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Spanish language use and attitudes: A study of two New York City communities¹

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a comparative study of two Hispanic communities in New York City: Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona. Our data on language proficiency, language use, and attitudes were gathered using a sociolinguistic questionnaire. However, the study benefited from the interactive process established between the researchers and the communities which they studied and in which they live and work.

Our data are analyzed along three dimensions. First, we compare data for the two Spanish-speaking communities. We discuss how the social status and the ethnic configuration of the community affect linguistic and attitudinal behaviors. Then, we analyze the data according to national origin. We discuss how the five nationality groups included in our study – Central Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and South Americans – differ in language proficiency, language use, and language attitudes. Finally, we compare the data for Dominicans in Washington Heights to that of Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona. We examine how national origin and the language surround of the ethnic community interact in order to determine language use and attitudes. Some of the findings here differ from what may be supposed of such cases.

We suggest socioeducational and language policies for Hispanics in the United States based on the results of this study. (Sociology of language, sociolinguistics, language planning, ethnic studies, sociology, education of language minorities, language education, Central American, Cuban, Dominican, Puerto Rican, South American Spanish in New York City)

INTRODUCTION

In the United States 17 million Latinos use Spanish daily in their private as well as their public lives. In the last decade there has been a great proliferation of studies on the use of, and attitudes toward, Spanish by the three Hispanic groups

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with the largest populations and the longest history of settlement in the United States, namely Mexican-Americans in the Southwest and elsewhere (Aguirre 1982, 1985; Amastae 1982; Elías-Olivares 1976; Sánchez 1983), Puerto Ricans in New York City (Attinasi 1979; Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños 1982; Pedraza 1987; Zentella 1981), and Cuban-Americans in Dade County, Florida (Otheguy & García 1988; Solé 1980). The use of Spanish by these Latino groups is often influenced by the attitudes and behavior of the Anglo society towards Spanish in the United States. However, more recent immigration from Central and South America and the Dominican Republic has had an even greater impact on the use of Spanish and the attitudes toward Spanish of all Hispanics in the United States. Yet, these more recently arrived Latino groups remain largely ignored in the sociolinguistic literature.

This article presents the results of a comparative sociolinguistic study of two Hispanic communities in New York City that are characterized by an unusually large number of more recent Hispanic immigrants and a remarkably small number of Puerto Rican residents, the most numerous Hispanic group in the city. Fishman (1971) studied the bilingualism of Puerto Rican residents in the Greater New York area. Extensive Spanish language use and attitudinal research among Puerto Ricans in East Harlem has been conducted by the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños (1982, 1988) and others associated with the Centro (Attinasi 1979; Pedraza 1987). Our study extends their findings to Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona, communities in which Spanish is widely used, mostly among non-Puerto Ricans.

Three main research questions guided our study:

1. How do language proficiency, Spanish language use, and attitude differ in two distinct Hispanic communities in the United States? How do they relate to the socioeconomic status of the community and to its ethnic configuration? That is, is Spanish used more or less and favored more or less by a middle-class Hispanic community than by a poor Hispanic community? Is Spanish used more or less and favored more or less in an ethnic community that is mostly composed of one national origin or of mixed Hispanic origin?
2. How do language proficiency, Spanish language use, and attitude differ among distinct Hispanic national origin groups?
3. Concerning language proficiency, Spanish language use, and attitude, are Hispanics better categorized according to geographical community or national origin?

Our research team consisted of one faculty member and four graduate students of the Bilingual Community Education Program of The City College of New York. All of the researchers live or work in one of the two Hispanic communities. Two are Dominicans, two are Cubans, and one is South American.

A sociolinguistic questionnaire focusing on language proficiency, language use, and language attitude was designed. The questionnaire was written in Spanish and English. To administer the questionnaires, an interactive procedure was

followed in which the researchers interviewed the respondents. We planned, then, to obtain clear answers on a self-report measure of language proficiency and language use, as well as to observe the actual language behavior of the respondents.

During three months of intensive work at the intersection of 180th Street and Broadway in Washington Heights and the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and Junction Boulevard in Elmhurst, a total of 294 residents (118 from Washington Heights and 176 from Elmhurst/Corona) were interviewed, chosen by convenience. The only criteria for inclusion in the study were that they be Hispanics and reside within the geographical boundaries of Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona outlined below.

The two speech communities that we studied are similar only in their intense and vital use of Spanish. However, we suspect that the Hispanic residents of Washington Heights are mostly poor, whereas Hispanic residents of Elmhurst/Corona are more middle class. The ethnic configuration of the two communities also seem very different. Whereas Washington Heights has a predominance of Dominicans, Elmhurst/Corona has a mixture of South and Central Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans.

It was our intent that the data gathered on language proficiency, use, and attitude be used to establish language and socioeducational policies in community agencies where the researchers worked as volunteers.

THE TWO COMMUNITIES

Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona

Washington Heights is located in the northern part of Manhattan. It extends in a triangle from 155th Street on the south and the Hudson River on the west to the Harlem River on the north and east.

Washington Heights was, until the 1960s, a middle-class community with mostly Irish and Jewish residents. In the 1960s the white middle class started to flee the city toward the suburbs. Working-class and poor people, first Puerto Ricans, then Cubans, and more recently Dominicans, started taking the place of the white middle class (Community Profile 12, 1983; Georges 1984).

The population of Washington Heights today is 54 percent Hispanic. This figure does not include the many undocumented persons who are found in the area. While the Hispanic population has increased by 85 percent since 1970, the white population has decreased by 44 percent. The ethnic groups that used to occupy a predominant place prior to 1960 have almost completely disappeared, although 7 percent of the population is still Irish, whereas another 7 percent is German (Community Profile 12, 1983; Georges 1984).

The Hispanic group that predominates is, without a doubt, the Dominican. The 1980 Census counted 27,577 Dominicans in Washington Heights. Cubans

(5,305 residents) and Ecuadorians (1,391 residents) make up the two other largest Hispanic groups in the area (Community Profile 12, 1983; Georges 1984). Approximately 80 percent of the Hispanic population of Washington Heights is of Dominican origin.

Today the average salary in Washington Heights is \$15,281. Twenty-one percent of the families are on welfare, and 9 percent are unemployed. The rate of birth in Washington Heights is 31 percent higher than the general rate in the City of New York, and from 1970 to 1980 it increased by 23 percent. Schools are overpopulated and there is a serious housing shortage (Community Profile 12, 1983; Georges 1984).

In Washington Heights most of the Hispanic businesses are Dominican *bodegas* and Cuban restaurants. There are many Dominican community agencies that fight for the rights of the Dominicans in the area. In particular, *la Asociación Comunal de Dominicanos Progresistas* provides many educational, housing, and legal services to the community (Fernández 1984).

Elmhurst/Corona is in the county of Queens. It extends from the Long Island Expressway in the south to Roosevelt Avenue in the north and from 72nd Street in the west to 114th Street in the east. We also included in this study the area that goes from Roosevelt Avenue to Northern Boulevard in the north and from 96th Street or Junction Boulevard to 114th Street in the east. This section is usually referred to as North Corona.

The areas of Elmhurst and North Corona in Queens are very different from Washington Heights. In the 1960s many Italian and Irish middle-class families still owned one-family homes built before World War II and subsidized by the government. After World War II apartment buildings started to go up in Queens. These buildings attracted many middle-class Hispanics in the 1960s. However, in 1960 the zoning law was changed and construction of multiple unit buildings was stopped. The two- and three-family homes that were built after 1960 started to attract a great number of Asians who had the financial resources necessary to buy these homes (Community Board No. 4 Portfolio 1984).

According to the 1980 Census, the population today is 38 percent Hispanic, 34 percent White, 10 percent Black, 15 percent Asian (including Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, and Indians), and 3 percent that were classified as belonging to other ethnic groups. In Elmhurst/Corona one finds the largest concentration of legal and illegal immigrants in New York City coming from some 110 different countries (Blum 1979; Kleiman 1982).

The change of population between 1970 and 1980 in Elmhurst/Corona has been very different from that of Washington Heights. According to the 1980 Census, the Hispanic group has increased by 68 percent, compared to the 85 percent increase of the Hispanic population in Washington Heights. The greatest demographic change in the area can be observed among the Blacks, Orientals, and those that have been classified as belonging to other ethnic groups. Blacks have increased by 195 percent. It is estimated that the Asian groups and those

classified as others have increased 300 percent in the last ten years. However, the increase in these minorities, for the most part middle class and educated, has not spurred the flight of the white population, which in the last decade decreased by only 3 percent. It is estimated that the white population will show an increase in the 1990 census due to the increased cost of living in Manhattan. Elmhurst/Corona offers proximity to the city, low rents, and a multiethnic character with middle-class distinctiveness.

The multiethnicity of Elmhurst/Corona is also reflected in the variety of Hispanic groups residing in the area. Colombians, Ecuadorians, Peruvians, Argentines, Dominicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and many others live side by side. It would be difficult to determine which Hispanic national origin predominates. However, South Americans clearly make up the majority of the Hispanic population west of Junction Boulevard, whereas Dominicans predominate east of it.

The 1980 Census revealed that the average salary is \$19,601 and only 6 percent of the population is on welfare. Ethnic businesses of all kinds proliferate. Hispanic businesses are diversified. One finds many Colombian and Peruvian restaurants; Ecuadorian travel agencies; Cuban printing presses, furniture shops, and jewelry shops; Argentine butcher shops and bakeries; Dominican *bodegas*. In contrast to Washington Heights and perhaps because of its diversified Hispanic national origin, there is little social organization among Hispanics in Elmhurst/Corona. For example, there are few Hispanic community agencies that provide comprehensive services to the community.

From our observation as well as from the figures derived from the 1980 Census, we can conclude that there are two main characteristics that distinguish Elmhurst/Corona from Washington Heights:

1. *Social class.* Hispanics in Elmhurst/Corona are more middle class than Hispanics in Washington Heights.

2. *Ethnic configuration.* Hispanics in Elmhurst/Corona live among many other ethnolinguistic minorities, whereas in Washington Heights they are the sole ethnolinguistic minority. Furthermore, Hispanics in Elmhurst/Corona come from many national origins and lack social cohesiveness, whereas those in Washington Heights are mostly Dominicans and have a greater degree of social cohesiveness.

Demographic characteristics of the sample in the two communities

Our sample has characteristics that coincide with those of the 1980 Census for the two communities that we studied (see Table 1). Over three-fourths of our Washington Heights sample is Dominican. The rest of the sample is made up of a greater number of South Americans and Cubans and a smaller number of Puerto Ricans and Central Americans. The sample for Elmhurst/Corona is much more varied according to national origin. Approximately one-third is South American, one-third is Cuban, and one-third is made up of Dominicans, Central Americans, and a smaller number of Puerto Ricans.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of sample by community (%)

	Washington Heights (n = 118)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 176)
<i>National origin</i>		
Central America		
Cuba	2	13
Puerto Rico	5	32
Dominican Republic	2	7
South America	85	16
	6	32
<i>Years in the United States</i>		
0-5		
6-10	41	26
11-20	25	24
21+	33	41
	1	9
<i>Age</i>		
13-20		
21-30	21	9
31-50	36	32
51+	35	47
	8	12
<i>Academic level</i>		
Did not finish elementary school	28	1
Finished elementary school	26	23
Finished secondary school	40	54
Finished college	6	22
<i>Occupation</i>		
Blue collar worker	33	29
Student	19	19
Housewife	14	19
Unemployed	12	11
Business owner	3	1
Professional	4	7
Office worker	2	13
Store clerk	2	9
Technician	3	2
Craftsman	8	7
	2	2

As shown in Table 1, almost half of the Washington Heights population has lived in the United States for less than five years, making this a much more recently arrived population than that of Elmhurst/Corona. The Washington Heights population is also younger and less educated than that of Elmhurst/Corona. Twenty-eight percent of those we interviewed in Washington Heights, compared to only 1 percent in Elmhurst/Corona, have not finished elementary school.

In both Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona, Hispanics are mostly employed as *blue collar workers*. *Student* and *housewife* are the second most common occupational categories in both communities. The main occupational difference between the two communities is in the categories of *unemployed*,

professional, *business owner*, and *office worker*. The Washington Heights sample has twelve times the number of unemployed people (12 percent) as the Elmhurst sample (1 percent). The Elmhurst/Corona sample has four times the number of office workers, three times the number of professionals, and twice the number of business owners as the Washington Heights sample.

Linguistic proficiency in the two communities

As shown in Table 2, when asked whether they spoke Spanish well or not well, 100 percent of those we interviewed indicated that they spoke Spanish well. The vitality of Spanish in both communities was also confirmed when only nine people out of the 294 who were interviewed preferred to answer in English. The other 97 percent answered our questions in what we judged to be fluent Spanish, although obviously influenced by English. This English influence that preoccupies so many Spanish language professionals was of no concern to our respondents. They were able to effectively communicate in the Spanish-speaking community and felt comfortable doing so.

Table 2 also indicates that 10 percent of those we interviewed in Washington Heights reported to read or write Spanish either not well or not at all, compared to only 5 percent in Elmhurst/Corona. It is important to recall that 28 percent of those in Washington Heights claimed not to have finished elementary school, compared to only 1 percent in Elmhurst/Corona. We were puzzled by the discrepancy between the answers obtained for years of schooling and those for Spanish literacy proficiency. Based on years of schooling, we would have expected a greater divergence between the Washington Heights sample and the Elmhurst/Corona sample on Spanish literacy.

During the study we became aware of what we thought was a discrepancy

TABLE 2. Linguistic proficiency by community (%)

	Washington Heights (n = 118)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 176)
<i>Oral Spanish</i>		
Very good or good	100	100
Not good or not at all	0	0
<i>Written Spanish</i>		
Very good or good	90	95
Not good or not at all	10	5
<i>Oral English</i>		
Very good or good	49	67
Not good or not at all	51	33
<i>Written English</i>		
Very good or good	46	69
Not good or not at all	54	31

between self-report on Spanish literacy and actual literacy. One of the researchers in Washington Heights reported that she had interviewed a person whom she knew to have limited literacy in Spanish. Yet, that person had told her that she read and wrote Spanish well. We decided that we would question further those respondents whose answer to the schooling question and the Spanish literacy question seemed contradictory. We questioned them on their Spanish literacy habits and their attitudes toward it. In addition, we gave them the last section of the questionnaire to fill out by themselves.

The eighteen people who were questioned further were Dominican residents of Washington Heights. They all insisted that they read well, although none of them was able to successfully complete the questionnaire without the researcher's help. When we inquired further, they told us that they read well popular magazines such as *Selecciones*, *Vanidades*, *Buen Hogar*, the *fotonovelas* (photographic soap opera romances), the Bible, as well as the Dominican newspaper *El Nacional* and the Spanish language press *El Diario*. They also maintained that they understood well the few signs and advertisements in Spanish that they see in the subway. They reported writing letters in Spanish frequently to family and friends in the home country. When asked whether they ever filled out forms or took tests in Spanish, only three of the eighteen had ever filled out a form in Spanish and none had ever taken a test in Spanish in the United States.

It turns out that what these respondents were saying was that here in the United States their literacy in Spanish is adequate. They are rarely confronted with written Spanish in their daily lives. When they are, it is highly contextualized with familiar messages from back home or accompanied with pictorial messages. Their literacy in Spanish is sufficient to read the few signs and advertisements that they see in the subway and the magazines that they look at. Although back at home having limited literacy in Spanish might have restricted their opportunities, in the United States it is their lack of English literacy that makes the difference.

We had first assumed that many respondents were lying about their Spanish literacy skills to avoid embarrassment. This limitation of self-report language data is well known. However, when we probed further we found that these eighteen people were sincere in the evaluation of their skills. For them, their literacy skills in Spanish are entirely adequate in an English-speaking society that rarely calls for them or makes use of them. For us, literacy in Spanish was measured by the academic yardstick of a monolingual society where Spanish is used for all functions. Whereas we relied on a purely linguistic and academic definition of Spanish literacy, these respondents clearly understood the socio-functional dimensions of literacy. They had not lied. They merely saw language and literacy less in an analytic and abstract way and more as an instrument to fulfill certain functions in their own lives. Given the limited functions of literacy in Spanish in the United States, they judged their Spanish literary skills to be completely satisfactory.

On the other hand, we heard many people in Elmhurst/Corona tell us that their

literacy in Spanish was poor despite having finished elementary school. At least five told us that they were forgetting their Spanish and yet not learning English. It seems that these more educated speakers of Spanish were judging their skills based on the academic norm that they had learned in the home country. They judged their literacy skills in Spanish to be inadequate because their meta-linguistic awareness enabled them to compare their literacy to that expected in monolingual societies.

Whereas uneducated speakers evaluate their language performance based on the adequacy of meeting a particular sociofunctional need, more educated speakers judge their performance by comparing it to the norms of the system. *This discrepancy is important to keep in mind in evaluating self-reports on language proficiency.* Uneducated speakers may frequently overestimate their literacy ability, and educated speakers may frequently underestimate it.

Hispanic illiterate adults need to be taught the forms and structures of their native language, but they also need to be exposed to the different functions of literacy in society beyond those in their immediate lives. It is important that as we teach Hispanics with limited literacy to read and write both Spanish and English, we teach them to read signs and fill out forms. But it is equally important to expose them to the literary works of Eugenio María de Hostos, Juan Bosch, Jose Martí, Octavio Paz, Gabriel García Márquez, and the many others who make up the Hispanic literary tradition.

The English language proficiency of Hispanics in Washington Heights is also less than that of Hispanics in Elmhurst/Corona. Table 2 indicates that approximately half of those we interviewed in Washington Heights say that they don't speak English, compared to only one-third of those in Elmhurst/Corona. Although approximately half the Washington Heights Hispanic population is monolingual in Spanish, two-thirds of the Hispanic population in Elmhurst is bilingual.

One interesting result of our interviews is that almost half of the Hispanics in Elmhurst, compared to a handful in Washington Heights, report that they had learned English in their country of origin and not in the United States. It seems that middle-class status in Latin America generally includes schooling in English. Middle-class status is not, then, a result of speaking English but is the reason why more English is spoken. This also explained the surprising result that more Hispanics in Elmhurst/Corona claim to write English well than speak English well. Hispanics who are schooled in English in their countries of origin are comfortable reading and writing English, although they lack comparable speaking skills. In the United States, they often read the press in English and they are naturally surrounded with English print. However, since their socialization pattern is mostly among other Spanish speakers, they rarely have an opportunity to practice speaking English. As expected, the middle-class community has better literacy skills in both the native language and the second language.

The results on language proficiency of the two communities are extremely

important to keep in mind when establishing programs to teach English as a second language (ESL). Although traditional ESL classes might suffice for the literate Hispanic population of Elmhurst/Corona, they are clearly inadequate for some of the Hispanics of Washington Heights. In communities with a large rate of illiteracy in the native language, only an approach that would incorporate development of literacy in the native language as well as development of communicative and literacy skills in the second language seems appropriate. Furthermore, whereas an ESL grammatical-based syllabus might be adequate for educated speakers of Spanish, uneducated speakers of Spanish need to be introduced to English through a communicative-based syllabus that fulfills their English language needs for specific functions.

Linguistic behavior in the two communities

The use of two languages is often determined by the linguistic proficiency of the community. Given the more monolingual nature of the Washington Heights community, we can then expect that more Spanish will be used there than in Elmhurst/Corona. The results in Tables 3 and 4 confirm that in Washington Heights Hispanics watch more television in Spanish, listen to more Spanish language radio stations, read more in Spanish, and talk to each other more in Spanish than in Elmhurst. However, the qualitative differences revealed by the data on Spanish language use by the two communities is interestingly different.

With regard to the frequency with which Spanish is used in watching television, listening to the radio, and reading, it is most interesting that the least popular Spanish medium in both communities is television (see Table 3). That is, less Hispanics claim to always watch television in Spanish than those who claim to always listen to the radio in Spanish or always read in Spanish. When they watch television, Hispanics tune into an English language channel much more

TABLE 3. *Use of Spanish language by community (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 118)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 176)
<i>Television</i>		
Always	28	22
Sometimes	61	51
Never	11	27
<i>Radio</i>		
Always	52	32
Sometimes	41	44
Never	7	24
<i>Reading</i>		
Always	54	39
Sometimes	41	44
Never	5	17

TABLE 4. *Use of Spanish with different interlocutors by community (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 118)			Elmhurst/Corona (n = 176)		
	Spanish	Spanish/English	English	Spanish	Spanish/English	English
Father	98	0	2	96	0	4
Mother	97	1	2	92	4	4
Siblings	85	5	10	81	8	10
Children	68	24	8	57	31	12
Friends	69	21	10	42	42	16
Co-workers	58	26	16	15	42	43
Classmates	38	24	38	18	10	72

frequently than when they listen to the radio. When they read, more than half of the population only reads in Spanish. English language television seems to be the media which most often invades Spanish-speaking homes. This is not surprising given the highly contextualized nature of the language on television. English language television is a language resource which offers monolingual Spanish speakers the possibility of acquiring receptive knowledge of English. This is important to keep in mind when establishing ESL programs for the community. Latinos in Spanish-speaking communities are quickly gaining receptive knowledge of English through watching English language television. It is active communicative skills in English that Hispanic adults need. We feel, therefore, that methods of teaching ESL that expose Spanish-speaking adults to prolonged silent periods (such as Asher's Total Physical Response) are totally inadequate for Hispanics in the United States. More interactive and dialogical approaches should be taken in teaching English to Hispanic adults.

Another reason for the popularity of English language television and radio seems to be that most of the adults we interviewed had often watched American television programs and listened to American rock music in their home countries. North American images and sounds are very familiar to all Latin Americans. It is the English language, needed for reading and also for true participation in U.S. society, that remains unknown and incomprehensible.

Often children introduce Spanish-speaking adults to English language television programming. Since most programming is relevant for the whole family, the adults quickly tune in. This does not happen with reading. Although children often bring English books home, they remain children's books. Adults seldom are interested in the content of the school books that children bring home. The reading material in which adults are interested remains exclusively in Spanish, whether it is a newspaper or a *Vanidades*.

Although Hispanics are quickly gaining receptive knowledge of English through watching English language television, they most often lack the academic decontextualized language skills necessary to read English effectively. Most of

the people we interviewed had been educated in Spanish in their country of origin. They often have no choice but to read the many Spanish language publications that are available in the two communities studied. Therefore, reading turns out to be the most popular Spanish medium in both communities.

Our interviews revealed that it was the Spanish language newspaper from the country of origin that was most often read by the community. The Spanish language foreign press seems to offer a different content, of interest to the Hispanic population, that cannot be found in the English language press. Reading in Spanish remains a necessity in order to keep informed of events in the home country. This fact is important for the Spanish language television and radio industry in the United States. Although information about the United States in Spanish is extremely important, Hispanics are very much interested in Latin America. They are not satisfied with the news and content about their home countries which Spanish language television stations in the United States give them. This is another reason why Hispanics more often abandon the television programs in Spanish for those in English, than they give up reading in Spanish for reading in English.

Reading in Spanish emerges as a valued skill in both communities. Of those who claimed to read and write English, well over two-thirds said that they read frequently in Spanish because they preferred to do so. Even though some of the more assimilated Hispanics we interviewed frequently showed contempt for the *novelas* 'soap operas' on the Spanish language television stations and the *merengues* and other Caribbean dance tunes on the Spanish language radio stations, they praised the Latin American literature they read in Spanish as the best in the world. The more educated Hispanics we interviewed frequently mentioned the works of Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, and Carlos Fuentes in connection with their Spanish reading. The less educated Hispanics read *novelas* by Corín Tellado and other authors and magazines such as *Vanidades* and *Buen Hogar*. It became obvious that whereas Spanish language radio and television in the United States reflect only the popular culture, Spanish language reading is able to capture the popular, as well as the elite culture; the foreign, as well as the Hispanic culture in the United States. Surprisingly enough, both educated and uneducated speakers of Spanish and assimilated and nonassimilated Hispanics have more use for Spanish language reading than for Spanish language television or radio.

This again has consequences for educational policy. Spanish language reading seems to be a desirable skill in a Spanish-speaking home, and the ability to read is seen by the community as a function of schooling (see next section). Hispanic children in the United States easily have access to the Spanish that is spoken in their neighborhoods, on their television sets, and on their radios. But the oral medium in these ethnic domains does not enjoy the prestige of the literate medium capable of reflecting both the popular and the elite culture (Flores, Attinasi, & Pedraza 1981). Hispanic children in the United States, however,

rarely have access to Spanish literacy because schools do not teach them Spanish once they speak English. Thus, although many Hispanic children in New York continue to speak some Spanish at home with parents and continue to hear it on Channel 41 or 47, on Radio WADO or WKAQ, and in their neighborhoods, they quickly lose their limited ability to read and write Spanish. It seems that if schools taught Hispanic children to read in Spanish regardless of linguistic proficiency, they would give them access to a literate Hispanic culture that is often not obtainable at home. In the process of making Hispanic children literate in Spanish, they would increase their opportunities for incorporation and success in North American society.

With regard to Spanish language use with other interlocutors, we can see in Table 4 that even though more English is spoken in Elmhurst, the great divergence in the two communities occurs upon leaving the home domain. With the father, the mother, and the siblings, both communities use Spanish almost exclusively. However, out of the home domain the residents of Elmhurst use much more English with friends, schoolmates, and co-workers than those of Washington Heights. The bilingual/multiethnic and middle-class character of the Elmhurst community forces the residents to come into contact with Anglos and other ethnics who do not speak Spanish, as well as with other Hispanics who are already bilingual and with whom both Spanish and English is frequently used.

The economic vitality and ethnic variation within a community does not weaken the use of Spanish *within the home*. This reveals the strength of Spanish in both communities. The more middle-class and multiethnic community is not abandoning Spanish to speak English. It uses English as a means of communication with its more middle-class social circles and in order to communicate with other ethnic groups that live in the community. However, at home, English is rarely used as a sole means of communication, even with the younger children.

Language attitudes in the two communities

Given that Spanish is used less frequently in the public domain in the middle-class and multiethnic community, loyalty toward Spanish still remains extremely strong in both communities. Both communities express an overwhelming interest in maintaining Spanish and in having the schools teach in Spanish, while at the same time acknowledging the great importance of English in the United States (see Table 5).

Attitudinal research among Cuban-Americans (Cruz 1977; García & Otheguy 1985; Solé 1982), Puerto Ricans (Attinasi 1979; Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños 1982, 1988; Fishman 1971; Pedraza 1987; Pousada 1987), Mexican-Americans (Ryan & Carranza 1977; Solé 1977), and Hispanics in general (Attinasi 1985; Cole 1983) confirms our findings. There seems to be great concurrence among *all* Hispanics in the loyalty they feel toward both Spanish and English.

It seems that the attitude in favor of the Spanish language is consonant with the

TABLE 5. *Language attitudes by community (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 118)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 176)
<i>Importance of English</i>		
Yes	100	100
No	0	0
<i>Importance of Spanish</i>		
Yes	99	99
No	1	1
<i>Spanish in school</i>		
Yes	99	98
No	1	2

extensive use of Spanish as the private language in the home among members of the family, as well as in reading, in both communities. In addition, the monolingual Spanish speakers we interviewed support the use of Spanish in emergency and social services, ballots, and advertisements as a means of facilitating their participation in U.S. society. Bilingual Hispanics also favor the use of Spanish in public settings to help their monolingual compatriots.

The support for bilingual education is also overwhelming. Those whom we interviewed overwhelmingly feel that the animosity of U.S. society toward the Spanish language makes it absolutely necessary for the schools to support them in transmitting the Spanish language to their children. Most parents feel that without the support of the school, they will be totally ineffective in maintaining the Spanish of their children. All feel that Spanish literacy is needed in order to develop the Spanish of the children. This feeling is shared both by poor illiterate Hispanics and by middle-class literate and educated Hispanics. Both communities want their children to be bilingual and biliterate. They want them to speak, read, and write English as native born Americans, but they also want them to be able to speak, read, and write Spanish so that they can communicate with their parents, their grandparents, their relatives, and the Spanish-speaking community both in Latin America and in the United States. The Hispanics we interviewed support the private and public use of Spanish in the United States.

At the same time, the interviews reveal that most recognize English as the public language in the United States, and 100 percent of the respondents feel it is extremely important to learn it. Spanish is necessary, they told us, because it is needed to communicate with others in the home country, because it is the private language of the family, and because many Hispanics do not speak English. However, their keen preoccupation with having their children schooled in Spanish did not connote an interest in having Spanish compete with English in the United States. All the Hispanics we interviewed recognize the importance of English, although they also support the use of Spanish in U.S. society for their

own benefit. They do not understand those who criticize their use of Spanish, for they feel deeply loyal to the United States. And although most are almost fervent supporters of U.S. society, they turned angry and disloyal when we told them about efforts being made to curtail services in Spanish in their communities. From loyal Spanish-speaking Americans, they quickly turned into angry Central Americans/Cubans/Dominicans/Puerto Ricans/South Americans with claims of racism and discrimination in the United States and in stark opposition to U.S. policies in Latin America. It is clear that although the Hispanics we interviewed recognize English as the public language in the United States, they stand radically opposed to what they see as the racist threat posed to Spanish by the U.S. English movement, which attempts to make English the official language of the United States.

THE FIVE NATIONAL ORIGIN GROUPS

Hispanics are fiercely loyal as individuals to their country of origin. Thus, it is important for data on linguistic proficiency, use, and attitude to be also analyzed according to national origin. Having data on the behavior and attitude of the different national groups allows educators and social scientists to see relevant differences among Latinos.

Demographic characteristics of the five national groups

The characteristics revealed by our data of the groups included in our sample, Central Americans, Cubans, Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and South Americans, are extremely relevant in any discussion of social policy for these groups.

As shown in Table 6, among the five groups, the Dominicans are the most recently arrived. Almost half of them have lived in New York less than five years. Central Americans and then South Americans follow Dominicans in the recency of their arrivals. Approximately one-third of the Central Americans and one-fourth of the South Americans have lived in the United States less than five years. Our Puerto Rican and Cuban samples are longer-time residents, although both national groups include a small number of recent immigrants.

Our Puerto Rican sample consists of only fifteen respondents. Thus, as we discuss results, it is important for the reader to bear in mind that our Puerto Rican sample is not only small but is also unrepresentative of the majority of Puerto Ricans in New York City. For example, although Puerto Ricans make up approximately 70 percent of the Hispanic population of New York City, they are only 5 percent of our total sample. Only a small percentage of the Puerto Rican population in New York can be found in the Hispanic neighborhoods of Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona. Few have been able to escape the conditions of poverty in income, education, and housing in which most of them live in East Harlem and the South Bronx. Thirteen out of the fifteen Puerto Ricans interviewed live in Elmhurst. Almost half of the Puerto Ricans in our sample are

TABLE 6. *Characteristics of sample by national origin*

	Central America	Cuba	Dominican Republic	Puerto Rico	South America
<i>n</i>	24	63	128	15	64
Percentage of total sample	8	21	44	5	22
<i>Years in the United States (%)</i>					
0-5	29	17	45	14	25
6-10	33	11	28	20	28
11-20	38	56	26	33	45
21+	0	16	1	33	2
<i>Age (%)</i>					
13-20	18	3	21	0	9
21-30	41	21	37	33	38
31-50	36	52	33	60	48
51+	5	24	9	7	5
<i>Academic level (%)</i>					
Did not finish elementary school	8	0	26	0	0
Finished elementary school	42	21	27	0	22
Finished secondary school	46	38	40	60	72
Finished college	4	41	7	40	6
<i>Occupation (%)</i>					
Blue collar worker	58	30	33	7	20
Student	13	6	22	47	23
Housewife	4	10	11	7	22
Unemployed	0	0	12	0	0
Business owner	0	14	3	0	5
Professional	8	17	5	33	6
Office worker	0	11	4	0	11
Store clerk	0	3	2	6	2
Technician	4	9	6	0	11
Craftsman	13	0	2	0	0

middle-class and have lived in the United States over twenty years. We also interviewed a small number of young Puerto Rican professionals who recently migrated from Puerto Rico to New York.

More than half of the Cubans we interviewed have been in the United States between eleven and twenty years, thus corresponding to the second wave of immigration (Llanes 1982). Our Cuban sample also includes a small number of Mariel immigrants who arrived in New York less than five years ago.

Dominicans are the youngest of the five national groups. Over 50 percent of the Dominicans and Central Americans we interviewed are younger than thirty years. They are followed in age by the South Americans, the Puerto Ricans, and finally, the older Cubans.

Dominicans have the lowest educational completion figures of the five national groups. Twenty-six percent of the Dominicans we interviewed (thirty-three respondents) have not finished elementary school. Two out of the twenty-

four Central Americans also claim not to have finished elementary school. In contrast, all of the Cubans, South Americans, and Puerto Ricans whom we interviewed have completed elementary school. The Puerto Ricans in our sample have the most education. All fifteen Puerto Ricans are high school graduates and six are college graduates. This is indicative of the middle-class and professional status of the Puerto Ricans who have either left poorer neighborhoods, such as El Barrio, and moved to Queens or who have come recently to Queens from Puerto Rico as young professionals.

With regard to the occupation of the five groups, Dominicans in the United States are distinguished by a much higher unemployment rate, a growing number of students, and a very limited number of professionals. Thirty-three percent of the Dominicans (42 out of 128) are blue collar workers. For reasons outlined above, the Puerto Ricans in our sample have the highest number of students (seven out of fifteen) and also of professionals (five out of fifteen). On the other hand, most Cubans we interviewed are blue collar workers in the United States, although many claim to have been professionals back in Cuba. Cubans are distinguished from the other groups by the higher number of business owners (14 percent) among the sample and follow Puerto Ricans in the number of professionals. More than half of the Central Americans that we interviewed are blue collar workers. South Americans, with their higher rate of secondary school completion than Central Americans and Dominicans, but their lower rate of college graduates than Puerto Ricans and Cubans, are distinguished by a more numerous group of technicians and office clerks than any of the other five groups.

Linguistic proficiency of the five national groups

The Spanish oral proficiency of all the groups is excellent. Table 7 shows that 100 percent of all the groups report that they speak Spanish very well. Over two-thirds of all those interviewed, regardless of national origin, claim to read and write Spanish well. All the South Americans in the sample report full literacy in Spanish.

Comparatively speaking, more Central Americans claim to have limited literacy in Spanish (17 percent or four out of twenty-four people interviewed) than the Dominicans, who claim fewer years of schooling (only 9 percent or 12 out of 128 people interviewed). Besides revealing the limitations of self-report data that we have already discussed, this last result indicates the danger of comparing national origin groups without regard for their total numbers in the United States. In establishing social policy one needs to know not only the characteristics of each national group, but also their total number in the community for which the policy is being considered. Even if the self-reports on literacy were objective, there might be less need of literacy programs for Central Americans in New York (since their absolute number is smaller) than for Dominicans, whose numbers are rapidly growing.

TABLE 7. Linguistic proficiency by national origin (%)

	Central America (n = 24)	Cuba (n = 63)	Dominican Republic (n = 128)	Puerto Rico (n = 15)	South America (n = 64)
<i>Oral Spanish</i>					
Very good or good	100	100	100	100	100
Not good or not at all	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Written Spanish</i>					
Very good or good	83	95	91	93	100
Not good or not at all	17	5	9	7	0
<i>Oral English</i>					
Very good or good	67	65	47	80	73
Not good or not at all	33	35	53	20	27
<i>Written English</i>					
Very good or good	62	70	45	73	75
Not good or not at all	38	30	55	27	25

As expected, more Puerto Ricans have oral proficiency in English than any of the other four national origin groups (see Table 7). Puerto Ricans are followed by South Americans, Central Americans, Cubans, and finally, Dominicans, who know the least English. More than half the Dominican population is monolingual in Spanish, while at least half of the Cuban, Central American, South American, and Puerto Rican population that we interviewed is bilingual.

Although more than half of the Cubans in our sample have been in the United States for over a decade, they rank second to the Dominicans in lack of English speaking ability. The greater Spanish monolingualism of Cubans in the United States than that of Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics has been noted before (NCEP 1982). This is despite, or maybe because of, the greater economic integration of Cubans, especially in Dade County. One reason for the results on the limited English speaking ability of Cubans in our sample might have to do with the higher language/literacy expectation of the educated and the middle class that we discussed earlier. The Cubans in our sample (over half of them of the second immigration wave and likely to have been professionals) had access to the full range of the functions of Spanish in Cuba. Their English is used for only limited functions in the United States, and they judge it as inadequate. As will be seen below, however, Cubans indeed seem to speak less English with their co-workers than do South Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Central Americans.

Linguistic behavior of the five national groups

Given that Dominicans are the most monolingual of the five Hispanic groups included in our study, we expected their use of the Spanish language media and their use of Spanish with other interlocutors to be higher than that of the other

TABLE 8. Use of Spanish language media by national origin (%)

	Central America (n = 24)	Cuba (n = 63)	Dominican Republic (n = 128)	Puerto Rico (n = 15)	South America (n = 64)
<i>Television</i>					
Always	29	22	27	0	25
Sometimes	50	37	64	80	53
Never	21	41	9	20	22
<i>Radio</i>					
Always	38	24	51	40	36
Sometimes	42	33	46	53	44
Never	20	43	3	7	20
<i>Reading</i>					
Always	42	29	55	20	48
Sometimes	38	46	40	73	39
Never	20	25	5	7	13

groups. Table 8 confirms the fact that Dominicans clearly make more use of the Spanish language media than do the other national groups. Only 9 percent of the Dominican population claim never to watch Spanish language television. More than half the Dominican population always listens to a Spanish language radio station or always reads in Spanish rather than in English. Overall, Dominicans use the Spanish language media exclusively much more often than do other Hispanic groups. The other more bilingual Hispanic groups have less need of the Spanish language media because they can also benefit from the English language media.

With the exception of Cubans, over three-fourths of the other Hispanic groups watch Spanish language television and listen to Spanish language radio frequently, although not exclusively. The Spanish language media has an important, although not an exclusive, role in most Hispanic homes.

Surprisingly, although Cubans rank second in Spanish monolingualism, almost half report that they never watch Spanish language television or listen to Spanish language radio. Those whom we interviewed claim that the Spanish language programming was irrelevant to them. When we asked them why this was so, they most often said that "*esas novelas no sirven para nada*" 'Those soap operas are no good'. They were so unfamiliar with Spanish language television programming that they rarely were able to tell us whether there were other programs in Spanish besides *novelas*. They told us that they understood enough English to be able to watch English language television. Their dislike for Spanish language television and radio was not based on language preference. Rather, what we gathered from the interviews was that they felt a class difference between themselves and the Hispanic audience for whom the *novelas* were aired. It is important to remember that although most Cubans in our sample are blue

collar workers in the United States, they are likely to have been professionals in Cuba. In fact, 41 percent claim to be college educated (see Table 6). One Cuban woman who has lived in Washington Heights for sixteen years told us, "*que uno le pierde el gusto a esas novelas*" 'One stops enjoying those soap operas'. She told us that she regularly watched them when she first arrived in New York. Now, she is no longer interested in the babies born out of wedlock to the maids of rich Latin American men, the content, she claims, of most soap operas. She explained that her present reality in the United States as the single parent of two teenage girls is very different from that portrayed in the *novelas*. The *novelas* "*lo embobecen a uno*" 'drug you'. It seems that besides education, degree of assimilation to U.S. society is also an important determiner of participation in Spanish language television programming. *The decision to use the minority language in a majority society does not always depend on linguistic ability or preference.* Sometimes it depends on the role and the functions which the minority language has, or is allowed to have, in the majority society.

Reading in Spanish is again the most favorite Spanish language medium of every single Hispanic group (see Table 8). With the exception of Puerto Ricans, more claim to read exclusively in Spanish than to watch television or listen to the radio only in Spanish. Even the two groups with higher illiteracy in Spanish, the Central Americans and the Dominicans, follow this pattern.

As shown in Table 9, regardless of national origin, Spanish is also almost exclusively used at home with the father, the mother, and the siblings. Spanish is also used extensively, although not exclusively, with the children. The least Spanish at home is spoken among the Puerto Ricans in our sample.

Table 9 also reveals that South Americans and Central Americans claim to separate the two languages at home more than Cubans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans. That is, South and Central Americans report to speak either always Spanish or always English at home with their parents and their siblings and almost always with their children. More Cubans and Puerto Ricans report to use the two languages in addressing the parents, the siblings, and the children.

We asked those Cubans who claimed to speak either English or both Spanish and English to their children why they did it and what they meant by speaking both languages. The 23 percent who claimed to speak only English to their children told us that their children simply did not speak Spanish, although most said that the children understood Spanish. However, the 27 percent who claimed to use both languages with their children reported that their children were bilingual, although they felt the children understood some things in English better. The respondents used English when their children's English-speaking friends were present and when they helped them with their homework. They spoke Spanish when they were alone and when they were discussing whether to buy the new bicycle. They simply had not made a conscious language choice when addressing their children. They used the language that was most appropriate to the situation at hand. They spoke sometimes Spanish, sometimes English.

TABLE 9. *Use of Spanish with different interlocutors by national origin (%)*

	Spanish	Spanish/English	English	Spanish	Spanish/English	English
	Central America (n = 24)			Cuba (n = 63)		
Father	100	0	0	94	6	0
Mother	100	0	0	96	4	0
Siblings	99	0	1	81	4	15
Children	80	5	15	50	27	23
Friends	92	0	8	41	47	12
Co-workers	17	18	65	18	60	22
Classmates	40	0	60	20	0	80
	Dominican Republic (n = 128)			Puerto Rico (n = 15)		
Father	98	0	2	86	10	4
Mother	97	1	2	83	15	2
Siblings	85	5	10	72	10	18
Children	70	15	15	48	28	24
Friends	69	21	10	30	55	15
Co-workers	58	26	16	15	43	42
Classmates	38	24	38	25	0	75
	South America (n = 64)					
Father	100	0	0			
Mother	100	0	0			
Siblings	79	0	21			
Children	78	2	20			
Friends	63	2	35			
Co-workers	9	23	68			
Classmates	9	0	91			

It became clear that they were mostly describing intersentential language alternation. It is important to point out that none of this behavior was exhibited in the interviews with the research team, although there was much use of loans and calques when they spoke in Spanish with us. This was not surprising since the research team consisted of people who were very proficient in Spanish and our respondents were reporting language alternation with interlocutors who might have been less proficient in Spanish. It seems that since almost half of the Cuban parents in New York report speaking either solely English or both English and Spanish to their children, these Cuban-American children will have a very slight chance of becoming fully proficient in Spanish. Given the fact that Cuban-American children rarely spend time in a monolingual Spanish-speaking society and that the Cuban community in New York City is not as cohesive as that in Dade County or in New Jersey, we can predict that many Cuban-American children in New York will find it difficult to continue speaking Spanish.

The small number of Puerto Ricans in our sample report a slightly higher use of English, and English and Spanish, in the home than Cubans. Their answers to our questions are very similar to those we obtained from Cubans. They also use sometimes Spanish, sometimes English in addressing their children. However,

their actual language behavior with us was slightly different. For example, only nine persons in the entire sample surveyed preferred to answer in English. Of these, four were Puerto Rican. We believe that the reason for their language choice was partly determined by the fact that no one in the research team was Puerto Rican. English was a more neutral language to communicate with us than their more marked Nuyoricano Spanish. These English-speaking Puerto Ricans often code-switched back to Spanish with the research team, most often intrasententially. At least one of them reported that he spoke both Spanish and English to his daughter "*como ahora*" 'just like now'. The eleven Puerto Ricans who spoke to us in Spanish (all with at least a high school education) rarely switched to English, although they also frequently used loans and calques from English. Regardless of language use at home, it seems that Puerto Rican children have a higher probability of Spanish language regeneration as adults than Cuban-American children. First, Puerto Rican children frequently travel to Puerto Rico to see family and friends, whereas Cuban children have lost touch with the homeland. Second, Puerto Rican children growing up in any New York City neighborhood will have opportunities as young adults to become involved with the large and struggling Puerto Rican community in the City.

We had expected the more monolingual Dominicans to use more Spanish at home than any of the other groups. However, Dominicans use more Spanish than Cubans and Puerto Ricans, but slightly less than Central and South Americans. We were also surprised that 15 percent of the Dominicans, compared to only 5 percent of Central Americans and 2 percent of South Americans, claim to use both Spanish and English with their children. We were puzzled by at least four Dominicans who told us that they spoke both Spanish and English to their children when it became obvious to us that they were not English speakers. When we probed them further, it turned out that they were describing the use of some very few well-known English loans such as *el estín* 'steam' and *el bildin* 'building' when speaking Spanish to their children. Yet, the fact that these Dominicans were quick to report speaking both languages to their children, even when unable to do so, teaches us an important lesson about the loyalty of Hispanic immigrants to the United States and to the English language, as well as the linguistic discrimination they encounter. At least three Dominicans reported that when they spoke Spanish they were classified as poor, uneducated, and even as illegal aliens. However, when they spoke English, they could be classified just as Hispanics in the United States, and some non-Hispanics might even confuse them with Puerto Ricans, who have citizenship privileges. The effort of some Dominicans to speak English, even when they don't know how is revealed by their description of their linguistic behavior. Although code-switching is a stigmatized linguistic practice among educated bilingual speakers, it seems to be an accepted practice among monolingual Spanish speakers who lack a formal education, have recently arrived, do not have the full ability to code-switch, and believe that English holds the key to their success in the United States. For them,

using loans and switching occasionally demonstrates their limited knowledge of English and is a first step in their acquisition of English.

It is interesting to note that the three groups from the Caribbean, namely, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans, report using both Spanish and English in the privacy of their homes more often than Central Americans and South Americans. It seems that the report of this language behavior is partly due to the stigmatization of Caribbean Spanish in the United States, as well as to the greater discrimination that Caribbean speakers encounter (based, of course, on both linguistic and racial grounds). Although everyone we interviewed reported to speak Spanish very well or well, some of the Cubans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans reported that their Spanish was not as good as that of their South American and Central American friends. They said that the Spanish they spoke was heavily influenced by English and that in speaking they often "swallow" sounds (*nos comemos las letras*). Some may then prefer to abandon their stigmatized variety of Spanish in favor of English. This may partially explain why Dominicans, more recent, more monolingual, and less educated than South and Central Americans, report to speak both languages at home more often.

South and Central Americans are also less likely to report the use of both Spanish and English since they regard this as the linguistic characteristic of poor, more racially marked Hispanics, especially Puerto Ricans, who have been in the United States for many years. In actual behavior, however, the Spanish of the Central and South Americans we interviewed was also deeply influenced by English.

Differences in linguistic behavior among national groups became most apparent outside of the home context. On the whole, Dominicans use the most Spanish with friends, co-workers, and classmates. The Dominicans of our sample, with the least education, the highest rate of illiteracy, and the least prestigious occupations, are excluded from social, work, and schooling opportunities where English is used. On the other hand, South Americans come into most contact with English-speaking co-workers and classmates. We must remember that South Americans have the highest percentage of people employed as technicians and office workers. On the whole, South Americans in New York City interact more with an English-speaking society, although this does not imply that they are more structurally incorporated into the United States society.

For example, curiously enough, Cubans rarely come into contact with English monolingual co-workers. This, however, is only indicative of the success of the Spanish-speaking and bilingual Cuban business and professional community. This business and professional ethnic community functions mostly in Spanish, serving mostly a Hispanic clientele and employing mostly Hispanic workers. The public use of Spanish in the United States cannot be solely seen as an indication of lack of structural incorporation. In fact, for many Hispanics, Spanish seems to be an important tool for successful business endeavors.

As has been seen, all five Hispanic national origin groups use Spanish exten-

sively in the privacy of the home. Speakers of a more prestigious Central and South American Spanish report to compartmentalize its use from English much more than speakers of Caribbean Spanish, regardless of social class. Speakers of Caribbean Spanish, whether Cubans, Dominicans, or Puerto Ricans, tend to alternate languages much more often than Central Americans and South Americans. This is a surprising finding since it suggests that variables such as recency of arrival and level of education may not be as important in determining the degree of compartmentalization as is the prestige of the dialect spoken by the community, the social status of the linguistic group in the United States, and the identification of the ethnic group with regard to the United States.

Language attitudes of the five national groups

There are many differences in the reported linguistic behavior of the five national groups studied. However, as shown in Table 10, all overwhelmingly assert that it is important to learn English, maintain Spanish, and have the schools teach in Spanish.

Only one Dominican, one Puerto Rican, and one Cuban say that Spanish is not important to them. Only two Dominicans and two South Americans claim that Spanish should not be taught in the public school. The two South Americans told us in our interviews that bilingual teachers in New York City public schools, usually long-time residents in the United States, lacked the appropriate Spanish skills to teach Spanish. Yet, seven of the South Americans we interviewed send their children to Saturday schools organized by the Argentine and Uruguayan communities of Queens precisely to learn the Spanish language and their culture. South American teachers rarely qualify for jobs as bilingual teachers in public schools since most have not been educated in the United States, and they frequently lack the English skills necessary for certification. The lowest interest shown by the South Americans in having public schools teach Spanish does not

TABLE 10. *Language attitudes by national origin (%)*

	Central America (n = 24)	Cuba (n = 63)	Dominican Republic (n = 128)	Puerto Rico (n = 15)	South America (n = 64)
<i>Importance of English</i>					
Yes	100	100	100	100	100
No	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Importance of Spanish</i>					
Yes	100	98	99	93	100
No	0	2	1	7	0
<i>Spanish in school</i>					
Yes	100	100	98	100	97
No	0	0	2	0	3

reveal an indifference in having their children learn Spanish. On the contrary, it manifests a lack of trust in the majority public school system and in the bilingual teachers it employs to do a thorough and complete job of teaching Spanish.

THE CASE OF ONE NATIONAL GROUP IN TWO COMMUNITIES: THE DOMINICANS OF WASHINGTON HEIGHTS AND ELMHURST/CORONA

Most immigrants to the United States originally settle in communities where others of the same national group reside. Often, therefore, the characteristics of the community coincide with those of the national group residing within its boundaries. This ethnic enclave provides the newly arrived immigrant with an atmosphere that is culturally and linguistically familiar. It serves to ease the often painful transition between the home country and the new society.

Language minority communities in the United States, especially Spanish-speaking communities, are most often poor. Immigrants to the United States rarely have economic wealth when they arrive. However, immigration to the United States is not solely prompted by the pull of economic opportunities in the new society. Often the political situation of the home countries pushes the immigrants out. The sociopolitical climate in the Spanish-speaking world, many times created by North American policies in Latin America, forces many well-educated professionals to emigrate to the United States. Thus, although most arrive penniless, there are differences in social class among immigrants of the same ethnic group.

At first, many middle-class immigrants may live side by side with their less fortunate compatriots. However, these middle-class immigrants have the skills and values necessary in U.S. society. They are often the only ones to succeed and to leave the poor ethnic neighborhood for more integrated areas. Often, however, middle-class immigrants, although poor in the new society, prefer to live in areas where the residents are not solely of the same national origin. They prefer a neighborhood that is less ethnically marked and that offers them better housing and schools.

The question of whether social policy for Hispanics in the United States should be guided by categorizations of national origin or ethnic community is an important one. In this section we will argue that given the social structure of North American society, the *language surround* of an ethnic group becomes an important indicator of language proficiency, language use, and language attitudes.² Comparing the answers obtained from the Dominicans we interviewed in Washington Heights and those we interviewed in Elmhurst/Corona gives us valuable insight into the variability of ethnic groups in different communities.

Demographic characteristics

Since the 1960s the continuous influx of Dominicans to Washington Heights has earned it the name of *el platanal* 'the banana grove', named after the plantains, a

staple in the Dominican diet. After 1966, Dominicans, most of them from the town of Sabana Iglesia, also started settling in the less urban, less congested neighborhood of Corona in Queens. Until the mid-1960s Corona had been mainly a black lower-middle-class neighborhood. In the early 1960s Latin Americans started settling in the area of Elmhurst/Corona, especially to the west of Junction Boulevard. In the 1970s some middle-class Dominicans started buying the small homes east of Junction Boulevard from many blacks. The Dominicans in *Sabana Iglesia*, as Corona is called, include a number of educated, middle-class professionals such as medical doctors, architects, and engineers who have a difficult time finding high salaried jobs in the Dominican Republic.

As shown in Table 11 the recent influx of Dominicans has affected both Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona equally. Almost 50 percent of the Dominicans in Washington Heights, as well as those in Elmhurst/Corona, have been in the United States less than five years. However, 30 percent in Washington Heights, compared to only 15 percent in Elmhurst/Corona, have lived in

TABLE 11. *Characteristics of Dominicans in Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 100)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 28)
<i>Years in the United States</i>		
0-5	45	46
6-10	25	39
11-20	30	11
21+	0	4
<i>Age</i>		
13-20	24	14
21-30	36	39
31-50	32	36
51+	8	11
<i>Academic level</i>		
Did not finish elementary school	33	0
Finished elementary school	27	29
Finished secondary school	37	50
Finished college	3	21
<i>Occupation</i>		
Blue collar worker	33	32
Student	20	29
Housewife	14	0
Unemployed	14	4
Business owner	2	7
Professional	3	11
Office worker	1	14
Store clerk	3	0
Technician	8	0
Craftsman	2	3

the United States for more than a decade. This is an interesting finding. One would expect that the longer-time residents might already be more assimilated and might have left the poorer ethnic neighborhood. However, the demographic data on level of education and occupation in Table 11 reveals why years of residency in the United States rarely affects incorporation into the mainstream.

Although our sample's age distribution is similar, there are significant differences with respect to academic level. The thirty-three Dominicans who claim not to have finished elementary school are all residents of Washington Heights. Although slightly over one-third in Washington Heights claim to have finished high school and three are college graduates, almost three-fourths of the Elmhurst/Corona Dominicans are high school graduates and almost one-fourth have finished college. These differences in education are also reflected in occupation. Most of our Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona samples are blue collar workers in the United States, this despite the higher education level in their native country of those in Elmhurst/Corona. The difference is felt however, in the greater incorporation of the more educated Elmhurst/Corona Dominicans into the work force. Only 4 percent of the Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona, compared to 14 percent in Washington Heights, are unemployed. There are also many more professionals and office workers in Elmhurst/Corona than in Washington Heights. The less educated Dominicans of Washington Heights have less opportunity for incorporation into the mainstream.

At least two of the middle-class Dominicans we interviewed in Elmhurst/Corona report that they prefer their neighborhood to Washington Heights because they would rather not associate themselves with less educated Dominicans. They also told us that they don't want others to categorize them as poor, undocumented, and illiterate Dominicans. Although prejudice against Dominicans abounds in Washington Heights, Colombians seem to be the target of discriminatory practices in Elmhurst/Corona. The discrimination here is not based on race, for the Colombians are mostly white, whereas the Dominicans are more racially mixed. However, Colombians are stereotyped as drug dealers, and their numeric density in the area has promoted the stereotype. The presence of Dominicans is not an issue in the community, and therefore, they can slip by unnoticed.

Linguistic proficiency

Given the higher level of education of Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona, we expected that they would claim much better Spanish literacy skills. We were surprised by the little difference reported in the two communities (see Table 12). Again, we feel that the limitation of self-report on language proficiency as well as the restricted role and status of Spanish in the United States, discussed earlier, may be responsible for this result. Given the limited function of Spanish in the United States, Spanish speakers overwhelmingly feel that their Spanish skills are adequate. It is their inadequacy in English that is strongly felt.

TABLE 12. *Linguistic proficiency of Dominicans by community (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 100)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 28)
<i>Oral Spanish</i>		
Very good or good	100	100
Not good or not at all	0	0
<i>Written Spanish</i>		
Very good or good	90	93
Not good or not at all	10	7
<i>Oral English</i>		
Very good or good	45	54
Not good or not at all	55	46
<i>Written English</i>		
Very good or good	42	57
Not good or not at all	58	43

Although Spanish proficiency reports are similar in both communities, there is a slight difference in their reports of English proficiency (see Table 12). Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona are indeed slightly more bilingual and biliterate than those in Washington Heights. They also report English proficiency in the same way as the rest of the Elmhurst/Corona community. That is, more report to read and write English well than to speak English well.

Our interviews with those who reported this apparent contradiction revealed that in the Dominican Republic, as in other Latin American countries, the middle class often learned English in schools. Many reported the failure of the schools in teaching them to speak English. They claimed, however, to be familiar with English grammar and to read English well.

Language use

Judging from the demographic characteristics of Dominicans in Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona, we also expected that those in Washington Heights would watch more Spanish language television, listen to more Spanish language radio, read more in Spanish, and speak more Spanish with others than Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona. We also expected that the more middle-class Dominicans of Elmhurst/Corona would express the same negative attitudes toward Spanish language television and radio that we had heard from Cuban respondents. Furthermore, we expected that the Spanish of the Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona would be different from that of the Dominicans in Washington Heights.

Table 13 reveals that Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona indeed make less exclusive use of Spanish language television, radio, and reading than those in

TABLE 13. *Dominicans' use of Spanish language media by community (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 100)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 28)
<i>Television</i>		
Always	29	18
Sometimes	63	68
Never	8	14
<i>Radio</i>		
Always	55	36
Sometimes	41	64
Never	4	0
<i>Reading</i>		
Always	57	46
Sometimes	39	46
Never	4	8

Washington Heights. Yet, the difference between the use of the Spanish media in the two communities is not as profound as we would have expected, given the social class difference.

When we probed the Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona further, it turns out that although they are critical of the *novelas*, they report watching them. "*Son tan bobas pero tan interesantes*" 'They are so silly, but so interesting', a young dental assistant told us. Only 14 percent claim never to watch Spanish language television. An interesting finding is that none of the Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona report never to listen to Spanish radio. Many told us they regularly listened to Radio WADO and SUPER-KA-QU hoping to find *merengues*. Dominican music, and in particular *merengues*, dominates the Latin American music world. Dominicans are proud of their music, and they play and dance *merengues* regardless of social class. These recently arrived Dominicans have not assimilated the contempt for popular culture that is the norm in the United States. In Latin America, the middle class participates actively in the popular culture of the working class. Although one would rarely find a high-ranking executive of a U.S. corporation dancing to rap music, one rarely finds members of the elite in Latin America unable to dance a *conga*, a *merengue*, or a *cha-cha-chá*.

The Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona also claim to read material in Spanish that is similar to that read in Washington Heights. *El Nacional*, the Dominican press, and *El Diario*, the Spanish language press in New York, rank first in their preferences. It was surprising that the Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona seem to manifest even less interest in Latin American and Dominican literature than those in Washington Heights. Juan Bosch, a contemporary Dominican writer, was mentioned in connection to reading practices only in Washington Heights. Only

one of the Dominicans we interviewed, again in Washington Heights, mentioned any other Latin American writer. Dominican literature has not partaken of the international "boom" of Latin American literature. Therefore, many Dominicans do not see Latin American literature as their own.

At least two of the Dominicans we interviewed in Washington Heights are young poets belonging to a Dominican poetry group that specializes in *poesía comprometida* 'politically committed poetry'. We were surprised by the number of Dominicans in Washington Heights who told us that they wrote poetry and short stories. Many of the poets report reading their poetry regularly at cultural events. In the more ethnically marked community of Washington Heights there is an emergent Dominican literature. This again is an interesting finding. Most Hispanic literature in the United States falls clearly under the category of *literatura de protesta*. The poorer community that feels victimized and frustrated expresses that anguish in creative writing. The more successful community does not feel the need to develop a literary identity in Spanish. Not only are the reading practices in Spanish of the more educated Dominicans of Elmhurst/Corona not different from those in Washington Heights, but the use of Spanish in literary activities seems to be valued less.

Dominicans in Washington Heights and Elmhurst are also quite similar in their reported language use in the home domain (see Table 14). Even among the more educated Dominicans of Elmhurst/Corona there are reports of use of both Spanish and English with siblings and children. Since the reports of English language proficiency among the two communities are not that different (see Table 12), language use outside of the home does not differ much. Clearly, however, although some of the bilingual residents of Washington Heights continue to use Spanish with their mostly Dominican friends, co-workers, and classmates, those in Elmhurst/Corona have more English-speaking and bilingual friends, co-workers, and classmates. Some of the Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona who claim to use English or both English and Spanish in their interactions with friends, co-

TABLE 14. Dominicans' use of Spanish with different interlocutors by community (%)

	Washington Heights (n = 100)			Elmhurst/Corona (n = 28)		
	Spanish	Spanish/English	English	Spanish	Spanish/English	English
Father	98	1	1	98	0	2
Mother	97	2	1	97	1	2
Siblings	87	5	8	84	6	10
Children	70	24	6	68	10	22
Friends	72	23	5	66	18	16
Co-workers	60	28	12	55	25	20
Classmates	40	26	34	35	22	43

workers, and classmates referred to the interethnic nature of their language surround. For example, one young woman told us that she worked in a local *factoría* where Blacks and Hispanics of many national origins work. She often spoke to other Hispanics and even to other Dominicans in English so that her Black co-workers could understand. One young Dominican college freshman in Elmhurst/Corona told us that he preferred to speak English with his classmates because it was more neutral. He goes to a community college in Queens where most of the Hispanic students are South American or Puerto Rican. He said his accent in English was similar to that of other young Hispanics. However, his accent in Spanish is clearly Dominican.

The actual language behavior of Dominicans in Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona vis-à-vis Spanish and English is also not much different. All the Dominicans we interviewed preferred to answer in Spanish. All answered in fluent Spanish with lexical features that were clearly Dominican. For example, Dominicans both in Washington Heights and Elmhurst/Corona regularly substitute *casimente* 'almostly' for *casi* 'almost'. However, the more educated Dominicans of Elmhurst/Corona have a more conservative pronunciation, that is, one that follows more closely the orthography of the language. For example, they are careful to say /nada/ instead of the common /na/. This is also an interesting finding. Speakers are aware of regionalisms, however, in their oral interactions they rarely abandon them. Yet, their pronunciation is readily affected. They may hear their Colombian neighbor refer to a bus as *autobús* instead of *guagua*, but they will continue using the Caribbean *guagua*. Yet, they will imitate the more conservative phonology of their Colombian neighbors.

We asked some very conservative speakers of Dominican Spanish in Elmhurst/Corona why their pronunciation was so conservative. They claimed this was "*la pronunciación correcta*." We were surprised that some of these very conservative speakers were from El Cibao, a region in the Dominican Republic that is well known for the palatization of /r/ or substitution of /y/ for /r/. When asked about the use of *poique* for *porque* among Cibaeños, they were quick to tell us that this was the wrong pronunciation. However, when asked about the use of *ayama* for *calabaza* 'pumpkin', they said that *ayama* was correct and it was simply the way it was said in the Dominican Republic. As seen before, phonology is much more affected by contact with other Spanish-speaking groups than lexicon.

Educated speakers of Dominican Spanish in the United States seem to hold on to regionalisms much more readily than to a radical pronunciation. This linguistic pattern also responds to distinctions of social class. Whereas in the Dominican Republic all Dominicans regardless of social class say *chichigua* for *cometa* 'kite', the more educated Dominicans have a more conservative pronunciation even back home. Regionalisms do not distinguish educated from uneducated speakers, however, a very radical pronunciation characterizes one as being uneducated.

In the Dominican Republic most of the population are radical speakers of Spanish. Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona often come into contact with South Americans and Central Americans who have highly conservative pronunciations. As the options of literacy in Spanish in an Anglo society are reduced and as the possibility of speaking English increases, we can expect that English may become an important option to escape linguistic prejudice.

The sociolinguistic isolation of Dominicans in Washington Heights reduces their linguistic options even further than those of their compatriots in Elmhurst/Corona. On the one hand, their Spanish has little opportunity for development in a society that does not recognize it. On the other, there are simply not enough ESL classes in the area to meet the great English language needs of Dominicans. Unfortunately, even when classes are available, they most often take the wrong educational approach. Those whom we interviewed told us that there are free ESL classes in churches, neighborhood schools, a neighborhood college, and the community agency, but that they all have long waiting lists. Others told us that they had attended English classes and that they just couldn't learn.

On the whole, one senses a great linguistic frustration in Washington Heights that one does not experience in Elmhurst/Corona. Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona have more opportunity to interact in English in the community. The community becomes the classroom. Dominicans in Washington Heights rarely need to speak English to function within their community. They need effective English language educational programs desperately. Even though they get along very well in Spanish, they often blame their lack of English skills for their lot. They feel incompetent and ignorant, and they blame themselves for their incapacity, rather than accusing a system that does not give them the opportunity to attend effective English classes or escape from the linguistic isolation of the community.

Language attitudes

Table 15 reveals again the great unanimity that there is among Dominicans with regards to the importance of English, Spanish, and the teaching of Spanish in school.

Although Dominicans in both communities overwhelmingly report to be in favor of having schools teach in Spanish, our interviews revealed a different reality in the schooling practices of the two communities. Most of the Dominican residents of Washington Heights send their children to the overcrowded public schools of District 6. With the exception of one school in the District, the rest of the schools have highly transitional bilingual programs only for the newly arrived. Most of the parents we interviewed reported that their children were not getting any Spanish classes. At least four of those we interviewed send their children to a special afterschool program in Spanish reading and writing in one of the community agencies. For the most part, parents were very dissatisfied with

TABLE 15. *Dominicans' language attitudes by community (%)*

	Washington Heights (n = 100)	Elmhurst/Corona (n = 28)
<i>Importance of English</i>		
Yes	100	100
No	0	0
<i>Importance of Spanish</i>		
Yes	99	100
No	1	0
<i>Spanish in school</i>		
Yes	99	96
No	1	4

the schools. When we asked them whether there were Dominican and Hispanic teachers in the schools, they told us there were. The problem, however, is that given the huge number of Dominican children in the schools, there simply are not enough Hispanic teachers or programs for their children. Some expressed hope that the recent election of a Dominican community resident to the School Board might change the situation in the future.³ When we pressed the parents about the reason for their discontent, it turns out that they were rarely talking about the lack of Spanish in the schools. The source of their dissatisfaction was most often the overcrowding of classes, the contempt of the teachers and administrators for the community, the apathy of the teachers, and the lack of cafeteria and gym facilities.

The Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona are much more satisfied with their schools. Parents report sending the children both to the two public schools and the two parochial schools in the area. The many who told us that they send the children to parochial schools were proud to point out the presence of two Dominican teachers there. Their children, like those in Washington Heights, were not getting Spanish language classes in the schools. However, especially the parochial school parents were satisfied with the education their children were getting and with the way that Dominican children were treated in those schools.

NATIONAL ORIGIN OR ETHNIC COMMUNITY?

A comparison of Dominicans in Washington Heights and Elmhurst yields interesting differences regarding the residents of one national group in two socially different communities. Even when the economic prosperity of Dominican residents in the two areas is about the same, the sense of past and future seems very different. One of the unemployed residents of Elmhurst/Corona told us that he knew his hardship was temporary. He had been attending the Universidad Autó-

noma in Santo Domingo. He is taking English lessons and he feels that in the future he will get a job "porque aquí todo el mundo trabaja" 'because here everybody works'. This is a very different attitude from that expressed by the unemployed in Washington Heights. "Aquí," one young man told us, "es muy difícil conseguir trabajo" 'Here it's very difficult to get a job'.

This difference is also clearly felt with regard to language proficiency, behavior, and attitude. The more English language surround of Elmhurst/Corona creates differences that go beyond nationality. Thus, Dominicans in Elmhurst/Corona are more proficient in English, use English more, especially in public, are more concerned with the literary values of English than Spanish, and are slightly less concerned with having schools teach in Spanish. The presence of English in their language surround, even when their immediate one functions in Spanish, becomes very important.

Nationality groups may share ways of speaking and rules of linguistic codes. In the privacy of their homes, linguistic minorities of the same national origin may behave similarly. But in public, linguistic minorities respond to the language surround in which they are immersed. Minority language use is mostly linked to the sociofunctional need and the social status of that language within a given speech community.

CONCLUSIONS

This article has focused on differences and contrasts of two Hispanic speech communities made up of five Hispanic national origin groups with regard to language proficiency, language use, and language attitudes. The most interesting result of our research, however, is the great cohesion that exists in the Hispanic community in the United States with regard to linguistic proficiency, language use, and language attitudes. Communities with differences in social class and ethnic composition, as well as different Hispanic national origin groups, have great interest in speaking English well, great loyalty toward Spanish as the means of communication with others in the country of origin and the family in the United States and as a resource for the ethnic community, and great desire to have the schools teach Spanish to their children. All Hispanics - wealthy, middle class, or poor; educated or uneducated; young or old; blue collar workers or professionals; monolingual or bilingual - use Spanish extensively at home to speak with family and in the individual act of reading.

The Hispanic communities that we studied are too recent for us to argue about diglossia or even to make predictions about Spanish language maintenance or language shift. Most of those we interviewed are Spanish monolinguals, clearly with linguistic need for Spanish in order to communicate effectively. Most of the bilinguals we interviewed had learned English in schools in the country of origin. Thus, their linguistic behavior and attitudes vis-à-vis bilingualism are shaped by

the notions of elite bilingualism which they bring from the country of origin, as well as by the prejudice toward folk bilingualism which they encounter in the United States.

It is clear to us that the Hispanics we interviewed feel that their major obstacle in the United States is the lack of majority support for their community's bilingual use of Spanish and English. Those who speak only Spanish dream of speaking English well. However, ESL educational programs that use Spanish to give meaning to English are rare in the United States. Most teachers of foreign languages for the elite use English to teach the target language. Yet, for poor Hispanics, the approach is considered suspect. Inadequate and scarce ESL programs in these communities cannot teach English effectively. The communities are not given the opportunity to learn English, and at the same time they are robbed of their self-esteem as speakers of Spanish in the United States.

For middle-class Hispanics schooled in English in the country of origin the situation is not much different. Although they come as speakers of a prestige dialect of Spanish having adequate knowledge of English for a Spanish-speaking country, they quickly become speakers of a stigmatized language with inadequate knowledge of English. Without any societal support for Spanish in the United States, these middle-class Hispanics face a similar linguistic lot to poorer Hispanics. That is, they increasingly lose the use of Spanish, while not learning English fast enough.

The Hispanics whom we interviewed have a different sense of linguistic present and future, and of their own and their children's linguistic needs. For the present, and for themselves, monolingual speakers of Spanish want more programs of instruction in English using Spanish as a resource to give them meaning. They also express the need to have majority approval of their linguistic situation. They ask for the majority's tolerance of their limited knowledge of English and their need to use Spanish for communication. Bilingual speakers also express discontent about the linguistic prejudice they experience because of their accents, their mispronunciations, their incorrect grammar. The attitude of all is one of acceptance of their linguistic present with little hope of any possible change within their community in this generation. However, they express hope that changes in the attitude of the majority toward bilingualism and the use of Spanish will ameliorate their lives in the United States in the present.

For the future, and for their children, however, the Hispanics we interviewed want more programs of instruction in Spanish. The Spanish programs are needed in order to insure the maintenance of Spanish in the home. But they are also needed in order to raise the prestige and status of Spanish in the United States and improve the parents' lives in accented English or Spanish. The community understands that their children will be native English speakers. However, they feel that unless U.S. society approves of Spanish-English bilingualism, their bilingual children will face the same educational and social neglect that they, the parents, feel now.

NOTES

1. We wish to thank Joshua A. Fishman for the inspiration we have found in his work.
2. The term *language surround* has been adopted from the work done by Lillian Weber on classroom verbal interaction.
3. In early 1987 the Local School Board of District 6 was dismissed by the Superintendent of New York City public schools.

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