his study of this process in a Limburg dialect of Dutch, Hinskens describes a Dutch province that 'has a terrace shaped dialect landscape' in which one finds three dialect areas, the features of which increase from west to east (37). Reallocation, according to Trudgill's model of koineization as explained in Tuten's article, 'occurs when more than one competing variant in the pre-koiné linguistic pool survives, but each with a different social or stylistic function' (Tuten 2001: 328).

Simplification is often defined following Trudgill's model, as 'an increase in regularity or an increase in morphological and lexical transparency' (Tuten 2001: 328). Examples of simplification, then, would include a large number of first language learners' attempts to make irregular forms fit into a regular paradigm, such as saying *goed* instead of *went* or *holded* rather than *held*. In the case of Spanish, parallel examples might include the addition of a morphological *–s* to the second person singular forms of the preterit, as in *comistes* and *hablastes* (cf. *comiste* and *hablaste*), which arise by analogy with the second person singular forms of the present, such as *comes and hablas*, which add an –s to the verb stem and thematic vowel. This definition, however, fails to specify in which parts of the grammar such increases in regularity can occur and to what extent they might occur. In this dissertation, I will employ Tuten's definition of simplification, a process which he describes as 'a limited reduction in inventories of units and rules in those areas of grammar which show variation in the different contributing dialects' (328). The limited reduction to which Tuten refers contrasts greatly with the definitions of reduction, an additional process that linguists like Muhlhausler included in their inventories of features common to koinés. By defining reduction as 'those processes that lead to a decrease in the referential or non-referential potential of a language' (Muhlhausler 1980, as cited in Tuten 2001), Muhlhausler was essentially allowing for the possibility that a koiné could be as

structurally deficient as a pidgin. As Tuten points out in his article 'Modeling Koineization,' such a misconception often stems from the claims of some linguists that pidginization and koineization are essentially parallel processes. Since structural reduction is a notable feature of pidgins, it is often assumed to characterize koinés as well. Tuten, however, argues that such reasoning is faulty, basing his claim on differences in the input received by pidgin speakers versus speakers of a koiné. While it is understood that pidgin learners are deprived of the rich input that would be provided by native speakers, Tuten explains that this is not the case for learners in a koineizing situation. Although the first speakers of a koiné will clearly lack access to native speakers of the new variety being developed, they will, nevertheless, receive linguistic input from the native speakers of their particular dialect, thus ensuring the development of a complete grammar, albeit not necessarily that of the koiné in question. As Tuten points out, nativization can occur at any point in the koineization process, and this ensures that subsequent generations will receive the input necessary to those who are acquiring a koiné.

Although certain linguistic criteria must be met in order to consider a linguistic variety a koiné, this is not a strictly linguistic concept. A koiné is also defined in terms of the social functions it fulfills, and koinehood is determined based on the particular social conditions that have given rise to the linguistic variety in question. In his definition of a koiné, Siegel (1985) specifies that, '[f]unctionally, a koiné serves as a lingua franca among speakers of the different varieties' (376). As a process that leads to the development of a compromise dialect, koineization necessarily requires the coincidence of speakers of different dialects in one location (cf Gambhir, Domingue). Such a situation may be attributed to 'certain political, social, economic or demographic changes which cause either increased interaction among speakers of various linguistic subsystems or decreased inclination to maintain linguistic distinctions' (Siegel 1985:

368). Socially motivated accounts for koineization tend to depend heavily on the concept of prestige, a highly abstract notion that is best defined as a type of positive value that is attributed to a social group or feature(s) of said group by another. The literature on this topic has identified the following factors as relevant when it comes to determining the prestige of an immigrant group: numerical majority, historical precedence, possession of desirable characteristics such as citizenship status, desirable physical characteristics (e.g. lighter skin color, finer features), prestige in the home country, and the economic niche that they occupy in the new country (e.g. agricultural work manual labor vs. service jobs). As will be seen later on in this chapter, the impact of these aforementioned factors often overrides that of the social evaluations assigned to linguistic features in their countries of origin. Speech characteristics that are widely accepted in one's home country may prove the object of ridicule in the new setting and vice versa.

Social network theory has also been applied to the koineization process in order to account for the possibility of accommodation in the first place. As Tuten (2001) explains, 'if immigrants to a mixed community maintain close-knit social networks and strong ties, norm enforcement within group will remain strong as well, and what will result is not koineization but rather stable multilingualism or multidialectalism. For koineization to occur, conservative social networks must break down and weak ties predominate; speakers may then begin to interact, accommodate, and alter their speech' (329). The importance of these close-knit ties cannot be overstated, given that 'a close social network assures close adherence to established norms and thus more frequent and consistent input for child learners' (Tuten 330).

2.2. DIALECT CONTACT AMONG CHILDREN. It has long been observed that children demonstrate the greatest success in acquiring a second dialect of their native language. There are numerous anecdotes, for instance, of children who pick up the pronunciation and lexical complexities of a

new variety with greater ease than their parents. More importantly, however, are the systematic linguistic studies of such phenomena that indicate that, among immigrants, an important factor in predicting the success of dialect acquisition is age of exposure. As Siegel (2010) explains, research on second dialect acquisition indicates that the youngest acquirers use the highest percentage of second dialect features and have the highest proportion of speakers to reach native-like levels of second dialect characteristics (84). Age, however, does not seem to be the only relevant factor. Interaction with one's peer group, as is seen is the studies below, is crucial as well.

In a developmental study Chambers (1992) examines both the lexical and phonological features of six Canadian English speaking subjects who have moved to South Eastern England. Using data collected from interviews spaced two years apart, he develops a set of principles of dialect acquisition relating to the sequence and velocity of the adoption of certain types of rules, as well as the influence that particular attributes of a speaker have on the accommodation process. With respect to lexical acquisition he finds that, 'Lexical replacements are acquired faster than pronunciation and phonological variants' (677). Here Chambers makes an important distinction between pronunciation variants, identified as 'individual words that are the same in both dialect variants but sound different,' and phonological variants, which he defines as 'rule-governed or systematic phonetic differences in the two dialect areas such that whole sets of lexical items are affected' (677). Thus, he found that his subjects more speedily made lexical changes like replacing Canadian English (CE) *braid* with Southeastern English (SEE) *plait* than they did phonetic changes like pronouncing *half* as [hɑf], like SEE speakers, or than articulating all medial /t/s as /d/s in certain phonetic contexts, as dictated by the SEE rule of T-voicing. Furthermore, the aforementioned lexical replacements occur quickly at first but then slow down

noticeably, suggesting that the dialect acquisition process occurs in two stages, ‘end[ing] up at roughly the same point’ (682). According to Chambers, it seems that ‘dialect acquirers make most of the lexical replacements they will make in the first two years’ (1992: 679).

The complexity of rules plays an important role in the principles Chambers outlines, as does the difference between their status as categorical or variable. Not surprisingly, ‘[s]imple phonological rules progress faster than complex ones’ (682). Chambers defines as complex those rules that either have ‘exceptions or variant forms’ or whose output includes ‘a new or additional phoneme’ (682). Acquisition of such rules, he states, separates his subjects into two groups: early and late acquirers. The fact that this division exists is further supported by differences in the ages of the dialect acquirers, resulting in the following generalization (insert note: results for children between 7 and 14 vary and Payne has evidence that not only age but also other factors such as parents’ place of birth are significant): ‘A person seven or under will almost certainly acquire a new dialect perfectly, and a person 14 or over almost certainly will not’ (689). Regarding the earliest stages of acquisition, Chambers affirms that ‘both categorical rules and variable rules of the new dialect result in variability in the acquirers’ (691). As he explains, this principle posits that those adopting the new dialect will undergo a stage of variability, even when acquiring categorical rules. Using as an example the categorical rule in SEE of R-lessness, in which non-prevocalic /r/ is eliminated in words like *summer* and *birthday*, Chambers compares the pronunciation of his six subjects with those of an English control group of comparable age and gender. Whereas the SEE speaking children eliminate non-prevocalic /r/ 100% of the time, his Canadian subjects ‘have variant forms’ (691). Similar results are found when contrasting the children’s application of the variable rule Intrusive /r/, ‘which inserts an [ɹ] epenthetically between vowels at a word boundary or internal juncture’ (692). Chambers further notes that this

principle leads one to hypothesize that the coexistence of lexical variants, such as *plait* and *braid*, clearly a case of lexical variability, would precede the categorical replacement of one with the other, and this is attested in his data. Such results lead him to conclude that '[t]he new lexical items do not eradicate the old ones but can co-exist beside them in the mental lexicon' (693).

The last three of Chambers' principles relate to the linguistic mechanisms underlying the acquisition of the rules of the new dialect. With regard to sound changes, he states that, 'Phonological innovations are actuated as pronunciation variants' (693). This affirmation, based on the results from picture-card elicitations, is not at all surprising given that it is basically a version of the theory of lexical diffusion which states that sound changes obtain first in single words and then spread in a systematic manner throughout an individual's speech 'after a critical mass of instances have been acquired' (693). While the number of subjects on which the data supporting this principle is based is small, the support it gains from its similarity to such a widespread linguistic theory lends it greater credibility. Chambers also affirms that 'eliminating old rules occurs more rapidly than acquiring new ones' (695). Beginning by categorizing a phonological process in terms of either absence of a feature of the old dialect or presence of a rule characteristic of the new one, he finds that his Canadian subjects score higher (i.e. make more replacements) when it comes to eliminating features of CE than acquiring phonological characteristics of SEE (697). The final principle Chambers sets forth is relevant only in the case of standard dialects since they contrast the written representation of words with their pronunciation. He states that, 'Orthographically distinct variants are acquired faster than orthographically obscure ones' (698). He bases this affirmation on the fact that his subjects acquired phonological rules that are reflected in spelling changes such as the elimination of T-voicing, as represented in words like *city* or *forty*, which are written with a /t/ rather than /d/,

much more quickly than they acquired R-lessness, which is contradicted by the spelling of words such as *summer* and *birthday*.

One aspect of the dialect acquisition process that Chambers discusses only in passing is that of the social mechanisms that lead children to make the necessary accommodation in the first place. In other words, he barely touches on the question of *why* it is that these children have made such changes in their speech. Rather than an oversight on his part, this failure to examine such mechanisms with any great detail is due mainly to the fact that dialect contact studies tend to focus on the acquisition of standard dialects and, with very few exceptions, fail to explore the unique challenges involved in situations involving oral, nonstandard dialects. Especially in the case of the social mechanisms that compel speakers to acquire a new dialect, such an omission becomes significant. This is evident in Chambers' treatment of such a topic. He fails to explore it at all not because he deems it irrelevant or uninteresting but because he assumes that the peer pressure encountered in the schools is the motivating factor. Such an assumption fails to hold for nonstandard dialects, however, given that these are not learned in formal academic settings. The question of *why* child speakers of nonstandard oral dialects accommodate to a new linguistic variety is consequently left unanswered.

As observed by Kerswill and Williams (2000) and, prior to them, by Ervin-Tripp (1973), children tend undergo a process of sociolinguistic maturation as they grow older, by which they orient their speech to various groups, most notably, their peers. Beginning in 1980, Arvilla Payne carried out research with children ages 2 to 13 years old of 12 families that had been transplanted to the King of Prussia neighborhood of Philadelphia from other parts of the United States in order to determine whether a child would 'learn to speak like his peers or retain the system learned from his parents,' she examined the acquisition of five phonetic variables. Independent

variables whose effects she analyzed included neighborhood blocks (reflecting various residential patterns), family type (local vs. out-of-state born children) and age of arrival. Payne chose to gather data from children of three different types of families in order to control for parent versus peer influence. She was able to do so by contrasting the speech of locally born children whose parents were also locally born with that of locally born children whose parents were born abroad. If a child born locally to parents born abroad produced a King of Prussia feature, which was absent from the parents' linguistic repertoire, she would know that it was the result of peer influence. Her results revealed that 'children are strongly influenced by their peers even when parental influence is maximal' (157).

More recent studies such as Tagliamonte & Molfenter (2007) and Starks and Bayard (2002) provide additional insight relating to the role of peer influence in children's acquisition of two different dialects of English. Acknowledging that children in immigration situations seem to be 'the only sector of the population capable of' adapting to the linguistic rules of the new community, they seek to better understand how children accomplish this (Tagliamonte and Molfenter 2007: 650). Examining the effect of education on the process of rule acquisition in previous studies, they note that 'parental influence diminishes when children enter school,' an observation that suggests that the parents' influence is replaced by that of peers (664).Their case study of /t/ voicing among three children over the age of six demonstrated that children's' use of the new variants increased in frequency over time and that the higher frequencies observed correlated with 'well-defined, culturally embedded milestones,' such as 'going to school and interacting with one's own siblings' (672). Tagliamonte and Molfenter (2007) conclude the article by stating that their results 'provide strong support for the ideas that successful second dialect acquisition […] is a direct consequence of sustained access to and integration with the

local speech community' (672). As these same researchers note, Starks and Bayard's (2002) study of four children who were born and raised in New Zealand to North-American born parents found that 'the earlier the children were enrolled in daycare, the more successful they were in acquiring New Zealand English' (2007: 653). To summarize, both articles strongly suggest that the interaction that children have with peers in school is a determining factor in their acquisition of new linguistic rules.

2.3. SPANISH DIALECT CONTACT IN THE UNITED STATES. Compared to studies on language contact between English and Spanish in the United States, studies on dialect between different varieties of Spanish in this setting are rather scarce. Interest in this topic, however, is growing, and the existing studies can be classified according to region as well as to the dimension of language use being researched—lexical, phonological, syntactic—and the nature of the contact involved. Although most studies focus on the contact that takes place between the dialect spoken in the home and that spoken in the greater Hispanic community, researchers are now looking into interfamilial dialect contact among families of mixed national origins. Research on dialect contact throughout the United States has focused almost exclusively on large urban areas. On the east coast, New York City has been the principal setting where this phenomenon has been researched (Otheguy and Zentella 2012; Zentella 1990). Studies in the Midwest have been carried out primarily in Chicago (Potowski 2008, 2011) and Ramos-Pellicia (2004) has conducted research in Lorain, Ohio. West of the Mississippi, studies of the dialect contact situation have been centered on Los Angeles (Parodi 2003, 2004, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Raymond 2012a; Villarreal 2012) and Houston (Lipski 1986a; Hernández 2009; Aaron and Hernández 2007), with a portion also conducted in Oregon and Washington (Woods and Rivera-Mills

2012). Differences in the national origin of the Spanish speakers comprising the Hispanic

population in each of these regions are evident both in subjects' national heritage as well as the outcomes observed. While the east coast Spanish-speaking community consists mainly of a Caribbean majority and a Mexican minority, Mexicans are the most populous group in both the Midwest and the West. On the west coast, Central Americans comprise the second largest group after Mexicans.

One of the main questions that arises with respect to the phenomenon of dialect contact in metropolitan areas like Los Angeles and New York, whose Spanish-speaking population is extremely diverse, is whether the relevant dialects maintain their linguistic autonomy or whether they are undergoing leveling processes and/or forming koinés. As will be seen shortly, the most recent studies in each of these regions indicate differing results.

Zentella and Otheguy's (2012) *Spanish in New York* presents the results of a quantitative study of dialect contact among Caribbeans (Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans) and Mainlanders (Colombians, Mexicans, and Ecuadorians) in New York City. Focusing primarily on the use of personal pronouns but also the pronunciation of coda /s/, Zentella and Otheguy examined the evidence for dialect leveling. Overall results indicated that region was the most important factor in accounting for differences in pronoun rates among subjects, and the authors stated that New York Spanish was 'a continuation of regionally differentiated usage of the Spanish of the Caribbean and the Latin American Mainland' (139). Within each regional group, however, different patterns emerged. While Caribbeans were found to be more homogenous and stable, Mainlanders were more heterogeneous, and differences among their pronoun rates provided evidence of dialectal leveling. In spite of the variation in pronoun use, especially among the New York-raised population, the authors conclude that these speakers' grammatical

knowledge of Spanish (in terms of pronoun use) is not different than that of monolinguals. In their closing discussion of the situation in New York and, Zentella and Otheguy offer some explanations as to why language contact seems to be more influential a factor than dialect leveling. To begin with, they point out that newly-arrived Spanish speakers have constant contact with English, both as the result of interaction with monolingual English speakers and bilingual Spanish speakers. They also claim that, while language contact is an internal phenomenon that involves a rearranging of the features of one's own bilingual competence, dialect contact is primarily external because it requires the adoption of new features (those of other dialects) rather than any type of reorganization of existing characteristics.

In another New York-based study, Zentella (1990) analyzed differences in the lexical production of Spanish speakers of four different nationalities: Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Colombians. Interested in determining whether one particular dialect was preferred or whether speakers of one dialect either used or had passive knowledge of the terms used by another, she asked nearly 200 subjects to participate in a lexical identification task in which they provided the word they used to refer to the object in question as well as those used by speakers of other dialects. Zentella (1990) found that there were few cases of words that were used by members of three or more groups. In the case of more than half of the words, each group either used its own word or one group would prefer a different word. In some cases, results were due to linguistic factors such as frequency, semantic weight, the desire to avoid ambiguity due to homonyms. Findings also indicated, however, that social variables like race and social class were at play. This was particularly evident in the data which showed that Dominicans, the group that experienced the most racial discrimination and that was the most economically disadvantaged, 'produced the most words that the other groups did not mention at all' (Potwoski 2011: 582).

Research focusing on dialect contact between Mexicans and Salvadorans, has centered on the western cities of Los Angeles and Houston, the two metropolises of the United States that have the highest Salvadoran populations: 358,825 and 123,049[15] respectively (US Census Bureau 2010). In both situations of dialect contact, Mexicans comprise the majority population, in addition to being the group with the longest history in the area, and findings indicate that Salvadorans accommodate to the speech of this long-established group. The first linguistic studies of this phenomenon are based on informal observations that Salvadorans raised in Los Angeles lack the typical Salvadoran aspiration of syllable-final /s/ and velarization of syllable-final /n/ and, in addition to avoiding the use of *voseo*, stigmatize use of this feature. Subsequent studies carried out in this region of Southern California are based on data obtained from a corpus of hour-long sociolinguistic interviews with Salvadorans of various generations who currently reside in the Los Angeles area. Hypothesizing that Salvadorans acquire a unique Los Angeles variety of Spanish natively, Parodi analyzes a combination of social and linguistic features of these speakers in efforts to identify factors that favor acquisition of LAVS. Parodi's (2004) article titled 'Contacto de dialectos en Los Ángeles: español chicano y español salvadoreño' presents a description of three major factors that affect its acquisition: one biological, another, sociological and yet another, psychological. The biological factor is the age of exposure. All of the subjects of Central American descent who speak LA Spanish are either born in the area or arrive before the age of eight (Parodi 2004: 283-4). Such a conclusion is not surprising given the fact that other linguists have identified age eight as the limit of the critical period for dialect acquisition (Chambers 1992; Krashen 1975). The sociological factor Parodi identifies is that of

[15] The figures provided here are for Los Angeles County, in which the city of Los Angeles is located, and Harris County, home to Houston.

interaction with the Hispanic community of Los Angeles, which speaks the dialect in question. The importance of such interaction can be seen in the case of both individual informants who grow up in non-Hispanic communities and fail to acquire the dialect, as well as entire groups, such as Cubans or Argentines, 'que suelen vivir en zonas de la ciudad separadas de los demás hispanos. En estos casos, la primera generación de hablantes no habla español chicano, sino el español del grupo al que pertenece, por ejemplo el cubano o el argentino' (Parodi 1999b: 926). The third factor which plays a pivotal role in whether or not a child learns LA Spanish is that of attitude towards Chicanos and their way of speaking. Those individuals who view the dialect and its speakers in a negative light tend to resist the process of dialect acquisition that naturally takes place and rather preserve the speech of their parents' country of origin (Parodi 2004: 289).

Additional studies that Parodi conducted on Salvadoran-Mexican dialect contact examine subjects' knowledge of Salvadoran vocabulary. A group of subjects half of whom were of Mexican descent and half of whom were of Salvadoran descent and further differentiated in terms of generation (half of first and half of second) were presented with a word list of 20 Salvadoran lexical items. Results demonstrated that, while first generation Salvadorans knew all of the words, those members of the second generation gradually lost such lexical knowledge, presumably due to replacement by Mexican words (Parodi 2011: 228).

In the Houston studies, the main features examined consist of realizations of two phonemes, syllable-final /s/ and syllable-final /n/, and the use of morphological *voseo*. A study conducted by Aaron and Hernandez (2007) investigates /s/ reduction by examining data obtained from 12 sociolinguistic interviews. Their findings indicate that the most significant factors in determining /s/ reduction are phonological context and subjects' age of arrival. In another study, Hernandez (2009) analyzed the effect of in-group versus out-group interviewers on variation in

production of word-final nasals in three Salvadoran corpora: Salvadorans in San Sebastián, El Salvador, in a Mexican barrio of Houston and in a Salvadoran Houston neighborhood. Salvadorans from the Houston Salvadoran neighborhood exhibited higher frequencies of velarization, resembling those of their compatriots in San Sebastián. A comparison of the two Houston corpora revealed lower rates or nasal velarization in the Mexican neighborhood, indicating accommodation to the out-group interviewer.

2.4. DIALECT CONTACT IN LOS ANGELES

2.4.1. LINGUISTIC ACCOMMODATION IN LOS ANGELES. Accommodation theory is best suited to account for those situations in which the group whose speech is accommodated to possesses certain social characteristics that are desirable to the newcomers and, furthermore, motivate the latter to seek the approval of the former. In the case of Los Angeles, LAVS speakers, who comprise the more established Mexican-origin population, exhibit a number of characteristics that make them the Spanish speakers to which others accommodate. The first and probably most important of these is its size. Mexicans are by far the largest group of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles, 3,510,677, according to 2010 Census data (US Census Bureau 2010). Apart from Census figures, the strong Mexican presence in Los Angeles is evident in the Spanish-language media available in the area, most of which broadcasts radio and television programming in either LAVS or standard Mexican Spanish (Parodi 2009b: 59; 2009a: 4-5). In addition to constituting the largest group of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles, the Mexican origin population has the longest history of residing in the area. As mentioned previously, even if one leaves aside the Californios (descendants of the original Spanish-speaking settlers prior to 1850), Mexicans are without a doubt the group with the greatest seniority, the first group of immigrants having arrived in the first decade of the twentieth century. As in other parts of the country, many

Mexicans have carved out an occupational niche for themselves in the construction business. While more recently-arrived Mexicans and Central Americans have followed suit and found employment performing this and other types of manual labor, it is important to note that the leaders of these groups are most often Mexicans of second generation or beyond. The Mexicans who have been born and raised in Los Angeles have the additional advantage of being United States citizens and of having a better command of English than do foreign-born Spanish speakers of any country. Familiarity with American institutions, policies and culture also provides them with valuable knowledge that allows them access to jobs and education which will allow them to climb socially. Parodi explains that eliminating non-Mexican features while adopting Mexican *tú*, vocabulary and expressions 'es resultado de la necesidad de supervivencia económica, pues el español chicano no sólo goza de prestigio en la comunidad hispana de clase trabajadora en Los Ángeles, sino que quien lo habla tiene movilidad y aceptación social en dicha comunidad' (2009b: 57).

In addition to comprising the minority with respect to Mexicans, Central Americans arrived in Los Angeles in large numbers relatively recently, beginning in the early 1980s. Although a considerable quantity of them have completed high school and even higher education in their countries of origin, their limited English skills and, in some cases, undocumented status, usually restrict them to jobs involving manual labor. This situation, especially during times of economic hardship, has led to competition between Central Americans and Mexicans for the same jobs. As the newcomers who have little in common with Mexicans apart from a common language, Central Americans comprise the minority and find themselves adapting not only to Mexicans' different tastes in music and food in addition to their pronunciation and use of phrases like *órale*, *ándale pues*, etc. This phenomenon is well documented in sociolinguistic interviews

that form part of Parodi's (2009b) study on dialect contact (57). Several Salvadorans report consciously adjusting their speech to the *tierras altas* variety spoken in Los Angeles in order to avoid teasing and ridicule while on the job, usually from fellow construction workers. Parodi explains that this occurs because in familial contexts and among working class Hispanics or latinos, 'el español chicano como variante étnica tiene mayor prestigio [Chicano Spanish as an ethnic variety has greater prestige]' (2011: 239).

Further support for employing accommodation theory when studying LAVS is found in some additional social and linguistic conditions that have not yet been mentioned. The large size as well as historical presence of LAVS speakers in Los Angeles creates a situation that undoubtedly favors the development of a situation in which one group is seen as more desirable to belong to than another. Two other social factors, however, play just as significant a role in this process: the continuous immigration of Spanish speakers and the rivalry that exists between Spanish and other languages, in particular, English. Especially in light of the language loss that is attested beginning in the second generation of a family, the constant influx of Spanish speakers leads to a situation in which Spanish is maintained, perhaps not at the family level, but certainly at the level of the community. Considering in particular the economic need that often motivates immigration to a city like Los Angeles, the dynamics that result between locals and immigrants develop in such a way that the newcomers possess little prestige in their new home. In addition to being significantly outnumbered by their established neighbors of Mexican descent who have greater historical roots in Los Angeles, recent Central American immigrants have little seniority in the region, lack familiarity with the culture and customs of their new host country, often speak little or no English and arrive with little money and often no job. For all of these reasons, they are obliged to adapt to the Los Angeles way of speaking and not the other way around.

Moreover, the rivalry that exists between English and Spanish in Los Angeles leads to the phenomenon of stable bilingualism.

The variety of Spanish that is used in the media, both written and spoken, also incorporates many of the features that are included in the inventory of LAVS features, particularly those of the phonetic and lexical dimensions. Referred to by Parodi as the ESTÁNDAR NATURAL or natural standard, it is employed in local newspapers and on local Spanish language radio stations (2009a: 5). This variety, she explains, shares some but not all of the features of LAVS, and is used by radio program hosts who contrast its use with that of monolingual standard Mexican Spanish in order to establish solidarity with a caller or to facilitate communication with a Los Angeles-raised interlocutor. Such speakers also use it, she finds, when focusing on topics related to Hispanics in Los Angeles or Southern California, as opposed to those having to do with Mexican politics, news or culture. Consequently, immigrants encounter many of the features of LAVS in the local media. As a result, Parodi explains that they 'empiezan a agregar e incluso a sustituir algunos elementos léxicos característicos de su habla regional por términos más comunes del vernáculo californiano [begin to add some of the more common terms of the Californian vernacular and even to substitute them for some lexical characteristics of their regional speech] ' (2009a: 7).

When one examines the evidence regarding the language attitudes of Spanish-speaking native Angelenos, it appears that they accommodate their evaluations of linguistic features as well as their speech production. LAVS speakers differ from those of monolingual standard Mexican Spanish in their stigmatization of *tierras bajas* features, *voseo* and use of some lexical items in particular, and also in their acceptance of features of rural speech, such as use of *haiga, mesmo* and *naiden.* This restructuring of values derives not only from the fact that the majority

of the Mexican population in California hailed from rural areas of central Mexico and often lacked the formal education that would have led them to stigmatize such speech, but also because subsequent immigrant groups, whether of Mexican or Central American origin, also used these rural features. With regard to evaluations assigned to *voseo* or regional lexical items of Central American Spanish, like *bicho* for *child*, it should be noted that such features are linguistic markers for speakers of monolingual standard Mexican Spanish.[16] That is, they serve to identify an individual as a speaker of a different variety of Spanish but are not accompanied by negative associations. Similar to the difference between the use of the words *pop* and *soda* in various parts of the United States, the use of one or the other is neither good nor bad, but simply different. Such attitudes lead to an intolerance of certain features of Central American Spanish, making them ripe for leveling, while at the same time preserving other features, those of a rural nature, which would otherwise be replaced by standard features of monolingual Spanish.

2.4.2. MOTIVATION FOR DISSERTATION. This dissertation is motivated by a desire to provide quantitative and qualitative data that can advance our knowledge of the Spanish spoken by children in Los Angeles and begin to explore the dialect contact phenomena that shape it. By treating this linguistic as a variety that is the outcome of natural linguistic processes, as well as by focusing solely on features particular to Spanish (as opposed to those attributed to contact with English), I hope to provide some data that will serve as a foundation for future studies of greater depth interested in exploring children's acquisition of Spanish in Los Angeles. My primary goal is to determine some of the principal phonetic, lexical and attitudinal characteristics

[16] This may not be the case in parts of Mexico that border with Guatemala where there is much more intense and prolonged contact with Central Americans. To my knowledge there are no studies on this topic and it is a promising area for future research.

of Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles and the effect that their home dialect classification and school neighborhood might have on these. By using a large number of subjects from several different regions of Los Angeles, I hope to obtain quantitative and qualitative data that will be generalizable to young Spanish-speaking Angelenos as a whole. This research is also driven by the desire to understand better the reasons why these children use the dialect features that they do. In particular, I am interested in examining the possibility that these children may accommodate linguistically to a stereotype or norm, as posited by Gallois and Callan, who claim that immigrants speakers may converge to a norm or a perceived norm in the new community' (1991: 248). I will do this by creating a situation in which the subjects speak with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown to them, one that can be achieved if the individual with whom they are interacting speaks to them in English rather than Spanish. It is expected that, short of carrying out ethnographic research, a study of this design will provide data that most accurately reflects the dialect features that occur in the speech of these young subjects when they are not under experimental conditions. Moreover, the speech they produce in this particular situation is anticipated to reflect what they consider to be the linguistic norm of their community. This is due not only to the fact that they do not know what dialect their interlocutor speakers, as well as to the school setting in which the recordings are made and the somewhat controlled nature of the linguistic tasks. If the subjects' linguistic production and evaluations converge with those of LAVS-speaking adults, regardless of the type of dialect to which they are exposed in the home, we would expect to find few to no differences between the speech of, say, a child of Mexican origin and one of Salvadoran heritage, when in the presence of a speaker whose dialect is unknown. It is anticipated that children of both Mexican and Salvadoran heritage will converge

with LAVS speakers as opposed to speakers of *tierras bajas* dialects since LAVS is considered the prestige variant among members of the Hispanic community (Parodi 2009a: 8).

Previous studies on dialect accommodation have only investigated whether convergence with linguistic production has taken place. However, there is another aspect to linguistic convergence that may also prove useful in analyzing children's convergence with LAVS speakers: linguistic evaluation. As seen in the description of LAVS features in the previous chapter, speakers of said variety differ greatly from those of Central American Spanish in terms of the social evaluations that they assign to *tierras bajas* pronunciation, and the lexicon and morphology of Central American Spanish. Given the potential that these differences that have as diagnostics of LAVS speakers, it becomes necessary to include them in this study by expanding the concept of linguistic convergence to embrace evaluation as well as production. Furthermore, there have been few detailed descriptive studies done on the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles, especially with regard to children, the most notable being Phillips' 1967 dissertation titled 'Los Angeles Spanish: A Descriptive Analysis,' and Lastra de Suarez's 1975 article 'El habla y la educación de los niños de origen mexicano en Los Angeles.' The work presented in this dissertation not only provides a much-needed updated description of the Spanish spoken by Angeleno children, but it also does so with three times the number of subjects.

2.5. Design for Research on Dialect Contact in Los Angeles

2.5.1. POSSIBLE SETTINGS FOR CONTACT. One of the most basic tasks that need to be completed even before beginning to design research on dialect contact is identifying where the relevant contact might take place. As discussed earlier, Los Angeles is an area characterized by organization into ethnic enclaves in which Hispanics are further divided by nationality, Central Americans clustering together in certain locations and Mexicans concentrating in others although

dispersed throughout the greater metropolitan area. In a situation such as this, in which neighbors and family could all be Central American, it appears possible that children of Central American immigrants could spend the formative years of their lives exposed to primarily Central American varieties of Spanish. The question then arises where would a Salvadoran child, for instance, come into contact with peers who speak LAVS? The obvious choice would be the school, as was found in studies of acquisition of various dialects of English. Although some may object to this suggestion on grounds that Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles speak mainly English in the classroom, several observations can be made. To begin with, the socialization that takes place in the school setting is not limited to what goes on within the four walls of a classroom. There are plenty of occasions throughout the school day during which their language use is not monitored including before school, during lunch and recess periods and after school. Research conducted on the playground of a Los Angeles area public elementary school over the course of a school year demonstrated that children did indeed speak Spanish on the playground (Villarreal 2012). In schools such as the one where the observations were conducted, which have high populations of Hispanics, it is common for the staff, including yard supervisors, to consist of members of the local community, often Spanish-speaking women who have been raised in Los Angeles. Definitely Spanish-dominant, these women tended to speak to the children in Spanish as opposed to English, leading to a greater presence of Spanish on the playground. It should also be noted that more recently-arrived children who truly lack the ability to communicate in English do use Spanish with their classmates, leading bilingual children who would normally prefer English to help their classmates adapt to their new environments. Both of these groups, the Spanish-speaking yard staff and bilingual children, generally consist of LAVS speakers. For a large population of children attending public schools in LA, time spent at school does not end

when the bell rings to dismiss class. This is because they are enrolled in after school programs and often stay until their parents or other family members pick them up around 6 pm. As on the playground, their language use is not monitored during such programs and children do use Spanish with one another. Younger children do so more than the older ones. Although they may not speak much Spanish during more structured academic activities in which they are performing tasks in English, they do use it among themselves at the end of the day, while they are waiting for their parents to pick them up. To summarize, children in Los Angeles public schools do speak Spanish amongst one another outside of the classroom, mainly on the playground or during after school programs. The need to communicate with both adults, like yard supervisors, and recently-arrived children who have not yet learned English, creates situations in which English-dominant children find it necessary to speak Spanish. Consequently it is quite likely that Central American children are exposed to LAVS in the school setting. This data also reinforces an important observation which is emphasized frequently throughout this dissertation, which is the fact that Spanish in Los Angeles is not confined to the home setting but, rather, is used in a variety of settings throughout the community.

2.5.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS. The general research questions motivating this study are the following: What are the main phonetic, lexical and attitudinal characteristics of the Spanish spoken by children raised in Los Angeles? Do these differ with regard to the child's home dialect classification and that of the peers with which they come into contact in the schools? In order to conduct a large-scale quantitative study that will make it possible to answer these questions in a systematic manner and attempt to better understand the phenomena motivating these children's dialect use, my specific research question is the following: Do Spanish-speaking children in Los

Angeles, regardless of national origin, converge with LAVS speakers, as opposed to Central American Spanish speakers, when talking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown? Answering this question will both help characterize the Spanish these children speak and provide data regarding what they consider to be the norms of linguistic behavior in their community. Since the researcher will speak only English to the subjects, resulting in a situation that precludes the possibility of short-term accommodation, it is assumed that they will accommodate to what they believe to be the norm for linguistic behavior in their community, according to the assertion of Gallois and Callan (1991). In order to make the study more manageable in terms of identifying the sample of subjects, the number of national origins will be limited to two: Mexican and Salvadoran.

Secondary questions that I will explore relate to the role of the public school setting in this process. As seen in the previous section, there is ample evidence to justify exploring the role of this environment as it relates to the dialect use of young Spanish speaking Angelenos. Given the importance that peer influence has been shown to have on dialect use and acquisition, I am interested in examining the effects of this particular factor in schools whose majority populations differ with respect to national origin. In other words, will the linguistic features employed by children in schools with a mainly Mexican population differ from those of students attending schools with a primarily Central American population? The national origin and generation of such students would also be determining factors in the outcome of the aforementioned situations. One would expect a first generation Salvadoran child in a school with mainly Salvadoran students, for instance, to be less likely to use LAVS in this situation than would the same child in a mainly Mexican school. What would happen, however, if there was a second generation Salvadoran child in a mainly Salvadoran school? Would the generational influence be greater

than that of peer nationality or would it be the other way around? These are additional questions that I hope to answer.

2.5.3. HYPOTHESES. It is hypothesized that children converge with the linguistic production and evaluations of LAVS speakers when speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown, regardless of their home dialect classification. This being a quantitative study, it becomes necessary to state this hypothesis and other alternative hypotheses in statistical terms. The hypothesis proposed here is that Salvadoran children converge with LAVS speakers in a situation in which their interlocutor's dialect is unknown. The converse of this hypothesis, referred to as the null hypothesis in statistics, would be that no such convergence takes place, i.e. that Salvadoran children maintain the *tierras bajas* features of their parents' country of origin, diverging from the speech of their classmates of Mexican origin. To summarize, then, the hypotheses proposed in this dissertation are the following:

H_1 = Salvadoran children converge with LAVS speakers when in the presence of an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown.

H_0 = Salvadoran children do not converge with LAVS speakers but rather produce Spanish that employs features of their parents' Central American dialects when in the presence of an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown.

With regard to the interaction between the school's neighborhood, the child's national origin and the child's generation, it is hypothesized that the greatest amount of difference in convergence with LAVS speakers will exist between a second generation child of Mexican origin attending a school with a mainly Mexican population and a first generation child of

Salvadoran origin who goes to school where the population is primarily Central American. Any hypotheses relating to the order of significance of factors like generation, nationality and school neighborhood would be mere speculation.

2.5.4. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING LAVS FEATURES. The particular features chosen for this dissertation were selected based on the following three criteria: 1) representativeness of the LA Spanish variety, 2) difference with respect to *tierras bajas* features and 3) practicality in terms of eliciting features and detecting them, as well as of the time commitment required to collect and analyze the resulting linguistic data. Great effort was also made to assess children's dialect use along several different dimensions. Previous studies regarding similar phenomena among English-speaking children focused on the production of phonological features, mainly vocalic, as well as lexical characteristics. Due to the lack of quantitative information regarding specific features of LA Spanish, several assumptions had to be made as to which of these are the most representative of this variety. The decisions made were guided by data collected by Parodi in several sets of sociolinguistic interviews with informants who were raised in Los Angeles in addition to being born in said city or arriving in it before the age of 8. Of the LA Spanish phonological features that were included in the analyses, pronunciation of syllable-final /s/ and syllable-final /n/ as [s], the oral, voiceless, predorsodental fricative and [n], the nasal alveolar consonant, respectively, were two characteristics that were consistent in the speech of all informants, regardless of their parents' country of origin. The great contrast between *tierras altas* [s] and *tierras bajas* realizations of coda /s/ as either the oral, glottal, voiceless fricative [h] or its elimination as well as the clear difference between the pronunciation of coda /n/ as *tierras altas* [n] and the *tierras bajas* [ŋ], the nasal velar consonant, satisfy the second criteria of the list

above. The high frequency of use of the /s/and /n/ phonemes, moreover, add to the appeal of including these two phonological features in this dissertation, as does the ease with which one can distinguish between the *tierras altas* and *tierras bajas* variants of these sounds. Many tokens of coda /s/ and coda /n/ can be obtained by analyzing relatively short speech samples lasting only a couple of minutes.

Dialect differences between Mexican and Central American words for a number of items are striking and can also be elicited with ease, by means of a lexical identification task. Immediately obvious, the differences between the Central American term *pacha* and Mexican words *biberón* or *mamila*, all of which mean *baby bottle*, are easily recorded and analyzed. In her studies on LA Spanish, Parodi included this and other similar lexical items and found that subjects raised in Los Angeles always used terms either Mexican origin or whose use was unique to the southwestern United States. While informants of Central American heritage demonstrated passive knowledge of many *tierras bajas* items, few were able to produce them on their own. Furthermore, data that she collected from sociolinguistic interviews with LA Spanish speakers revealed that the use of some Central American words like *bicho* or *cipote*, both meaning *child* or *kid*, is stigmatized by Spanish speakers of Mexican origin. Consequently, analyzing this dimension of children's dialect use should prove fruitful.

It is not commonplace for dialect acquisition studies to examine subjects' attitudes towards linguistic features of other dialects. Perhaps the one study that comes closest to doing so is Chambers' case study of six Canadian children adapting to a British dialect, in which one of the tasks that subjects complete consists of 'evaluat[ing] taped accents' (1992: 675). No further mention of this aspect of the study, however, is mentioned. In the case of LA Spanish, it has been noted that Spanish speakers raised in Los Angeles since a very young age and regardless of

national heritage differ not only from speakers of Central American Spanish but also from those of standard Mexican Spanish in terms of the social evaluations they assign to particular features of Central American Spanish, like the lexical items mentioned in the previous paragraph. As was explained in Chapter 1, the stigma that they place on *voseo* is a feature of LA Spanish that, thus far, has been supported primarily by anecdotal evidence and the results of small-scale case studies. There are few quantitative studies have been carried out in order to obtain children's evaluations of two different dialects. As is the case with all research regarding linguistic attitudes, the correlation between children's responses on the task with which they were presented and their attitudes towards a particular dialect was not completely clear. Although the ease of eliciting children's attitudes, in particular, is questionable at best, the striking differences that exist between attitudes of LA Spanish speakers and speakers of *tierras bajas* Spanish, as well as the existence of previous studies on which to model the present research, provide compelling reasons for including this dimension of children's dialect use in this dissertation.

2.5.5. DEFINING THE SAMPLE: THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS. The hypothesis that Spanish-speaking children raised in Los Angeles will converge with LAVS speakers when in the presence of an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown cannot be tested properly unless the sample meets certain criteria. To begin with, all study participants must meet the criteria for acquiring LAVS, i.e. have arrived in Los Angeles prior to the age of 8, participate in the local Hispanic community and have favorable attitudes towards the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles and its speakers. It is also necessary that subjects have a basic level of fluency in Spanish which allows them to hold an informal conversation and tell a story. Such fluency is not only necessary in order to elicit the long stretches of speech needed to collect large numbers of tokens of phonetic variables. Since it is being posited that children are exposed to LAVS in the

school setting, it follows that those children who have been in such an environment for the longest amount of time are those that would be most likely to have done so. Study participants will be selected from the population of fifth grade students, whose ages usually range from 9 to 11. Some Los Angeles area elementary schools go up to sixth grade, but this is not true of all. Consequently, limiting the sample to fifth graders helps narrow down the age range.

The decision to create two groups of nationalities, Mexican and Central American, the latter including Salvadorans, Hondurans, Nicaraguans and Guatemalans, is motivated by both theoretical and practical considerations. Since dialect use can be determined by examining the presence or absence of features of one variety in another, it follows that the more obvious the differences between the two dialects, the more convincing the argument for use of a particular dialect will be. Clearly, the *tierras altas* vs *tierras bajas* contrast that is exemplified in Mexican vs. Central American dialects proves useful in this situation. It is important to note that the lack of uniformity that exists among Central American varieties, particularly with respect to aspiration of /s/, would ordinarily eliminate the possibility of grouping all Central American dialects together. Nevertheless, practical considerations must also come into play when selecting the nationalities to be included in the sample because size is an important factor in quantitative studies such as this. Of the various Central American nations represented in the Hispanic population of Los Angeles, the two with the largest numbers include Guatemala and El Salvador. Since, as will be seen later on, the number of Central Americans of any single nationality was quite small in comparison with that of Mexicans, it becomes necessary to group them all together in order to achieve a sample size that will yield statistically significant results.

Other decisions regarding various characteristics of the sample are also theoretically grounded while further constrained by practical considerations. Among these are the schools

from which subjects were recruited. As will be explained in much more detail in Chapter 3, Methodology, all schools included in this study are located in neighborhoods that are, without a doubt, Hispanic. Consequently, it assumed that children attending these institutions participate in the Hispanic community of Los Angeles and, thus, fulfill this criterion of LAVS speakers. Moreover, the contact that children have with one another in schools is sustained and frequent, a factor that reinforces the expectation that children attending school in a Mexican neighborhood will employ dialect features that differ from those whose school is located in a Central American area. Although it was possible to determine the percentage of Hispanic students attending a school, a further breakdown of this population according to national origin was not available. Schools located within the boundaries of the Westlake district, as defined by Allen and Turner (1997) and Chinchilla, Hamilton and Loucky (1993) were assumed to consist of higher numbers of Central American children than those situated in areas known to be primarily Mexican. Several studies carried out on LAVS have demonstrated that subjects' generation is a factor that has a considerable effect on their use of said variety of Spanish. In particular, it was found that, while first generation Spanish speakers often continue to use their original dialect, the majority of those of the second generation use LAVS instead (Parodi 2003: 31; 2004: 281; 2008: 201, etc.). Finally, due to a lack of research on the factors affecting the acquisition of LAVS by speakers of other dialects, nothing is known about the effect that gender may have on this process. In order not to overlook the potentially significant role that gender may play in this situation of dialect acquisition, the sample for this dissertation will consist of both males and females.

2.6. SUMMARY. The theory of accommodation can be used to account for the consequences of dialect contact that occurs in Los Angeles between speakers of *tierras altas* LAVS and *tierras*

bajas Central American Spanish. Studies focusing on dialect contact between Mexicans and Salvadorans in the US have examined that situations in Houston and Los Angeles, and provide evidence for accommodation on the part of the Central Americans. They have all shown age of acquisition to be a significant factor in the preservation of phonetic features. This dissertation seeks to determine whether the young offspring of immigrants converge with LAVS speakers' linguistic production and attitudes when performing a set of linguistic tasks in the presence of a speaker whose dialect is unknown. Such convergence is attributed not to the presence or absence of a native speaker of the dialect in question but rather is believed to be the result of an immigrant speaker's belief that she is accommodating to the linguistic norm of her surrounding community.

III. Methodology

Making decisions about which methods to use when researching children's dialect use can be challenging. On one hand, there are numerous studies in dialect contact among children that can serve as precedents and give a good idea of the quantity and quality of the data that one can obtain using particular methods. On the other hand, the lack of information regarding multiple aspects of the specific situation among child Spanish speakers in Los Angeles makes it difficult to determine what types of methods might be better suited for this particular study. As explained in the previous chapter, methodological choices depend greatly on the theoretical framework being used, the research questions one seeks to answer and the hypotheses one hopes to test. Additional factors to consider include the linguistic features of the dialects in question and characteristics of the subjects such as age, attention span, use and knowledge of Spanish, etc. The final decisions, however, often come down to issues of practicality and feasibility in terms of time, economic resources and subject availability. The present chapter begins with a description of the most common methods used to collect data in dialect contact studies, followed by a discussion of the differences that this study presents with respect to those previously conducted and an explanation of the types of adjustments that need to be made for the situation at hand. This will be followed by a detailed presentation of the following aspects of the methodology employed for this dissertation: 1) sample selection and recruitment, 2) choice of task types and 3) implementation of methods, including selection and development of materials, equipment, instructions and setting of the study. Sample selection and recruitment are particularly thorny issues for a study that 1) focuses on use of a linguistic variety that some do

not consider a systematic dialect and 2) requires the participation of elementary school students. Consequently, great care will be taken to discuss all the minutiae of this process, including the many steps entailed in conducting a study within LAUSD schools and securing permission to work with children individually in such environments.

3.1. THE SAMPLE. As explained in Chapter 2, certain theoretical considerations help identify fifth grade children of Mexican and Central American origin of two different generations, first and second, as ideal subjects for a study of this nature. In order to improve the chances that an ample number of Spanish speakers would be available to participate in this investigation and that the necessary dialect contact would have taken place, the target population of this study was defined as Spanish-speaking fifth graders attending Los Angeles public elementary schools that have a high percentage of Hispanics. As data regarding enrollment by ethnicity from 2008-9 available on the district website indicates, over 80 schools in the district have a Hispanic population of at least 95%.[17] Setting 95% as a minimum percentage for inclusion in the study ensured that there would be an ample number of schools to choose from per neighborhood, which was important since study participation was voluntary.[18] Although information regarding school enrollment by ethnicity is available on the LAUSD website, this data is not further broken down by nationality. Consequently, it became necessary to employ a more indirect way of identifying schools whose population was primarily Mexican or mainly Central American, in particular, Salvadoran.

[17] This was the most recent information available at the time of defining the target population for this dissertation.

[18] Although it had originally been decided to exclude from the sample any schools implementing Dual Language immersion programs in Spanish, the sample did include one such school. This was not an issue, however, because statistical analyses revealed no significant difference between the results of children attending this school and those at institutions that did not offer Dual Language Immersion programs.

Assuming that schools located within a neighborhood that is well-known as a Mexican or Salvadoran area would have an enrollment that consisted primarily of students of said national origins, the neighborhoods of East LA and the Westlake district, both widely documented as primarily Mexican and Salvadoran areas, respectively, were identified as the best regions from which to select schools. Only schools located within the boundaries of East LA and the Westlake district, as defined by Allen and Turner (1997) as well as Chinchilla et al (1993) were selected for inclusion in the study.

Two schools, as opposed to just one, were selected in order to determine whether any differences found between schools were due to factors other than just differences in the national origin of the school's majority population (e.g. economic factors, parental involvement, etc.). The initial plan was to select 16 children from four schools each, for a total of 64 children. Each group of 16 would consist of four different groups, subdivided by nationality (half Mexican and half Central American) and further subdivided by generation (half of the Mexican group would be of 1st generation and half of 2nd generation and half of the Central American group would be of 1st generation and half of 2nd generation). This particular sample size was settled on as a compromise between feasibility and necessity, i.e. it was calculated by determining the maximum number of subjects whose data could be collected and analyzed and the minimum number needed to yield statistically significant results. Each of these four groups consisted of an equal number of males and females. Several additional criteria were used in the attempt to ensure that study results would be both accurate and reliable. Children were considered eligible to participate in the study only if they:

1) were born in LA or arrived in LA prior to age 3

2) were native Spanish speakers (i.e. Spanish was their first language)
3) had parents who were from the same country
4) had not received formal instruction in Spanish (i.e. had not had bilingual education)
5) had attended public schools in the LA metropolitan area for their entire educational career

3.1.1. REPRESENTATIVENESS OF SAMPLE. The sample described here is expected to be quite representative of the young Spanish speaking population in terms of nationality and socioeconomic status. In terms of nationality, Mexicans, Salvadorans and Guatemalans make up the three largest Spanish-speaking groups in Los Angeles, and these also comprise the three most highly-represented nationalities in this dissertation. With respect to socioeconomic status, Parodi has demonstrated that LAVS speakers typically belong to the working class, and often have occupations in construction, agriculture, factories and the food service industry, among others. Such jobs typically require their employees to work long hours and, as a result, parents enroll their children in after school programs in which they receive supervision and academic help. Selecting a sample from children attending after school programs in various public elementary schools helps to ensure that the subjects participating in this study are of primarily working class, just like most LAVS speakers.

As one might expect, research that is carried out within schools belonging to the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) must first meet the approval of its research division. Obtaining the necessary permission at this level entailed the submission of a formal research proposal that included a statement of purpose, a detailed description of research questions, hypotheses, literature and the contribution that the study was expected to make in its relevant field, a description of the sample, methods and analyses to be used, as well as a letter of

sponsorship from a faculty member. In addition, the proposal had to explain how the intended research would directly benefit the school district. Proposal submissions are only accepted twice per year and the process is highly selective. It is important to not only explain how students would benefit from participating in the study but also to design the study so as not to burden the students in any way or deprive them of class instruction. In order to ensure that students' learning would not be affected and consequently increase the probability that the proposal for this dissertation would be accepted, subjects for this study were limited to children participating in after school programs at the schools selected. Limiting the target population to these children only presented some other advantages as well. While California legislation specifies that classroom instruction be imparted in English, this no longer holds true once the dismissal bell rings. As observation throughout the process of conducting field work revealed, children were free to speak Spanish in these programs and almost all of the staff members leading such programs were bilingual. Furthermore, as their mission statements demonstrate, most after school programs serve economically disadvantaged families and exist because parents work all day and are unable to pick up their children immediately after school ends. Thus, selecting only children who attend after school programs also increased the probability of recruiting subjects of a similar socioeconomic background.

There are over fifteen different after school programs offered throughout LAUSD elementary schools. Some are limited to a particular geographical area while others are scattered throughout the district. A few of these programs are housed within a larger umbrella organization, but many are owned and operated by independent organizations. As a result, it was impossible to restrict the target population of this study to participants of just a single program. Although each program varies slightly in terms of academic rigor, quality of supervision and

variety of activities offered, all of the ones included in this study consisted of essentially the same elements: homework help, snack time, and supervised group activities, usually related to sports, the arts or technology. While students completed their homework and ate their snack with classmates of the same grade, they also interacted with children of other ages as they participated in club activities like drama, knitting, dance or soccer.

Of the schools with a Hispanic population of 95% or above located within East LA and the Westlake District, every effort was made to select ones that offered the same after school programs in order to minimize the amount of bureaucracy involved in obtaining permission to work with different programs. After coming up with a short list of 17 schools (9 Mexican and 8 Salvadoran), four of these were chosen randomly based on willingness of both principals and after school program coordinators to host the study. Requirements to work with children from the after school programs were extremely rigorous and included undergoing a LIVESCAN fingerprint analysis and submitting proof of a negative result of a TB test.

To summarize, the subjects for this study were defined as fifth grade children, both male and female, who attended after school programs in LAUSD public elementary schools located either in East LA or the Westlake District. Half of them were to be of Mexican origin and half were to be Salvadoran. Each of these groups was expected to be further divided by generation: half of first generation and half of second. As will be seen shortly, several issues arose which made it necessary to modify the final definition of the sample.

3.1.2. SAMPLE SIZE. It must be noted that no studies like the one being proposed here have been done in LA or even another part of the United States where there are Spanish speakers. Consequently, no previous standard deviations have been identified, and there is no way of

calculating either effect size or power. Due to time constraints, 160 was the maximum number of students the researcher was able to record and whose recordings she was able to analyze. Despite being a rather large number, especially given the dearth of quantitative studies of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles at all, it should be noted that the number of subjects per school was not at all even (see Table 8), nor was the number of Mexican versus Central American participants (consult Table 9).

School	Number of subjects per school	Percentage of subjects per school
M1	10	6
M2	16	10
M3	9	6
M4	13	8
C1	31	19
C2	27	17
C3	28	18
C4	26	16
Total	160	100

TABLE 8. Number of Subjects per School

Number of Mexican subjects	Number of Central American subjects
103	57

TABLE 9. Distribution of Subjects by Nationality

While it would have been ideal to obtain even numbers of subjects at each site and to have a more balanced sample in terms of subjects' nationality, it is important to recognize that the present study does comply with minimum requirements for conducting quantitative analyses and obtaining statistically significant results. The total numbers of subjects per school grouping (mainly Mexican vs. mainly Central American neighborhood) are sufficient for determining the statistical significance of this factor. Having this number of participants will ensure that there will be at least eight children for each of the eight possible subgroups, formed by combining the

three different independent variables (national origin of majority of school's population, child's generation and child's national origin). Given that textbooks for research in the social sciences identify five as the number of cases needed per subgroup in order to determine statistical significance, having eight will ensure that, even should a student or two drop out from the study, the results will still be statistically significant (Agresti 227). More importantly, it should be noted that the distribution of subjects with respect to nationality (103 Mexicans vs 57 Central Americans) reflects the population in Los Angeles and actually includes more Central Americans than one would expect given the 5:1 ratio of Mexicans to Central Americans that exists when focusing solely on the Hispanic population. Consequently, it is evident that the sample population for this study accurately reflects the actual population, an outcome that is highly desirable for a quantitative study.

3.1.3. SUBJECT RECRUITMENT. Once the four schools were selected and permission was obtained to talk to students, subject recruitment began. As will be seen shortly, this process underwent several stages before evolving reaching a satisfactory level of efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, a number of different issues arose that made it necessary to modify the definition of the target population from which subjects were selected. When the study began, the researcher visited all of the study sites and gave a brief five-minute presentation to fifth grade students during their after school program. Referring to the study as a 'Spanish project,' she explained that she was looking for children who spoke Spanish to do a few simple tasks, including an online activity where they listened to a "Martian" talk to them and then answer some questions. She tried to gain students' empathy by describing the study as a big homework assignment she had to do and asked for help. Afterwards she answered students' questions and distributed

bilingual information packets to each child who showed an interest in participating. Each packet consisted of a letter to the parents describing the study, a permission form in order to obtain a parent's written consent and a brief preliminary questionnaire consisting of questions regarding the child's age, place of birth, first language and amount of years spent attending LAUSD schools as well as questions' regarding each parent's country of origin. This document will be discussed in greater detail in the section on study materials. Students were asked to return their completed packets the next day and the researcher would collect them as time permitted. Participation was strictly voluntary, although it should be noted that students who returned their signed packets were promised a piece of candy as a reward. Children also received a pencil at the completion of the study but were not aware of this at the moment that they were asked to participate.

As mentioned in a previous paragraph, the researcher was not allowed to work individually with students until having received the necessary security clearance, a lengthy process. This factor, as well as the restriction that she not work with students until after they had finished their homework, greatly limited the amount of time she could spend at each school at a time and made it necessary to conduct data collection at two different schools each day. In order to ensure that a qualified adult supervised all interaction that the researcher had with the students, the researcher was asked to conduct the study in the nurse's office, adjacent to the main office. The times that she could conduct her study were limited to the hours that a qualified member of the staff was present, usually between 3:00 and 4:00 pm at the first school. Staff members of a second school stayed on campus a little later, so it was possible to conduct an additional session or two each day at the second school. These two schools were located within a few blocks of one another, both in the previously defined Salvadoran Westlake District.

Dismal return rates of the recruitment packets led to the decision to modify the recruitment process. As a result of discussions with the after school program leaders at various schools, the researcher arranged to speak with parents in person as they came to pick up their children in the evening. In most cases, this conversation was carried out in Spanish. Although it had been hoped that children would not hear the researcher speak any Spanish, in order to avoid the short-term accommodation that is believed to occur when speakers find themselves in the presence of an interlocutor who is a D2 native speaker, the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages since it would have been impossible to recruit sufficient subjects and, thus, to conduct the study at all, without speaking individually with the parents.[19] Speaking directly to the parents also eliminated the step of requiring them to complete the preliminary questionnaire. Parents who gave their consent for their child(ren) to participate in the study were asked to either fill out the biographical information sheet at the same time or to complete it at home and return it with their child(ren).

Although modifying the recruitment process increased the number of students who returned signed permission slips, the number of children eligible to participate, based on the criteria listed earlier in this chapter, remained low. The two main reasons for this outcome were, first, that not many of the children were of Salvadoran origin and, second, that of those who were, even fewer were the offspring of two Salvadoran parents. Although many Mexicans had Mexican spouses and Guatemalans had Guatemalan spouses, the same did not appear to be true of Salvadorans. Additional issues that arose included a lack of fluency in Spanish among fifth

[19] These conversations with the parents were very brief and infrequent and, most of the time, the children played with their friends while the researcher spoke with their parents. It is very doubtful that the very small amount of Spanish they heard her speak affected their language use when they participated in the study.

graders and small numbers of fifth graders in general. Again, the need to amass a sample of the proper size needed for statistical analysis outweighed some of these original criteria used to define the sample and additional modifications were made. First, four more schools were added to the pool of study sites, resulting in eight schools total, four in the Mexican neighborhood and four in the Central American neighborhood. Even if the number of Salvadoran children available in each school remained low, combining the total from four different schools should ensure the minimum for a quantitative study. Next, the sample was expanded to include fourth graders. In addition to being more fluent, the fourth grade groups were also larger. These changes, however, still did not remedy the lack of Salvadoran subjects. Results from the preliminary questionnaires returned indicated that, although Salvadoran participants were lacking, a large number of children of Guatemalan origin were available as were a handful of students of Nicaraguan and Honduran descent. Consequently the decision was made to include all Central American children rather than just those of Salvadoran origin. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the lack of linguistic uniformity presented by Guatemalans in particular with regard to aspiration of /s/ presented challenges but was addressed without too much difficulty. The numbers of Central American participants were further augmented by eliminating the criterion that both parents be born in the same country.

3.2. METHODOLOGY

3.2.1. CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY. The majority of dialect contact studies with children are either small- to mid-scale case studies that adopt a quantitative approach. Often depending on the availability of subjects (one's own offspring or those of acquaintances), linguists such as Chambers (1992), Tagliamonte and Molfenter (2007), and Starks and Bayard (2002) have opted to use a small number of participants since this allows them to focus on the development of

features along several different linguistic dimensions, including phonological features, which require the analysis of hundreds of tokens per subject. Other studies such as those of Payne (1980) and Kerswill and Williams (2000) involve more than 50 children in 12 immigrant families and 48 children, respectively. These, however, focus solely on acquisition of phonetic variables such as short-a and t-voicing. While some, like Chambers (1992), are diachronic studies that consist of data collected at two different points of time, others are conducted over the course of several months and yet others the majority is synchronic, relying primarily on a comparison between the new dialect acquirers and native speakers of the variety in question. Of all of these, Chambers' methodology is probably the most varied. The 'relaxed but controlled' interviews that he conducted with his subjects consisted of a variety of task types including a lexical identification task, identification of taped accents, and the reading aloud of word lists. Interview topics included subjects' comparisons of their old and new neighborhoods. This dissertation seeks to emulate Chambers' use of more varied methodology by using several different production tasks and a linguistic evaluation activity.

3.2.2. SELECTION OF TASK TYPES**.** As outlined in Chapter 2, several phonetic, lexical and attitudinal features were identified as diagnostic of *tierras altas* speakers of Mexican Spanish as opposed to speakers of Central American *tierras bajas* varieties. These include pronunciation of syllable-final /s/ and /n/, use of particular lexical items, and negative attitudes towards use of *voseo* and *tierras bajas* pronunciation features. These considerations, along with the decision to use quantitative methodology favor the use of tasks similar to those employed by Chambers, whose study was similar apart from the language attitude task. Moreover, the scale of this study,

as well as the participation of much younger subjects also differentiates the present study from his.

The two phonetic variables that will be analyzed in this dissertation, coda /s/ and word-final /n/, are both phones that occur fairly often in speech. The fairly high frequency that they exhibit allows for a certain amount of flexibility when deciding how controlled a particular task will have to be. In this case little control over the task is required and subjects could talk about almost anything and still produce the amount of tokens necessary for a quantitative analysis. A number of factors, however, preclude the use of methods such as a free or semi-controlled conversation. To begin with, there is the issue of the children's timidity. As was observed in a pilot study conducted with fourth and fifth graders, elementary school students are quite timid and often reluctant to speak Spanish completely freely even if they are given suggestions on what they might talk about. They have no qualms, however, with describing a picture that they are shown, and even seem to enjoy such a task if the picture is one to which they can relate or includes humorous elements. This method (asking subjects to describe drawings and tell stories to accompany pictures of sequences of events) has proven effective in past studies (Peña 1967; Matluck & Mace 1973; Cornejo 1969), including a pilot study that I conducted with elementary school students (ages 6-11). This type of task has the advantage of eliciting speech samples of a substantial length and avoiding the need for subjects to read or write in Spanish, important since most Spanish speakers raised in Los Angeles lack literacy in the language. Although the analysis of the speech elicited from this picture description task will be of a mainly phonetic nature for this dissertation, it should be noted that the speech sample produced will also include a variety of lexical and morphosyntactic features that can be analyzed in future studies.

A variation on matched guise methodology was employed to ascertain children's linguistic attitudes towards Salvadoran versus *tierras altas* Mexican speech. While it is true that indirect methods such as this can prove difficult to interpret, especially when compared to the much simpler strategy of asking students their opinions of Salvadoran speakers or their speech, this approach is thought to elicit more accurate representations of their true feelings for a number of reasons. First, it is well known that the answers that subjects give false impressions regarding their attitudes towards a particular dialect or way of speaking out of a desire to not be considered politically incorrect, prejudiced, racist, etc. This is especially true if the variety in question is one that is stigmatized or associated with a minority group, as in Salvadoran Spanish in Los Angeles. Using a more indirect method in preferred in such cases because subjects' responses are expected to better reflect their true attitudes, which may be unconscious. Furthermore, it should be noted that the types of tasks that are used with the matched guise recordings range from an AB preference task, to a forced-choice rating task to an open-ended question in which subjects explained their choice in a previous task. This variety of activities, which required subjects to access their linguistic attitudes at different levels of consciousness, was also intended to provide more accurate reflections of the evaluations that they assigned to Salvadoran Spanish. Similar methodology has been used successfully with children from ages 3 to 5:11 (Rosenthal 1974) and with kindergarteners and first graders (Day 1980).

3.2.3. MATERIALS. A wide variety of materials were developed for this study including several sets of visual stimuli for the picture description and lexical identification tasks, the recordings for the matched guise task and the actual matched guise activities that subjects completed, which were presented in the form of an online questionnaire-type activity.

Images selected for the picture description task included three different two-page scenes from a child's picture book titled *The First Thousand Words in Spanish* and a copy of a series of illustrations of the Little Red Riding Hood story. These scenes chosen included a home, a park and a classroom and were drawn in a cartoon style. Although each scene is framed by vocabulary words in the book, these were covered so as to eliminate any text on the page. Color copies of the images were made and laminated for use at the various study sites. The particular scenes were chosen both for their humorous elements and because it was expected that subjects would the familiar with at least some of the vocabulary necessary to describe them. The large size of these illustrations and the variety of characters and activities depicted on them were intended to elicit fairly long speech samples that incorporated a wide variety of vocabulary and basic grammatical structures in present, present progressive and future tenses. The Little Red Riding Hood scenes, on the other hand, were chosen to elicit language associated with narration, in particular, preterit and imperfect tenses, pronouns, etc. It was anticipated that most children would be familiar with the story and, if they were not, they would be able to use the illustrations to invent one.

The 14 flashcards used for the lexical identification task were created for this study using photographic images of objects whose names that regional dialect variation in Salvadoran and Mexican Spanish. Photographs of real objects, rather than line drawings, were used for this study, given that photographs are considered to be more easily identifiable by researchers such as Matluck and Mace (1973) and Potowski (2008), as cited in Potowski (2011). In addition to demonstrating the lexical variation just mentioned, the items depicted were fairly common ones that would be recognized by Central American children raised in the US, i.e. would not require specialized cultural knowledge only available to children raised in a Central American country.

The appropriateness of both the words and images used to illustrate them were verified by two different speakers of Salvadoran Spanish, both of whom were born and raised in El Salvador. Using individual flashcards made it easy to present the images randomly to all subjects. In the case of one Central American Spanish item, *bicho/cipote/patojo*, 'child,' two photographs were used, one of a baby and one of a toddler in case there may have been a difference in word choice due to the child's age. See Table 10 below for a list of the flashcards used along with their corresponding Central American and Mexican equivalents.

Object/concept	Mexican Spanish	Central American Spanish
baby bottle	mamila/biberón/bibi	pacha/pepe
belt	cinto/cinturon	cincho
bunk bed	litera	camarote
cake	pastel	queike
blond	güero/a	chele
ice cream	nieve/helado	sorbete
jacket	chaqueta/chamarra	chumpa
baby in sand	bebé/niño/chamaco	bicho/patojo/cipote
toddler with box	niño/chamaco	bicho/patojo/cipote
kite	cometa/papalote	piscucha
pig	marrano/cochino/puerco	tunco/chancho
rice and beans	frijoles con arroz	casamiento/gallo pinto
drinking straw	popote	pajilla
dirty (stray dog)	sucio	chuco
turkey	pavo/guajolote	chompipe

TABLE 10. Lexical Items Depicted on Flashcards

The recordings made for the variation on a matched guise task were produced by two different native speakers of Spanish, one of whom was of Mexican descent but had been born and raised in Los Angeles, and the other of whom had been born and raised in El Salvador. Although it is true that recordings for matched guise studies are often made by a bidialectal speaker, the challenge of finding Salvadoran Spanish speakers in Los Angeles who maintained their Salvadoran dialect made it difficult to locate such a speaker. For the sake of time and accuracy, the decision was made to use two different speakers. Both speakers were female, in

their mid to early sixties and spoke using more or less the same pitch. Each made a set of two different recordings: a child recording and an adult recording made by the Salvadoran speaker and a child recording and an adult recording made by the Mexican Spanish speaker who was raised in Los Angeles.[20] All recordings were scripted, with the child and adult recordings differing completely in terms of content. The set of scripts read by the Salvadoran speaker (i.e. the child script and the adult script) differed only slightly from the set read by the Mexican speaker with respect to morphology. Uses of *tuteo* in the Mexican script were replaced with *voseo* in the Salvadoran script. Apart from these differences, both child scripts were identical and both adult scripts were identical. The two native speakers recording the matched guise stimuli were instructed to read the scripts in a natural manner using their native dialect. The Salvadoran speaker was asked to speak 'as Salvadoran as possible.' Similar to the flashcards, appropriateness and accuracy of the scripts was verified by the Salvadoran speaker prior to making the recordings. See Appendix A for both sets of scripts. As was expected, the actual recordings made by each speaker further differed in terms of phonetic features, in particular, pronunciation of syllable-final /s/ and /n/, and with respect to intonation.[21] Whereas the stimuli produced by the Salvadoran Spanish speaker included some instances of aspiration of syllable-final /s/ and velarization of syllable-final /n/, those produced by the Mexican speaker were

[20] It should be noted that, although the speaker making the Mexican recording was born and raised in Los Angeles and was, furthermore, reading a script as opposed to speaking freely, there are virtually no linguistic features in this recording that can be used to identify it as a particular dialect of Mexican Spanish such as LAVS. Consequently, the results of the language attitude study only allow us to compare children's preference for a Salvadoran speaker with their preference for a speaker of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish. It is not possible, however, to make any inferences as to children's attitudes towards LAVS in particular. This will have to be left for future studies.

[21] Although intonation is not analyzed in this dissertation, there are clear intonational differences between the varieties of Spanish produced by the Salvadoran and LA-born Mexican Spanish speakers, and these will undoubtedly prove excellent topics for future research.

completely devoid of such features. Due to the manner in which the recordings were made, there was also a slight difference in sound quality between the Mexican and Salvadoran recordings which must be mentioned. Although the researcher recorded the Mexican speaker herself, in a quiet room with a digital recorder, the recordings provided by the Salvadoran speaker were self-made on the computer, using a headset microphone. When listened to separately, both recordings appeared to be of good quality with no background noise. It was not until they were listened to in order and with the volume on a much higher setting, that it was possible to notice a difference in recording quality, supposedly due to the different types of microphones used. Since the microphone used by the Salvadoran speaker was of better quality, her recording was much clearer and crisper than that of the Mexican speaker. Following this discovery, a second set of recordings was made with the Mexican speaker, this time also using a headset microphone. The resulting stimuli sounded much clearer but still a little distant. As will be seen in the following chapter, some, but not all children did pick up on this difference. It should also be noted that the recordings produced by the Salvadoran speaker were significantly shorter than those made by the Mexican speaker, indicating that the Salvadoran spoke at a much faster rate than the Mexican speaker. This did not prove problematic, however, because it was possible to modify the speed of the recording digitally without affecting its quality. The resulting stimuli, both Mexican and Salvadoran, were of the same length. Prior to incorporating these into the online questionnaire administered to subjects, one final modification was made to the stimuli produced by reading the child scripts, and the pitch of both the Salvadoran child stimulus and the Mexican child stimulus was raised by half a step in order to better approximate a child's voice as well as to better disguise the gender of the speaker. The final recordings consisted of two child recordings, one

Salvadoran and one Mexican, and two adult recordings, one Salvadoran and one Mexican. The speed and pitch of the Salvadoran stimuli corresponded with those of the Mexican stimuli.

The content of the online questionnaire activity into which the recordings above served as stimuli was modeled after a dialect study conducted by Rosenthal (1974) with children from ages 3 to 5:11 and later replicated by Day (1980) with kindergarteners and first graders. Rosenthal's study was designed to be fun and interactive for children, provide linguistic information about their dialect preferences yet still be age-appropriate. In said study, subjects listened to recordings of the same bi-dialectal speaker reading the same script but in two different dialects. Each recording was then associated with one of two identical cardboard boxes each painted with a face. After having been told that each of these boxes had a present for them, subjects listened to each box and was then asked to answer some questions about it. Children were also asked to explain their answers in order to verify that their responses were based on their evaluations of the dialects in question. This particular task, in which the boxes 'speak' directly to the subjects and ask them to select a present from one of them, is ideal for investigating children's attitudes towards Salvadoran Spanish, whose most salient distinguishing feature with respect to Mexican Spanish is the use of the second person singular form of address, *vos*. Maintaining the original concept of asking subjects to listen to a message directly addressed to them and then requiring them to answer a series of questions about these speakers, the present study is an updated version that uses modern technology and explores the characteristics, besides socioeconomic status, that children associate with the dialects at hand.

Practical considerations prevented the researcher of this dissertation from providing real presents from which the children could choose. This, combined with the fact that it would minimize the amount of props and other equipment necessary to conduct the study, led to the

decision to develop an online task for subjects to complete. In order to minimize as much as possible any associations that children might make between any physical characteristics of a person and a particular dialect, the visual stimuli with which they were presented, rather than the cardboard boxes, consisted of cartoon drawings of "Martians." Using non-human extraterrestrials also made it possible to avoid referring to the gender of the speakers, since they are not necessarily male or female. In order to have more possible avenues through which to access children's attitudes towards Salvadoran versus Mexican varieties, an extra dimension was added to the Magic Boxes studies, as we will refer to the Rosenthal and Day studies from this point forward. Whereas the Magic Boxes studies consisted of recordings of the children's peers only, i.e. the boxes were supposed to represent children of more or less the same age as the subjects, this dissertation also added an extra set of recordings that were not peers but authority figures, to be more exact, high school language arts teachers. Instead of asking study participants to select a present from them, these recordings described a literacy program they sponsored and subjects were then asked whose program they wanted to join. In order to distinguish clearly the appearance of the set of peer "Martians" from the adults, both sets of images differed in terms of size, color and accompanying object. While the peer "Martians" were smaller, light green and positioned above presents, the adult "Martians" were larger, lavender and positioned above clipboards. Both peer "Martians" were identical, as one was a copy of the other, and great care was taken to position each one in the same place on each side of the screen. The same was true of the adult "Martians."

Every effort was made to make the members of each set of "Martians," i.e. peer "Martian" Salvadoran speaker and peer "Martian" Mexican speaker, as similar to the other as possible. While it was possible to ensure that one "Martian" was an exact copy of the other, it

was impossible to give “Martians” the same name because subjects needed to be able to distinguish easily between them. In order to avoid any associations that might exist between names and dialects, the “Martians” were assigned non-human names, consisting of a series of two letters and then a number. The Mexican-speaking peer “Martian” was CF2 and the Salvadoran Spanish-speaking peer was AJ6, while the Mexican-speaking adult “Martian” was Mrs. QN4 and the Salvadoran Spanish-speaking adult “Martian” was Mrs. CR7. Studies with taste tests have shown that even the letter assigned to a particular product can influence subjects' opinions of it. Since the same phenomena could easily be transferred to the letters used in the “Martians'” names, this was a factor that was taken into account when designing the language attitude study. Rather than trying to find letters that were comparable to one another in popularity, the choice was made to use letters that clearly differed in this aspect. Expecting subjects to prefer Mexican over Salvadoran Spanish, the more popular letters were deliberately used in the names of the Salvadoran Spanish-speaking “Martians” in order to weight the study in favor of Salvadoran Spanish rather than inadvertently giving an additional advantage to the Mexican-speaking “Martian.”

The Magic Boxes studies were particularly interested in the associations that children made between the nonstandard dialects of English and socioeconomic status. This, however, is not a primary concern of this dissertation since the differences between Mexican speakers and those of Salvadoran Spanish are minimal. Rather, the goal at hand is to identify other characteristics attributed to these groups that might distinguish them, such as intelligence or honesty. The Magic Boxes studies asked children to complete a series of tasks including selecting a gift from one of the boxes, taking a gift from one of the boxes and explaining their selections and opinions regarding the boxes' speech. In the present study, the ‘giving' aspect was

eliminated and replaced by a question of a different nature, each of which depended on the speaker's status of peer versus authority figure. For the peer, subjects were also asked which they would prefer to do a science project with and why, and for the authority figure, subjects were requested to identify which one would make a better teacher and why. Another addition that this dissertation makes to the Magic Boxes study is that of including a more direct component of asking subjects to rate the "Martians'" speech. By using a Likert scale whose options include "very well," "well," "poorly," and "very poorly," subjects were forced to attribute a positive or negative judgment to the dialects they heard.

The online task described above was created using Moodle, a web application for producing modular internet-based courses. In particular, the quiz function of this application allowed the researcher to compile all of the recordings and questions into an interactive questionnaire-style activity that subjects could complete in between 10 and 15 minutes. Since access to Moodle is restricted, the researcher obtained a username and password that allowed guest access to the site. She used these to log each subject into the Moodle page where the quiz was located. This allowed her complete control over who had access to the language attitude task.

Due to limitations of the Moodle quiz function, it was impossible to create a quiz that allowed for the random ordering not only of certain questions but also of the recordings. Since the order in which the recordings were presented could potentially affect subjects' responses, this proved problematic. The only way to resolve the issue was to create four different versions of the quiz, each one varying with respect to the ordering of the recordings.

3.2.4. LINGUISTIC QUESTIONNAIRES. The linguistic questionnaire used to collect information about subjects' language use and other basic data was modeled after similar sociolinguistic questionnaires. Since this document was originally intended to be completed by subjects' parents at home, it was designed so as to collect all of the necessary information in a format that was simple and occupied as little space as possible. Since it was believed that the children's parents most likely would not have the time nor desire to fill out anything longer than two pages, the questionnaire was limited to a single, double-sided sheet of paper. The first side of the page consisted of a grid in which children's parents were asked to include biographical information about the child participating in the subject and every person (adults and children) who lived in the same home as the subject including relationship to child, age, city and country of birth, first language, year of arrival in Los Angeles, occupation, education and the language(s) that each person spoke with the child as well as the language(s) that the child spoke with each person. An example of how to complete the grid was also included. The decision was made to request such information about all those living in the home rather than just about immediate family members because, especially in Hispanic cultures, it is common for households to include members of the extended family as well as, sometimes, boarders or other non-related individuals such as the partner of a single or divorced parent or other family member. Although the grid included provided space for information on seven individuals (including the child participating in the study), an additional sheet with space for data on eight more people was included for large households. In the event that grandparents did not live in the home with a family, a similar grid was provided on which to include information about these family members. The remaining six questions were all multiple choice with the option for specifying information (a format which was considered more convenient for people to complete and, thus, would hopefully increase the

probability that they would complete it) and requested data regarding subjects' length of residence in Los Angeles, use of Spanish, number of years attending Los Angeles public schools and frequency of visits to the parents' countries of origin. See Appendix B for the actual questionnaires in both English and Spanish.

3.2.5. EQUIPMENT. All recordings of subjects were made using an Olympus 800 digital recorder on Meeting mode. No external microphones were used. The online task was completed on the researcher's personal laptop, a Sony Vaio VGN-SR290. A wireless hotspot was used to ensure the availability of a reliable internet connection, a necessity for a study with an online component.

3.2.6. SETTING. All research was carried out on school grounds, either in a nurse's office or conference room adjacent to the main office, or in a separate classroom, depending on availability of a particular room. Conducting research at the various schools precluded completely the possibility of maintaining uniformity in terms of the setting where the study was administered and made it necessary for the researcher to depend completely on school or after school program administrators for not only the location but also the schedule of the research. While a quiet room was always requested, the actual amount of silence available varied widely given that some rooms contained loud appliances that could not be unplugged (e.g. soda machines or fans), and others experienced a high volume of traffic (i.e. large groups of children passed by on their way to the playground) or were next to the main office, which was still in use during after school hours. Subjects completed the study individually in the room provided, almost always in front of a table which held the laptop for the online component. Although rooms in which to conduct the study were often immediately available, this was not always the

case and the researcher and her subject would sometimes have to wait until a room was unoccupied.

3.2.7. PROCEDURES. Subjects whose parents had given their written consent were either brought to the room that had been provided to the researcher or the researcher would go get them from their particular programs. Complying with UCLA IRB and LAUSD procedures, oral consent was obtained by all subjects who completed the study. Barring a child's need to leave early or running out of time due to factors beyond the researcher's control, subjects completed the entire study in one session of approximately 35 to 40 minutes. All communication between the researcher and subjects took place in English. As noted in Chapter 2, this was done in order to prevent, as much as possible, the possibility that subjects engage in short-term accommodation to the *tierras altas* Spanish spoken by the researcher. The researcher began every session by explaining to the subject, very briefly, the various components of the study. As during the recruitment process, great care was taken to reassure the children that the study was part of a homework project the researcher was completing, rather than a test, and that there were no right or wrong answers. All subjects[22] completed tasks in the same order: 1) description task of three scenes, 2) narration of Little Red Riding Hood Story, 3) lexical identification task and 4) online language attitude task.

Prior to beginning the picture description task, the researcher instructed the subjects, in English, to look at the picture and describe it in Spanish. When she noticed that not all children understood what she meant by 'describe the picture,' she would ask them to tell her what things

[22] Rare exceptions to this included a small handful of children who at first refused to complete the narration task but then changed their minds after finishing the lexical identification activity.

they saw and what the people were doing. Believing that the vocabulary required to describe the pictures was most familiar for the scene of the house, then the park and then the school, she presented the images to the subjects in that same order. She encouraged children who said very little to describe more by pointing out particular images that she thought they might be able to describe easily (a dog, people eating, etc.). Often children would forget a word and pause for a long time, trying to remember it, sometimes asking the researcher how to say it. In such cases the researcher would indicate that she did not know it either or pretend not to remember it and urge the child to continue, saying that it was ok not to know a word.

The researcher introduced the narration task by showing subjects the images from the story and informing them that they were pictures from a story. She then asked the children if they knew which story they were from. Although most children were able to identify the fairy tale correctly, there were some who were unfamiliar with it. When this was the case, the researcher asked them if they thought they could make up a story to go with the pictures, and these subjects always said they could. As with the previous task, children who got stuck on a word were encouraged to continue without it or to use a different word if the item they could not recall could be referred to in a different way (i.e. the wolf could also be referred to as 'he,' 'it,' 'the man,' etc.). This option was also encouraged in this part of the study since it seemed likely that subjects might fixate on finding a particular word due to their familiarity with the story in English even though their Spanish repertoire probably included a word of roughly the same meaning. Since fairy tales like Little Red Riding Hood have multiple versions, it is not unusual that certain details of a particular version be unfamiliar to them. Consequently, children were allowed to skip scenes from the story that they did not recognize. In some cases subjects would begin the narration task and then stop, presumably overwhelmed or intimidated. When this

occurred, the researcher gave subjects the option of ‘practicing’ the narration first, without the recorder. Just as when the recorder was on, children who got stuck on a word were not provided with it but rather encouraged to continue or to think of another way to say it. The purpose of allowing children to ‘practice’ first was merely to build their confidence and ease their anxiety about being recorded.

In the lexical identification task were instructed to say in Spanish the name of the object pictured on the card. The researcher always shuffled the flashcards so that images would be presented to the subjects in a random order. If an image pictured multiple items, as did the photograph of a drinking straw in a glass of juice, the researcher pointed to the relevant item, to direct the subject’s attention to it. In the event that a child did not know a word, the researcher encouraged her to describe it in Spanish or name something else that they saw in the picture. Not only did this allow her to collect a speech sample even when the subject was unable to name a particular object, but it was also crucial when transcribing recordings of this task. Since images were always presented in a random order, it was necessary to have a way of identifying those that subjects could not name, an otherwise impossible task if they failed to describe two or more flashcards. Subjects were allowed to return to images that they had not been able to identify the first time. However, this rarely made any difference in task results. All subjects received positive oral feedback, regardless of the accuracy or length of their actual responses.

Subjects completed the language attitude portion of the study in the presence of the researcher. While the researcher logged each subject into the Moodle quiz site, she would explain to them that, in the next part of the project, they would listen to some “Martians” talk to them in Spanish and then answer some questions about them. Next, she would ask the subjects to pick a number between one and four, in order to ensure that the quiz version they took was

selected randomly. Upon opening the page where the quiz was located, the researcher would point out the two cartoon images on the page and tell subjects that these two “Martians” spoke and had presents. Subjects then clicked on the image of each “Martian” to hear its accompanying recording. Study participants were instructed to then select a present from only one of the “Martians” after having heard them both and then select the name of the one whose present they wanted to take. After doing so, the researcher told them to click on the “Martian” they had chosen to view the gift. Subjects who had selected AJ6, as the Salvadoran Spanish speaker was called, saw an image of a multicolored slinky, while those who had picked the Mexican speaker, saw the image of a Rubik’s cube. After viewing their gift from the “Martian” they had chosen, they were allowed to view the other one, since the researcher told them, ‘we won’t let the other “Martian” know, but you can see what this one has.’ Since the children had already indicated their preference, presenting them with additional information about each “Martian” that distinguished one from the other appeared to be harmless and was, moreover, considered desirable since it added an element of interaction to the study. As will be explained in subsequent chapters, however, this choice proved problematic. Next, the researcher instructed them to explain why they had chosen a particular “Martian.” Subjects had the option of typing their answer themselves or dictating their answer to the researcher who then typed it for them. In this portion of the study, subjects were encouraged to explain as much as possible. In the event that subjects did not specify which speaker they were referring to or only pointed to a “Martian” without identifying it audibly, the researcher would ask for clarification in order to have a record for the purposes of the transcription and later analysis of subjects’ responses.

Study participants were next told to imagine that both “Martians” were new kids in their class that they had both known for one month and instructed to indicate which “Martian” they

would want as their partner for a science project. As with the previous question, they were asked to either type or dictate the reason why. Next they were presented with each of the recordings again, one at a time. After listening to each one again, they were instructed to rate how it spoke Spanish, using a four-point Likert scale ranging from very poorly to very well.

Procedures for the second half of the language attitude task, this time with the recordings of the adult authority figures rather than the peers, matched those of the first half exactly. A brief description of the various components of the language attitude task is shown below in Table 11 in the order in which they were presented in the study. The response options offered for each selection task consisted of only two options, CF2 and AJ6, in the case of the peer "Martians" and Mrs. QN4 and Mrs. CR7 for the adult "Martians."

Components of Language Attitude Task
1. **Instructions and images of peer "Martians" accompanied by recordings**
2. **Selection task:** Which "Martian" do you want to take your present from?
3. **Images of "Martians" with presents**
4. **Short answer task:** Why did you take your present from this "Martian"?
5. **Instructions and image of science project**
6. **Selection task:** Which one do you want to do a science project with?
7. **Short answer task:** Why?
8. **Image of peer "Martian" CF2 with accompanying recording (shown individually)**
9. **Rating task:** Peer "Martian" CF2 speaks Spanish…
10. **Image of peer "Martian" AJ6 with accompanying recording (shown individually)**
11. **Rating task:** Peer "Martian" AJ6 speaks Spanish…
12. **Instructions and images of adult "Martians" accompanied by recordings**
13. **Selection task:** Whose program do you want to join?
14. **Images of "Martians" with clipboards**
15. **Short answer task:** Why do you want to join this program?
16. **Instructions:** Both "Martians" are applying to be language arts teachers at the high school level
17. **Selection task:** Which one would make a better teacher?
18. **Short answer task:** Why?
19. **Image of adult "Martian" Mrs. CR7 with accompanying recording (shown individually)**
20. **Rating task:** Adult "Martian" Mrs. CR7 speaks Spanish…
21. **Image of adult "Martian" Mrs. QN4 with accompanying recording (shown individually)**

22. Rating task: Adult "Martian" Mrs. QN4 speaks Spanish…

TABLE 11. Description of Language Attitude Task Components

In addition to completing the study tasks, study participants were asked to answer basic questions regarding the other people who lived in their homes with them, the languages they used with these individuals, and a variety of other questions about their language use, schooling and the frequency with which they traveled to their parents' countries of origin. The researcher used this information to complete, at least in part, the biographical information sheet on each subject. Although subjects did not always know the answers to all of the questions asked (e.g. parents' year of arrival in Los Angeles, etc.), having them answer at least some of them helped minimize the amount of parents' time that the researcher required. Since contact with parents was only possible in the evening when they came to pick up their children from after school programs, and parents were often eager to get home, the researcher was anxious to ease the burden on them as much as possible. In most cases, subjects were interviewed for this purpose after completing the entire study. On a few occasions, however, the researcher took advantage of time that would otherwise have been wasted while waiting for a room to become available and conducted the interview prior to administering the study tasks.

3.2.8. COMPENSATION. Children participating in the study received no monetary compensation. They were, however, given a pencil of their choice as a token of appreciation.

3.3. ANALYSIS

3.3.1. TRANSCRIPTION. Recordings of the picture description, story narration and lexical identification tasks were all transcribed shortly after they were made. All transcriptions were made by the researcher, who listened to each recording a minimum of three times, using Sony ear buds, on two different devices, each of which offered a feature that facilitated the

transcription process. Replaying the recordings on Windows Media Player allowed her to stop and start as many times as necessary with ease, while listening to them on the digital recorder on which they had been made offered the option of slowing them down. For the sake of efficiency, transcriptions were word-for-word rather than phonetic. Due to the scarcity of aspirated tokens of /s/ and instances of velar /n/, these were noted as they were encountered in the first round of transcription, but also in subsequent more systematic stages of the transcription process. Once she was certain that she had transcribed everything the subject had said, the researcher listened a second time in order to note all pauses. After doing this, she reviewed all transcripts, circling all syllable-final /s/ in order to facilitate the next round of transcribing the realization of such phones. Upon completing this part, the researcher listened to all recordings for a third time, determining whether a syllable-final /s/ was maintained, reduced or eliminated. Using broad phonetic transcription, she coded tokens of /s/ as: [s] when the predorsodental fricative pronunciation was maintained, [h] when the /s/ was aspirated or [ø] when it was eliminated. Since she was not interested in voicing, this information was not included in the transcription. Consequently, a phone was represented as an [s] regardless of whether it was voiced due to assimilation to the following segment, as in *mismo*, and all aspirations were transcribed as [h] if they were realized as glottal fricatives, whether they were voiced or voiceless. Although the primary focus of this analysis was the /s/ in syllable-final position, the researcher did note very few instances of aspiration of /s/ in syllable-initial position, such as in *niñoh están* (W15), which is transcribed as ['ni.ɲo.hes.'tan], following the rules of syllabification in Spanish. In the rare instances when the researcher was unsure about a particular phone, she verified her transcriptions with those of two other Spanish linguists and deferred to their expertise.

It is necessary here to include a word about /s/ deletion. Although identifying this phenomenon is a relatively straightforward task in standard Spanish, the same is not true of most varieties of US Spanish. In standard Spanish, for instance, plural agreement is obligatory, and the absence of a plural morpheme in dialects that are known to elide the /s/ is easily identified as deletion. In the case of US Spanish speakers, however, in which interference with English leads to variation with respect to overt realization of grammatical agreement, identifying instances of deletion is a complex matter. In addition, cases of a dropped /s/ could also be attributed to lexicalization, a process by which an individual word is simply learned, in this case, without the /s/. Consequently, a child may pronounce a word like 'resbaladilla' as 'rebaladilla' simply because she failed to hear the /s/ in it and has since acquired it without the /s/. Unlike /s/ aspiration, which is a rule that a speaker applies consistently and categorically, lexicalization only affects individual words. Unless there is evidence of /s/ missing from other words in the rest of a speech sample, it is highly likely that the one token of a missing /s/ is an example of lexicalization. Consequently, the handful of tokens that might constitute elision of /s/ have been set apart for further research and do not figure into the analysis of syllable- and word-final /s/ realization.

After completing the transcription of all tokens of syllable-final /s/ as well as any aspirations of /s/ regardless of where in the syllable they occurred, the researcher calculated indices of /s/ realizations for each speaker for nine different phonetic contexts.[23] Total numbers of /s/ that a speaker produced in each context were noted as well as their realizations: [s] or [h].

[23] The nine contexts were those used by Lipski (1990) in his article on the reduction of /s/ in Honduran Spanish), each differentiated in terms of position in the syllable (initial or final), preceding and following segments (vowels, consonants or pauses) and the stress of the following vowel.

Subjects who realized /s/ as [s] 100% of the time had indices of 1 and, consequently, were excluded from this portion of the analysis. See Table 12 for a list of the nine contexts included in the analysis and examples of each. Note that in examples that contain more than one /s/ phoneme, the relevant phone is indicated in bold.

Description of phonetic context	Example
Word-interior /s/ preceding a consonant	*pasta* ['pas.ta]
Word-final /s/ followed by a word beginning with a consonant	*los dientes* [los. 'dien.tes]
Syllable-final /s/ before pause	*las* [las##]
Word-final /s/ followed by a word beginning with a stressed vowel	*los otros* [lo. 'so.tɾos]
Word-final /s/ followed by a word beginning with an unstressed vowel	*las escaleras* [la. ses.ka. 'le. ɾas]
Word-initial /s/ preceded by a vowel and followed by a stressed vowel	*y solo* [i. 'so.lo]
Word-initial /s/ preceded by a vowel and followed by an unstressed vowel	*a su* [a.su]
Word-interior /s/ preceded by a vowel and followed by a stressed vowel	*azul* [a. 'sul]
Word-interior /s/ preceded by a vowel and followed by an unstressed vowel	*cocinar* [ko.si. 'naɾ]

TABLE 12. Description and Examples of Phonetic Contexts Included in Analysis of /s/

As with the /s/, the researcher identified tokens of velarized /n/based on careful and multiple instances of listening to the recordings. Cases of velarized /n/ due to assimilation of place of articulation to the following velar segment were not included in the count of tokens of velarized /n/, since such a phenomenon is common to all dialects of Spanish. Only those tokens of velarized /n/ that occurred between a vowel, a pause or a non-velar consonant were included in this analysis. As will be seen in Chapter 4, there were only a handful of children that produced the velarized /n/ in such contexts, and of these, none did so with the consistency or regularity necessary to be considered a dialect feature.

3.4. SUMMARY. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, certain aspects of the methodology of this dissertation were more challenging than others, due to the lack of research on dialect contact between Spanish speaking children in Los Angeles. In particular, those elements that are common to any dialect contact study, such as identifying task types and selecting materials were relatively straightforward. Decisions relating to defining the sample and creating materials such as the flashcards for the lexical identification task and online language attitude task, however, proved more challenging since little was known about the details of the language contact that takes place in Los Angeles. As will be seen in the following chapter, the many adjustments that had to be made to the sample criteria indicate that this dissertation has only just begun to understand the phenomenon of dialect contact among children in Los Angeles.

IV. Results

This chapter will present the findings of each of the linguistic tasks completed, discuss factors that may have affected their outcomes and offer some reflections as to their implications. Throughout the course of the study, numerous modifications were made, particularly with regard to the criteria for defining the sample population. These, as well as other challenges encountered while recruiting subjects, conducting the study and when analyzing the results, will be explained in detail as they not only affect the outcome of this dissertation but could also help facilitate future research by raising awareness of such issues.

4.1. STUDY MODIFICATIONS

4.1.1. SAMPLE CRITERIA. Like any quantitative study, the validity of the present study depends greatly on the size of the sample population, both in terms of total numbers as well as containing the minimum quantity of subjects for each combination of variables, since it is impossible to determine the statistical significance of results without the proper numbers of subjects. As mentioned in the previous chapter, subject recruitment proved to be somewhat of a challenge. To begin with, it should be noted that the fifth grade classes of all of the after school programs participating were the smallest, usually consisting of no more than 20 students. Of these 20, only about two thirds spoke Spanish at a level of fluency necessary to complete the tasks. Furthermore, of these remaining students who were eligible to participate in the study, the majority were of Mexican descent, even in the schools located in Central American

neighborhoods.[24] Those who were of Central American origin were often either Guatemalan or Salvadoran. However, many of the Salvadoran subjects were of mixed origin, with one parent of either Mexican or Guatemalan origin and, based on the subject selection criteria originally developed, these had to be eliminated from the sample. As a result, sample sizes at each school were rather small and, moreover, included very few numbers of Central Americans. The great difficulties that the researcher encountered in obtaining subjects that fit the original criteria, especially considering that she began the study at schools in the Central American neighborhoods, those in which it should have been easiest to find Central American subjects, led her to realize that it would be necessary to make numerous changes both to enlarge the size of the pool from which subjects could be selected and to increase the number of Central American subjects. Consequently, the number of schools per neighborhood was increased from two to four, for a grand total of eight schools rather than the original four, and fourth graders were also included. In addition, the researcher eliminated the criterion that both parents be from the same country. This made it possible to include in the study Salvadoran children with one non-Salvadoran parent. Although these were considerable modifications that may affect the study results, they were deemed necessary since a lack of sufficient numbers of subjects would have brought into question the study results. As will be seen in the discussion of task results that is found at the end of this chapter, it is highly unlikely that the changes made had much of an effect on the overall findings.

[24] Although it was true that more Central American children attended schools in Central American neighborhoods than in Mexican neighborhoods, they nevertheless comprised less than half of the fifth grade after school program population.

When the researcher finished carrying out the study at the four schools in the Central American Westlake District and began field work in the Mexican neighborhood of East LA, she discovered that additional changes would be necessary, again due to difficulties in obtaining qualified subjects. This time the issue was a combination of generation and degree of fluency. Unlike in the Westlake District, where students were mainly second generation, about half of the children attending schools in East LA were of third generation or beyond and, as a result, spoke very little or no Spanish. After spending twice the time at a single East LA school and barely finding half of the number of subjects as at the other sites, the researcher realized that it would be best to conduct fieldwork in a primarily Mexican neighborhood that did not have such established historical roots as East LA. Although almost all of the literature on Hispanic communities in Los Angeles cites East LA as the quintessential Mexican neighborhood, the great differences in generation between said area and the Westlake District made it extremely difficult to compare subjects from both neighborhoods, let alone find fluent Spanish speakers in a neighborhood where families have lived for four and five generations. Consequently, the researcher found it necessary to locate another region, within the jurisdiction of the LAUSD,[25] which was primarily Mexican but was home to a more recently-arrived immigrant population. Relying on personal observation, demographic information from the Census and school population profiles by ethnicity, she identified the areas of Huntington Park and Vernon as suitable for her study. After obtaining the permission of the program director of an after school program that had sites in both areas, the researcher was able to carry out her field work at four schools in those areas. The ease with which she was able to find Spanish-speaking subjects, with

[25] It was necessary to stay within the LAUSD because 1) that was what UCLA IRB had approved and 2) there was no time to apply for permission to conduct research in a different school district.

respect to the difficulty that she encountered in the East LA schools, supported her suspicions that, although it may have been an ideal place to conduct research on Spanish speakers in the 1970s and 1980s, East LA is not so any longer. The earlier choice made to expand the study to include four schools per neighborhood was also supported at this time since the total number of Central American subjects from the Mexican neighborhoods met the minimum but did not exceed it.

This dissertation, as it had originally been conceived, was designed to explore the effect of three different variables on subjects' convergence with the production and attitudes of LAVS speakers: national origin, generation and school neighborhood (primarily Mexican vs. primarily Central American). As seen with the need to change the Mexican neighborhood from East LA to an area with more recently-arrived immigrants, as well as the overwhelming majority of second generation participants in the sites located in Central American neighborhoods, the strong correlation between generation and language maintenance requires that generation be eliminated as a variable for this particular study. As will be discussed further in Chapter 5, the fact that generation cannot be used as a variable in the present dissertation, due to practical considerations, does not eliminate it as a variable that could prove significant. On the contrary, the inability to include it in this study leads to an even greater necessity to examine its effects in a future study. Until its significance is determined, studying the effects of generation should be a priority for research on dialect contact in Los Angeles. As a look at the information regarding subjects in this study demonstrates, there are children of third generation in Los Angeles who speak Spanish with a considerable degree of fluency. The issue is that there are not many of them at any one school. Consequently, just as the present study was expanded to eight different sites in order to obtain sufficient numbers, a study investigating the effects of generation would most

likely have to be conducted at two or three times more sites in order to obtain a large enough sample of fluent third generation speakers. Provided that a researcher has this knowledge prior to submitting her research proposal and obtaining the necessary permissions, this should be quite feasible.

4.1.2. STUDY PROCEDURES. A few small changes were also made with respect to study procedures, mainly as they pertained to the picture description, story narration and lexical identification tasks. The modifications made were minor and, in all cases, were made as the study was being conducted—momentary reactions to particular situations. One of these was the decision to allow subjects to describe a picture once without being recorded and then a second time with the recorder on. All speech produced in this manner was entirely that of the subject, differing only in terms of the confidence and (sometimes) the speed with which it was produced. Given the limited number of subjects eligible to participate in the study, using the abovementioned strategy was essential since it allowed those children who were a little more hesitant or reserved to feel more relaxed in an intimidating situation. As stated in Chapter 1, in Los Angeles Spanish is an ethnic language that is usually reserved for familiar contexts with relatives or friends. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that some children might be reluctant to speak the language on school grounds, in the presence of an adult they do not know, in order to complete some unfamiliar tasks all while being audio recorded.

When in the design stages of the lexical identification task it was decided that subjects would be instructed to identify each image in Spanish and subsequently be asked to say any other words they used to refer to the object shown. They would then receive points for each answer given, two points being assigned to a first response of Mexican origin, one being assigned to a

second response of Mexican origin and none being given for a response of Central American origin. When conducting the study, however, the researcher realized that children rarely knew more than one word for the same item. Consequently, the plan to assign points for secondary or subsequent replies was abandoned, and only first responses were scored. The researcher also found that adjectives were much more challenging to elicit than nouns and, as a result, ended up treating as nouns the two images that depicted adjectives. A more detailed discussion of these aspects of the study and any effects they may have had on the task outcomes will be found later in this chapter.

4.2. RESULTS. The purpose of the tasks of which this dissertation consists is to measure the degree to which subjects converge with both the linguistic production and social evaluations of LAVS speakers. Results of the study will be presented in two parts, corresponding to the linguistic dimensions that they measure. Beginning with the production portion of the study, the challenges or concerns related to each particular task will be discussed, as well as general comments regarding their effectiveness, appropriateness and children's reactions to them. Since the analysis of the phonetic variables syllable-final /s/ and /n/ was based on subjects' realization of these phonemes across all three production tasks, findings will be reported with respect to the independent variables (subjects' national origin and school neighborhood) or even individual subjects as opposed to the particular task. A description of the statistical treatment of the data regarding the subjects' phonetic production will follow. Turning next to the lexical dimension of the study, the results from the lexical identification task will be presented. These will include a description of the statistical analyses to which the data were subject and a discussion of the

insights that these may reveal with respect to the significance of the two independent variables being investigated.

The results of subjects' convergence with the social evaluations of LAVS speakers will be the focus of the following section. This part of the dissertation will open with an explanation of the results of the quantitative portion of the language attitude task, which includes children's responses to the forced-choice preference questions as well as the ratings they assigned to both dialects of Spanish (Mexican and Salvadoran Spanish). Next there will be a description of the statistical treatment to which data obtained from these questions was subjected as well as an explanation of the results of these analyses. The final part of this section will consist of a qualitative analysis of children's explanations as to why they preferred one speaker over another.

4.2.1. OVERVIEW OF PRODUCTION TASKS

TASK 1: PICTURE DESCRIPTION. Although, to a linguist, a picture description task may seem like a very straightforward activity, children's reactions when asked to describe the pictures shown them suggested that the task was neither natural nor familiar to them. Rather than simply asking children to describe the scene in front of them, the researcher had to be much more specific and instruct them to identify objects in the picture and indicate activities the people were engaged in. As mentioned in the discussion of study procedures (Chapter 3), subjects were encouraged to provide as complete descriptions as possible, and those who spoke little were urged by the researcher to keep speaking. She did this silently by pointing to different characters in the drawing. She did, nevertheless, stop when it became clear that the children were ready to move on. While the task itself was somewhat challenging for some subjects, the scenes used proved to be level-appropriate, sufficiently complex and even a little entertaining.

TASK 2: STORY NARRATION. A story narration task complemented the above-described picture description task. It was chosen in order to elicit longer stretches of speech with a greater variety of grammar and vocabulary. The story selected was that of the Little Red Riding Hood. Although great care was taken in selecting a story that would be familiar to Spanish speakers of various cultures, there were still a handful of subjects who had never heard this fairy tale. In such cases, they were asked to simply invent a story to go along with the scenes they saw, a task that they were able to complete with ease. Based on their reactions, it seems clear that all subjects considered this a more difficult task than the picture description activity, perhaps due to the less common vocabulary required.[26] Although children would often complete the picture description task with little or no hesitation, many of them refused to do the story narration task. A few of them did agree to narrate the story after having successfully completed the lexical identification task and, presumably, feeling more confident in their Spanish-speaking abilities.

TASK 3: LEXICAL IDENTIFICATION. As noted in the discussion of study procedures presented earlier in this chapter, this particular task underwent a number of small, unanticipated changes. These concerned those images that represented adjectives rather than nouns. The two adjectives used, *blond* and *dirty*, differ greatly in Salvadoran versus Mexican Spanish, hence the decision to include them. Furthermore, since both refer to physical characteristics, it was expected that they would be relatively easy to elicit. A picture of several children of different ages, sexes and races, some of which were light-haired, was used for *blond*, and an image of a filthy stray dog was selected to represent the concept of *dirty*. When the researcher began conducting the study with

[26] The need to narrate in the past tense may also have been another factor, but it should be noted that, although most children did narrate the story in the past tense, not all of them did so, some opting for the present.

the first subjects, however, she found that, even when prompting them to describe the children's physical characteristics or the dog's appearance, she was, for the most part, unable to elicit adjectives. For this reason, the two adjectives were eliminated from the word list. The flashcards depicting them, however, were kept and used, in the hopes that they might elicit other regional lexical items and because they would elicit more speech in general.

4.2.2. FACTORS AFFECTING REALIZATION OF IMPLOSIVE /S/.

DIALECT CLASSIFICATION. Aspiration of syllable-final /s/ is a phonetic characteristic that is used to distinguish *tierras bajas* countries like El Salvador from the highland areas of Mexico, that form part of the *tierras altas*. The reduction of postnuclear and even prevocalic /s/ in Salvadoran speech has been documented widely (Canfield 1981, Lipski 1985, Lipski 1994, Quesada Pacheco 1996, etc.). This phenomenon is found throughout the entire country, although the eastern regions have been noted to aspirate more than the center and west (Azcúnaga 2010: 108). Mexico, as a whole, is typically classified as a *tierras altas*, i.e. non-aspirating, region, although some of its coastal inhabitants do reduce syllable- and word-final /s/ on a systematic basis. Lope Blanch states that, although examples of aspiration can be found throughout Mexico, this is only a definitive feature in certain coastal regions: 'Veracruz, Tabasco y parte de Campeche en el Golfo de México; costa de Chiapas, Oaxaca y de Guerrero, así como de Sinaloa y Sonora del Pacífico' (2004: 15). Lipski (1994: 280) has also made a similar observation, stating that in 'much of rural northwestern Mexico, including the state of Sonora (e.g. Brown 1989), part of Sinaloa and Baja California Sur (Hidalgo 1990b, López Chávez 1997), /s/ is reduced, at rates comparable to parts of Central America, e.g. Honduras and El Salvador.' Moreno de Alba adds to this list 'isolated inland pockets of reduction in the rural areas of Nuevo León, southern

Tamaulipas and Chihuahua' (as cited in Aaron and Hernández 2007: 33). El Salvador, on the other hand, forms part of the *tierras bajas* region, and its dialect, along with those of Nicaragua and Honduras, is characterized by aspiration of syllable- and word-final /s/ (Lipski 2000: 75). Rather than being limited to certain regions of the country as it is in Honduras, reduction of syllable- and word-final /s/in El Salvador is correlated with the urban vs. rural distinction of speakers (Lipski 2000: 75). Although a Central American country, Guatemala, on the other hand, maintains syllable-final /s, the only exceptions being those areas 'along the border with El Salvador, along the Pacific coast and near the border with Belize' where 'a slight weakening of preconsonantal /s/ [is] found' (Lipski 2008: 184).

LINGUISTIC FACTORS. A number of linguistic factors have been found to influence the reduction of coda /s/ including preceding and following phonological environment (Brown 2004, Aaron and Hernández 2007), word class (Terrell 1979), word stress (Lipski 1985), grammatical function (Terrell 1979), and position within a word (Terrell 1979, Brown 2004; Aaron and Hernández 2007, etc.). Given the likelihood that only the most prominent factors will have an effect in situations of dialect contact like the one in Los Angeles, this analysis focuses on those factors that have proven most significant: preceding and following phonological environment. Lipski (1985: 145) states that the word-final preconsonantal position most favors reduction, explaining that even among the most phonologically conservative dialects of Central America (those of Costa Rica and Guatemala), there is 'a decided tendency to weaken word-final preconsonantal /s/.' He also affirms that 'The rate of aspiration may be somewhat lower before vowels than before consonants, and rate of deletion even lower; moreover, the presence of a stressed vowel following the /s/ may be a more potent impediment to weakening than an

unstressed vowel (Lipski 1985: 146). Results from Aaron and Hernández's (2007) study of the realization of /s/ among Salvadoran immigrants in Houston, as well as García and Tallon's article on postnuclear /s/ in San Antonio Spanish, both demonstrated that the following phonological environment was the most significant factor in constraining production of implosive /s/, with the preceding phonological rating second in the Houston Salvadoran study. Given the similarities between the subjects in the Houston study and this one, the same linguistic variables were selected for analysis: following and preceding segments. The four types of segments identified were vowel, consonant, glide, and pause.

SOCIAL FACTORS. Turning next to the social aspects of the reduced pronunciation, we see that Terrell (1979: 599) states that, in general, such phenomena are 'socially and stylistically stratified.' In a situation of dialect contact like that found Los Angeles, prestige also plays a major role in realization of syllable-final /s/. According to Otheguy and Zentella (2012: 115), 'there can be little doubt that when Spanish is taken as a whole, and when speakers from different native lects come together as they do in New York, weakened coda /s/ … is the less prestigious alternative.' The literature on this topic appears to confirm this observation, offering evidence that new arrivals produce greater amounts of reduced /s/ tokens than immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for a longer amount of time. In their study of the immigrant Salvadorans of Houston, Aaron and Hernández (2007: 339) find age of arrival to be 'the most influential factor in distributional patterns of /s/ distribution' in said community, the older groups favoring reduction and the younger ones 'us[ing] a fully realized /s/ almost exclusively.' Since the present study focuses on children, rather than adults, an additional social variable not yet considered in the literature, school neighborhood, either separately or interacting with child's national origin, is

hypothesized to effect realization of the implosive /s/. In light of the strong influence that age of arrival and social stratification[27] have been documented to have on this phenomenon, these variables are also included as independent variables in the regression analyses that were carried out. Since most of the children participating in the study were born in the U.S., the age of arrival variable referred to that of the parents, rather than the children. Social stratification was determined with respect to the highest level of education parents completed in their countries of origin.

4.2.3. REGRESSION MODELS. The goal of this portion of the dissertation is to evaluate the hypothesis that the speech and attitudes of Spanish-speaking children raised in Los Angeles, regardless of parents' national origin, will converge with the linguistic production and social evaluations of LAVS speakers. In particular, we are interested in determining the effect that two independent variables, subjects' national origin and the primary national origin of the neighborhood in which the subject's school was located, referred to as *school neighborhood*, for short, have on the following dependent variables: 1) phonetic realizations of the syllable- and word-final /s/ and /n/, 2) choice of Mexican versus Central American lexical items and 3) dialect preferences and ratings. [28] In cases such as this, in which we are interested in predicting an outcome based on certain predictor variables, it is common to use logistic regression analysis.

[27] As Lipski (1985:146) points out, /s/ reduction 'is conditioned by conversational style and rapidity of speech.' In this study style was controlled for since all subjects carried out the picture description tasks under similar conditions: a setting on the school grounds with the same researcher. Furthermore, although slight differences in the speed of children's speech may exist, the pace at which they spoke was, for the most part, the same.

[28] Although the original study was designed to examine a third variable, generation, the difficulty encountered in finding fluent subjects of third generation or greater among the children participating in after school programs at the schools selected precluded this possibility.

Logistic regression analysis is used often in the social sciences to determine the relationship that exists between independent variables and a particular outcome. It does so by using the data provided to estimate a constant or base-line value for a particular dependent variable and then creates a statistical model in the form of an equation that will allow one to determine to what extent changes in a certain independent variable will affect the value of the dependent variable if all other variables are maintained constant. Calculating regressions can be done using most statistical software packages. The ones for this study were carried out using Stata IC12. Three different types of regression models were used throughout the dissertation depending on characteristics of the outcome variable: poisson, logit, and mlogit.

As with all statistical analysis, there are certain challenges as well as risks associated with applying logistic regression analyses. There are two factors that can greatly reduce the reliability of or even preclude the possibility of subjecting data to this type of analysis: small sample size, small number of events per explaining variable, where an event refers to the occurrences of the less frequent outcome, and collinearity, i.e. large overlap in the outcome of two different variables, which can bias the results. The issues of small sample and event sizes are factors that undoubtedly affected this study, although every effort was made to address them. As explained earlier, overall sample size was increased by doubling the number of sites where subjects were recruited, as well as by expanding sample criteria to include 4th graders and children of Guatemalan origin. Event size, however, was much more difficult to address due to various circumstances (difficulty in obtaining biographical information from parents, the overwhelming number of Mexicans compared to Central Americans in Los Angeles, etc.). When collinearity was detected, Stata 12IC automatically removed the relevant variables from the analysis. It is also important to note that, although logistic regression analysis does indicate the existence of

correlations between a particular outcome and certain independent variables, this cannot be interpreted as causality. In other words, even though, for instance, having a mother of Central American origin is correlated with an increased likelihood of using the word *pacha*, it is not possible to prove that it causes a child to employ this lexeme.

Logistic regression analysis was initially applied in order to measure the relationship between the percentage of aspirated tokens produced and the two variables that are the focus of the hypotheses presented in this dissertation: child's national origin and school neighborhood. Other explanatory variables cited in the literature as having a significant effect on children's speech were also included in the models. These include the subjects' age, gender, first language, years of bilingual schooling, the presence of grandparents in the home, the frequency of visits to the family's country of origin, the parents' highest level of education, the child's generation, and the parents' age of arrival. Descriptions of these variables and their values are presented in Table 13.

Independent variables	
Primary	
School neighborhood	1=Mexican, 0=Central American
Home dialect classification	1=*tierras bajas* dialect spoken in home, 2= *tierras altas* spoken in home
Secondary	
Gender	1=female, 0=male
First language	1=Spanish, 2=English, 3=bilingual
Presence of grandparents	1=1+ grandparents present in home, 0=none present in home
Frequency of visits	1=at least 1visit to family's country of origin, 0=never visited

Parents' level of education	1=high school or above,[29] 0=less than high school
Child's generation	1=both parents born abroad, 0=1 parent born in US and 1 abroad
Parents' age of arrival	1= arrived 0-14 years old, 2=arrived 15-25, 3=arrived 26+
Child's national origin	1=Central American mother, 0=Mexican mother

TABLE 13. Independent Variables

In order to best determine which variables to include in the regressions, a general-to-specific modeling strategy was used. This entailed starting with a model that included all of the variables in question, eliminating variables one by one, and then examining the AIC (the Akaike Information Criterion), an estimate which helps decide how many parameters to include in a model, weighing the balance between model complexity and the quantity of information that is lost when excluding variables (Cavanaugh 2012).

Obtaining the relevant information for some of these variables (parents' education and age of arrival, etc.) was difficult in some cases, due to the lack of contact between the researcher and the parents. As a result, some of these values are missing. Since there is no way of recovering this information and it could bias the results, no attempt was made to estimate values or substitute them with mean values.[30]

Due to the complications arising from including some children whose parents were *tierras altas* speakers who aspirated the /s/ and some whose parents were *tierras bajas* speakers and did not, a few modifications were made to the hypothesis regarding the effect of subjects' national origin on their realization of syllable-final /s/. The original supposition that a child's

[29] In cases where parents' levels of education differed, this value was calculated based on that of the parent with the highest level of education.

[30] Stata 12IC automatically eliminates missing values when calculating logistic regressions.

national origin could influence her realization of the /s/ phoneme was based on the assumption that her parents would speak a dialect that reduced the /s/ if they were born in Central American countries or would speak a variety that maintained the /s/ if their place of birth was a highland region of Mexico. In essence, the factor of subjects' national origin was assumed to correlate directly with subjects' exposure to an aspirating versus a non-aspirating dialect of Spanish. Since this did not turn out to be the case (due to the changes made to sample selection criteria), it became necessary to reconceive of this one independent variable with respect to the pronunciation of syllable-final /s/ only.[31] The new variable that replaced national origin was the equivalent to exposure in the home to an aspirating dialect of Spanish. Since Mexicans from Sinaloa have been documented to aspirate and Guatemalans generally do not, two new categories were established. Subjects who had been exposed to aspirating dialects included Mexicans with at least one parent who hailed from Sinaloa and all subjects with at least one parent who was from any Central American country except for Guatemala. Those who had not had such exposure included subjects whose parents had been born in other parts of Mexico or in Guatemala. Apart from the Poisson regression for aspiration of /s/ described in the following paragraph, all other regressions (logit and mlogit) were carried out using the variable national origin, which was determined based on the parents' countries of birth.

The results of the regression analyses presented in this dissertation will include information regarding the particular type of analysis used, the coefficients (the effects of the different independent variables), the standard error, and the significance of the values given (the

[31] With respect to production of other linguistic features (pronunciation of syllable-final /n/ and regional lexical items, Central American origin correlated directly with *tierras bajas* features and Mexican with *tierras altas* features, so there was no need to reformulate the national origin variable.

p value). When regression analyses are not possible, a discussion of the reasons why will be presented as well as numerical data regarding percentage of use and other relevant figures.

4.2.4. IMPLOSIVE /S/. In Table 14 we see the descriptive statistics that are generated the percentage of /s/ maintenance of this population. Reading from left to right we see the number of observations (Obs), the average percentage for the entire population (Mean), the amount of variation from the average percentage (Std. Dev.), and the minimum and maximum values recorded for this group. This small amount of data actually reveals a considerable quantity of information about these children. To begin with, we see that, out of a large sample, 160 subjects, the average percentage of /s/ maintenance was 99%. When we examine the standard deviation in order to see how uniform these percentages were with respect to the entire sample, we find that this number is very low, 1.8, indicating that there was little difference between the mean percentage and those generated by the entire sample. Furthermore, when examining the minimum and maximum values of percentage of aspiration, we see that the highest percentage was 100%, and the lowest was 91%, which is differs considerably from those one might expect from Spanish speakers in Central American *tierras bajas* regions, as will be seen later on. In general, we see that the percentages of aspirated tokens found in these children's speech samples are very high and, furthermore, that these large numbers are found across the board.

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Percentage of implosive /s/ maintenance	160	99.3743	1.8107	91.3793	100

TABLE 14. Descriptive Statistics for Variable Representing Percentage of Implosive /s/ Maintenance

Turning next to Figure 1, a histogram for the same variable, we can see the exact distribution of these children's production of aspirated allophones. In this graphical representation of the data, the percentages of coronal [s] realizations are shown on the X axis, while the Y axis presents the number of students who maintained /s/ as a coronal fricative at the particular ratio indicated. Not only does it show that this population tended to maintain the /s/, as the descriptive statistics suggested, but it also indicates clearly that the majority of this population did not generate a single aspirated token. This means that these most of the subjects always produced the coronal fricative[32] in syllable-final and word-final positions, a characteristic of *tierras altas* dialects.

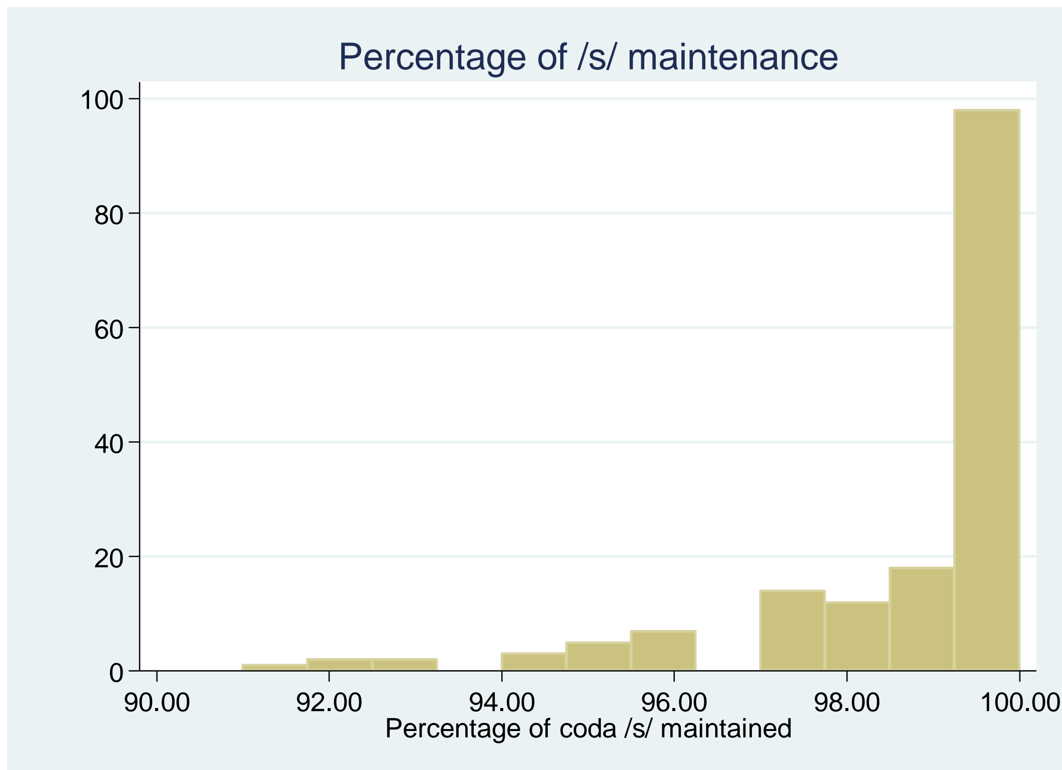

FIGURE 1. Histogram of Percentage of Maintenance of Coronal [s]

[32] Both voiced and voiceless coronal fricatives, [s] and [z], are considered instances of /s/ maintenance.

These data regarding children's pronunciations of syllable- and word-final /s/ were used to estimate a regression model in order to determine whether the two variables hypothesized to influence /s/ maintenance were statistically significant. The particular type of model chosen was based on the nature of the dependent variable, the number of tokens of aspirated /s/ produced. Since this variable is a function of the number of total /s/ allophones a child produced in the recordings of both production tasks, it was necessary to use a Poisson regression model, which deals with outcome variables that are ratios, in this case, the percentages of syllable- and word-final /s/ that are not reduced.

Results from the Poisson regression for aspiration of /s/ revealed that neither the children's home dialect classification nor school neighborhood produced a significant effect in the percentage of coronal tokens of /s/ produced by the children. This means that in the model that was estimated for the outcome observed in the data produced by this sample, neither of these two variables had a significant effect at the $p<0.05$ level. Before discarding completely the hypothesis that these variables are not relevant for predicting maintenance of syllable-final /s/, two other sources of information were examined: 1) the results of t-tests comparing the mean values produced by the two different groups distinguished by such variables and 2) the data themselves.

Results from a two-sample t-test indicate that at least one of the hypotheses proposed may not have been completely incorrect. In particular, the outcome of the t-test revealed that the variable of home dialect classification led to a significant difference ($p <0.02$) in mean percentages of /s/ maintenance. This means that, with respect to maintenance of /s/, the amount of coronal allophones produced by those children who were exposed to an aspirating dialect in the home DID differ significantly from that produced by subjects who were exposed to dialects in

which the /s/ was always maintained. In other words, the results of the t-test (but not the Poisson regression) indicate that there is a difference between the rates of aspiration of children whose parents spoke *tierras altas* dialects and those whose parents were speakers of *tierras bajas* dialects. When we look at the actual rates presented below in Table 15, we see that the two means are extremely high, 100% and 99%, respectively. However, this is not surprising given the distribution of the rates of aspiration. Recalling the histogram of aspiration rates on page 145, we know that this variable was not distributed normally. In order to account for the possibility that the results of the t-test shown in Table 15 may be affected by this uneven distribution, a Mann-Whitney test was used.[33] Results of this test also confirm the presence of a significant difference between the two groups with respect to percentage of /s/ aspiration. This indicates that children whose parents speak a home dialect that maintains the /s/ produce more coronal tokens than those whose parents reduce it.[34] However, both groups produce very high rates of the coronal fricative [s]. Moreover, when looking at the nature of the aspirated tokens produced by children whose parents speak a *tierras bajas* dialect, we observe that these pronunciations are sporadic and lack the systematicity that one would expect in the case of rule-governed aspiration.[35]

[33] The non-parametric analog of the t-test, this type of analysis is used when the outcome variable is not normally distributed i.e. is not symmetric.

[34] While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to explain how such a (seemingly) slight difference could prove significant, it should be noted that the slightly higher percentages of aspirated tokens produced by children raised in homes where a *tierras bajas* dialect is spoken could be attributed to the lexicalization of aspiration in isolated words, a phenomenon that most likely does not occur in the speech of children who are solely exposed to *tierras altas* dialects. Moreover, since most of the offspring of *tierras altas* dialect speakers do not produce any aspiration at all, the fact that the children of *tierras bajas* speakers generate even a few aspirated tokens might be sufficient to create a difference of "no aspiration" versus "some aspiration."

[35] It is also important to note that when they reach adolescence, these same subjects will most likely have eliminated even these few cases of sporadic aspiration, excluding instances of lexicalization. This prediction is based on data obtained from Parodi's (2003, 2004, 2011) research with adult native Angelenos of Central American heritage.

2-Sample T-Test, unequal variances				
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	SE Mean
Non-aspirating home dialect	115	100	1.5	.14
Aspirating home dialect	45	99	2.4	.36

t-value: 2.3 *p*-value: 0.02 DF: 57

TABLE 15. Results of t-Test Comparing Mean Percentages by Home Dialect (*Tierras Altas* vs. *Tierras Bajas*)

When a t-test was carried out using the variable *school neighborhood*, however, the difference in means (99.2 vs. 99.5) was not found to be significant ($p = 0.5$). In other words, the discrepancy in the average rates of /s/ maintenance for children attending schools in Mexican vs. Central American neighborhoods could easily be due to chance. With respect to this study, this means that the hypothesis that *school neighborhood* has a significant effect on /s/ variation was not supported at the $p < .05$ confidence level. When we examine the data for each subject, we find further confirmation of this outcome. If *school neighborhood* had influenced subjects' realizations of syllable-final /s/, one would expect greater percentages of aspiration among children attending schools in Central American neighborhoods than among those whose schools were located in Mexican areas. This, however, was not the case. The rates of /s/ maintenance generated by children attending schools in Mexican neighborhoods were basically no different than those produced by children who go to schools located in Central American parts of town.

Given the additional confirmation of the t-test results, we must conclude that the variable school neighborhood does not have a significant effect on rate of /s/ variation produced attested in the speech of this sample of children. This result provides strong evidence that children

accommodate to the *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish to which they are exposed in school and the rest of the community regardless of their classmates' home dialect.

The results of the t-test shown in Table 15 prompted a more thorough examination of the data of those individuals who generated the lower percentages of /s/ maintenance in order to determine whether they shared certain characteristics (presence of grandparents in the home, frequent visits to the family's country of origin, etc.) that prevented their complete adoption of this feature. When doing so, an unexpected finding emerged, namely, the discovery that not all of the children who generated the lowest rates of maintenance had been exposed to aspirating dialects of Spanish in the home.[36] Three of them had at least one parent that was from the Central American countries of El Salvador and Nicaragua and two others were the offspring of at least one parent from Sinaloa, Mexico, all considered *tierras bajas* regions.[37] Nevertheless, three other subjects who were among the producers of the highest numbers of tokens of aspiration were the children of Mexicans from non-aspirating regions: Guadalajara, the mountains of Oaxaca (Huajapan de León) and Guatemala/Puebla (the mother was from Guatemala and the father from Puebla). In fact, some of them generated lower rates of /s/ maintenance than some of the children of Salvadoran parents. As a result of the unexpected nature of these findings, the transcriptions of the recordings produced were confirmed by two Hispanic linguists, each of whom listened to the recordings independently of one another.

[36] As mentioned earlier, this determination was based solely on information from the biographical questionnaire completed by subjects' parents. Parents originating in *tierras bajas* regions, where aspiration has been documented in the literature, were presumed to speak an aspirating dialect, while those from *tierras altas* regions were not.

[37] The researcher spoke with the primary caretakers of the two children of Sinaloan background and was able to confirm the aspiration in their speech.

Given the extremely high rates of /s/ maintenance generated by the Central American children of parents who report coming from regions whose dialects are characterized by aspiration, it is important to ask whether we are justified in assuming that the Spanish these subjects are exposed to in the home are varieties that aspirate the /s/. In the absence of speech samples from the parents, we turn to the literature in order to identify those factors that most favor dialect maintenance. Some of the most recent research on immigrant Salvadoran communities in the western United States indicates that age of exposure (in the case of adults) is the most influential factor in maintaining the *tierras bajas* phonological system, which includes aspiration of syllable-final /s/ (Parodi 2011, Aaron and Hernández 2007). Parodi (2011: 233) states that, 'En términos generales, los hablantes de la primera generación—que inmigraron a Los Ángeles en la adolescencia o después—mantienen la pronunciación de su dialecto original,' remarking that, 'la aspiración de /s/ en posición final de palabra o sílaba suele ser más suave y sobre todo menos frecuente que en El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Cuba o Perú.' Aaron and Hernández (2007: 339), who examined /s/ reduction among immigrant Salvadorans in Houston, state that 'full /s/ realization tends to increase as the age of arrival in each group decreases…' They further explain that 'those who arrived as young adults (15-25) slightly favor reduction at .69, while the oldest group (26+) highly favors reduction at .92' (339). Consequently, we see that immigrants who arrive in the U.S. as adults (past the age of 26) tend to maintain syllable- and word-final /s/ reduction as a phonetic feature. Furthermore, as Parodi points out (2011: 233), phonetic variation is not stigmatized in LAVS.

When comparing the percentage of reduced /s/ tokens produced by the Angeleno children with those that one would expect from a speaker from an aspirating dialect of Central America, it is evident that the former is quite low. According to Lipski (2000: 87), the minimum percentage

of aspiration of syllable-/word-final /s/ for the context that least favors aspiration (word-final before a consonant) in Salvadoran speech is 10%, while percentages for other contexts reach as high as 86%. The highest total percentage for ALL contexts for the three children who produced the highest rates of [h], however, is only 10%. In light of such information, these data demonstrate clearly that, as a whole, children raised in Los Angeles, regardless of their parents' national origin, speak a *tierras altas* dialect of Spanish. It is necessary to examine not only the frequency with which these children produce aspirated tokens but also the consistency with which they did so and how systematic they were in doing so. What are their patterns like with respect to those produced by non-immigrant Central American *tierras bajas* speakers? Do any of them aspirate the /s/ in a systematic manner? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to examine a more detailed analysis of the tokens of aspiration that were generated in order to determine whether they are rule-governed or sporadic pronunciations.

PHONOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT. The great effect that phonological environment been has found to have on /s/maintenance in numerous studies makes this a logical starting point for this more in-depth analysis. In this dissertation, phonological context is defined in terms of following segment (consonant, vowel, glide or pause) and preceding segment (consonant, vowel, glide or pause). Position within a word is also included in this analysis. Results from the analyses based on phonological environment revealed only four contexts in which /s/ reduction occurred more than once. Here it is important to note that no child, regardless of where she was born or where her parents were from, aspirated syllable- or word-final /s/in a systematic manner. This means that there were no contexts in which a subject realized the glottal fricative [h] categorically. The few environments in which children produced any reduced tokens were all word-final, with the

exception of a few instances of reduction in syllable-final positions. The only instances of word-medial aspirations occurred in the words ‘después,’ ‘está,’ and ‘maestra.’ Only the last of these, it is likely that the aspiration of the medial /s/s in ‘después’ and ‘está,’ however, are cases of lexicalization in which the child’s underlying mental representation of the word includes a glottal, rather than a coronal, fricative. The aspiration of /s/ in ‘maestra,’ is probably the only instance of medial /s/ reduction that is not due to lexicalization. Most of the word-final aspirations occurred before sonorants (/l r m n/) and voiceless consonants (/p k /), overwhelmingly prior to the word ‘niño.’ A small number of reduced tokens of /s/ were also realized before unstressed non-high vowels (/a e o/) and before a pause.

Analysis of the pronunciation of coda /s/ among this sample indicates clearly that subjects use a *tierras altas* variety of Spanish, characterized by precisely this maintenance of syllable-final /s/, when speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown. Results of a two-sample t-test reveal significant differences between the mean rate of maintenance of children based on the classification of the home dialect. As Aaron and Hernández (2007) find with their subjects who arrived before the age of 14, syllable- and word-final /s/ aspiration, which is quite salient in most Central American dialects, is lost almost completely in a situation of contact with *tierras altas* varieties. An examination of the contexts in which reduced tokens of /s/ appear most frequently reveals that aspiration does not occur categorically in any phonological environment. Consequently, the few tokens of [h] that these children do produce can only be considered traces of residual aspiration or other processes. These remnants of a feature are sporadic in nature and, hence, not rule-governed. The categorical nature of /s/ maintenance in the speech of two children born in El Salvador who arrived in Los Angeles at ages six and seven, respectively, suggests that the accommodation process occurs extremely rapidly. Contrary to

what one would assume, there are some children of Mexican origin who are among subjects who produce some of the highest percentages of aspirated tokens. Possible explanations for this outcome are discussed in the following chapter.

4.2.5. VELARIZED /N/. The numbers with respect to velarization of /n/ are even more striking than those of aspiration of /s/. Whereas 64 subjects produced one aspirated token of word-medial or word-final /s/, only seven children realized syllable-final /n/ as the velar nasal, [ŋ], at least once. The small numbers of tokens of the velarized /n/ produced by children born in Los Angeles, as well as their uneven distribution with respect to subjects' place of birth, precluded the possibility of even carrying out a statistical analysis of the relevant data. This lack of statistically significant results, however, should not be considered problematic. Since only 7 out of 160 subjects (i.e. 4%) produce any tokens of velarized /n/ at all, it is clear that this cannot be considered a feature of the speech of Spanish-speaking children of Los Angeles. Children who were born in Central America and arrived in the LA area after having attended at least one year of school in their country of origin, however, appear to maintain sporadic remnants of this feature. What follows is a discussion of the tokens of velarization that subjects did produce, along with some information regarding the possible role that factors such as age of arrival and frequency of visits to the family's' country of origin may have played in their production of tokens of velarized /n/.

Although all seven children were of Central American heritage, three of them had been born abroad and did not arrive in Los Angeles until the ages of six and seven. Somewhat surprising, in light of the nearly categorical maintenance of syllable- and word-final /s/, are the differences we find between the number of velar nasals produced by these children and the quantity produced by those born in Los Angeles. The three children who were born in Central America produce percentages of velar /n/ that are much higher than their American-born

classmates. Nevertheless, when these are compared to rates of velarization that have been documented among Salvadorans and Guatemalans born and raised in Central America, they are considerably lower. In his monograph on Salvadoran Spanish, Lipski reports percentages of word-final n velarization for speakers of three different social classes. The rates presented vary from 52-60% for word-final n before a pause and from 71-75% for word-final n followed by a word beginning with a vowel, the lowest percentages belonging to members of the lowest class (2000: 87). When compared with the figures reported for Salvadorans living in the United States, the differences are considerable. The rate of /n/ velarization in Salvadoran speech, for example, has been noted as 23% in Hernández' 2009 study of word-final nasal velarization among Salvadorans residing in the area of San Sebastián, El Salvador (602).

Figure 2 below presents the phonological contexts in which each of these seven subjects produced tokens of velarized /n/. Readers should note that the place of birth of each subject is recorded in the legend located in the right side of the graph. A comparison of the percentages of velarized /n/ produced by each of the seven subjects is presented in Figure 3 immediately following Figure 2.

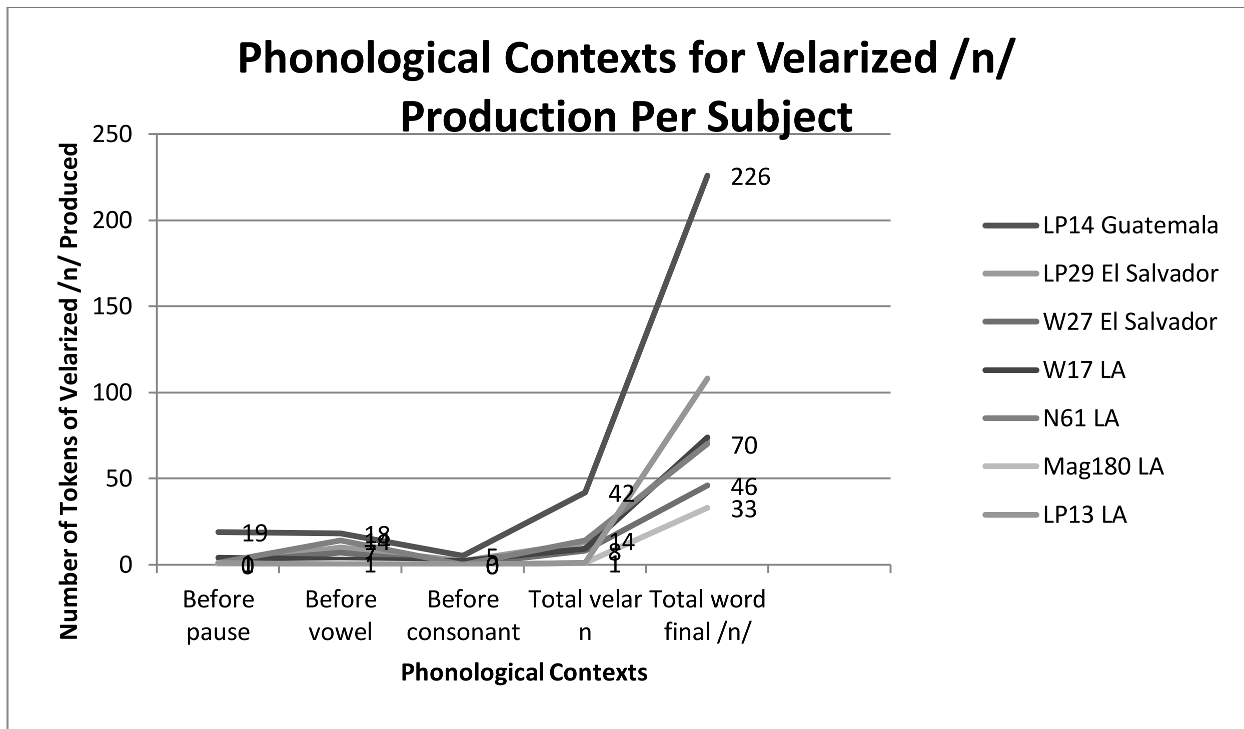

FIGURE 2. Number of Tokens of Velarized /n/ Produced per Subject and Phonological Context

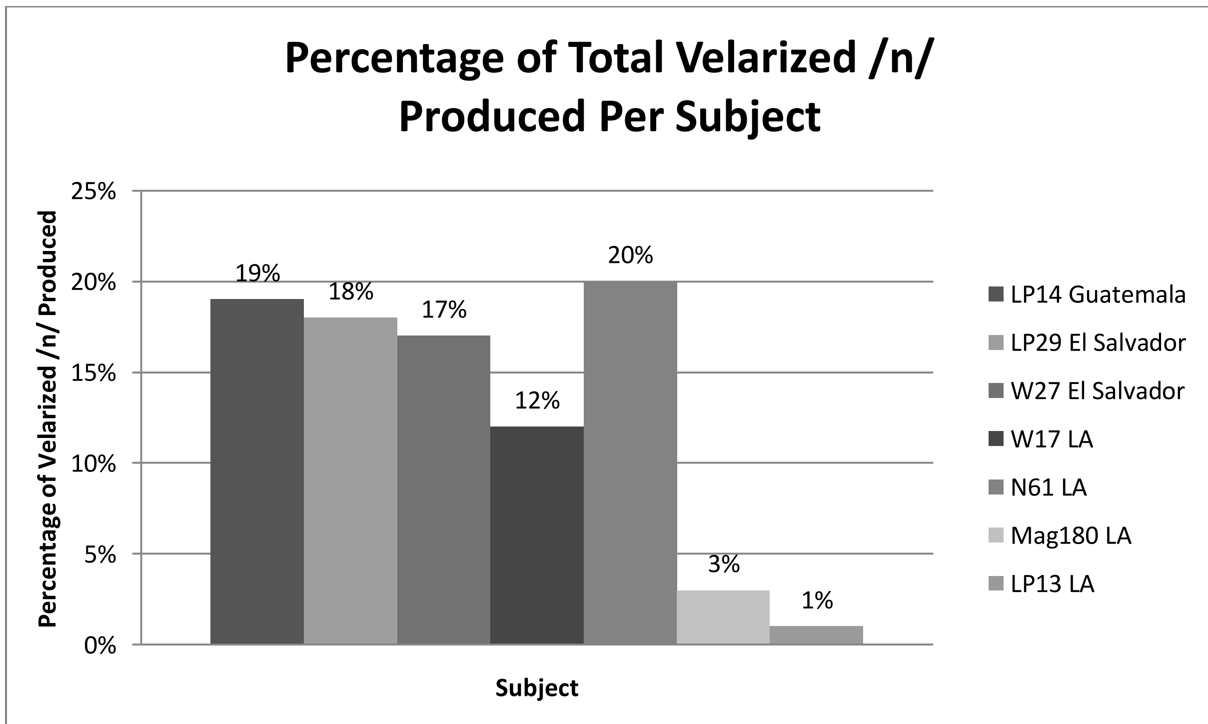

FIGURE 3. Comparison of Percentages of Total Velarized /n/ Produced per Subject

As with reduction of the /s/, we find that this feature is neither categorical nor reaches the frequencies reported for non-immigrant Central Americans. However, it is interesting to note that among the children who do maintain remnants of this feature, these appear to be realized more frequently than do reduced tokens of /s/. Why this might be so is a question that is beyond the scope of this dissertation but interesting nevertheless. When examining the particular phonological contexts in which these pronunciations were generated, we find that all occurred in word-final position, primarily preceding a vowel or non-velar consonant. There were only a few instances of a residual velarized /n/ preceding a pause. A similar pattern, it should be noted, is observed among non-immigrant Salvadorans, who generate a greater percentage of velarized /n/ preceding a vowel than they do in when the /n/ is in syllable-final position (Lipski 2000: 87 *Cuadro* 4). The percentages of velarized /n/ produced by the children ranged from 1 to 20%, considerably lower than those produced by non-immigrant Central Americans, as noted at the beginning of the previous section. Since only seven subjects produced at least one token of the velar nasal, it is difficult to make any generalizations regarding the characteristics of these children that may have led them to produce these remnants of this feature. All six of the subjects who produced tokens of residual velarized /n/ had been exposed to *tierras bajas* dialects, as evidenced by the national origins of their parents. The mothers and fathers of these 6 children were from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala and had all arrived after adolescence, their ages at the time of reaching Los Angeles ranging from 16 to 34.

In the case of the children born in Central America, the percentages indicate that /n/ velarization has been maintained as a dialectal feature, albeit a weak one. With respect to the production of velar /n/ in the speech of two of the children born in LA, however, the percentages are considerably lower, to the point that they can only be considered remnants of velarization

rather than instances of a systematic dialectal feature. The case of N61, another native Angeleno, is surprising since it does not fit the pattern observed thus far by which children born abroad produce the largest percentages of velar /n/ while those born in Los Angeles produced the lowest quantities. Turning to the additional data regarding factors that could influence the child's speech, we find several details that favor the maintenance of features like /n/ velarization. These include having a mother who arrived in Los Angeles at age 29, having contact with four grandparents of Salvadoran origin, one of which still lives in El Salvador, and visiting El Salvador on a regular basis, every three years. These findings on the maintenance of /n/ velarization suggest, but do not confirm, that being born in Central America may be a sufficient condition for producing tokens of this feature. In the case of subjects born in Los Angeles, the data suggests that having parents who arrived in Los Angeles as adults may prevent children from accommodating completely to a categorical pronunciation of alveolar /n/ in word-final position. For these same subjects, visiting a parent's country of origin regularly may also be an important factor, given that one child visited El Salvador once every three years and another traveled to Honduras every year.

Having reviewed the results of all three production tasks, we can return to the original question of whether these subjects, as a whole, have accommodated to the pronunciation and lexicon of LAVS. We have observed that /s/ reduction and /n/ velarization occur only as sporadic remnants of true rule-governed features. However, how do they relate to one another and to the production of regional lexical items? In order to answer these questions we can turn to co-occurrence analysis, which Bell (2010[2001]:48) explains, 'concentrates on the patterning of two or more linguistic features in the flow of speech.' As he points out, this type of interpretation of patterns in the data provides a more complete picture of the identity a speaker is presenting.

Table 16 presents the results of the co-occurrence of reduced tokens of /s/ and allophones of velarized /n/in the speech of children of Central American origin only. The regional Central American lexical items produced by these children in the picture identification task are also included. Only children with at least one Central American parent are included. Additional information presented in the table includes each subjects' nationality, place of birth, the mother's age of arrival to the United States, the father's age of arrival to the United States, the number of visits made to the family's country of origin, and the number of grandparents with which the child has contact.

Subject	% of [s] maintenance	% of alveolar [n]	Lexicon	Nationality	Place of Birth	Age Mom	Age Dad	Visit	Grandparents
V22	92%	100%	pacha, gallo pinto	N P	LA	21	30	*never*	ø
H22	92%	100%	pacha, pajilla	S S	LA	1	31	*never*	ø
Mag22	95%	100%	pacha	G S	LA	22	14	*never*	ø
Mag183	97%	100%	*none*	S H	LA	23	26	*never*	ø
Mag181	97%	100%	pacha	S M	LA	19	22	*never*	ø
Mag180	100%	97%	pacha, cincho, camarote pajilla	S S	LA	?	?	S once; H once	S-2
W27	100%	83%	cincho	S G	S, arrived at 6 yrs	24	16	*never*	ø
W23	96%	100%	pacha, cincho	G G	LA	30	20	*never*	ø
W17	94%	88%	pacha, cincho, pajilla	G H	LA	26	30	H 1/yr	G-2 H-2
W13	98%	100%	pacha, cincho, pajilla	S na	LA	38	na	*never*	ø
LP29	100%	82%	pacha, cincho, pajilla, casamiento, sorbete	S na	S, arrived at 7 yrs	27	na	*never*	ø
LP28	98%	100%	pacha, pajilla, sorbete	S S	LA	22	12	*never*	ø
LP26	94%	100%	pacha	S S	LA	30	42	*never*	ø
LP24	93%	100%	cincho	G M	LA	15	28	*never*	ø
LP22	97%	100%	pacha	S G	LA	na	18	*never*	S-2 G-2
LP14	100%	81%	pacha	G G	G, arrived at 7 yrs	34	38	*never*	ø
LP13	97%	100%	pacha, cincho, sorbete, pajilla	S na	S, arrived at 7 yrs	32	?	*never*	ø
LP9	97%	100%	*none*	G G	LA	22	21	*never*	ø
LP6	96%	100%	*none*		LA	?	?	*never*	ø
N61	100%	80%	pacha, cincho	S S	LA	29	17	S-1/3 yr	S-4
N247	97%	100%	pacha, pajilla	G na	LA	28	na	*never*	ø
N252	96%	100%	pacha, cincho	S S	LA	37	24	*never*	ø
N60	95%	100%	pacha	S S	LA	12	22	*never*	ø

LA = Los Angeles	M = Mexico
S = El Salvador	P = Perú
G = Guatemala	N = Nicaragua
H= Honduras	na = not applicable (single parent)

TABLE 16. Co-Occurrence of /s/ Aspiration, /n/ Velarization and Regional Lexical Items

Although we find that all of the children in Table 16 produce at least one or two instances of the *tierras bajas* features in question, some of these in conjunction with up to five regional lexical items, it seems clear that they have received exposure to a Central American *tierras bajas* dialect. When examining the percentages of maintenance of coronal /s/ and alveolar /n/, however, the very high rates that we find for both indicate that these children have, for the most part, accommodated to the Mexican-origin lexicon and *tierras altas* pronunciation of LAVS. Only one child of the entire sample, W17, produces more than one instance of each of the three features included in this production study. The rates at which he does so, however, fall well under those that one would expect for a non-immigrant counterpart from Honduras, his family's country of origin. When examining the data regarding his family and language practices we find several factors that are known to impede complete accommodation somewhat including having two parents who arrived in Los Angeles as adults (past the ages of 26), having contact with two sets of grandparents, and visiting Honduras once a year.

To summarize the results of the phonetic portion of this study, we find that the Spanish these children use is undoubtedly a *tierras altas* dialect, as evidenced by the strong maintenance of both syllable-final /s/ and alveolar /n/. While results from the logistic regression analyses are inconclusive due to low numbers for outcomes involving particular combinations of independent variables, results from t-tests prove that the variable associated with classification of dialect spoken in the home is significant. The extremely low percentages of both *tierras bajas* features,

however, strongly suggest that dialect leveling has already taken place at this young age. The few pronunciations of [ŋ] and [h] that children produce are clearly not rule-governed, but rather sporadic remnants of their home dialects.

4.3. LEXICAL ANALYSIS. Results of the lexical identification task confirm those of the phonetic analysis. Although there were subjects who produced a few Central American lexemes, they did not do so frequently or consistently. Subjects' response to this task was very positive, most likely due to the fact that it followed the more complex activities of describing various scenes and narrating the Little Red Riding Hood story. Since they were only required to name in Spanish the object depicted on the flashcards, they were more comfortable with this activity and, for the most part, at ease.

The scores assigned to children's responses to this task were categorical, meaning that they could be classified into separate groups that did not have a particular order or ranking. Any response a child uttered fell into one of three categories: Central American lexicon, Mexican/Los Angeles lexicon, and other. As can be seen in the table below, responses categorized as Central American lexicon received a score of 1, while those words that were used in Mexico or Los Angeles were given a score of 2.[38] Since the concern related to this particular task was subjects' dialect preference, as indicated by use of one dialect over another, scoring of subjects' responses was designed so as to eliminate from the analysis answers that were inaccurate,

[38] Readers should note that labeling a word as Mexican or LAVS did not imply that these were lexemes unique to these varieties of Spanish. Rather, they are identified as Mexican or LAVS because they contrast with Central American words, as is the case with *mamila* and *pacha*, both of refer to a baby bottle. Regardless of whether it is used in other parts of the Spanish-speaking world, *mamila* contrasts with the Central American *pacha* and thus receives a score of 2.

incomprehensible, non-existent or in English rather than Spanish. Thus, words or phrases such as *vasito para bebés* 'little cup for babies' or *cama* 'bed,' that accurately identified an item but did not mark a response as belonging to either a Central American nor a Mexican/Los Angeles dialect were assigned a score of 0. Children's replies were scored following the rubric shown in Table 17 below.

Score	Description of Response	Example
0	Any response in English Incorrect responses Dialect neutral response in Spanish Lack of response	*Belt* *leche* for baby bottle *cama* for bed --------
1	Central American word	*pacha* for baby bottle *chancho* for pig
2	Mexican word LAVS word	*guajolote* for turkey *suera* for jacket

TABLE 17. Rubric for Scoring Children's Responses on Lexical Identification Task

It should be noted that, while great care was taken not to overlook or discard such lexemes that have been incorporated into the LA Spanish speaker's lexical inventory, it was also important not to accept indiscriminately any word that exhibits English influence but is not used and recognized by LA Spanish speakers, such as *cota* for 'jacket' and *kaite* for 'kite'. Two native speakers of Los Angeles Spanish were consulted regarding the validity of words in question.

Readers should recall that the objective of the lexical identification task was to determine the degree to which subjects' lexical use converged with that of Mexican/LAVS speakers. Consequently, the responses they gave were analyzed so as to result in a score of lexical convergence ranging from 0 to 1. Before continuing with a description of how these scores were calculated, it is necessary to discuss the children's performance on the lexical identification task. As explained in chapter 3, the difficulties encountered in eliciting the adjectives 'blond' and

‘dirty’ made it necessary to eliminate these items from the final analysis as well. After such adjustments were made, twelve items total were left from which to calculate subjects’ lexical convergence scores. These twelve items are presented below in Table 18 for ease of reference.

	Object/concept shown on flashcard	Mexican/LAVS Spanish
1	baby bottle	mamila/biberón/bibi
2	belt	cinto/cinturon
3	bunk bed	litera
4	cake	pastel
5	ice cream	nieve/helado
6	jacket	chaqueta/chamarra
7	baby	bebé/niño/chamaco
8	kite	cometa/papalote
9	pig	marrano/cochino/puerco
10	rice and beans	frijoles con arroz
11	drinking straw	popote
12	turkey	pavo/guajolote

TABLE 18. List of Lexical Items

Since very few children (6 out of 160) were able to identify correctly all twelve of the items shown to them, it was first necessary to determine the number of lexical items from the list that they could name accurately in Spanish, irrespective of the dialect they used. Scores of zero were discarded, leaving only scores of 1 and 2.

The initial step consisted of adding the number of 1 and 2 responses that subjects had produced. Thus, a child who had a score of one ‘1’ and six ‘2s’ had a total score of 7. This score was then used to calculate the child’s lexical convergence index, the percentage of total words accurately identified that had been of either Mexican or Los Angeles origin. To do so, the number of responses of Central American origin that the subject produced was subtracted from the number of total correct responses she gave. This number was then divided by her total

number of correct dialect-specific responses. Thus, in the aforementioned example of the child who scored one '1' and six '2s', the child's Mexican-origin lexical index would be .9, the percentage that results when dividing the total number of Mexican-origin words produced, six in this case, by the total number of dialect-specific lexical items the child had used, seven in total. Children who produced only lexemes of Mexican or Los Angeles origin, regardless of the total number of items they were able to identify using a dialect-specific response, received the highest score, an index of 1.

Results from this task reveal information relating to several aspects of regional lexical use among Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles. Turning first to the distribution of subjects' indices, as shown in Figure 4 and Table 19, it is clear that these are, in general, quite high, indicating that children in Los Angeles use mainly words of Mexican or Los Angeles origin, as opposed to Central American lexemes.

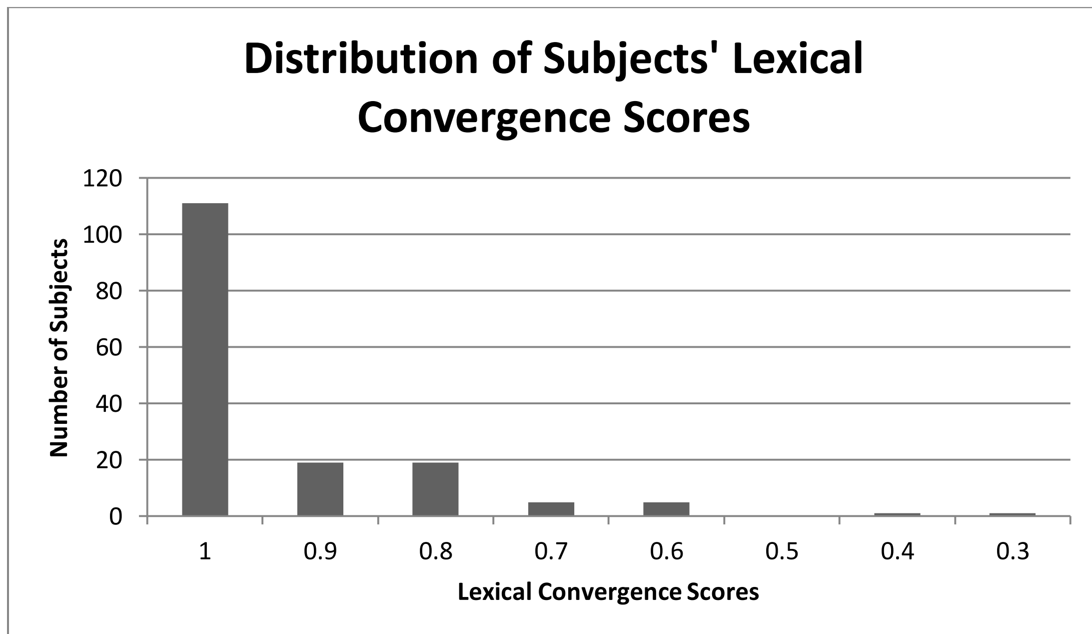

FIGURE 4. Subjects' Lexical Convergence Scores

Subjects' lexical convergence scores		
Score	**Number of subjects**	**Percent of sample**
.3	2	1.23
.4	1	0.62
.6	5	3.09
.7	4	2.47
.8	15	9.38
.9	13	8.13
1	120	75.00
Total	**160**	**100.00**

TABLE 19. Detailed Distribution of Subjects' Lexical Convergence Scores

Examining next the lexical items themselves, it is possible to classify the words based on the frequency with which they are used, as well as to identify those children who used the most Central American regional lexemes. The data provided by the lexical identification task indicates that some Central American children in Los Angeles use a limited amount of the Central American lexical items. In the case of all but a small handful of children (seven), however, they demonstrate a clear preference for Mexican-origin vocabulary. As with the velarized /n/, we find that the few regional Central American lexemes that are produced are uttered almost exclusively[39] by children who have been exposed to them in the home through the speech of at least one Central American parent. The most commonly-used of these were *pacha* 'baby bottle,' *pajilla* 'straw,' *cincho* 'belt,' and *sorbete* 'ice cream,' as can be seen in Figure 5 below. The high rates of production of *pacha* confirm Parodi's (2003: 30) assertion that 'De todas estas palabras [regionalismos salvadoreños], la voz *pacha* se conserva más que las otras. *Of all of these words* [Salvadoran regionalisms], *the word pacha is maintained more than the others*.' In

[39] The item *pacha* was produced by one Mexican child attending school in a Central American neighborhood. This child was known to have many Central American friends.

Figure 6, which follows, readers will see the obvious difference that results when comparing subjects' production of Central American versus Mexican-origin lexical items for these same lexemes.

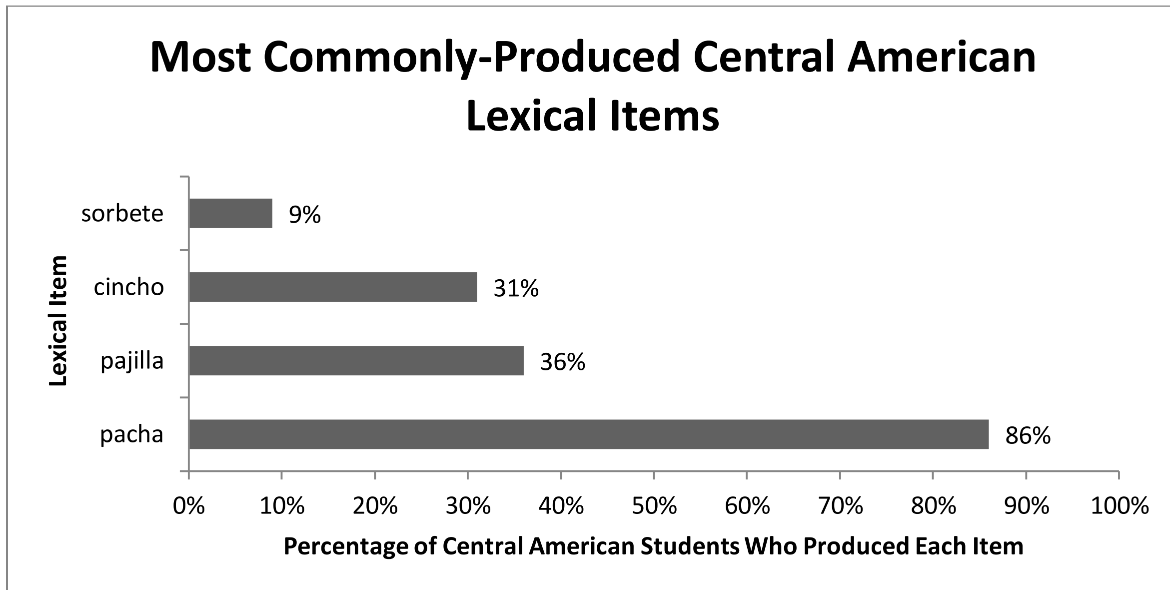

FIGURE 5. Central American Lexical items Most Commonly Produced by Students of Central American Origin

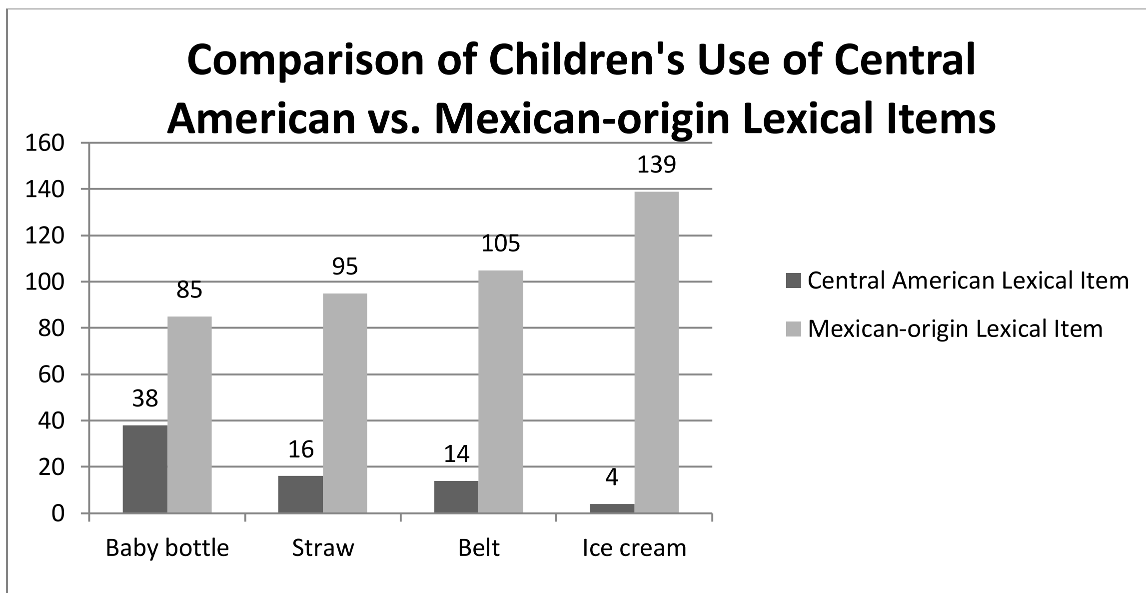

FIGURE 6. Comparison of Children's Use of Central American vs. Mexican-Origin Lexical Items

A comment is required here regarding the use of the third item, *cincho*. Although the word for *belt* in standard Mexican Spanish is *cinturón*[40], the item *cincho* is commonly used by speakers of rural Mexican Spanish. Not being aware of this overlap in the terms of rural Mexican and Central American varieties of Spanish prior to designing this portion of the study, it was necessary to modify the analysis of *cincho* slightly, eliminating from the analysis instances of *cincho* that were produced by children of Mexican origin. Results shown in Figures 6 and 7 reflect the count of *cincho* after productions of this word by Mexican children were eliminated. In order to ensure that production of *cincho* reflected use of the Central American dialect rather than the Mexican, this item was only included in the count shown in Figures 6 and 7 if the same subject used at least one other word of Central American origin. In the majority of instances, the word *cincho* co-occurred with *pacha*. There was only one exception, in which it co-occurred with *pajilla*. The fact that, however, this item exhibited similar behavior to another Central American lexemes (i.e. was produced only by children of Central American origin) once the responses of *cincho* produced by Mexican children were removed suggest that *cincho* is not limited to the lexicon of rural Mexico but is also a Central American regional item. This observation is further supported by the fact that figures on the frequency of the use of this item matched almost exactly the production of another item, *pajilla*. Clearly, the aforementioned pattern is not sufficient justification for eliminating instances of *cincho* produced by subjects of Mexican origin. Nevertheless, the fact that this lexeme was counted as Central American lexicon only when it co-occurred with other Central American words in the speech of children with

[40] As recorded in Lope Blanch's (1978) Léxico del habla culta de México, page 92.

Central American parents does help to ensure that the abovementioned decision is supported by additional data. Such facts suggest that using the word *cincho* does provide valuable information regarding children's dialect preferences as they relate to lexicon. All of the data presented in this dissertation, it must be noted, are based on this conservative analysis that only considers *cincho* to be a Central American lexical item when it co-occurs with another lexeme whose dialectal origins cannot be called into question.

When turning to the data per subject, we find that the number of Central American dialectal items produced by a subject ranges from 1 to 6. In total, only 39 subjects (24% of the total) produced any Central American lexemes.[41] Of these 39 children, 15 used only one. The one word that these subjects knew was, in the case of all but three children, *pacha* 'baby bottle.' The three exceptions were *pajilla* 'straw,' *queike* 'cake,' and *chancho* 'pig.' A breakdown of the number of Central American words subjects produced and the number of subjects who generated each quantity can be found in Figure 7 on the following page. Of the 24 subjects who produced two or more Central American lexemes, only one did not use *pacha*. With the exception of the items *bicho/cipote* 'child' and *piscucha* 'kite,' at least one subject produced at least one Central American word for each of the flash cards shown to them.

[41] As noted in the previous paragraph, this calculation excludes *cincho* as a Central American dialectal item if it does not co-occur with another word of Central American origin.

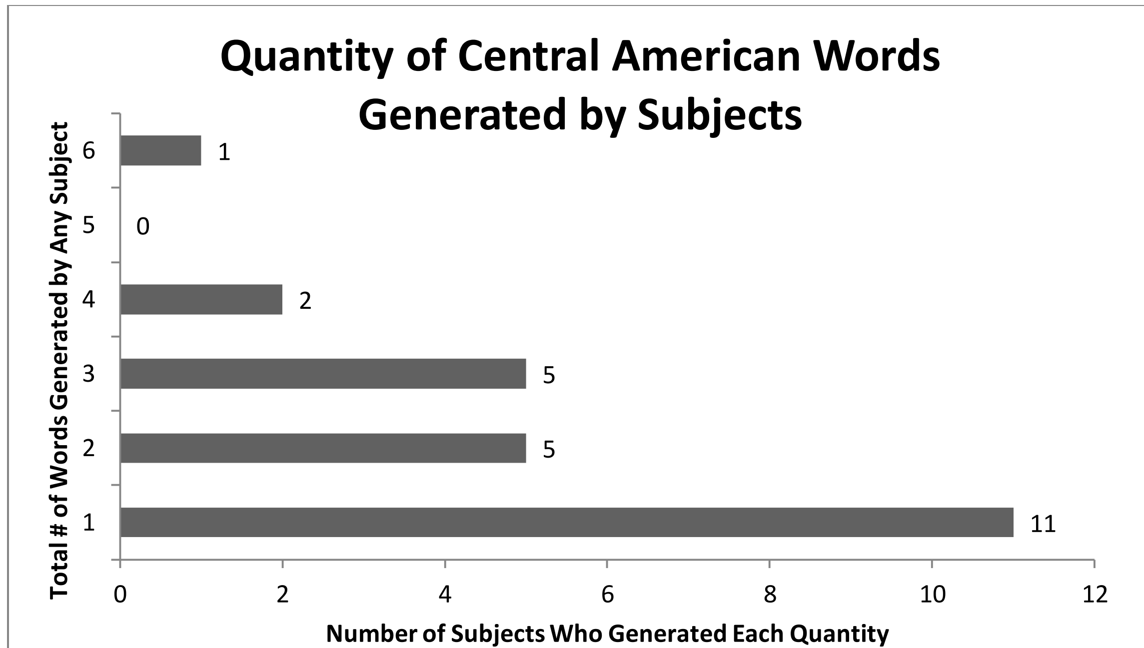

FIGURE 7. Quantity of Central American Words Produced by Any Subject and Number of Subjects Who Generated Each Quantity

With the exception of only five subjects, all children who used any Central American lexemes attended schools located in Central American neighborhoods.

4.3.1. MULTINOMIAL REGRESSION. A multinomial regression is used to analyze the statistical significance of variables on tasks whose outcomes are categorical (i.e. exhibit no natural ordering) and can have more than two options, as is the case in this lexical identification task. Results of the multinomial regression reveal a significant difference with respect to subjects' nationality but not with respect to *school neighborhood* or any other independent variable such as age, gender, etc. This held true for the dependent variable, *lex1*, 'baby bottle,' but not for any of the other lexical items.[42] Table 20 presents the results of the regression, beginning with the

[42] Lexical variables were assigned labels consisting of *lex* and a corresponding number. Lexical variables will be discussed using these labels, followed by the English gloss.

constant, i.e. the baseline multinomial logit estimate for the production of *pacha* when the predictor variables are valued at zero. This model indicates that for every unit increase in *tbmom*, the variable indicating that a child's mother is of Central American origin, we can predict a four unit increase in the production of *pacha*. Since the same observation cannot be made of any other of the lexical items, however, these findings strongly suggest that Spanish-speaking children raised in Los Angeles use Mexican-origin lexicon regardless of their home dialect.

Independent variable	**Coefficient Estimates**
Age	.067 (.35)
Female	.1 (.53)
Tbmom	4.00* (.69)
Mneighborhood	.30 (.68)
Intercept	-4.06 (3.58)
No. observations	160
$p < 0.00$	
Standard errors are reported in parentheses.	
*** indicates significance at the 95% level.**	

TABLE 20. Regression Results for Production of *Pacha*

In summarizing the results of the lexical identification task, we find that, although some subjects to produce words of Central American origin, the overwhelming majority uses lexicon of Mexican origin. *Pacha* is the one lexeme that appears to be maintained with some degree of consistency.

4.4. LANGUAGE ATTITUDE TASKS. Results from the quantitative portion of the language attitude tasks reveal no significant results on dialect preference and rating questions with respect to the independent variables of subjects' national origin and school neighborhood. In this part of the

study, the attitudes that subjects express towards the Salvadoran-speaking "Martian" do not differ significantly for children of Mexican origin versus those of Central American descent. Nor do they vary greatly from schools in Mexican neighborhoods to those in Central American areas. However, subjects' responses to the open-ended questions, in which they explain *why* they chose a particular answer, suggest that their language attitudes can reveal valuable information regarding their social evaluations of Central American *tierras bajas* Spanish. The apparent discrepancies that are found between these quantitative and qualitative measures of subjects' language attitudes suggests that further refinement of the methodology employed may improve the efficacy of the dialect preference and rating questions.

The language attitude tasks were, by far, subjects' favorite part of the dialect contact study. Not only could they answer questions in the language of their choice, but they were delighted to have the opportunity to use the computer. After completing the entire study, most of the children expressed the desire to participate again specifically because they liked 'the part with the "Martians."'

4.4.1. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ATTITUDE TASKS. Depending on the type of question, equations for estimating subjects' evaluations of the "Martians" on the various language attitude tasks were calculated using ordinal and logistic regression models. Ordinal regression models are used when the outcome of a task consists of more than two ordered levels, such as "beginning, intermediate, and high," in which the responses are ordered with respect to one another. Since the subjects could evaluate the quality of the "Martians'" speech using four different ratings, each of which is ordered relative to the other, an ordinal model was used on the

rating tasks, and scores from one to four were assigned to each rating, beginning with the lowest rating. The rubric used to assign these scores is shown in Table 21.

Rating	Score assigned
Very poorly	1
Poorly	2
Well	3
Very well	4

TABLE 21. Rubric Used to Assign Numerical Scores to Ratings

Possible responses for dialect preference tasks, on the other hand, were restricted to only two: the Mexican Spanish-speaking "Martian" and the one that spoke Salvadoran Spanish. Since the outcome was binary, the logistic regression model, logit, was used. For these tasks, a score of 1 was assigned to the Mexican-speaking "Martian" (CF2 for the child and Mrs. QN4 for the teacher), and a score of 0 was given to the Salvadoran-speaking "Martian" (AJ6 for the child and Mrs. CR7 for the teacher).

Results from both the ordinal and logistic regression models revealed no significant differences between subjects with respect to the variable *national origin* or *school neighborhood* or any combination of these variables. Such data might lead us to conclude that none of these variables proves significant and, furthermore, that there is nothing to be learned from the attitude tasks. A look at the more basic aspects of the results, however, reveals that this is far from true. Rather, it appears that the research questions motivating the use of the regression models are somewhat premature. When asking more basic questions such as 'Do subjects' responses on attitude tasks demonstrate dialect preferences or do they appear to be random?' and 'If so, what are these preferences?,' some interesting results emerge. Of the two sets of quantitative attitude questions, the preference tasks and the rating tasks, the latter prove more useful in answering the

aforementioned questions than the former. In the rating tasks, subjects were asked to evaluate how each of the four "Martians" spoke Spanish, selecting their responses from the following 4-point scale: very poorly, poorly, well, and very well. Since the scale consists of an even number of responses, it is possible to categorize ratings with respect to polarity. Ratings of "very poorly" and "poorly" are clearly negative, while those of "well" and "very well" are indisputably positive. Two of the "Martians" were speakers of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish and two were speakers of Salvadoran Spanish, each set consisting of one child and one adult, the only difference between the two being a change in pitch which was achieved digitally, as detailed in Chapter 3. In Table 22 we find the quantities of students who assigned each of the four possible ratings to the Mexican-speaking "Martians."

Rating		**Mexican speaking "Martians"**	
		child CF2	teacher Mrs. QN4
Negative	1 (very poorly)	0	1
	2 (poorly)	1	6
Positive	3 (well)	60	32
	4 (very well)	**99**	**119**
	Missing[43]	0	2
	Total	**160**	**160**

TABLE 22. Ratings Assigned to Mexican-Speaking "Martians"

Turning next to a comparison of the ratings given to Mrs. QN4, the Mexican-speaking teacher, we find a similar pattern in which all but 7 subjects rate Mrs. QN4 positively. In the case of the ratings assigned to the Salvadoran speakers, on the other hand, we find that, although the majority of subjects do assign them positive ratings (scores of 3 or 4), these positive ratings are

[43] Two children were picked up early from the after school program, before they had finished the language attitude tasks in their entirety. Scheduling conflicts precluded the possibility of having them complete the tasks.

not as high as those assigned to the Mexican-speaking “Martians.” As can be seen below in Table 23, the data for the Salvadoran-speaking “Martians” reveal some different patterns. The numbers in bold correspond to the rating that the majority of the subjects assigned to each “Martian.”

Rating		**Salvadoran-Speaking “Martians”**	
		child AJ6	teacher Mrs. CR7
Negative	1 (very poorly)	3	3
	2 (poorly)	35	25
Positive	3 (well)	**84**	**71**
	4 (very well)	38	59
	Missing	0	2
	Total	**160**	**160**

TABLE 23. Ratings Assigned to Salvadoran-Speaking “Martians”

Whereas the Mexican-speaking “Martians” (both child and teacher) received an overwhelming majority of ratings of “very well,” the Salvadoran speaking “Martians” received a majority of “well” ratings, indicating that, though they were rated positively, they were not rated as positively as the Mexican-speaking “Martians.” Moreover, they received more negative ratings than did the Mexican-speaking “Martians.” The Salvadoran-speaking child “Martian,” AJ6, received 38 (24%) negative ratings, while Mrs. CR7, the Salvadoran-speaking teacher “Martian” received 28 (18%) negative scores. Although these are hardly considered high percentages, they prove considerable when compared to the less than 1% negative ratings assigned to the Mexican-speaking “Martians.” These findings are statistically significant at conventional levels, as seen in the results of paired t-tests comparing mean ratings assigned to both pairs of “Martians,” the peers and the teachers. In the case of the peer “Martians,” the mean score assigned to CF2, the Mexican speaker, was a 3.6, which exceeded by .6 points the mean score assigned to AJ6, the Salvadoran speaker ($p < .00$, $t(159) = 9.46$)). Similar findings result from the paired t-test

comparing the mean ratings assigned to the adult “Martians”: the Mexican-speaking teacher obtained a mean score that was .5 points higher than the Salvadoran speaking teacher (3.7 vs. 3.2). This difference also proved statistically significant (p <.00, t (157) = 6.43). These findings, presented in Table 24, indicate that we must discard the null hypothesis, the belief that the difference between the mean ratings assigned to each set of “Martians” is due solely to chance.

2-Sample t-Test				
	Me an	Standard Deviation	SE Mean	95% Confidence Interval
Mexican-speaking “Martian”	3.7	.57	.05	3.6-3.8
Salvadoran-speaking “Martian”	3.2	.76	.06	3.1-3.3

t-value: 6.9 *p*-value: 0.0000 DF: 157

TABLE 24. Mean Ratings Assigned to Teacher “Martians”

Overall, the results from these ratings tasks demonstrate that subjects assign higher ratings to the Mexican speaking “Martians” than to those that speak Salvadoran Spanish. Moreover, whereas very few subjects assigned any negative ratings at all to the Mexican-speaking “Martians,” the same cannot be said of the Salvadoran-speaking “Martians,” who did receive more than a handful of negative scores. While they do little to explain WHY there is a difference in ratings, they demonstrate without a doubt that such a difference does exist.

Turning next to the four dialect preference questions, in which subjects were asked to select one of the two “Martians,” who differed primarily with respect to the dialects they spoke, we find further evidence of a preference for Mexican over Salvadoran Spanish. The four dialect preference questions are repeated here for ease of reference.

1. Which “Martian” do you want to pick your present from?
2. Which “Martian” do you want to be your partner for a science project?
3. Whose program do you want to join?

4. Which one do you think would make a better high school language arts teacher?

The percentages and numbers of subjects who chose one speaker over another are presented in Figures 8 and 9 below, Figure 8 illustrating this data for the peer "Martians" and Figure 9 doing so for the adults. The two questions in the white boxes referred to the child "Martians," while those in the shaded boxes alluded to the teacher "Martians." For each question, the majority of the children selected the Mexican-speaking "Martian," although this preference was much clearer in the case of the teacher "Martians." The greater distinction that is found between dialect preferences in the case of the teacher "Martians" is one that was also observed with respect to the Mexican-speaking "Martians," though not the Salvadoran-speaking ones, in the rating task.

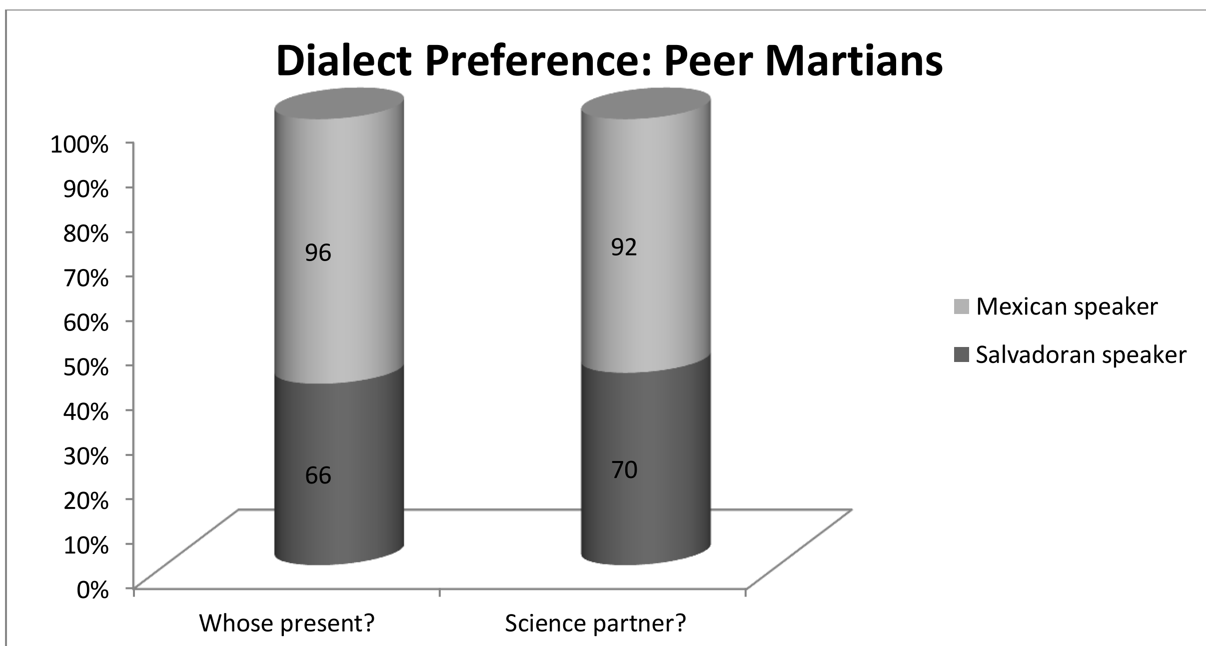

FIGURE 8. Dialect Preference for Peer "Martians"

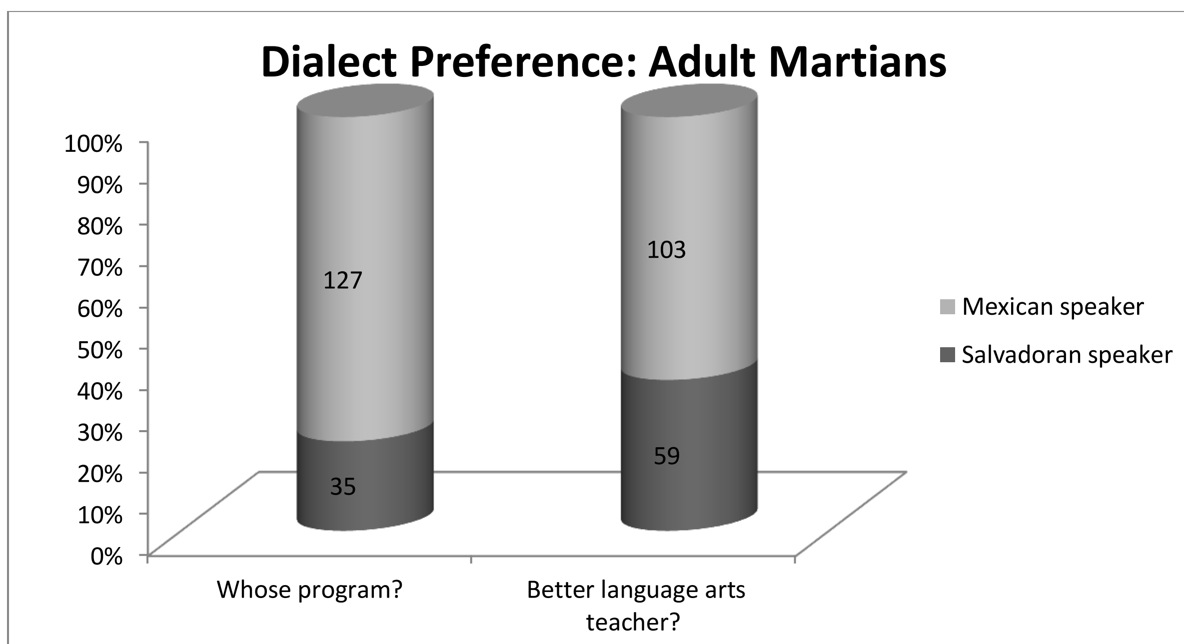

FIGURE 9. Dialect Preference for Adult "Martians"

Shifting the focus of this analysis to subjects' explanations as to why they selected one "Martian" over another, we observe that their preference for the Mexican-speaking "Martian" seems to stem from a number of different factors including dislike for or failure to understand the Salvadoran-speaking "Martian," especially with respect to its use of *vos*. All of the comments that children made that referred specifically to the dialect that the "Martian" spoke, either in general or in terms of features that distinguished it from the Mexican-speaking "Martian," are reproduced in the following table. It is interesting to note that every subject that made one of the comments below selected the Mexican-speaking "Martian" when prompted to choose between the two. The names of the "Martians" to which they refer are shown below in parentheses to clarify the comments when children used pronouns to refer to them rather than their names.[44] In

[44] The accuracy of the interpretation was confirmed during the study, when the researcher asked subjects to specify which "Martian" they were referring to.

cases where students made more than one comment on the "Martians'" dialect, both comments are recorded but separated by a space. The nationality, age and gender and school neighborhood of each of the subjects quoted are provided in the column labeled 'Subject.'

	Subject	Comment on *vos*/Central American Spanish
1	Guatemala Age 9, female Cen. Am. school	"Because I liked how did he talk and I didn't choose him (AJ6) because he said *vos* and I didn't like it when he called me that."
2	Guatemala Age 11, female Cen. Am. school	"'Cause I understand it more and it had the language that I use at home. And the first one, it was like the language that I heard in Guatemala, so it's kind of strange to me."
3	El Salvador /Mexico Age 10, female Cen. Am. school	"Because for Mrs. CR7 when she said *vos* that didn't really make me feel proud. QN4, she made me feel happy when she said *comunidad* and she said *tú*, and that made me feel much better."
4	Mexico Age 9, female Cen. Am. school	"Because this one (Mrs. QN4) talks good Spanish and the other one (Mrs. CR7) she was talking a little bit like Salvadorian." "Because she (Mrs. QN4) would talk Spanish or English to her students and the other one (Mrs. CR7) would talk like a Salvadorian and maybe some of the other students won't understand her."
5	Guatemala Age 10, female Cen. Am. school	"…she doesn't say too much *vos"*
6	Mexico Age 10, female Cen. Am. school	"Because Mrs. CR7 kept on saying *vos* (imitating) and because maybe she'll (Mrs. QN4) be a very nice teacher"
7	Mexico Age 10, female Cen. Am. school	"Because she (Mrs. QN4) speaks well the Spanish and the other one (Mrs. CR7) doesn't. She's like *apurate vos*."
8	Guatemala/Mexico Age 10, female Cen. Am. school	"I picked Mrs. QN4 because she talks more clearly than the other one. She (Mrs. CR7) talks like from like *vos* like if it's from another country from here and the other one (Mrs. QN4) talks like it's from Mexico."
9	Guatemala Age 10, female Cen. Am. school	"She (Mrs. QN4) didn't say too many *vos*. She said *you*, and that's why I picked her."
10	Mexico Age 9, female Mex. school	"Because she talks Spanish and Mrs. CR7. She talks like another language, but she doesn't talk more Spanish and so Mrs. QN4 she used the words in Spanish and Mrs. CR7 she use another

		language like *vos* and another ones, so I didn't understand Mrs. CR7, so I understand Mrs. QN4."
11	Mexico Age 10 male Mex. school	"Because some people understand Spanish but one of the teachers talks like another kind of Spanish people because instead of *tú* she uses *vos*."
12	Honduras Age 10, female Mex. school	"Yo quiero pedir QN4 porque ella no digo *vos* como la maestra CR7 y eso no es bien que digan eso. So, para eso yo pido eso porque la CR7 no era respect…no está respectando a los niños." "Yo pedí eso porque la maestra CR7 está diciendo *vos* y no me gusta eso y la maestra QN4 no 'staba diciendo eso. Estaba respectando eso cuando estaba hablando."

TABLE 25. Subjects' Comments on WHY Questions That Specifically Referenced Dialect

Several important observations can be made based on the data provided in Table 25. Looking at comments 4 and 7, we see that although subjects do not overtly say that Salvadoran Spanish is 'bad,' the contrast that they make between speaking Spanish well, on one hand, and 'Salvadorian Spanish' and the use of *vos*, on the other, certainly seems to imply that the latter is not 'good Spanish.' Turning next to differences observed with respect to national origin, we find that there is some overlap between the reasons the Mexican subjects give for preferring the Mexican-speaking "Martians," and those provided by the children of at least one Central American parent. Both cited the potential for a lack of understanding as an explanation for why they had chosen the Mexican-speaking "Martian." Only subjects of Central American origin, either full or half, however, gave more emotional reasons for their preferences, explaining that they did not feel respected (cf. comment 12), proud (cf. comment 3) nor pleased (cf. comment 1) when addressed as *vos*. A few other children (cf. comments 2 and 10) also mentioned that the *voseo* that they heard sounded like "another language," and that their lack of familiarity with it led them to prefer the Mexican speaking "Martian," whose speech was, as one subject expressed it, 'like the

language that I use at home.' Although only 12 out of 160 subjects made comments on the Spanish spoken by the Salvadoran-speaking "Martian" that indicated either dislike for or unfamiliarity with it, it should be noted that not a single child made positive comments about Salvadoran Spanish or about *voseo*. Furthermore, readers should be aware that not once did the researcher mention the term Salvadoran or make any mention to dialects of Spanish of any kind. All of the comments that children made in which they referred to a specific dialect were made without any prompting.

A few subjects made unsolicited comments throughout the course of the study, and the researcher noted these, which are presented in Table 26. Although few, these opinions are reminiscent of those found in Table 25 above and provide further evidence for children's negative attitudes towards Salvadoran Spanish in general and *voseo* in particular. The fact that these sentiments were volunteered rather than being produced at the urging of the researcher suggests that these attitudes are genuine. At no time was a subjects' attention called to the use of *vos*, yet almost all of those who made comments mentioned directly or alluded to this particular pronoun. Explanations of the contexts in which these utterances were produced are provided in italics.

Subject	Additional comment
El Salvador **Age 8, male** **LA**	*Comment made in reference to AJ6 (Salvadoran "Martian")*: "He could have just said 'para ti.'"
Guatemala **Age 9, female** **LA**	"'Es para *vos*' is not right."
Guatemala **Age 11, male** **LA**	*Subject repeated vos when he heard it the first time, then smiled. He explained that he gave AJ6 only a rating of "well" and not "very well" because* "I know what it (*para vos*) means, but it sounds weird". *Subject gave CR7 a rating of "*poorly*" because* "people might not know what

	that word (*vos*) means—"she said it a lot."
El Salvador Age 10, male LA	*About AJ6* (Salvadoran "Martian"): "I don't like how he talks. I'm not used to cubanos."
Mexico Age 9, female LA	"[It] sounds weird when they say *vos*, [I] like saying *tú* much better."

TABLE 26. Additional Comments Noted during Course of Study

Overall, both the production and language attitude tasks provide evidence that subjects use few Central American *tierras bajas* phonetic features and Central American lexical items and assign more favorable evaluations to Mexican speakers than to those of Salvadoran Spanish. With regard to phonetic features, maintenance of syllable-final predorsodental [s] and alveolar [n] are the norm, even among children of at least one Central American parent. When asked to identify in Spanish items whose names differ in Central American and Mexican-origin dialects, subjects overwhelmingly used words of Mexican origin.[45] The only word of Central American origin used by more than 40% of Central American children was *pacha* 'baby bottle.' All other Central American lexemes were used only sporadically by very few subjects, suggesting that they are residual lexical items that they have maintained from their home dialects. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Central American dialect of their parents' countries of origin is not their dominant variety.

Results from the language attitude tasks demonstrate that, in general, subjects assign significantly lower ratings to a Salvadoran speaker than they do to one who speaks Mexican

[45] Lack of studies on this topic preclude the possibility of identifying words as uniquely LAVS lexicon. Nevertheless, there are some borrowings that have been incorporated into the linguistic repertoire of native Angelenos. See Guerrero 2013.

Spanish. These findings provide further evidence for convergence with the social evaluations that LAVS speakers assign to Central American *tierras bajas* Spanish speakers. Results from t-tests comparing the ratings assigned to the Mexican-speaking young “Martian” and the Salvadoran-speaking young “Martian,” on one hand, and the Mexican-speaking teacher “Martian” and the Salvadoran-speaking teacher “Martian,” on the other, reveal that the probability that the difference in the ratings assigned to each pair of “Martians” is not significant is less than .00001. In other words, the lower ratings that the Salvadoran Spanish-speaking “Martians” receive when compared to the Mexican-speaking “Martians” are not due to chance but, rather, are deliberate. The explanations that children gave as to why they selected a particular “Martian” from each of the pairs cite a number of aspects of the extraterrestrials' speech including general characteristics of the “Martians”' voice such as volume and pitch, references to the quality of the Spanish it spoke and examples of specific features of the “Martian's” dialect. The one dialectal feature that was mentioned the most was the Salvadoran Spanish speaking “Martian's” use of *vos*. Although not necessarily given a negative evaluation by those who mentioned it, the use of *vos* was viewed as foreign or unfamiliar by a number of students of both various nationalities. Some of the children of Central American origin also explained that they found it disrespectful or inappropriate.

4.5. SUMMARY. Results from all three tasks demonstrate that the subjects in this sample converged to a great extent with LAVS speakers with respect to their pronunciation, vocabulary use and evaluation of Salvadoran Spanish. Adopting the theory that immigrants will converge linguistically with what they perceive to be the linguistic norms of their new community, these

results indicate that these children, regardless of the dialect to which they are exposed at home, believe that *tierras altas* features characterize the linguistic norm in Los Angeles.

V. Conclusion

The arrival of large waves of Central American Spanish speakers in Los Angeles over the past few decades has created a linguistic situation that allows linguists to discover data about the nature and transmission of Spanish in Los Angeles that were previously obscured. Prior to this time, the differences that existed between the varieties of Spanish that Mexican-born immigrants were importing and the mainly Mexican Spanish that was spoken by native Angelenos raised in the United States was virtually left unexamined. Almost all of the research conducted on the language of US-born Angeleno Spanish speakers focused on the contact phenomena they exhibited (code switching, lexical borrowings, calques and semantic extensions, etc.) rather than on its dialectal features.[46] Any discrepancies observed in the Spanish of native were attributed to language loss, itself considered a product of English influence. Some very striking differences, however, differentiate the *tierras bajas* Spanish of Central American countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras, from the *tierras altas* variety characteristic of Los Angeles. Shifting focus to the new evidence that has resulted from contact between these two varieties, it has become evident that the linguistic processes affecting Spanish in Los Angeles cannot be fully explained as phenomena of attrition or language loss. It is doubtful, for instance, that English

[46] One notable exception to this generalization is Robert Phillips who, in the introduction to his dissertation explains that his purpose is to 'examine all facets of the dialect—pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary—to see how the language is spoken. A secondary purpose is to see how the phenomenon of bilingualism … affects the Spanish spoken there' (1967:1). Such a statement reveals his assumption that there are indeed differences between Los Angeles Spanish and that spoken by Mexican-born citizens living in Mexico. This supposition is further supported Phillips' choice to use the *Cuestionario lingüístico hispanoamericano* by Navarro-Tomás to carry out his research.

influence can explain the observation that the pronunciation of the Spanish spoken by second generation offspring of first generation Central American immigrants tends to resemble that spoken by Mexicans of *tierras altas* regions, devoid of the features of their parents' dialect. The obvious dearth of aspiration of /s/, velarization of /n/, Central American lexicon and *voseo* in the speech of Central American children raised in Los Angeles who participate in this study strongly suggest that other factors are in operation. In particular, these findings indicate that these youth raised in Los Angeles speak a Mexican *tierras altas* variety of Spanish, most likely because they identify it as the prototypical linguistic behavior of their community and, consequently, grow up speaking not the Spanish that they are presumably exposed to in the home, but rather a Mexican variety that exhibits *tierras altas* phonetic features and Mexican-origin vocabulary.

This concluding chapter will return to the research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation and re-examine them taking into consideration the data collected. As one of the few studies that investigate dialect contact involving Spanish-speaking youth in the United States by means of quantitative methods, this research undoubtedly brings to light numerous issues that had previously remained undetected, many of them related to methodology. The following portion of this chapter will examine the role that quantitative studies can play in research on Spanish spoken in Los Angeles and similar varieties and present some recommendations with respect to methodology for scholars interested in further pursuing the issues of dialect contact addressed here. The chapter will conclude with a detailed discussion of the practical applications that this newly-acquired data can have with respect to identifying and addressing the particular needs of Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles and the implications that such information

could have for research in the discipline of US Spanish studies and the knowledge related to dialect contact among children.

5.1. Research Questions Revisited. The primary question motivating this dissertation is the following: What are the primary features that characterize the linguistic production and evaluations of the Spanish spoken by children raised in Los Angeles? Do these children, regardless of national origin, converge with LAVS speakers, as opposed to Central American Spanish speakers, when talking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown? Any attempt to answer such a query, especially when attempting to do so by means of quantitative methods, necessarily involves addressing the two sub-questions that follow:

1. What are the features of LAVS? Which of these contrast with those of other dialects and, thus, lend themselves to a quantitative study of dialect contact?
2. How does one measure a subject's convergence with LAVS speakers?

As we saw in Chapter 1, LAVS, like any other variety of Spanish, is essentially a compound of many different phonetic, lexical, morphosyntactic and evaluative features. As one of many types of US Spanish, some of its most salient characteristics include the so-called archaisms, mainly lexical and morphosyntactic features common to rural, nonstandard dialects of Spain and Latin America, such as addition of –*s* to second person singular preterit verb forms or the use of *haiga*, *mesmo* and *muncho*, among others. Its status as a contact variety establishes the presence of lexical borrowings, semantic extensions and calques as well as limited influence of English with respect to the frequency and occurrence of particular phonetic and morphosyntactic features. The primary phonetic features of LAVS are defined by its classification as a *tierras altas* dialect, and,

as a variety that originated as the result of contact between various regional dialects of Mexican Spanish, its phonetic inventory bears great resemblance to those of said dialects. Studies investigating the linguistic attitudes of LAVS speakers have reported that these individuals do not stigmatize the use of the aforementioned rural features, but do assign negative evaluations to *voseo*, *tierras bajas* phonetic features and certain items present in Central American lexicon.

The *tierras altas*/*tierras bajas* dialect dichotomy described in Chapter 2 proves highly useful for addressing the second part of question 1, above. The contrast that it establishes between the *tierras altas* LAVS and Central American *tierras bajas* dialects makes it possible to identify those phonetic features that readily distinguish LAVS from the dialects of other Spanish speakers who have representation in Los Angeles, such as Salvadorans, Guatemalans and Hondurans. Additional features that facilitate the distinction between LAVS and the incoming Central American dialects include regional Central American lexicon and *voseo*.

In order to both define and assess convergence with LAVS, this dissertation adopts accommodation theory. Said framework posits that speakers modify their speech in order to "reduc[e] the dissimilarities" that exist between them and their interlocutors in order to receive more favorable evaluations from the latter (Giles and Powesland 1997: 233). Since the result of such a phenomenon is greater similarity to the speech of the interlocutor, using this theory allows one to conceive of accommodation as convergence with the linguistic production of an interlocutor. One instance of this convergence is short-term accommodation, which obtains only in the presence of the individual who speaks the dialect in question. Long-term accommodation, on the other hand, occurs regardless of an interlocutor's presence, and is, essentially, dialect acquisition. Using the framework provided by accommodation theory, it is possible to define

acquisition of LAVS as convergence with long-term convergence (i.e. the linguistic production of LAVS speakers. Unlike Chambers (1992), who equated dialect acquisition with the inability to suppress features of the new dialect in the presence of a speaker of the first dialect), this dissertation seeks to characterize children's dialect use and linguistic attitudes. Examining specifically a situation in which they speak with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown, it measures children's convergence with the production and evaluations of speakers of *tierras altas* Mexican dialects, since LAVS is the dominant variety among Spanish-speaking Angelenos. The research presented here analyzes subjects' convergence with the linguistic production and attitudes of LAVS speakers in a specific situation (i.e. one in a formal setting that requires speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown).-Before asking how one can assess such convergence, it is necessary to establish the criteria that will be used to identify the relevant features and, subsequently, to select features that fit said criteria. Without repeating all of the details of how this was done, it will simply be stated here that three criteria were used to select the features included in this study: representativeness of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish, difference with respect to *tierras bajas* features and feasibility of elicitation and analysis. The relevant *tierras altas* features were identified as 1) maintenance of postnuclear predorsodental [s] and word-final alveolar [n], 2) production of Mexican-origin lexical items when referring to a selected list of words, and 3) the negative evaluation of *voseo* and a small number of Central American *tierras bajas* phonetic features.[47] The data used to determine convergence with *tierras altas* phonetic features was elicited using picture description and story narration tasks, while that

[47] Although these features contrast clearly with *tierras bajas* features, it is important to note that they are not characteristics that are unique to LA Spanish.

of the lexical items was obtained by means of a lexical identification task. A web-based activity employing a variation of matched-guise methodology was designed to collect information regarding the degree to which subjects' language attitudes converged with those of LAVS speakers.

Having answered the previously stated questions, it is now possible to return to the original research question, that of whether Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles converge with *tierras altas* Mexican speakers when speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown, and examine the data that have been obtained using the selected tasks. It is important to keep in mind that the outcomes of such activities depend on the characteristics of the sample chosen to participate in the study. For this reason subjects were recruited from schools that had the highest percentages of Hispanic students and were located in neighborhoods that were clearly ethnic niches, as demonstrated by a number of factors including businesses and storefronts in Spanish and advertisements distributed and posted in Spanish. Furthermore, the responses that the children's parents gave regarding their own levels of education and occupation demonstrated that they were members of the working class, an important criterion in the use of LAVS. The choice to select children from eight schools, as opposed to the originally planned four, was also made in an effort to obtain a representative sample. By addressing all of the factors that the literature on LAVS has identified as relevant to dialect use in this area, this study has obtained the most representative sample of subjects possible. Consequently, we can be confident in assuming that the results are valid and generalizable to the population of Spanish-speaking children raised in Los Angeles.

5.2. LINGUISTIC PRODUCTION

5.2.1. PRODUCTION OF PHONETIC FEATURES. As was seen in Chapter 4, it was necessary to take into account the lack of uniformity of Central American dialects with respect to the realization of implosive /s/ when conducting the analysis of this particular variable. This was due not only to the high rates of intermarriage among Central Americans and Mexicans, but also to the fairly large numbers of Guatemalans, Central Americans whose dialects does not aspirate coda /s/, who participated in the study. The presence in Los Angeles of Mexicans from a region that does aspirate the /s/ contributed an additional layer of complexity. Before having considered such complications, it had been expected that the subjects' nationality might prove to be a relevant variable when it came to determining the percentage of /s/ aspiration that a child might produce. In light of the situation discovered, however, some modifications had to be made and a new variable was identified. Rather than distinguishing between subjects based on their parents' national origins, this new variable discriminated between children whose parents spoke dialects of Spanish that aspirated syllable-final /s/ and those whose parents spoke other varieties that did not.

While a number of factors complicated the analysis of the pronunciation of syllable-final /s/, this was not true of word-final /n/. A more consistent variable, /n/ in coda position is realized with a velar pronunciation in all Central American dialects and as an alveolar phone in Mexican *tierras altas* dialects. In other words, unlike the situation with coda /s/, the independent variable of national origin was relevant to the subjects' realization of velarized /n/. The number of subjects who produce velarized realizations of word-final /n/ is so low that it is not possible to carry out any tests of statistical significance with this particular variable. In this case, the raw

data speak for themselves. Out of 160 subjects, only 7 produced at least one token of the velar nasal, [ŋ]. Clearly this outcome is not due to chance. Rather, it demonstrates that the realization of word-final /n/ preceding a vowel, pause or non-velar consonant is not a characteristic of the speech of young Spanish-speakers raised in Los Angeles. Not only that, but the few tokens of velarized /n/ that they produce cannot really be considered instances of /n/ velarization as a systematic dialectal feature since it is realized so rarely. Rather, it should be considered a residual characteristic of the *tierras bajas* Central American dialects spoken by their families. When analyzing its use among those few speakers who do produce it, parents' nationality and child's age of arrival, in the case of Central American-born subjects, do appear to be significant variables. The three Central American children who arrived in Los Angeles at the age of six or older all produced tokens of word-final velar [ŋ]. From a purely quantitative point of view, it might be desirable to conduct future studies involving greater numbers of Central American subjects of the same age who arrived at different ages in order to state that age of arrival is a significant variable in the production of velarized /n/ tokens. Nevertheless, these findings demonstrate that, when confronted with a speaker whose dialect is unknown to them, children who have been raised in Los Angeles, employ *tierras altas* pronunciations of implosive /n/ regardless of their parents' home dialect. Given the semi-controlled nature of the task they were performing and the nearly categorical absence of velar /n/ from their speech, there is nothing in this data to suggest that Central American children, as a whole, have a rule for word-final /n/ velarization in their grammar. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that their realization of this phoneme would differ greatly were they in the presence of a Central American speaker of *tierras bajas* Spanish or were they speaking in a less formal style.

In the case of the phonetic variable of word-final /n/, the quantitative analysis performed here is essential to demonstrate the extent to which Spanish speaking children in LA have converged with the production of LAVS speakers and, in the case of children of Central American origin, eliminated from their speech a feature characteristic of the dialect of their parent's/parents' country of origin. A qualitative analysis of data from small numbers of Central American subjects, while perhaps useful with respect to identifying those phonetic contexts in which a word-final /n/ is more likely to be velarized, simply cannot provide the information necessary to convince scholars that the dialect contact taking place in Los Angeles results in the use of certain phonetic features shared by LAVS and *tierras altas* Mexican dialects but not found in Central American *tierras bajas* varieties of Spanish.

5.2.2. PRODUCTION OF LEXICAL ITEMS. The results of the lexical identification task present further evidence of subjects' convergence with the linguistic production of LAVS speakers. As reported in Chapter 4, out of the 12 lexical items depicted on the flashcards, the majority of subjects of Central American origin referred to all but one with words of Mexican origin. It should also be noted that, unlike previous studies that have examined dialect contact in Los Angeles, this particular task required subjects to demonstrate active, as opposed to merely passive, knowledge of these lexical items. The fact that some subjects did produce a few Central American words, however, provides additional evidence to support the claim that that they are exposed to the dialect of their parents' countries of origin at home, an important point to establish in a study of dialect contact. While their failure to use any Central American words at all could easily be used to argue that the Spanish they hear at home is devoid of Central

American *tierras bajas* features, these findings suggest the opposite, thus reaffirming the need for studies of dialect contact like the one analyzed here.

The low numbers of subjects who produced any Central American, as opposed to Mexican-origin lexemes, combined with the equally low percentages of the items that they did use, indicate clearly that, although some children may use a few words of Central American origin, the lexicon of children raised in Los Angeles, regardless of their parents' national origin, can be characterized as consisting primarily of words of Mexican origin. It should be noted that the term used here, Mexican origin, refers as much to words used by monolingual Mexicans raised in Mexico as it does to those used by the bilingual LAVS speakers of second generation or beyond raised in Los Angeles. Consequently, while this particular task contrasts subjects' use of Central American words with those of Mexican-origin words, it provides little information regarding subjects' use of LAVS words in particular. A lack of research identifying words as belonging to the LAVS lexicon, as opposed to that of monolingual Mexican Spanish speakers, precluded creating flashcards with the words that would provide the data necessary to make such a distinction. The existence of a unique LAVS lexicon is the focus of 'A Los Angeles Flavor of Spanish: Local Norm & Ideology,' an MA thesis by Armando Guerrero. This work offers valuable empirical evidence that the vocabulary of monolingual Spanish speakers who have relocated to Los Angeles differs from that of monolingual Spanish speakers of metropolitan areas such as Mexico, D.F. and San Juan Puerto Rico.

As seen in the results from the previous tasks, examining the lexical aspect of dialect contact with quantitative methods reveals much valuable information. The high rates of convergence with Mexican-origin lexicon affirm confirm the assumption that Spanish-speaking

children raised in Los Angeles use Mexican, as opposed to Central American vocabulary when speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown to them. This finding does not necessarily demonstrate that these children have eliminated the Central American vocabulary of their parents from their repertoire completely, replacing it with words of Mexican origin, since their use of Mexican words in this situation may simply reflect their desire to avoid the confusion or misunderstanding that may result from using lexical items that differ from those that they hear most frequently on the street. Due to the nature of this study, this result gives little indication of the words they would use when in the presence of other Central Americans. The fact that these subjects use few to no Central American words in this study could be interpreted in two different ways. First, it could be that their use of primarily Mexican lexicon most likely reflects the exposure that they have had. Since Mexican Spanish is used throughout the community in public places such as churches, stores, restaurants, etc., it comes as no surprise that this is what these children speak. Second, even if one were to claim that Central American vocabulary for these items forms part of these children's repertoire and they choose not to use it, this in itself can prove a telling finding. According to the theory proposed by Gallois and Callan (1991), the subjects will use the vocabulary that they believe reflects the linguistic norm of the community. Thus, their choice to use Mexican vocabulary would indicate that it is the lexical norm in Los Angeles.

Carrying out this quantitative study also makes it possible to observe patterns that may have remained hidden or not as clear in a study of a smaller scale. When comparing children's production of phonetic features with that of lexical features, it appears most likely that subjects tend to eliminate the former while retaining more of the latter. For instance, the discovery that a

large percentage of children of Central American origin continue to use the word *pacha* for ‘baby bottle,’ as revealed in this task, provides a useful criterion that could help to determine whether Central American children have been exposed to the regional dialects spoken in their parents’ home countries. Since over half of the subjects with at least once Central American parent used the word *pacha*, it is anticipated that examining the difference between those who did and those who did not may offer valuable clues regarding children’s self-identification as Central Americans and/or the dialect of Spanish spoken in their homes.

Results from the lexical identification task also demonstrate the large amount of heterogeneity that characterizes the lexicon of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles. Although it was anticipated that subjects would have a small lexicon from which to select a term, coding subjects’ responses provided evidence to the contrary. Few words had a one to one ratio in which there was only one word of Mexican origin that corresponded to a Central American lexeme. Rather, in most cases, subjects produced between two and six words of Mexican origin, be they used primarily by monolingual Mexicans raised in Mexico, such as *litera* ‘bunk bed,’ or by bilingual LAVS speakers raised in the United States, such as *suera* ‘sweater.’ Such variety points to a richness in the lexicon of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles as a whole that has not been previously documented and demonstrates that Spanish, mostly LAVS, is widely spoken in Latino communities. See Appendix C for a list of all of the terms, Mexican and Central American, produced by the subjects.

5.3. LINGUISTIC EVALUATION. Traditionally, the social evaluations that speakers assign to particular linguistic features are not considered when determining dialect use. However, as noted in previous chapters, clear differences exist between bilingual Spanish speakers raised in Los

Angeles and speakers of monolingual Mexican Spanish raised in Mexico when one examines subjects' attitudes towards Central American *voseo*. Incorporating language attitude tasks into this study makes it possible to examine the potential that such a feature holds for identifying a subject's membership in the community of LAVS speakers.

Results from the two different tasks using matched guise methodology indicate that subjects evaluate speakers of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish slightly higher than they do speakers of Salvadoran Spanish, a statistically significant result, confirmed by a t-test.[48] The value of such a finding, however, is minimal when only quantitative methodology is used. Employing a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods by including both multiple choice questions and open-ended questions in this part of the study helps to identify the nature of subjects' attitudes and the particular linguistic features that evoke them. This type of information is crucial when it comes to determining whether the tasks used to obtain such information are appropriate or how they should be modified in order to be more effective. Furthermore, it should be noted that, although quantitative methods can indicate, for instance, whether a difference between the ratings subjects assigned to each kind of speaker, is statistically significant, the ability they have to isolate the variables that cause such a difference is limited. If none of the variables for which one has collected data can account for the findings one has, then the utility of the quantitative methods used has been exhausted and nothing more can be done until more data on other variables has been collected. Such is the case with the differences that subjects assigned to the Mexican-speaking versus the Salvadoran-speaking "Martian." While results from a t-test

[48] Since the recording made by the speaker who was born and raised in LA does not employ any features that differentiate her Spanish from that of other varieties of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish, it is not possible to specify that her speech represents LAVS.

indicated that the ratings given to each “Martian” were different, other tests isolating variables that could account for such differences failed to identify the relevant factors. All they could do was eliminate variables from the list of probable causes.

The findings with regard to the multiple choice questions in which subjects listened to the two different dialects and then answered questions about the “Martians” they had heard also failed to reveal the outcomes hoped for, although for different reasons. Children’s comments as to why they had picked a particular “Martian” indicated that their responses to the first set of questions about the peer “Martians” had been influenced by at least two factors that had not been anticipated to be relevant: 1) seeing the “Martians’” presents before explaining their preferences and 2) their desire to treat both “Martians” fairly. Although the attitude study was designed so that subjects were required to indicate their preferences prior to viewing the presents from each “Martian, they did see the images of the gifts prior to explaining why they made the choice that they did. Since a considerable number of subjects referred specifically to the gift rather than to anything that the “Martian” said or any aspect of its speech, it seems probable that they could have based their preferences on the recordings but then explained them in terms of the difference in gifts. This reasoning is supported by the fact that most of the other subjects (those who did not refer to the gifts) cited either something the “Martian” had said or the way in which the “Martian” said it as a reason for selecting a particular “Martian.” Since the information children had prior to making their selection did not include knowledge of the “Martians’” gifts, it must be concluded that their decisions could not have been based on this difference. This particular aspect of the study design makes it challenging to know why these subjects in particular chose the “Martians” that they did. It is highly likely, however, that they demonstrate a preference for

the Mexican-speaking "Martian" because its speech is closer to the Los Angeles norm, i.e. LAVS.

5.4. VARIABLES IN DIALECT CONTACT. In Chapter 2 it was posited that the independent variables referred to in this dissertation as *school neighborhood* and *child's national origin* would be significant factors in the degree to which a subject's linguistic production and evaluation converged with those of LAVS speakers. Reasoning that children of Central American origin would more likely to use features of *tierras altas* Mexican Spanish based on their contact with children of Mexican origin in their elementary schools, it seemed likely that the pressure to accommodate to the speech of the majority would be greater in an environment where speakers of Mexican origin *tierras altas* Spanish abounded as opposed to a setting where they were surrounded by other speakers of Central American Spanish. The predominance of subjects of Mexican origin, even in schools located in Central American neighborhoods, however, suggests that there are few, if any, schools in Los Angeles where children of Central American origin comprise the majority of the Spanish-speaking population. Given the 5:1 ratio of Mexican to Central American speakers that obtains in Los Angeles County, this predominance of children of Mexican origin is not surprising and, furthermore, supports the affirmation that the sample used for this study is representative of the population of Los Angeles as a whole. This data also explains why LAVS, and not some other type of Spanish, is the prestige variant in Los Angeles. Consequently, the impact of the independent variable *school neighborhood* should be evaluated together with other variables.

Ordinarily a subject's nationality is a variable that can be defined straightforwardly, with little room for interpretation. In the case at hand, however, determining a child's nationality

proved to be challenging for a number of reasons. As reported in Chapter 4, the large amounts of intermarriage that occur between Mexicans and Central Americans complicate tremendously the usually simple task of determining a subject's nationality. This complexity stems from the fact that, in this study, the variable of nationality represents more than the country from which a subjects' family originated. Rather, in a linguistic study such as the one at hand, a child's national origin is assumed to correlate with the particular dialect of Spanish to which said child is exposed in the home and with family. In most studies of dialect contact, subjects are selected so as to avoid the participation of children who have had premature exposure to the dialect whose use is in question. In the present study, this would mean that only children with two Central American parents could be classified as Central American. The reality of the situation in Los Angeles, however, has made it necessary to revisit this definition. Since, as was discovered while carrying out this study, the Mexican population in Los Angeles is extremely numerous and widespread, and intermarriage between Mexicans and Central Americans is very frequent, it became necessary to broaden the definition of a Central American to include a child with at least one parent of Central American origin. Such a situation could prove puzzling, given that one might easily question whether the amount of Central American Spanish to which a child in a two-dialect household would be exposed would be sufficient for the child to speak said dialect.[49] Nevertheless, the fact that some of the children classified as Central American, according to this modified definition, produced some lexical and phonetic features that were clearly not Mexican

[49] In this situation, we could turn to the results of Potowski's (2011) research on intrafamilial dialect contact and assume that the child will produce more features that correspond to the mother's ethnolinguistic group. . Clearly the situation of Spanish in Chicago and in LA is quite different, among other reasons because LAVS is widely spoken outside the household, in the community at large. In Chicago, however, according to Potowski, the use of Spanish is limited to the household.

supports the hypothesis that this is not the case. It is also important to keep in mind that the linguistic production of the subjects participating in this study most likely represents a more regulated sample of their speech since the children were speaking in a semi-formal environment with an unknown adult and completing semi-controlled linguistic tasks.

Blended family structures that arise as the result of divorce or the presence of unwed live-in partners comprise an additional factor that complicates the matter of determining the dialects to which a child has been exposed. When parents are divorced or unmarried, much more data is needed in order to find out the extent to which a child has been exposed to the speech of an adult who is not her primary caregiver. Such information includes the length of time that divorced parents have been separated or unmarried couples have lived together, information regarding custody arrangements in the case of divorced parents, the nature of the relationship between the child and other parent/partner and the frequency with which the child spends time with that other adult and the adult's family. A researcher should also determine if the relationship between the child and other adult is a close one or if the contact they have is (ir)regular and (in)frequent, since it seems likely that the child's exposure to the dialect will depend on the nature of the bond she shares with the adult and the amount time they spend together on a regular basis. If this is correct, data of this sort should be included in subjects' linguistic profiles along with information regarding their age, first language(s) and so on.

As explained previously, the variable typically labeled *subject's nationality* is, in reality, a way to distinguish between those children who have been exposed to *tierras bajas* Central American dialects and those who have not. Realizing this, it is clear that, in the case of some variables, such as coda /s/, defining this variable in terms of the country in which one or more of

the child's parents were born may not be the most accurate indicator of the Spanish to which they have been exposed. Findings from the lexical identification task provide convincing evidence that a large number of children with one or more parents born in Central America refer to a baby bottle with the word *pacha*, a lexeme completely foreign to speakers of Mexican origin Spanish. Such data, then, lends validity to the modified definition of nationality employed here. However, not all of the children identified as Central American use the word *pacha*, and it is quite likely that those who do not may not have been exposed to a Central American dialect, the most likely reason being that their parents, though born in Central America, had already eliminated such features from their own speech before their children were born. One way of making sure that the subjects' parents spoke a Central American dialect would be to make recordings of their speech as well as that of their children. Due to limitations of time, however, such data was not collected. The researcher, however, did speak with most of the parents when obtaining their informed consent and asking them questions in order to fill out the biographical linguistic information sheet. Her general impression was that the parents born in Central American countries did aspirate syllable-final /s/ and velarize word-final /n/. Informal observation, however, is not sufficient for a quantitative study such as this.

In the absence of speech samples of the parents, the next best method of determining whether the subjects' parents have maintained their Central American dialect is to examine the age at which they arrived in Los Angeles, as well as other factors known to influence the maintenance of regional dialectal features. As Parodi (2004) has shown, Central American immigrants who arrive after the age of 20 are not likely to abandon the features of their Central American *tierras bajas* dialects, in particular those related to the phonological system (2004,

2009a). Those individuals who arrive prior to the age of eight, on the other hand, tend to adopt LAVS, and those who arrive in Los Angeles between the ages of 9 and 20 often alternate between LAVS and their home dialect (2004: 282). It is also important to remember that additional factors, such as visits to the family's country of origin and the contact they have with grandparents, can also increase the probability that children have received greater exposure to a *tierras bajas* Central American dialect of Spanish. By categorizing subjects according to their parents' age of arrival, it is possible to make an educated guess as to the type of Spanish to which these children have been exposed. This information, combined with data regarding the number and frequency of visits that the children make to their families' countries of origin and the interactions they have with their grandparents, provide a fairly accurate idea of which subjects were most likely exposed to Central American *tierras bajas* Spanish.

When examining more closely the list of subjects with at least one Central American parent, there were 18 subjects (8 of whom had one parent of Mexican origin) whose parents arrived before the age of 20 and whose linguistic backgrounds suggested that they had had more contact with *tierras altas* varieties of Spanish versus those of the Central American *tierras bajas*. Two of these 18 produced some tokens of aspirated syllable-final /s/, but no others produced any other regional phonetic features, and the highest amount of Central American lexical items any of them produced was two. Although it was not possible to identify any one variable that was shared by all of the other Central American subjects that aspirated the /s/, there are some important observations that can be made. All except one, a child with a Salvadoran mother and Mexican father, came from households where both parents were of Central American countries, although not necessarily the same one. Twelve of the mothers of these children had arrived after

the age of 20, but 5 had not.[50] Furthermore, although a look at the numbers reveals that only two children of Central American origin who produced vestiges of aspiration attended schools in Mexican neighborhoods, it is important to recall that the sample was unevenly distributed, with more than twice the number of subjects in schools located in Central American neighborhoods than those in schools found in Mexican areas. When turning to the other phonetic variable, the realization of word-final /n/, we again find little uniformity with respect to subject characteristics. While the parents of all of these children were both from Central America, not all couples were from just one country. All but one of the mothers of the children who produced velar tokens of /n/ in word-final position arrived in Los Angeles after the age of 20.[51] Furthermore, three of these children were themselves born in Central American countries. Two of these were born in El Salvador and arrived at ages 6 and 7, respectively, and one was born in Guatemala and arrived at the age of 7. As noted in Chapter 4, the child born in Guatemala produced higher ratios of the [ŋ] than did the other subjects. It should also be noted that all of the children who produced the velarized [ŋ] reported speaking Spanish with at least one grandparent.

5.5. DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY. There is no doubt that a quantitative study offers advantages that are often outside of the reach of any qualitative project, namely, the status of numbers and percentages. The numerical data that results from such work are thought to lend credibility to research, especially that done in the social sciences, which tend to be considered more subjective and less concrete than their "hard" science counterparts. In the discipline of US

[50] The sixth mother was born in Los Angeles.

[51] Due to lack of contact with one of the mothers, it was not possible to obtain data regarding her age of arrival.

Spanish, however, few large-scale quantitative studies have been undertaken. In light of the data obtained through the present study, it is important to reflect on the challenges and benefits that this particular methodology presents, as well as the role that such methods could play in future scholarship on US Spanish in general and LA Spanish in particular.

Before entering into a discussion of the quantitative methods used in this dissertation, it is important to realize that the present study combines quantitative methodology with the study of dialect contact, a task which has not, to the knowledge of the researcher, been undertaken in the Los Angeles setting. The last large-scale studies of Spanish in this region were Phillips' 1967 descriptive analysis of the Spanish spoken in Los Angeles and Lastra de Suárez' research carried out in 1969 on the Spanish spoken by elementary school aged children in East LA. While both of these analyzed several dimensions of said variety including the pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax of Spanish in Los Angeles, neither of them examined issues of dialect contact. Consequently, neither encountered much difficulty in locating suitable subjects. If the present study had been, like Phillips (1967), a descriptive analysis of the speech of Spanish-speaking children in Los Angeles, subject selection would have been less challenging. Having established this important difference, it is now possible to return to the issue at hand. The challenges associated with conducting these quantitative studies of Spanish speakers in Los Angeles fall into three main categories: the constantly changing geography of communities in large urban areas, the diversity of family structures, and assessing the fluency and accuracy of the Spanish spoken by potential subjects.

As explained in Chapter 1, during the several decades that have passed since researchers like Phillips and Lastra de Suárez carried out their studies of Spanish in East Los Angeles, the

linguistic profile of subsequent generations of inhabitants of this area has changed drastically. Most Angelenos now living in East Los Angeles are primarily 3rd, 4th and 5th generation immigrants. As a whole they are English dominant, a development that makes it challenging to study the Spanish spoken in this community. Consequently, East Los Angeles is no longer an ideal place to study the Spanish spoken by children in Los Angeles. The continuous flow of immigrants, however, ensures that other communities of Los Angeles now replace East LA as ethnic enclaves for recently-arrived (mainly) Mexican immigrants. These new communities include the areas of Vernon and Huntington Park, both of which are currently vibrant zones of Spanish maintenance in which one hears and sees the language throughout the area. Rather than providing readers with a list of neighborhoods this dissertation aims to stress the need to keep in mind the ever fluctuating nature of large cities such as Los Angeles. As this study demonstrates, linguists and other scholars cannot simply assume that certain areas will not change. Demographic profiles of the area, such as those found in Allen and Turner's *The Ethnic Quilt* and *Changing Faces, Changing Places*, along with the LA Times recent Mapping LA project, are just some of the resources available to scholars interested in the changes that have taken place in LA neighborhoods.

Just as the demographic profiles of Los Angeles area communities are changing and fluctuating, so are the families residing in these neighborhoods. Traditional family structures, in which children live with both biological parents, siblings and other family members, comprise the majority of the subjects participating in this dissertation. Nevertheless, a considerable number of children also came from different kinds of nontraditional families, including those with parents who are divorced, single but living with an unmarried partner, married but living apart,

blended families, etc. Such living arrangements prove challenging because they inevitably affect the amount and quality of exposure that the child has to a particular dialect. Thus these variables should be taken into consideration when formulating questionnaires and other research instruments that allow scholars to obtain the relevant information in a sensitive manner. Even when one does acquire the data pertaining to the contact that a child has with the dialect of Spanish spoken by a stepparent or biological parent with whom she no longer lives, the issue arises of how to interpret such information. Can one say, for example, that a child whose primary caregiver is of Mexican origin but whose divorced biological parent is Salvadoran received sufficient exposure to the Salvadoran dialect so as to have had the opportunity to learn it? What, furthermore, should be considered 'sufficient exposure'? These are just some of the questions that researchers must address given the development of the nontraditional family units in Los Angeles and other large urban areas. All of these issues that arise illustrate the impossibility of controlling all of the variables in a statistical analysis of language, thus placing greater importance on the need to complement quantitative studies with case studies, ethnographic research or additional types of methodology.

Assessing the Spanish proficiency of potential subjects is another task that makes carrying out a quantitative study difficult, especially when working with children. The challenge lies in determining quickly yet accurately whether an individual possesses the degree of fluency necessary to complete certain tasks. This is crucial since the results of one's research can result in an inaccurate portrayal of the linguistic features of the participating subjects. However, given the linguistic insecurities of most US Spanish speakers and their reluctance to speak Spanish at

all,[52] dismissing willing subjects due to a lack of fluency or other linguistic skills will most certainly do more harm than good, multiplying or exacerbating their lack of confidence. How, then, can this dilemma be resolved? One possible solution is the strategy employed in this dissertation, which consisted of recording all subjects that were willing to participate and whose parents gave their informed consent. Regardless of the children's own assessment of their speaking skills, the exposure to Spanish that they received as infants is sufficient for the development of the core grammar of the language. As Parodi (2008) explains, 'Bilinguals have internalized the blueprint of Spanish grammar through exposure during childhood' (211). Consequently, linguistic proficiency becomes dependent on the child's age at the time of the study and age of exposure to the language. Those who clearly lacked the necessary skills completed the study, as did their more fluent classmates. The recordings they produced, however, were transcribed but not analyzed. Rather, they were set aside to be analyzed at a later date, as part of a different study. Choosing to address this dilemma in this way both ensures that researchers do not contribute to the linguistic insecurities of non-proficient speakers and results in the collection of data that can be used for future studies, both desirable outcomes.

There is no doubt that any scholar who conducts a large-scale quantitative study of Spanish as it is spoken in Los Angeles faces numerous challenges. The benefits obtained from doing so, however, clearly outweigh the difficulties. The power of numbers, especially in the context of the social sciences and, in particular, fields like education in which policy is often driven by relevant statistics, is indisputable and invaluable. Nevertheless, it is important to note

[52] Readers interested in this topic can see Chapter 4 of this dissertation, Parodi 2008, Zentella 2007, and the references contained therein.

that a purely quantitative study fails to answer the questions that linguists are most interested in, namely, why children acquire LAVS (or any other dialect) and how this phenomenon occurs. Since variables such as age, age of arrival, gender, travel to the family's country of origin, etc., neither individually nor collectively, can account for the presence of features of *tierras bajas* dialects among children whose parents are of Central American origin, it is clear that more data are needed. For example, information regarding the social networks in which the subjects participate regularly—information regarding their friends, neighbors and other recreational, religious and cultural activities in which they take part may be important. In addition to this, however, it is necessary to observe these children when they are in casual, familiar situations surrounded by other speakers of the same national origin. The linguistic behavior that they exhibit in such contexts should provide a richer picture of their actual language use in addition to the features of the dialects to which they are exposed on a regular basis. As this dissertation demonstrates, such information is crucial when attempting to answer questions such as those posed here. Without such data, it is possible to argue that the numbers that result from purely quantitative studies can support a variety of interpretations. Complementing such numerical data with qualitative observations, however, helps to ensure that all of the various aspects of children's language use are noted and considered when formulating a theory about the linguistic phenomena that motivate children to use a particular dialect. Examining the results from the language attitude tasks used in this study, which employed both quantitative and qualitative methodology, serves to support this claim. On one hand, the numerical figures obtained from the dialect preference task, for instance, demonstrate without a doubt that children assign higher ratings to the *tierras altas* Mexican-speaking "Martian" than to the one that speaks Salvadoran

Spanish. Why this is so, however, is something that no amount of numbers can reveal. Similarly, the comments that children made when explaining why they selected one "Martian" over another helped elucidate the role that their attitudes towards *voseo* played in making their choice. Individually, neither type of data provides sufficient evidence to explain children's dialect attitudes satisfactorily. While the numbers do not explain *why* children have the attitudes that they do, the amount of qualitative evidence is too small for one to assign it much importance. Taken together, however, one set of data supports the other, and it becomes clear that children's feelings towards *voseo* most likely underlie their dialect preference. This is not surprising in light of the fact that *vos* is stigmatized among Salvadorans who live in El Salvador (Quesada Pacheco 1996: 107).

In addition to the qualitative methodology that is implemented in the language attitude portion of this study, there is also a need for ethnographic research regarding the Spanish that the children's parents speak. While the data collected regarding the parents' age of arrival and country of origin, among other information, leads us to believe that these adults have maintained their original regional dialects, it is advisable to observe them producing such features in their homes and other familiar contexts, as is done in Chase Raymond's (2012) case study of the interaction between three generations of a Salvadoran family. While it is expected that this type of ethnographic research will confirm the researcher's informal observations that these children's parents did indeed speak differently than their offspring, it will be desirable as further documentation of the maintenance of their native dialects on the part of immigrants who arrive as adults. Such information on the parents' linguistic features is important because it serves as the basis for the interpretation of the data collected through studies such as the one presently

described. In addition to studying the speech of children's peers, knowing what kinds of dialects they are exposed to in the home can also prove enlightening when trying to understand *how* or *why* children in Los Angeles speak Spanish the way that they do. Obtaining this information should comprise part of the research agenda of scholars interested in continuing the study of dialect contact in Los Angeles from a quantitative approach.

5.6. DIALECT CONTACT. In addition to yielding data that helps linguists better characterize the Spanish spoken by children raised in Los Angeles, the present study offers valuable insights regarding the phenomenon of dialect contact in general. For instance, we can examine one of Chambers' (1992) principles of dialect acquisition in light of the data collected here: the affirmation that 'Lexical replacements are acquired faster than pronunciation and phonological variants' (677). One may recall that, with respect to lexical production, there were 7 children who used at least 40% Central American lexemes (compared to the 153 students who used less than 30% words of Central American origin). When examining the phonetic production of these same 7 children who used (relatively) high amounts of Central American lexicon (i.e. children who have not replaced all Central American lexemes with ones of Mexican origin), we find support for such a claim. Given Chambers' affirmation, one would expect that subjects who have not yet replaced all lexical items of the original dialect with those of the new one would preserve some phonetic features of the original dialect. Of these seven children who continued to use Central American lexical items, 6 produced tokens of either residual aspirated /s/ or residual velarized /n/ or both, as shown in Table 27. While the percentages of such features may seem quite low, especially in the case of reduced /s/, readers are reminded that the majority of the 160

subjects participating in this study did not produce a single token of either allophone. Thus, the alveolar fricative [s] is the standard for this group.

Subject	Parents' Nationality (Mother/Father)	Place of Birth	Use of Central American Lexicon	Production of Residual /s/ Aspiration	Production of Residual /n/ Velarization
LP29	Salvadoran	El Salvador	66%	2%	18%
LP13	Salvadoran	El Salvador	57%	3%	1%
LP16	Guatemalan	San Diego	40%	none	none
W17	Guatemalan/ Honduran	LA	40%	6%	12%
W13	Salvadoran	LA	40%	5%	none
Mag188	Salvadoran	LA	40%	2%	none
Mag180	Salvadoran	LA	40%	none	3%

TABLE 27. Phonetic Production of Subjects with High Use of Central American Lexicon

Upon inspecting the table above, one may note that there is one subject, LP16, a Guatemalan, who produces quite a few Central American lexemes yet fails to utter tokens of the *tierras bajas* allophone of [ŋ],[53] resulting in behavior that fails to support Chambers' abovementioned principle of dialect contact. This seeming contradiction, however, is explained when we examine

[53] The lack of aspirated /s/ allophones in this subject's speech are expected, given the fact that most Guatemalans do not aspirate syllable- or word-final /s/. Consequently, the discussion that follows is focused on the child's lack of production of velarized /n/ allophones only. Note that velar /n/ highly marks or distinguishes this dialect of Spanish.

this subject’s responses to the questions comprising the language attitude tasks. In addition to always selecting the Mexican Spanish-speaking “Martian” when prompted to choose from among it and the Salvadoran speaker, this child gave the former positive ratings and the latter negative ones, demonstrating a preference for Mexican Spanish. The following comments that she made as to why she made the choices that she did could provide a plausible explanation as to why she may not have used any *tierras bajas* allophones: ‘’Cause I understand it more and it had the language that I use at home. And the first one, it was like the language that I heard in Guatemala, so it's kind of strange to me,’ and ‘I picked this program because the teacher explained me more fluently than the second one. Like the other, there were some words I didn’t understand. She didn’t say words that were pronounced a certain way, but they were pronounced a different way. So the first one reminded me of how my mom and dad talk.’ Both comments reveal that this child has undoubtedly developed linguistic awareness and is quite conscious of how she speaks Spanish, and especially of how it is pronounced. Furthermore, this awareness appears to be linked to the differences she perceives between her and her parents’ speech and that of Guatemalans living in Guatemala. It is highly likely that her definite views as to how one should speak also stem from the fact that her mother is an elementary school teacher and might promote prescriptivist language attitudes in the home. The child’s affirmation that both her and her parents’ speech differs from that of the Salvadoran “Martian” is intriguing since it indicates that this child does not associate herself with the Salvadoran way of speaking. The question that arises is why? Could it be that her parents have eliminated regional dialect features from their speech and speak LAVS instead? Or is the disparity due mainly to the pronunciation differences that exist between Salvadoran and Guatemalan Spanish, noted most saliently in the aspiration of

syllable- and word-final /s/? This last question is one that has not received much attention in the literature and leads to the topic of the following section, a questioning of the need to examine the differences that exist between the Spanish of Angelenos of various Central American countries. Although scholars of Hispanic dialectology have often treated Central America as a dialectal area, it is important to note that specialists in the Spanish of spoken in Central American countries have their reservations regarding this matter. Quesada Pacheco (1996), for instance, states that conclusive evidence for identifying Central America as a unified dialect area has yet to be found (115).[54]

5.7. ON DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN CENTRAL AMERICAN DIALECTS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. Within the past two decades, linguists studying the Spanish of the United States have begun to examine dialect contact phenomena with increased zeal. While research on the East coast and Midwest has focused mainly on contact between Mexican and Puerto Rican varieties, the emphasis west of the Mississippi has been on communication between speakers of Mexican Spanish and Central American Spanish in general, and that of Salvadorans in particular (cf Parodi, Hernández, Aaron and Hernández, Raymond, etc.). Like the present dissertation, studies that do not examine specifically the speech of Salvadorans tend to group other Central Americans (Hondurans, Guatemalans, Nicaraguans, Costa Ricans, etc.) together into one entity. Considering the new data that this dissertation contributes to our understanding of dialect accommodation on the part of Central Americans, it seems apt to ask whether the decision to continue grouping together these immigrants of different Central American countries is justified.

[54] Quesada Pacheco's reluctance to identify Central America as a dialect area is even reflected in the title of his chapter, 'El español de Ámerica Central,' as opposed to 'El español centroamericano.'

As this dissertation demonstrates very clearly, the numerical inequality that exists between Central Americans, the linguistic minority, and Mexicans is undeniable.[55] According to Census 2010 data Mexicans comprise 70% more of the Hispanic population than do Salvadorans, the most populous of the Central Americans nationalities in Los Angeles. The data from the present study show that even in the ethnic niches like Pico Union and the Westlake District, where Central Americans are known to be concentrated, Mexicans constitute more than half of the elementary school population. The historical seniority of Mexicans and the related feelings of entitlement that many of them express also distinguish Mexicans from Central Americans as a whole. Since Central Americans and Mexicans interact socially, all of the abovementioned factors have a strong effect on speech of all Central Americans regardless of their specific nationalities. Given such conditions it is highly unlikely that they would maintain the dialects of their countries of origin in Los Angeles.[56]

Findings from the present study indicate that, at an early age, children's speech is devoid of the lexical and phonetic characteristics of Central American dialects that are not shared with LAVS (i.e *tierras bajas* features, *voseo* and regional vocabulary). Although it is not immediately clear whether this is due to the absence of these features from the subjects' repertoire or whether they consciously choose to use Mexican features, the undeniable fact is that, as a whole, they do not maintain aspiration of /s/ or velarization of /n/ as a systematic feature when speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown. Consequently, distinguishing between the particular

[55] Here the term Mexicans refers to individuals of Mexican descent of various generations, not just those born on Mexican soil.

[56] In rare instances, Central Americans can maintain their home dialects through conscious effort.

Central American dialects in this study becomes a moot point from a purely linguistic point of view. Turning to children's use of regional Central American lexical items, we see that they eliminate most of these from their speech as well. The one word that they do maintain, *pacha* 'baby bottle,' is one that is shared by Central Americans of various countries. So, again this study offers no reason to differentiate between these dialects. Furthermore, although subjects' responses to the biographical questionnaire revealed that a fair number of them, all Guatemalans, lived in households in which an indigenous language was spoken, this factor did not appear to affect their dialect use.[57]

5.8. JUSTIFICATION FOR STUDIES OF DIALECT CONTACT AMONG US SPANISH SPEAKERS. As most research on US Spanish demonstrates, Spanish in this country is often lost by the third generation and sometimes even before. Furthermore, continuous migration has maintained the vitality of Spanish in California, resulting in the formation of LAVS, a linguistic variety particular to Los Angeles. It is due to this inevitable process of language shift that many may question the usefulness of dialect contact studies with regard to US Spanish. Why, they might ask, should we study the particular dialects that these individuals are speaking when they eventually quit speaking the language altogether? The findings that relate to children's language attitudes as revealed in this study offer important insights that allow us to better assess whether or not dialect contact studies are worth pursuing in the area of US Spanish. This dissertation provides definite proof that children who are raised in Los Angeles not only demonstrate a preference for the

[57] It is important to consider, however, the impact that this indigenous vs. non-indigenous distinction may have on children's linguistic practices in general (i.e. in English) and issues related to language such as sociocultural identity, linguistic insecurity, etc.

Mexican variety that is most widely spoken in the area, but also articulate conscious attitudes towards particular features of other dialects, namely, *voseo*. Most likely a direct result of dialect contact in this region, the negative attitudes towards *voseo* that are registered in this study show that this situation in which Mexicans and Central Americans coexist in a community can influence more than just linguistic production. This is important because, while features of a group's speech rarely impact those outside of said group, their evaluations of others inevitably affect those whose speech they judge and can impact the relationships between the groups comprising the community they live in. For instance, a Salvadoran's accommodation to the *tierras altas* tense /s/ may only affect her speech and, possibly, that of her children. A Mexican child's dislike for *voseo*, however, could arguably have more far-reaching consequences, given that it may result in reactions that may range from teasing speakers who use *voseo*, to bullying them, to shunning them. This, in turn, could lead *voseante* speakers to abandon that particular feature or, possibly, to quit speaking Spanish altogether. It is also possible that these children might develop negative attitudes towards their parents as illiterate or of lower social class. Furthermore, since one only needs to be able to comprehend a linguistic variety but not necessarily speak it in order to develop a particular attitude towards it, it is possible that this dislike for *voseo* could be reflected in the actions of individuals who are not proficient Spanish speakers but rather receptive bilinguals of 3rd generation or beyond. Their ability to understand Spanish would allow them to identify particular features of Spanish and, possibly, to react to them according to the linguistic norms of their community. If this is the case, the repercussions of this particular situation of dialect contact could be greater than originally surmised and definitely merit future research.

5.9. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR DIALECT CONTACT RESEARCH IN LOS ANGELES. There are numerous ways in which the research carried out for the present study can benefit the immigrant communities whose speech they focus on. The language attitude portion of this dissertation provides valuable empirical evidence that as early as elementary school children are aware of the way that their classmates speak and have already developed definite attitudes towards Salvadoran Spanish in general and *voseo* in particular. Such findings strongly suggest that children who speak Spanish with these features that are considered undesirable could be likely targets for discrimination or possibly even bullying based on their speech. While previous studies offered primarily anecdotal evidence to support such a claim, this dissertation makes it clear that this is a serious issue that needs to be addressed.

In addition to identifying linguistic discrimination as a challenge that poses problems for children of Central American heritage, the present study also reveals that these children exhibit much more cultural diversity than had previously been assumed. Their responses to the biographical information questionnaires, for instance, revealed that many children are of mixed national heritage and have parents who are of differing generations. There was even one child who came from a home where the native language of both parents was neither English nor Spanish but an indigenous language. Such data further reinforce the need for school administrators and teachers to be aware that the Hispanic students attending their schools have different backgrounds and different needs. It is undeniable that children raised in Los Angeles but of Mexican origin deal with the challenges of being neither completely Mexican nor American. It is also true that they enjoy a certain amount of prestige as members of the largest ethnic minority in the area as well as a group that can claim historical ties to the land on which

they live.[58] The children of Central American immigrants face the same challenges but without either of the aforementioned benefits. Instead, they are misidentified and often denied a cultural identity of their own since the society at large is unaware of their existence. The same can be said of Central American immigrants of indigenous heritage who face the added stigma of having indigenous blood and not sharing the cultural practices and beliefs of their fellow countrymen. For all of these children, one of the greatest needs is the understanding that the linguistic and cultural diversity that they contribute to their communities is valuable and should be considered a source of pride. As the lexical portion of this dissertation indicates, children do actively use some lexical items from their parents' countries of origin, a fact that suggests that they have not completely rejected this aspect of their identity and could be encouraged to cultivate it.[59]

One way of addressing both of the situations presented in the previous paragraphs is to develop a dialect awareness curriculum, similar to those instituted in certain regions of the United States to teach children about dialect diversity. To my knowledge, no work has been done on dialect awareness for varieties of Spanish. Following the guidelines that Siegel (2010) provides for such a program, we see that instructing children on dialect diversity with respect to

[58] As Peñalosa (1980) explains, many Chicanos identify 'the American Southwest and adjacent parts of northwest Mexico,' as Aztlán, the legendary homeland of their Aztec ancestors (1980: 280). Consequently, they see California and other parts of the Southwest as a part of their cultural heritage and claim ownership of it.

[59] This study points to the need for greater cultural understanding on the part of children's parents and other adults with regard to the emotional difficulties that these youth face when speaking Spanish. Many of the children in the study reported that their own parents and other family members, abroad but also in Los Angeles, often ridiculed them because of the way they spoke Spanish. When answering questions about their children's linguistic practices, a lot of parents expressed attitudes towards their Spanish that substantiated the students' claims, stating that they didn't speak well, citing examples of borrowings and code switching as proof. Some of these same children, however, spoke quite well.

varieties of English usually consists of three components: an accommodation component, which incorporates use of the second dialect in the classroom; a sociolinguistic component, which consists of instruction on linguistic variation; and a contrastive component, which explains the rule-governed nature of said variation. These three elements are then used to inform the development of specific activities that focus on teaching children about the linguistic features, such as *voseo*, that are stigmatized in Los Angeles.

10. IMPLICATIONS. The present dissertation demonstrates clearly that the speech of children raised in Los Angeles is characterized by a particular set of features which includes maintenance of syllable-final /s/, an alveolar realization of word-final /n/, and a predominance of Mexican-origin lexical items. Furthermore, it reveals that fourth- and fifth-grade students who have grown up in Hispanic neighborhoods of this Southern Californian city assign significantly higher ratings to Mexican Spanish speakers than to speakers of Salvadoran Spanish, a finding that has never before been documented. The comments that students made when asked to explain their responses, as well as some unsolicited remarks they made, lend even greater credibility to the aforementioned dialect preferences. These data are particularly meaningful because children exhibit these features regardless of their parents' national origin. Consequently, they demonstrate that children raised in Los Angeles use a Mexican *tierras altas* variety of Spanish when speaking with an interlocutor whose dialect is unknown. With respect to the claim that LAVS is a koiné, the data collected in this study suggest that certain phenomena identified as requisite for the formation of a koiné have taken place. As explained in Chapter 2, one such development is the restructuring of values, which consists of a change in the social evaluations that are assigned to particular linguistic features. Although seemingly insignificant when compared to the linguistic

phenomena that affect grammatical or phonological features, this reevaluation of linguistic features is an important find because, unlike the aforementioned phenomena, it cannot be accounted for by a language loss perspective. The fact that it receives no satisfactory explanation under the current analyses of US Spanish as instances of language loss, attrition or incomplete acquisition challenges the explanatory adequacy of such a perspective, while strengthening that of the claim that LAVS is a koiné which should be studied outside of the home environment as a variant of the larger speech community since it has linguistic and sociolinguistic features of its own, as I have shown in this dissertation.

The few children who prove to be exceptions to the trends revealed in this data also help to further illuminate our understanding of the phenomenon of dialect contact in Los Angeles and the identification of factors that favor maintenance of a regional dialect in spite of the large disparity in numbers of speakers. The data provided in this study pinpoint said factors and can steer future researchers in a fruitful direction. Thus, the research presented here accomplishes important groundwork that will serve as the foundation for further investigations.

By providing quantitative data based on large numbers of subjects, rather than limited information obtained from few informants, this dissertation provides valuable support for the claim that US Spanish as evidenced in Los Angeles is neither deficient Spanish nor a stage of language loss, but rather a systematic variety of the language characterized by a particular set of phonetic, lexical and sociolinguistic evaluative features spoken in a large speech community. Although far from sufficient to prove this claim in and of itself, it will hopefully lead linguists and other scholars to question the all-pervasive belief that the Spanish spoken by Hispanics raised in the United States is not a systematic variety. The ramifications of accepting

unconditionally such a position affect not only the Hispanic population of the United States but also every non-Hispanic resident of cities like Los Angeles that consist of a Latino majority, as reflected in policies on everything from education to politics. Consequently, it seems only fair that the validity of a belief that has such far-reaching consequences should be thoroughly re-examined in light of the ever-growing body of knowledge regarding the Spanish spoken in this region and eventually in this country.

APPENDIX A
Scripts for Language Attitude Task

Script 1

Mexican Spanish Script 1:

Hola. Me llamo CF2. Tengo diez años y vivo en Los Angeles. Mira, aquí tengo un regalo. Es para ti. Creo que te va a gustar mucho. Es muy divertido. ¿Puedes adivinar qué es? Te voy a dar unas pistas. Tiene seis colores y te va a durar mucho tiempo. Puedes usarlo en casa, en la escuela o en el carro. Mi amigo tiene uno y le gusta mucho. Yo tengo uno también. Si eres nuevo en tu clase, como yo, y quieres impresionar a tus amigos, necesitas este regalo. Toma mi regalo. Sólo tienes que hacer clic en la imagen del regalo.

Salvadoran Spanish Script 1:
Hola. Me llamo AJ6. Tengo diez años y vivo en Los Ángeles. Mirá, aquí tengo un regalo. Es para vos. Creo que te va a gustar mucho. Es muy divertido. ¿Podés adivinar qué es? Te voy a dar unas pistas. Tiene seis colores y te va a durar mucho tiempo. Podés usarlo en casa, en la escuela o en el carro. Mi amigo tiene uno y le gusta mucho. Yo tengo uno también. Si sos nuevo en tu clase, como yo, y querés impresionar a tus amigos, necesitás este regalo. Tomá mi regalo. Sólo tenés que hacer clic en la imagen del regalo.

English Translation Script 1:

Hello. My name is ________. I am ten years old and live in Los Angeles. Look, I have a present here. It's for you. I think you're going to like it a lot. It is very fun. Can you guess what it is? I'm going to give you some clues. It has six colors and will last you a long time. You can use it at home, at school or in the car. My friend has one and he likes it a lot. I have one too. If you are new in your class, like I am, and you want to impress your friends, you need this present. Take my present. Just click on the image of the present.

Script 2

Mexican Spanish Script 2:

Hola. Soy la Sra. QN4 y soy maestra en Lincoln Middle School en Los Angeles. Hoy quiero hablarte sobre un programa educativo que ofrecemos en nuestra escuela secundaria, que pienso que te va a gustar. Como ya sabes, es muy importante que todos los niños aprendan a leer y a apreciar los libros. Cuando entres a la escuela secundaria, recuerda que tenemos un programa especial en el cual los estudiantes del sexto grado trabajan con niños del kínder para enseñarles a leer. Si participas en este programa, tú serás el experto y podrás leerle tus libros favoritos a un niño del kínder. ¿Te acuerdas de cuando eras chico y alguien te leía a ti? Ahora tú puedes hacer lo mismo y ayudar a mejorar tu comunidad. ¡Anímate! Únete a nuestro programa. Haz clic en la lista abajo para participar.

Salvadoran Spanish Script 2:
Hola. Soy la Sra. CR7 y soy maestra en Lincoln Middle School de la ciudad de Los Ángeles. Hoy quiero

hablarte sobre un programa educativo que ofrecemos en nuestra escuela secundaria, que pienso que te va a gustar. Como ya sabés, es muy importante que todos los niños aprendan a leer y a apreciar los libros. Cuando entrés a la escuela secundaria, recordá que tenemos un programa especial en el cual los estudiantes del sexto grado trabajan con niños del kínder para enseñarles a leer. Si participás en este programa, vos serás el experto y podrás leerle tus libros favoritos a un niño del kínder. ¿Te acordás de cuando eras chico y alguien te leía a vos? Ahora vos podés hacer lo mismo y ayudar a mejorar tu comunidad. ¡Animate! ¡Unite a nuestro programa! Hacé clic en la lista abajo para participar.

English Translation Script 2:

Hello. My name is Mrs. ________ and I am a teacher at Lincoln Middle School in Los Angeles. Today I'd like to talk to you about an educational program that we offer at my middle school that I think you will like. As you already know, it is very important that all children learn to read and appreciate books. When you enter middle school, we have a special program in which sixth grade students work with kindergarteners to teach them how to read. If you participate in this program, you will be the expert and you will be able to read your favorite books to a kindergartener. Do you remember when you were little and someone read to you? Now you can do the same and help to improve your community. Come on! Join our program. Click on the list below to participate.

APPENDIX B
LINGUISTIC QUESTIONNAIRE, ENGLISH

Questionnaire

1. How many people live in your home? __________
2. Please complete the following table, filling out one column for each person (children as well as adults) who lives in your home, beginning with the child participating in this study. If you need more space, please use the attached half sheet.

    1. Relationship to child (mother, grandmother, aunt, brother, etc.)
    2. Age (in years)
    3. Sex (M = male, F = female)
    4. City and country of birth
    5. Year of arrival in LA (if born here, please put "NA")
    6. Highest level of education completed
    7. Native language (first language)
    8. Occupation. If person does not work, please put "NA"
    9. Language(s)that this person speaks with the child
    10. Language(s) that the child speaks with this person

EXAMPLE **1.** *sister*		**A** **1. child participating in study**		**B** **1.**		**C** **1.**	
2. *22*	**3.** *F*	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**
4. *Los Angeles, USA*		**4.**		**4.**		**4.**	
5. *NA*	**6.** *College*	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**
7. *Spanish*		**7.**		**7.**		**7.**	
8. *waitress*		**8. NA**		**8.**		**8.**	
9. *Spanish, English*		**9. NA**		**9.**		**9.**	
10. *English, some Spanish*		**10. NA**		**10.**		**10.**	

D **1.**		**E** **1.**		**F** **1.**		**G** **1.**	
2.	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**
4.		**4.**		**4.**		**4.**	
5.	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**
7.		**7.**		**7.**		**7.**	
8.		**8.**		**8.**		**8.**	
9.		**9.**		**9.**		**9.**	
10.		**10.**		**10.**		**10.**	

1

3. Please include the information for the child's grandparents below. If they are deceased, please put a "D" next to their age in box # 1. If the child never had contact with the grandparent, please indicate this in boxes #6 and 7 and put "NA" in each of these.

	grandma (maternal)	grandpa (maternal)	grandma (paternal)	grandpa (paternal)
1. age	1.	1.	1.	1.
2. birthplace (city, country)	2.	2.	2.	2.
3. year arrived in LA	3.	3.	3.	3.
4. highest level of school completed	4.	4.	4.	4.
5. native language(s)	5.	5.	5.	5.
6. language s/he speaks to child	6.	6.	6.	6.
7. language child speaks to him/her	7.	7.	7.	7.

4. Has the child lived somewhere other than Los Angeles?
   - ☐ Yes. Please write where and for how long: ______________________________
   - ☐ No.

5. Has the child studied Spanish outside of the home? (For example, in a school, language institute, cultural institute, community center, etc.)
   - ☐ Yes, in ____________________ (name of place) for ______ (# of years)
   - ☐ No

6. Has the child always attended a public school here in Los Angeles?
   - ☐ Yes
   - ☐ No. Please explain: ______________________________

7. Does the child visit the country of origin of his close family members (parents, grandparents)?
   - ☐ Yes, he/she has visited ______________________________ (cities and countries) ____________ (number) times
   - ☐ No

8. How often?
   - ☐ More than 3 times per year
   - ☐ Between 2 and 3 times per year
   - ☐ Once every other year
   - ☐ Once every year
   - ☐ Once every 3 years
   - ☐ Once every 4 years or less
   - ☐ Other: ____________
   - ☐ Never

Thank you for your participation!

2

LINGUISTIC QUESTIONNAIRE, SPANISH VERSION

Cuestionario

1. ¿Cuántas personas viven en su casa? __________
2. Por favor complete la siguiente tabla, llenando una columna para cada persona (adultos y niños) que vive en su casa, comenzando con el niño que está participando en esta investigación. Si necesita más espacio, por favor use la hojita adjunta.

    1. Parentesco (madre, abuelo, tía, hermano, etc.)
    2. Edad (en años)
    3. Sexo (M = masculino, F = femenino)
    4. Ciudad y país donde nació
    5. Año en que llegó a este país (si nació aquí, por favor ponga "NA")
    6. Grado de escuela más alto que ha completado. Si nunca asistió a la escuela, por favor ponga "sin estudios"
    7. Lengua materna (primera lengua)
    8. Ocupación. Si no trabaja, por favor ponga "NA"
    9. Lengua(s) que habla con el niño
    10. Lengua(s) en que el niño habla con la persona

EJEMPLO **1.** *tía*		**A** **1. niño/a que participa en la investigación**		**B** **1.**		**C** **1.**	
2. *22*	**3.** *F*	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**
4. *Puebla, México*		**4.**		**4.**		**4.**	
5. *2002*	**6.** *grado 5*	**5. NA**	**6. NA**	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**
7. *español*		**7.**		**7.**		**7.**	
8. *mesera*		**8. NA**		**8.**		**8.**	
9. *español, inglés*		**9. NA**		**9.**		**9.**	
10. *inglés, un poco de español*		**10. NA**		**10.**		**10.**	

D **1.**		**E** **1.**		**F** **1.**		**G** **1.**	
2.	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**	**2.**	**3.**
4.		**4.**		**4.**		**4.**	
5.	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**	**5.**	**6.**
7.		**7.**		**7.**		**7.**	
8.		**8.**		**8.**		**8.**	
9.		**9.**		**9.**		**9.**	
10.		**10.**		**10.**		**10.**	

Por favor vea el otro lado

1

3. Por favor incluya los datos de los abuelos abajo. Si han fallecido, por favor ponga una "F" junto a la edad, en la casilla # 1. Si el niño nunca tuvo contacto con ellos, por favor indíquelo en las casillas #6 y 7 y ponga "NA" en cada una.

	abuela materna	**abuelo materno**	**abuela paterna**	**abuelo paterno**
1. edad	**1.**	**1.**	**1.**	**1.**
2. ciudad y país donde nació	**2.**	**2.**	**2.**	**2.**
3. año que llegó a LA	**3.**	**3.**	**3.**	**3.**
4. grado de escuela más alto que completó	**4.**	**4.**	**4.**	**4.**
5. primera(s) lengua(s)	**5.**	**5.**	**5.**	**5.**
6. lengua que habla con niño/a	**6.**	**6.**	**6.**	**6.**
7. lengua que habla niño/a con él/ella	**7.**	**7.**	**7.**	**7.**

4. ¿Siempre ha vivido el niño en Los Angeles?
   - ☐ Sí.
   - ☐ No. Por favor explique dónde y por cuánto tiempo: ______________________________

5. ¿El niño ha estudiado español fuera de casa? (Por ejemplo, en una escuela, un instituto de lenguas, un instituto cultural, un centro comunitario, la iglesia etc.)
   - ☐ Sí, en ______________________ (nombre del lugar) por ______ (# de años)
   - ☐ No

6. ¿El niño siempre ha asistido a una escuela pública aquí en Los Ángeles?
   - ☐ Sí
   - ☐ No. Por favor explique: ______________________________

7. ¿Visita el niño el país de origen de sus familiares cercanos (padres, abuelos)?
   - ☐ Sí, ha visitado ______________________________ (ciudad(es) y país(es)) __________ veces (número)
   - ☐ No

8. ¿Con qué frecuencia visita ese país?
   - ☐ Más de 3 veces al año
   - ☐ Entre 2 y 3 veces al año
   - ☐ 1 vez al año
   - ☐ 1 vez cada 2 años
   - ☐ 1 vez cada 3 años
   - ☐ 1 vez cada 4 años o menos
   - ☐ Sólo fue una vez
   - ☐ Nunca

¡Gracias por su participación!

2

APPENDIX C
Mexican and Central American Lexical Items Produced by Subjects

Object/concept	Mexican origin Spanish	Central American Spanish
baby bottle	mamila biberón bibi	pacha pepe
belt	cinto cinturón faja cincho	cincho
bunk bed	litera	camarote
cake	pastel	queike
ice cream	nieve helado paleta	sorbete
jacket	chaqueta/jaqueta/yaqueta chamarra suéter suera	chumpa
kite	cometa papalote	*none*
pig	marrano/marranito cochino/cochinito puerco/puerquito cerdo/cerdito	tunco chancho/chanchito
rice and beans	frijoles con arroz	casamiento gallo pinto
drinking straw	popote	pajilla
turkey	pavo guajolote	chompipe chumpe
baby	niño bebé	

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