# A Sociolinguistic Profile of Heritage Spanish Speakers in the Public Schools in Laredo, Texas

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## 0. Background

In the United States a heritage language is defined as a language other than English spoken as a first language. Heritage language students are individuals who speak a language other than English as their first language, either because they were born in another country or because their families speak another language at home (Campbell 1996). Valdés (1999)further adds that heritage language students may speak or merely understand the heritage language, and that they are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language. The increasing number of children who enter United States' schools from homes where languages other than English are spoken, and the overdue recognition that bilingualism is a valuable national resource have helped generate interest in the field of heritage language instruction, or the teaching of heritage languages as academic subjects. The fastest growing of these heritage language communities is the Spanish-speaking community made up of recent immigrants and Americans of Hispanic descent. Across the country, Spanish heritage language programs offer Spanish-speaking students the opportunity to study Spanish formally in an academic setting in the same way that native-English speaking students study the English language.

**1.0 Statement of the Problem**

This project addresses the problem of language development and language growth for students educated in Laredo whose home language is Spanish. Most school-aged Hispanic Americans in the Laredo public school systems rarely have the opportunity to fully develop their first language, i.e. Spanish. By the time these students reach secondary school, their Spanish vocabulary is often restricted to the home and neighborhood, while their English vocabulary encompasses their intellectual and abstract thought. Although these students are considered to be bilingual, they lack higher level skills in Spanish. Given that the United States has an unprecedented need for individuals who are competent in English and one or more other languages (Brecht and Ingold 1998), the Laredo community and the State of Texas squanders a great resource by not developing Spanish spoken natively in Laredo.

**2.0 Importance of the Research Problem**

Spanish is considered to be the first language of more than 90% of the children in the public schools in Laredo, yet most students cannot function in Spanish past a primary school level. Their Spanish vocabulary is restricted to the home and neighborhood, while their English vocabulary encompasses their intellectual and abstract thought. It is in their vocabulary, perhaps more than any other language area, where their bilingualism is most evident. Most Hispanic-Americans in this region grow up with Spanish, English, and a tendency to mix the two languages. Codeswitching, or 'TexMex', as it is often referred to in this community, is an important characteristic of the overall dynamic picture of linguistic interaction in Laredo. It is natural, spontaneous and is characteristic of any community whose languages are in contact. As members of a bilingual speech community, most

Laredoan's Spanish contain a large number of integrated borrowings, which are in fact part of the Spanish variant that this community speaks. Furthermore, there are a number of loan words and loan translations that heritage speakers use which they believe to be 'true' Spanish items until they are in contact with other monolingual Spanish-speakers who do not understand certain local lexical items (e.g. catpeta for 'carpet' rather than alfombra or even 'folder'). As a result, many Laredoans are led to believe that their variety of Spanish is corrupt or deficient. Unfortunately, this situation is representative of other large minority populations in the United States as well.

The first step in establishing a Heritage Language Program is to define the characteristics of heritage language learners in order to design and recommend instructional goals and pedagogy to meet the community's needs. Specifically, this paper defines the characteristics of and language attitudes that embody Laredo's Spanish heritage public school students. An investigation of language use and language attitudes in a bilingual community is important since certain non-linguistic factors have a profound influence on the language that is used in a discourse situation. In most cases, the selection of the particular code to be used, albeit English, Spanish, or a mixture of the two, is based on non-linguistic factors. Moreover, border residents are faced with the complex task of negotiating their identity every time they engage in discourse. The expected outcome of this paper is for public policy planners, administrators, teachers and community members to recognize the need for and the value of implementing a Laredo Spanish Heritage Language Project.


**3.0 Research Methodology**

The data utilized in this study came from a questionnaire administered to 965 subjects ranging from first grade to twelfth grade randomly chosen from 10 elementary, 4 middle and 3 high

schools in Laredo ISD and United ISD in April ?000. Sampling included a brief sociolinguistic background questionnaire (see Appendix A and B) and a 44 item questionnaire (see Appendix C) which examined subjects' self-reported language use patterns along with their attitudes toward Spanish proficiency, societal identity, home language and bilingualism, and English proficiency in the Laredo community. Texas A&M International students enrolled spring semester 2000 in ENGL 4347 (Contrastive Linguistics)and ENGL 5347 (Contrastive Linguistics-graduate level) assisted with the data collection'.Consequently, data collection was done by students of the same Language and ethnic background as the majority of the students surveyed.

**3.1 Research questions:**

1. Is Laredo a Spanish heritage language community, i.e. is Spanish the predominant home language?

2. If so, what linguistic and sociolinguistic characteristics do Spanish heritage language speakers in this border community possess?

    a. Language use w/interlocutors: Parents, siblings, grandparents, friends.

    b. Language used for: Talking casually at school, praying, counting, dreaming.

    c. Language considered to be their home language and their dominant language.

3. What are the speakers' self-reported attitudes toward:

    a. Spanish proficiency

    b. Identity

    c. Home Language

    d. English proficiency

**4.0 General Characteristics of Laredo Heritage Spanish Speakers**

**4.1 Gender**

Of the 935 subjects, 495 (53˚Io) of the subjects were female and 440 (47%) were male.

**4. 2 Grade Level**

Grades 1-12 were represented in the survey, with the largest participation coming from the 5th, 6th and 7th grades.

**4. 3 School Category**

Seventeen elementary, middle and high schools were included. From Laredo ISD there were four schools at the Elementary level with a total of 107 students surveyed, one middle school with 138 students and two high schools with 86 students surveyed. From United ISD there were six schools at the Elementary school level with a total of 190 students, three middle schools with 198 students and one high school with 219 students surveyed.

**4.4 Ethnicity**

With regards to group labeling in the middle and high schools[2]: 47% of those surveyed consider themselves to be 'Hispanic', 25% consider themselves to be 'Mexican', 18% call themselves 'Mexican-American', 7% consider themselves to be 'Latino(a)', 2% 'Tejano' and less than 1% consider themselves in the 'other' category where they responded that they were 'Anglo', or 'African-American'. No students surveyed marked the 'Chicano(a)' category.

**5.0 Language Use by Laredo Heritage Spanish Speakers**

**5.1 Home Language**

Subjects claimed their home language, i.e. the language used most frequently in the home to be: Spanish 38%, Both English and Spanish 30%, TexMex[3] 17% (combination of English and Spanish by the same speaker), and finally English 15% (see Table 2). Based on these results, the answer to the first research question posed above in section 3.0, "Is Laredo a Spanish heritage language community, i.e. is Spanish the predominant home language?," would have to be 'yes'. Fishman (1992) argues that the language of the home domain is the primary indicator as to whether or not a minority language will survive within a community. He argues that if the home domain is lost there is no chance for institutions to support the perpetuation of an endangered language. It appears as though Spanish is safely situated in the home environment in the Laredo community.

**5.2 Dominant Language**

Subjects considered their dominant language, i.e. the language that they felt was their main language or strongest language, to be TexMex 41%, then English 33%, and finally Spanish (26%) (see Table 2). In addition, 60% of the subjects stated that their first spoken language was Spanish, while on the other hand, 60% report that they learned to read and write English first. Predictably, none of the subjects acknowledged learning to speak, read or write in TexMex prior to speaking, reading or writing in English or Spanish. Therefore, the finding that TexMex is being reported as a dominant language is interesting, and deserves further analysis, which is beyond the scope of this paper. Briefly, however, it may be an artifact of language usage or language attitudes which will be discussed in sections 4.2.3 -4.2.5.

**5.3 Language Use with Different Interlocutors**

Since who speaks what to whom is an important indicator of language vitality, subjects were asked to report which language they used with various family members and peers. Among the subjects, there is a tendency to use more Spanish with their grandparents(77%) and their parents (52%). Subjects report using more English (32%) when their speech partners are their siblings. Subjects reported that they use TexMex (30%) when their friends are the interlocutors. It is important to note that all four language choices (i.e. Spanish, English, Both and TexMex) were chosen to some degree by all four groups of interlocutors(see Table 3). However, the data suggest that there is a general shifting pattern of language use from Spanish to English between generations which is quite typical of bilingual communities. Also, it is interesting to note that TexMex is the preferred code to be used with friends or with peers. This finding coincides with the argument that people codeswitch or codemix (i.e. speak TexMex) due to socially motivated circumstances (Scotton-Myers 1993). Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that codeswitching, or using TexMex, in itself is an indication of language shift (McMenamin 1973).


**5.4 Language Usage by Context**

On the topic of language usage in different contexts and domains, subjects report using more English while dreaming (41%), praying (42%), counting (96%) and talking casually among friends at school (37%) (see Table 4).

**6.0 Language Attitudes of Laredo Heritage Spanish Speakers**

**6.1 Attitudes and Proficiency**

In the Life of a language, attitudes to that language appear to be important in language restoration, preservation, decay and even death. Attitude surveys provide social indicators of changing beliefs, and the chances of success in policy implementation. The variety of Spanish spoken on the border region is often perceived by its speakers to be a corrupt and illegitimate dialect of Spanish. The linguistic situation of the border is unique. Border residents are faced with the complex task of negotiating their identity every time they engage in discourse. However, there are many people in the Laredo community who believe that code-switching, although unavoidable for most, illustrates an incorrect way of speaking. These negative attitudes toward the variety of language spoken on the border often lead to avoidance of speaking Spanish all together. Speakers feel that their Spanish is not 'good' enough for 'real' Spanish speakers. While 95% of respondents state that they are bilingual, only 31% report that they can read Spanish 'well' or better, and a mere 27%believe that they can write Spanish 'well' or better. Fortunately, the numbers rise with regards to speaking and understanding Spanish well or better, 66% and 47%, respectively. In addition, only 39% say that they would feel comfortable speaking with a native, monolingual Spanish speaker outside of the Laredo community. Overall, as a group they claim poor proficiency in Spanish. Studies indicate that a positive attitude may be linked to language success and language maintenance, while on the other hand, a negative attitude toward a minority variety may play a key role in loss of language loyalty and may lead to language shift (Fishman 1968).

Moreover, even though heritage language speakers frequently lack language skills appropriate to a professional context, they possess an immense advantage over foreign language learners simply

because the effort and cost of bringing heritage language learners' skills to a professional level will be substantially less than that of foreign language learners. Therefore, a necessary component of a successful Laredo Heritage Language Program would need to include a focus on language awareness and language facts in general, and Spanish and TexMex in particular. A successful program would demonstrate that when students are given unbiased information about the language varieties that they speak, their positive attitudes toward themselves and their first language and their ethnic group will be enhanced.

## 6.2 Language Attitudes and Identity

Closely related to the first issue is the importance of identity and self-esteem with regards to Spanish in a minority community. Valdés (1978) suggests that language plays a prominent role in the development of group identity for ethnic minorities. Hispanic Americans share features from the Anglo American and the Mexican cultures. Many secondary students in this border region are confused about where they belong. They erroneously believe that they need to choose between one culture and leave the other behind. For example, in this study, an overwhelming 100% stated that speaking English makes them feel like they belong to a group, compared to an even split for the same question with Spanish. Thirty-three percent report that they agree with the statement that "speaking Spanish makes you feel like you belong to a group", while 34% disagree and 33% are undecided. Other studies have found that self-esteem and academic achievement have a positive correlation and that a curriculum emphasizing the culture of the student population is effective for at-risk students (Gumperz 1982). Similarly, by concentrating on Spanish language development from the perspective of adding to the language, rather than eradicating it, a component of the Laredo Heritage Language

would demonstrate how language education plays a key role in molding students' dual identity and increasing their self-esteem.

## 6.3 Language Attitudes and Home Language

While it is true that 68% of students surveyed consider Spanish (or both) to be their first language, only 26% of them estimate that Spanish is their dominant language. In atypical transitional bilingual program, Hispanic Americans enter the kindergarten speaking Spanish as their home and dominant language and by the third grade they are expected to be English dominant. Children are quick to assume that phasing out their home language must mean that it is inferior or that something is wrong with it. The psychological damage and educational waste occasioned by this approach is inexcusable. Viewing diversity as a strength, a Spanish heritage language program would encourage the intellectual development of individuals who function in two cultures and who can become fully competent in two languages. The vast majority of teachers in Laredo's public schools are functionally bilingual already; however, few feel qualified or equipped with the proper tools or support system to produce truly bilingual students who have a full command of Spanish[4], and are thus capable of promulgating minority language maintenance in this community. Furthermore, even if a teacher is committed to heritage language learning, few are trained as language teachers. Finally, in order to encourage the development of truly bilingual citizen, it is expected that by developing a Spanish language enrichment program that is linked to the development of the English language as a whole, will increase students' oral, written an dreading abilities in Spanish and English.

**6.4 Language Attitudes and Lack of English Language Skills**

Given that the majority of school-aged Laredoans surveyed consider themselves to be TexMex dominant (41% compared to English 33%), it is not surprising that only 35% state that they would feel comfortable speaking to a native monolingual English speaker outside of Laredo. Negative language attitudes can also have an affect on performance. The bad news is that, as a group, Laredo public school children's English language skills lag behind national norms. Results on standardized tests such as the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) for public school students and the SAT College entrance exam indicate that students in Laredo are below the national average in verbal skills. The good news, on the other hand, is that studies have shown that there are cognitive benefits derived from studying a second language that have also led to improved academic performance in the first language(Grittner 1980). In the case of Laredo, Spanish is viewed as the students' home language which in turn would also be their first language, and English would be their second language.The literature shows that language development is not completed by the first grade, or by the ages 11 or 16, and students still have much to gain before they can be considered truly proficient with language. Further, students who continue to grow in language proficiency are much more likely to achieve success in other school subjects, especially those requiring reading and writing. Vygotsky suggests that conscious and deliberate mastery of language is one of the principle contributions of formal schooling (Cooper 1989). Therefore, a Spanish heritage language development program that emphasizes a link between these students' Spanish and English language skills should carry over to increased academic achievement in English as well.

**7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this community, few would argue that being truly bilingual and bicultural is one of the greatest gifts that a heritage language community can give to its members, and yet an organized, systematic plan for reaching that goal is nonexistent in this community. The results of this survey clearly indicate that Spanish/English bilingualism is indeed a linguistic characteristic of the public school children in this community. Spanish can be heard in the home domain and school domain, students use Spanish to talk among themselves, to their parents and their grandparents, and they report an overall healthy attitude with regards to the importance and vitality of Spanish in this community. A summary of language used in different sociolinguistic contexts is outlined in matrix form in Table 5. As one can see, Spanish, English and TexMex are spread out throughout the differing linguistic situations. Even though Laredo students may lack language skills and knowledge required in a professional context, their 'headstart' is substantial when compared to students studying Spanish as a Foreign Language. The linguistic richness of the Laredo community makes it a prime candidate to participate in, and perhaps lead, the national initiative recently launched to design and implement heritage language development programming throughout the United States. The aim of the National Heritage Language Initiative is to build language programs more responsive to heritage language communities and national language needs and to produce a broad cadre of citizens capable of functioning in both English and another language.

A successful Heritage program would need to be supportive of Spanish language maintenance, expansion of the bilingual range, acquisition of the prestige variety, and transfer of literacy skills. A systematic heritage language program would also need to include teacher training, administrative support within the community, instructional materials, funding for material

development, sensitivity to language variation and attitudes, and formal instruction in the structure of the language. By establishing a Spanish heritage language program in this South Texas Border community, Laredoans could take advantage of the cultural and linguistic abilities that the majority of them possess. Also, it would accord students the opportunity to look at the importance and contributions of language as part of an academic discipline, and to study Spanish as a worthwhile endeavor not just reserved for language teachers. This is important since there is a national need for qualified individuals with a highly developed competence in English and Spanish. Laredo Heritage language speakers would thus be qualified to fill the huge demand for skilled bilingual speakers. The Laredo community has the ability and the opportunity to give the gift of 'true' bilingualism to its citizens.

## 8.0 References

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[1] I am grateful to my research assistant, Jessica Orduña, for her patience and persistence in entering the data into the data base.

[2] Only middle and high school students were questioned regarding ethnic labels given that I believe that elementary school-aged children are too young to fully grasp the concept.

[3] Interviewers explained the difference between the two categories 'Both' and 'TexMex' prior to administering the survey. In this study TexMex is used as an umbrella term for codeswitching at any level. It may include the use of one single lexical item such as 'troca', intrasentential switching, e.g. 'Nos vemos al as six', or intrasentential switching where the same speaker uses English or Spanish in one sentence and then switches codes in the next sentence, e.g. 'I'm not sure I really want to go. Es que tengo mucho trabajo.'

[4] We also interviewed the teachers of the students surveyed along with 50 other teachers randomly selected from both UISD and LISD. The preliminary results suggest that teachers feel that they lack training and support in integrating more Spanish at an academic level.

## Table 1

**General Characteristics of Laredo Public School Children Surveyed**

- N=935
- Gender- 495 female 440 male
- Grade Level-Grades 1-12, with largest groups from 5th, 6th & 7th.
- School Category - 17 elementary, middle and high schools.

Ethnic Lables: 47% Hispanic: 25% Mexican: 18% Mexican-American: 7% Latino(a): 2% Tejano: <1% White. Anglo or African American

## Table 2

**Linguistic Characteristics of Subjects**

- 95% State they are Bilingual
- 38% have taken ESL classes: 35% Have not taken ESL: 27% Don't know.
- Home Language: (1) Spanish 38%; (2) Both 30%; (3) TexMex (codemixing or codeswithching) 17%; & (4) English 15%
- Dominant Language: (1) TexMex 41%; (2) English 33%; (3) Spanish 26%

## Table 3

**Language Spoken w/Interlocuters**

- Grandparents = (1) Spanish 77%; (2) English 11%; (3) TexMex 6%; (4) Both 6%
- Friends = (1) TexMex 30%; (2) 28%; (3) Both 24%; Spanish 18%
- Siblings = (1) English 32%; (2) Spanish 25% (3) Both 24%; TexMex 19%
- Parents = (1) Spanish 52%; (2) English 23% (3) Both 14%; TexMex 11% (N= 933)

## Table 4

**Language Use**

- Dreaming (1) English 41%; (2) Spanish 27%; (3) Both 22%; (4) TexMex 10%
- Praying (1) English 42%; (2) Spanish 37%; (3) Both 15%; (4) TexMex 6%
- Counting (1) English 96%; (2) Spanish 3%; (3) Both 1%; (4) TexMex 0%
- Talking at School (1) English 37%; (2) Both 34%; (3) Spanish 11%; (4) TexMex 10%

# Table 5

## Characteristics of Heritage Speakers on the South Texas Border

I. English Dominant → Spanish Dominant

| Sociolinguistic Situation | Home Language | | Schooling: Language | | Academic Skills Opportunity | | Casual Language w/friends | | Language Dominance | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Completely English: | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E |
| English in a Bilingual Community: | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | T | E | E |
| | E | E | E | S | E | E | E | T | E | T |
| | E | E | E | S | E | E | E | S | E | E |
| | E | E | E | S | E | S | E | T | E | E |
| | E | E | E | S | E | S | E | S | E | E |
| English Born: Spanish Schooled: | E | E | E | S | E | S | E | S | E | S |
| | E | E | E | S | S | S | E | S | E | S |
| | E | E | S | S | S | S | E | T | E | S |
| | E | E | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| English Born: Spanish Raised: | E | S | S | S | S | S | E | S | E | S |
| | E | S | S | S | S | S | E | S | S | S |
| | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | T | S | S |

Legend:

S=Spanish        E=English      T=TexMex (Codeswitching/Codemixig w/English base)

M=MexTex (Codeswitching/Codemixing w/Spanish base)

**Table 5, (Cont.)**
**Characteristics of Heritage Speakers on the South Texas Border, Cont.**

I. Spanish Dominant → English Dominant

| Sociolinguistic Situation | Home Language | | Schooling: Language | | Academic Skills Opportunity | | Casual Language w/friends | | Language Dominance | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Completely Spanish: | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | S |
| Spanish in a Bilingual Community: | S | S | S | S | S | S | S | M | S | S |
| | S | S | S | E | S | S | S | M | S | S |
| | S | S | S | E | S | S | S | M | S | S |
| | S | S | S | E | S | E | S | M | S | S |
| | S | S | S | E | S | E | S | E | S | S |
| Spanish Born: English Schooled: | S | S | S | E | S | E | S | S | S | S |
| | S | S | S | E | S | E | S | E | S | E |
| | S | S | E | E | E | E | S | T | S | T |
| | S | S | E | E | E | E | T | E | S | T |
| | S | T | E | E | E | E | T | E | T | E |
| | S | T | E | E | E | E | E | T | E | T |
| | E | T | E | E | E | E | E | T | E | T |
| | T | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E |
| English Born: Spanish Raised: | S | S | E | E | E | E | S | T | S | T |
| | S | T | E | E | E | E | S | T | S | T |
| | S | T | E | E | E | E | S | T | S | T |
| | S | T | E | E | E | E | T | E | T | E |
| | T | E | E | E | E | E | T | E | T | E |
| | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | T | E | E |
| | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E | E |

Legend:

S=Spanish          E=English      T=TexMex (Codeswitching/Codemixig w/English base)

M=MexTex (Codeswitching/Codemixing w/Spanish base)

## Appendix A. Elementary School and Middle School

Linguistic Biography (Complete one per informant)          Informant Number: EMS00_____
\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*
Circle or fill in the blank.

1). Are you a:                          Boy              or              Girl

2). What Grade are you in?        $1^{st}$    $2^{nd}$    $3^{rd}$    $4^{th}$    $5^{th}$    $6^{th}$    $7^{th}$    $8^{th}$

3). Name of Your School          -------------------------------------------------------

4). Have you taken ESL or Bilingual classes?        Yes    No      I don't Know

5). What year were you born?      1984    1985    1986    1987    1988    1989    1990
                                  1991    1992    1993    1994

6). Were you born in Laredo?              Yes              No              I don't Know

            If no, then where?      -------------------,-----------------
                                    (City)              (State or Country)

7). Was your mother born in Laredo?        Yes              No              I don't Know

            If no, then Where?      -------------------,------------------
                                    (City)              (State of Country)

8). Was your father born in Laredo?        Yes              No              I don't Know

            If no, then Where?      -------------------,------------------
                                    (City)              (State of Country)

9). Do you speak both Spanish and English?        Yes    or      No

10). What language is strongest or easiest for you?  English        or        Spanish

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Gender of INTERVIEWER              M              F

Name of INTERVIEWER              _____

Course Name and Semester          _____

**Appendix B. High School**

Linguistic Biography (Complete one per informant)          Informant Number: HSS00_____
*********************************************************************

1). Are you a:                    _____Male              _____Female

2). What Grade are you in?        ---------9$^{th}$      ----------10$^{th}$    ----------11$^{th}$    ----------12$^{th}$

3). Name of Your School           ---------------------------------------------------------

4). Have you taken ESL or Bilingual classes?     ------Yes      ------No      -------I don't Know

5). What year were you born?        -------------------(year only)

6). Were you born in Laredo?                Yes            No
              If no, then where?        -------------------,-----------------
                                        (City)            (State or Country)

7). Was your mother born in Laredo?         Yes            No            I don't Know
              If no, then Where?        -------------------,------------------
                                        (City)            (State of Country)

8). Was your father born in Laredo?         Yes            No            I don't Know
              If no, then Where?        -------------------,------------------
                                        (City)            (State of Country)

9). Do you bilingual (Spanish/English)?     ---------Yes      ----------No

10).Language Spoken at home:    ------English   -----Spanish   ------TexMex (mixture)  ------Both

11). When you refer to yourself ethnically or culturally, you say that you are:

-----Hispanic -----Latino/a -----Mexican -----Chicano/a -----Mexican-American -----Other(what?)

12). What is the highest academic degree you would like to achieve in your lifetime?

--------High School diploma  --------Vocational school degree  --------Junior college degree (2 yrs)

13). Other places you have lived: ---------------------------------------------------------------------

14). How many years have you lived in Laredo? -------------------------

*********************************************************************
Gender of INTERVIEWER             M            F

Name of INTERVIEWER               _____

Course Name and Semester          _____

# Appendix C. Questionnaire

A.    What language do you consider to be dominant (your principal language)?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex (mixture)  4. Other _____

B.    What language do you mostly speak at home?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both
      5. Other_____

C.    What language do you mostly speak with your mother?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

D.    What language do you mostly speak with your father?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

E.    What language do you mostly speak with your brothers and/or sisters?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

F.    What language do you mostly speak with your grandmother?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

G.    What language do you mostly speak with your grandfather?
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

H.    You first learned to speak:
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

I.    You first learned to read:
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

J.    You first learned to write:
      1. English           2. Spanish
      3. TexMex            4. Both

K.  What language do you mostly speak with your group of friends?
1. English      2. Spanish
3. TexMex      4. Both

L.  What language do you mostly speak at school?
1. English      2. Spanish
3. TexMex      4. Both

M.  What language do you use most often when you are dreaming?
1. English      2. Spanish
3. TexMex      4. Both

N.  What language do you use most often when you are alone and praying?
1. English      2. Spanish
3. TexMex      4. Both

O.  What language do you use most often when you add up numbers in your head?
1. English      2. Spanish
3. TexMex      4. Both

P.  Can you speak Spanish without mixing-in English words?
1. All of the time      2. Sometimes
3. Rarely      4. Never

Q.  Can you speak English without mixing-in Spanish words?
1. All of the time      2. Sometimes
3. Rarely      4. Never

R.  You feel that you speak English:
1. Excellent      2. Well
3. Fair      4. Poor

S.  You feel that you speak Spanish:
1. Excellent      2. Well
3. Fair      4. Poor

T.  You feel that you write Spanish:
    1. Excellent          2. Well
    3. Fair               4. Poor

U.  You feel that you write English:
    1. Excellent          2. Well
    3. Fair               4. Poor

V.  You feel that you read English:
    1. Excellent          2. Well
    3. Fair               4. Poor

W.  You feel that you read Spanish:
    1. Excellent          2. Well
    3. Fair               4. Poor

X.  You feel that you understand English:
    1. Excellent          2. Well
    3. Fair               4. Poor

Y.  You feel that you understand Spanish:
    1. Excellent          2. Well
    3. Fair               4. Poor

Z.  Do you feel comfortable speaking English with a native English-speaking person in Dallas, for example?
    1. All of the time    2. Sometimes
    3. Rarely             4. Never

AA. Do you feel comfortable speaking Spanish with a native Spanish-speaking person in Monterrey, for example?
    1. All of the time    2. Sometimes
    3. Rarely             4. Never

BB. English is more important than Spanish for people living in my house to know.
    1. Agree
    2. Disagree
    3. Undecided

CC.     Most of my friends think that English is more important than Spanish.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

DD.     You prefer to speak Spanish rather than English.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

EE.     You feel proud that you speak Spanish.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

FF.     It is important to you to be able to speak Spanish.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

GG.     A person can have more job opportunities if he/she knows Spanish.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

HH.     Speaking Spanish makes you feel you belong to a group.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

II.     Hispanics should know Spanish.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

JJ.     You prefer to speak English rather than Spanish.\
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

KK.   You feel proud that you speak English.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

LL.   It is important to you to be able to speak Spanish.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

MM.   A person can have more job opportunities if he/she knows English.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

NN.   Speaking English makes you feel like you belong to a group.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

OO.   English is a threat to Hispanic culture.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

PP.   Speaking TexMex (a mixture of Spanish and English) makes you feel like you belong to a group.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

QQ.   People who speak TexMex (mix English and Spanish ) don't know Spanish very well.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided

RR.   People who speak TexMex (mix English and Spanish) don't know English very well.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Undecided.