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NEW MEXICAN SPANISH: A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME, SPACE, AND FAMILY VALUES

GARLAND D. BILLS
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New Mexican Spanish is one of the major heroes in my life. My hero is a complex entity that can be treated here in only a limited way. But what I'll concentrate on is of grand scope and fascinating. It's an epic story. We'll be covering a great span of time (some 2,000 years), a large expanse of space (approximately a third of the way around the world), and a diversity of manifestations of family values. Well, mostly the lack of family values. The notion of family values is pretty vague, but a fundamental premise of the notion is that 'My children are gonna be like me; they're gonna have my values.' Well, we all know that theory leaks like a sieve. Children just don't always respect tradition.

This paper is based largely on our recent book, *The Spanish Language of New Mexico and Southern Colorado: a Linguistic Atlas* (Bills and Vigil 2008), and as always owes much to collaborations with my colleague, Neddy Vigil. The data for all analyses come from lengthy interviews carried out largely between 1991 and 1995 with 357 Spanish speakers scattered across the state of New Mexico and sixteen counties of southern Colorado. These consultants were native born Hispanics, ages 15 to 96, ranging in Spanish proficiency from full fluency to limited oral productivity.

A first question as we begin this heroic tale: Can an area the size of New Mexico and southern Colorado have a complete shift from one language to another in just a few centuries? It did! It certainly did. I'm talking about Spain. It took only several hundred years for the Roman language, colloquial Latin (usually called Vulgar Latin), to become the national language of Spain. Though we have no detailed information on how this happened, the general outline is clear: It was the failure of family values. Children gradually, over several generations, gave up the language of the home in favor of a language of higher prestige. In this case,

it was the Iberian languages with little cultural clout which lost out to Latin, the language of the high-flying Roman Empire.

We can imagine a scene in Spain 2000 years ago something like this: a 12-year-old Celtic boy sees a Roman man polishing the wheel of his chariot, walks up to him and says in colloquial Latin something like, 'Hey, man, what's up?'

And the soldier says, 'Say, you speak Roman pretty good. Gimme five! Do you come from a Latin speaking home?'

'Oh no,' says the boy, 'my parents only speak Celtic. Well, my dad can make himself understood a little in Romance. But he only speaks Celtic at home. All of us kids speak Latin though, except for the little ones. I picked it up working in your stables. Wow, that's an awesome chariot you got there. I wish I had one.'

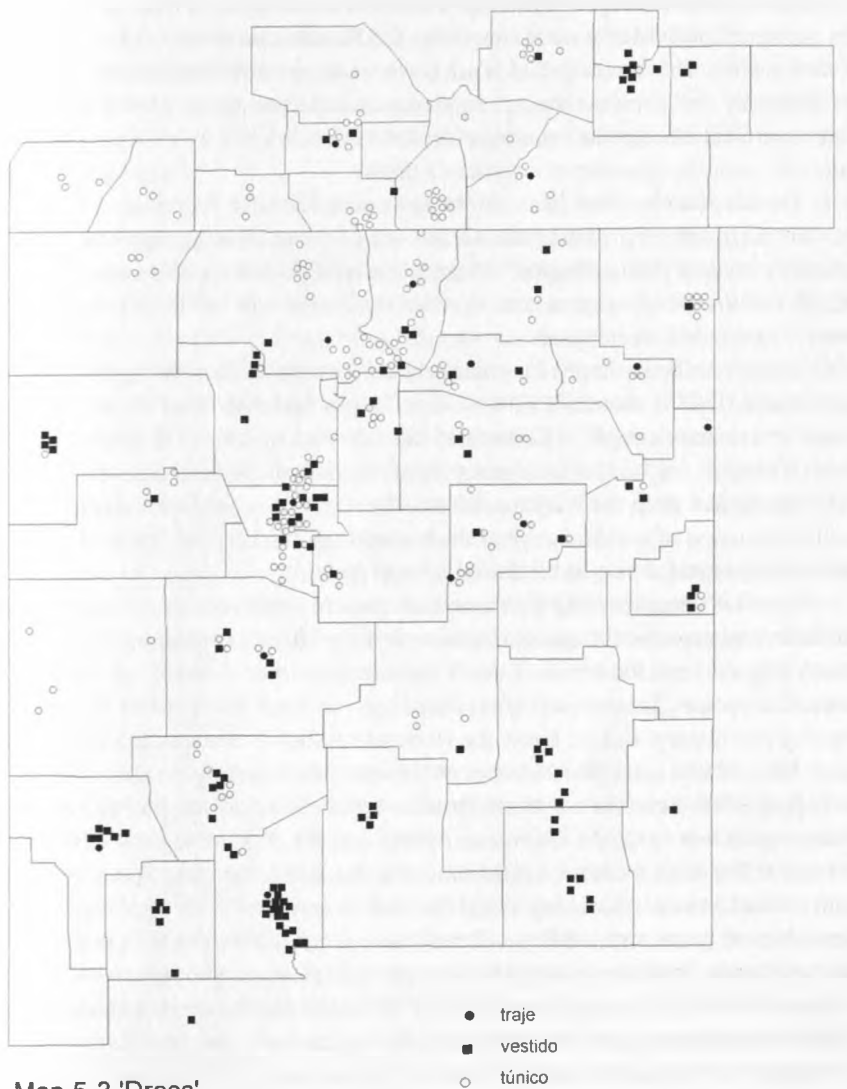
'Well,' says the soldier, 'You speak good Latin. You could be a soldier when you get older, go sack a few barbarian villages, save up your dinars, and buy yourself a chariot. And maybe even get a fancy *tunica* like this one of mine.'

The kid says, 'Holy smokes! That golden *tunica* is really cool.'

Let me interrupt this riveting conversation so we can spring forward in space and time to New Mexico two millennia later and see the consequences of this interaction. Consider Map 5-3 for the lexical item 'dress.' (The map numbers are those of the book, the first number corresponding to the book chapter; fuller discussions of each topic addressed here are contained in the book.)

This map shows New Mexico and 16 counties of southern Colorado. Each symbol on the map represents the location of one of the 357 consultants we interviewed (no map, however, plots all 357 speakers since for clarity of illustration only major variants are mapped and we were unable to get a response to every item from every speaker). When consultants were shown a picture of an ordinary woman's dress, we received two principal responses, *túnico* marked with open circles on the map and *vestido* (including a number of cases of the less standard *vistido*) marked with black squares.

A first observation about this map. The display illustrates the existence of two principal varieties of New Mexican Spanish. The open circles indicating the use of *túnico* are associated with a dialect that we call Traditional New Mexican Spanish, a dialect that Lipski considers 'arguably the oldest continually spoken variety of Spanish anywhere in the Americas that has not been updated by more recent immigration from Spain or neighboring countries' (2008:193). This variety is characteristic of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado and derives from early settlement in the area prior to the 20th century. The black squares indicating the use of *vestido* reveal a variety that we call Border New Mexican Spanish, which results primarily from immigration from Mexico during the 20th century. Border Spanish is typical across the southern third of New Mexico and other areas of more recent immigration such as urban areas (especially Albuquerque) and the



Map 5-3 'Dress'

Arkansas River area of southeastern Colorado. We toyed with the idea of labeling these two dialects Manito and Surumato, respectively, terms used not always respectfully by speakers of the other dialect, but we concluded that readers are likely to find those labels even more distasteful than Traditional and Border.

Now to the findings of this map: *Túnico* is a curious form that seems clearly to derive from the Latin *tunica* worn by the Roman charioteer of the preceding conversation. But this word, if it's known at all in other varieties of Spanish, is generally the feminine variant *la túnica*, not the masculine *el túnico* of New Mexican Spanish. And its meaning elsewhere is 'tunic'; it is only very, very rarely attested with the meaning of a woman's dress.

Vestido, on the other hand, is the now standard term for 'dress.' However, it's not an old noun predating the occurrence of *túnica*. It is transparently a more recently created past participle, 'dressed,' derived from the verb *vestir*. Thus, it's much like *dress* in English, a noun that derives from a verb and that there develops several extended meanings.

Since *vestido* is simply a nominalization with the basic meaning of 'dressed' or 'dressed up,' it shouldn't be too surprising to find that many New Mexicans (and others, for example in Colombia) use the word to refer to a man's suit. The use of *vestido* for 'suit' occurs pretty much in the same area as the use of *túnico* for 'dress,' that is, in the Traditional Spanish area. Its use is still prominent in spite of the intrusion of standard *traje* or the borrowing from English, realized as either the fully integrated *sute* or the unassimilated 'suit.'

Now let's leap back through time and space to Spain and consider the history of three major external linguistic influences in the Iberian Peninsula: the Romans, the Visigoths, and the Moors. I don't include the earlier invasion by those other Indo-Europeans, speakers of Celtic languages, because that episode is hidden in murky pre-history. But we know the Romans set foot in Spain in the late 3rd century BC and had established control of the entire peninsula by the time of Christ, bringing with them the advanced Roman civilization and the prestigious Latin language. Then came the Germanic hordes and the Visigoths' sack of Rome in 410 AD. The high Roman civilization collapsed, Latin-speaking Spain was overrun by the Germanic-speaking Visigoths, and the so-called Dark Ages set in for six centuries or more across Europe. Three hundred years after the Visigoths entered the peninsula, Arabic-speaking Muslims, the Moors, invaded Spain from northern Africa in 711 and promptly took control of practically the entire peninsula. The Moors brought to Spain the then highest civilization in the Mediterranean and European worlds and developed such magnificent structures as the Mesquita in Córdoba and the Alhambra in Granada. But the Iberians now became a rebellious lot, and it wasn't long before the Reconquista began. Moorish control was pushed back halfway down the peninsula by 1250, and the Muslims were finally expelled in 1492. But notice that the Arabic linguistic and high cultural presence was prominent in Spain for over 700 years.

How is it that Roman domination in the Iberian Peninsula for several centuries resulted in a wholesale shift from the native languages to Latin while the

other two invasions, one of 300 years and one of over 700, had little linguistic influence? How is it that colloquial Latin became the established language of Spain, but a colloquial Germanic variety or a colloquial Arabic variety failed to take hold? We could ask a similar question regarding the failure of a shift to French during the 300 years of French domination in England following the Norman Conquest.

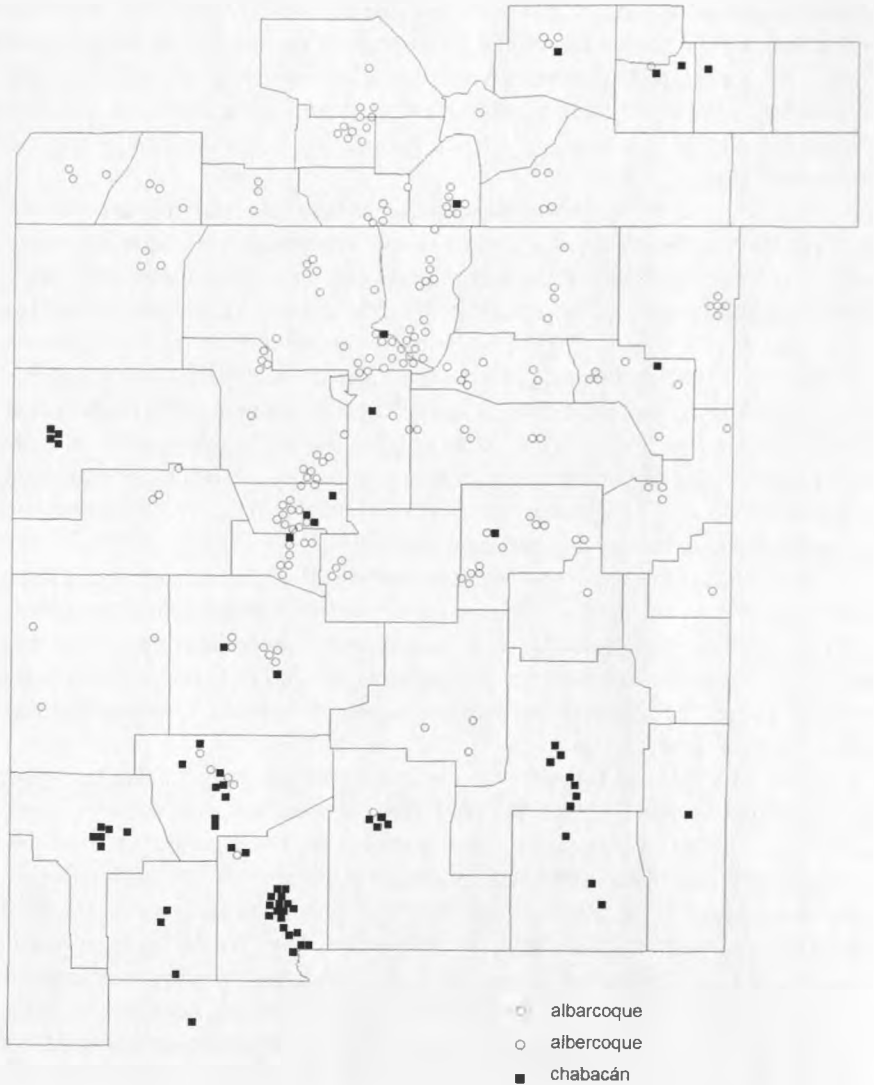
I'm not gonna try to answer those questions here, but the issues are relevant to New Mexican Spanish today and to anyone concerned with the maintenance of heritage languages, that is, those concerned with the linguistic aspect of family values. Scholars since the beginning of the 20th century (Espinosa 1914-1915) have lamented the shift to English by Hispanic communities in the United States, and research of the past thirty years demonstrates the reality and severity of this shift (López 1978, Hudson-Edwards and Bills 1982, Veltman 1988, Hudson et al 1995, Zentella 1997, Mora 2010, Rivera-Mills 2010). The maintenance of heritage languages is fraught with an enormous complexity of social, linguistic, and pedagogical issues. These complexities, like all complexities, may be informed by an examination of history and pertinent research.

Thus, back to my hero, New Mexican Spanish. The Spanish language became a permanent presence in New Mexico starting in 1598 with the arrival from Mexico of a small band of colonists, soldiers, and priests under the command of Juan de Oñate. These settlers and later arrivals from Mexico over the next 400 years brought linguistic features of the previous history of Spanish. I want to illustrate a few more of these.

Most of what they brought, of course, was the full range of the language. That's why it's called Spanish. But we'll focus here on less usual features. Some forms, like *túnico*, were retained from a very early Latin period. Others show evidence of Visigothic and Moorish influences. An example of Moorish influence is seen on Map 5-6 for 'apricot.' The long five-syllable *albaricoque* is the label generally accepted in Spain and many other places. This borrowing from Arabic is typical of the Traditional Spanish area. It is realized variably, sometimes as five syllables and more commonly as four. Another variation, /a/ versus /e/ as the nucleus of the second syllable, reveals subdialect differentiation that need not concern us here. All of the variants of the Arabic loanword are marked with open circles on map 5-6.

In contrast, the most widely used form in Mexico and in the Border Spanish areas is *chabacano* or *chabacán*. These two variants are combined for display on the map and marked as black squares. This variant was brought into New Mexico by more recent Mexican immigration during the 20th century.

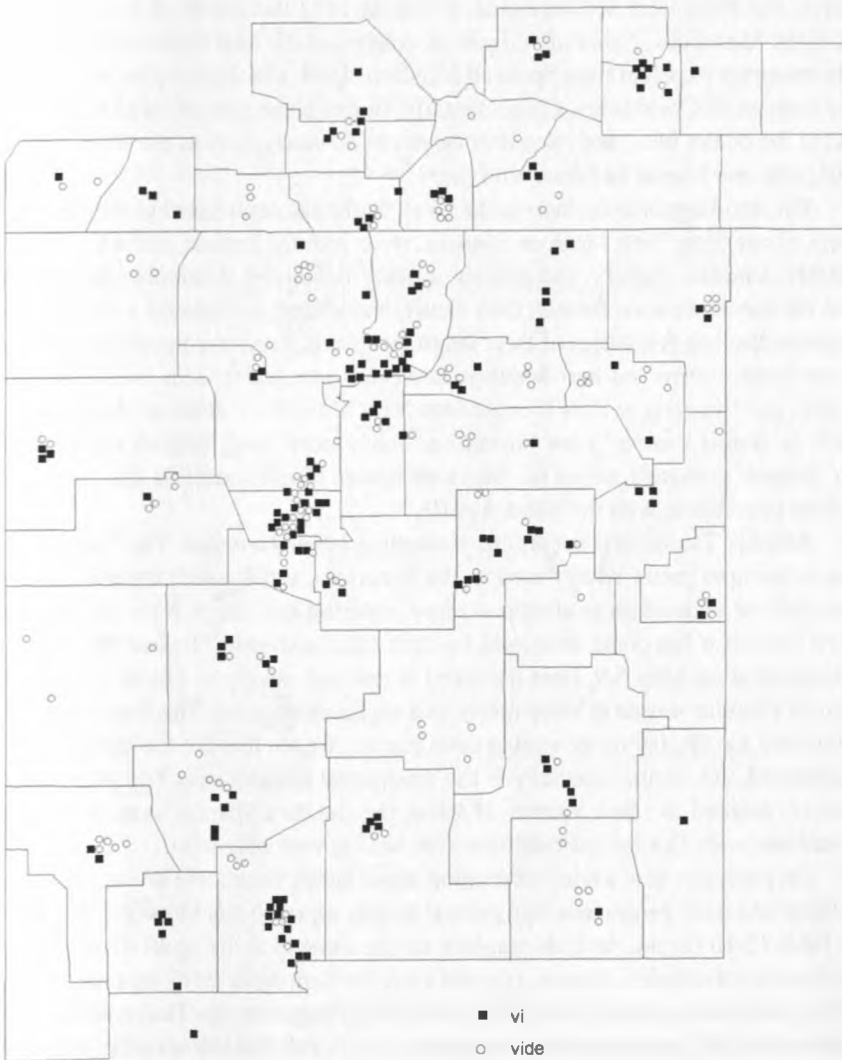
Other features from early Spanish are archaisms associated especially with the Traditional Spanish dialect, such as *cuasi* for 'almost,' *recordar* for 'wake up,'



Map 5-6 'Apricot'

mercar for 'to buy,' *almuerzo* for 'breakfast,' *estafeta* for 'post office,' *trujo* for 'he brought,' *asina* for 'thus,' *seigo* and *semos* for 'I am' and 'we are,' and many more, such as the example displayed in Map 5-8 marking the two ways of saying 'I saw' in the preterit. Indicated with open circles, *vide* is a retention from early

Spanish, retaining the /d/ from the Latin verb *videre*. We see this /d/ also in the English word 'video' and other classical borrowings from Latin. Indicated with black squares is the simplified *vi*, perhaps we should say the 'corrupted' *vi*, which is now widely considered the standard way to say 'I saw.'



Map 5-8 'I saw'

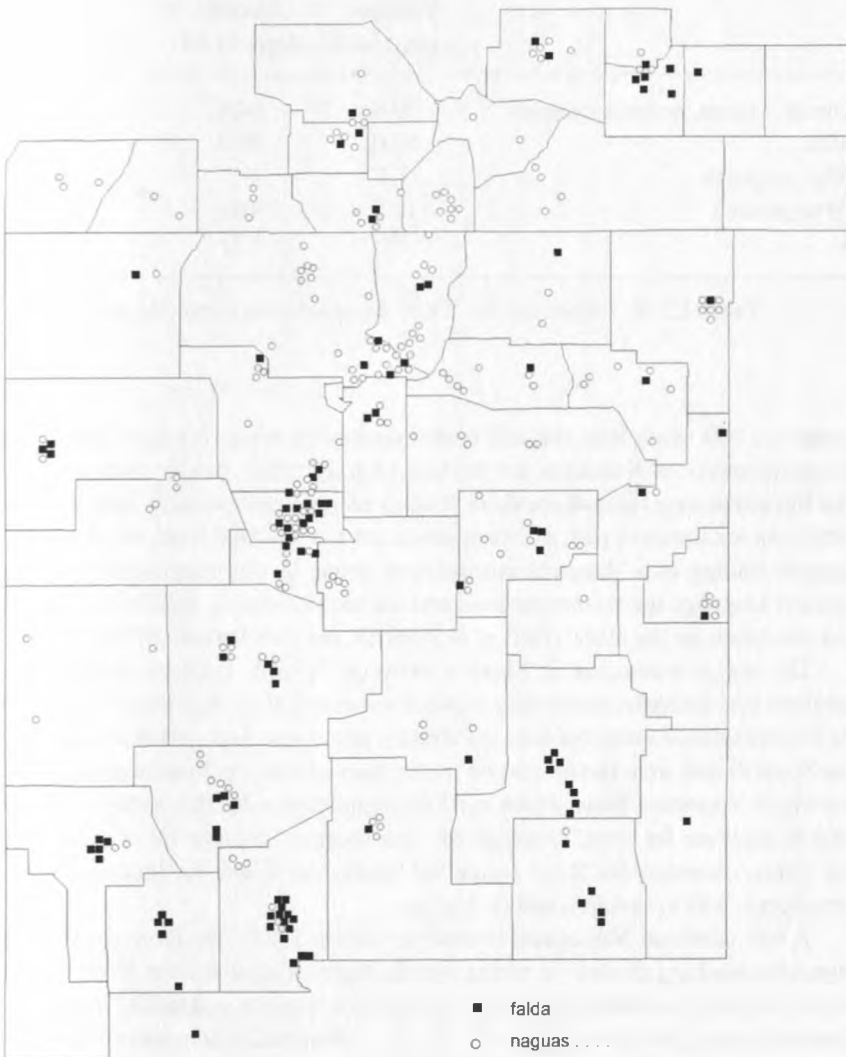
Note that the spatial distributions of *vi* and *vide* are pretty mixed, revealing no clear geographical patterning. We'll see later that education better explains the presence of these two forms in New Mexican Spanish today, even though the variation between the two forms has been going on for a long time in New Mexico, as documented so well by Sanz (2010:211-15) and Trujillo (2010).

Still other features of New Mexican Spanish come not from early Iberian forms, but from later developments. It was in 1492 that *los reyes católicos*, the Catholic Monarchs, *Fernando e Isabela*, celebrated the final defeat of the Moors and promptly expelled from Spain all Muslims, Jews, and anyone else who would not convert to Christianity. Coincidentally, in that same year of 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue, and Spaniards began to do unto others as the Romans and Visigoths and Moors had done unto them.

The first linguistic contacts in the New World that contributed to the development of our hero, New Mexican Spanish, were with the Indians of the Caribbean islands. Disease, slavery, and murder quickly decimated this native population and the survivors soon forsook their family values and assimilated with the conquerors, leaving few traces of their language. Some words for novel things were immediately borrowed into Spanish, however, principally from the Taíno language, and the early settlers brought into New Mexico a number of these words, such as *canoa* 'canoe,' *jején* 'mosquito,' *maíz* 'corn' (and English *maize*), and *ají* 'pepper'—though within the Mexican sphere of influence this last form was unable to compete with the Nahuatl *chile*.

Another Tainismo is the article of clothing labeled a *nagua*. The Taíno word *nagua* became pretty widely used in the Americas, usually with the meaning of loincloth or undercloth or similar skimpy covering that hangs from the hips. In New Mexico it has come to be used for both 'slip' and 'skirt.' Its use for 'skirt' is documented on Map 6-9. Here the word is realized usually as plural *naguas* but also as singular *nagua* or more rarely as *enagua* or *enaguas*. The four forms are combined for display on the map as open circles. We see that this variant is widely distributed, but occurs especially in the Traditional Spanish area. The other major variant, marked as black squares, is *falda*, the standard Spanish term. It is more associated with Border Spanish areas—as well as with education.

Let me inject here a brief observation about family values. We divided our consultants into three generations (age groups) to tally the responses for 'skirt,' displayed in Table 12-10 (again, the table numbers are the same as in the book, where further discussion is available). *Naguas* is far and away the form preferred by the oldest group (72%), but it is the preference of only 31% of the youngest group. The most common label among the younger group is the standard *falda* with 50%. Note further that 12% of the younger consultants could not offer any Spanish word at all for 'skirt.' The youngest generation is clearly not respecting the linguistic values of its elders.



Map 6-9 'Skirt'

Our hero's next stop in space on the way to New Mexico was Mexico, where Hernán Cortés landed in 1519 and promptly moved into central Mexico to conquer one of the more advanced civilizations of the world, the Aztecs, speakers of the Nahuatl language. Although the Spanish conquest of Mexico was quickly

	Younger Ages 15-40	Middle Ages 41-64	Older Ages 65-96
<i>naguas, nagua, enagua, enaguas</i>	30.8	64.4	72.2
<i>falda</i>	50.0	30.3	26.1
Other response	7.7	5.3	1.7
No response	11.5	0.0	0.0
N	78	132	115

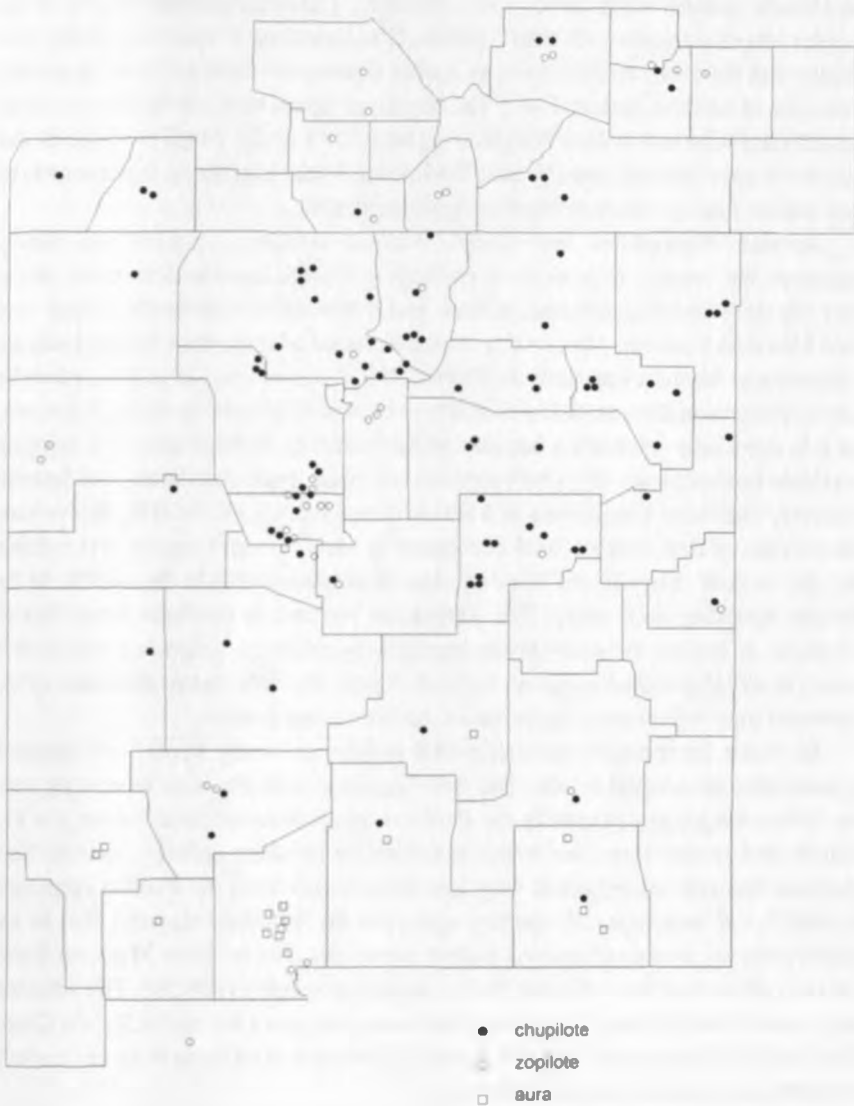
Table 12-10. Responses for 'Skirt' by generation (percentages)

complete, 500 years later Nahuatl is still spoken by many. It might appear that the maintenance of Nahuatl is due to strong family values, but we must also note that the remaining Nahuatl speakers tend to be socioeconomically marginalized Mexicans for the most part, a circumstance not too removed from our Southwest Spanish finding of a 'direct, consistent, and strong inverse relationship between Spanish language use on the one hand and the socioeconomic variables of income and education on the other' (Bills et al 2000:25, see also Jenkins 2009).

The early interaction in Mexico between Spanish speakers and Nahuatl speakers was intimate, necessarily so since almost all of the Spaniards were male. As a consequence many Nahuatl vocabulary items were incorporated into Mexican Spanish and were transported on to the *Nuevo Mexico* colony several generations later. Common Nahuatlisms used throughout New Mexico today are words such as *tecolote* for 'owl,' *chapulín* for 'grasshopper,' *zoquete* for 'mud,' *cuates* for 'twins,' *papalote* for 'kite,' *zacate* for 'grass,' *cacahuate* for 'peanut,' *jumate* for 'dipper,' *chile*, *tamal(e)*, and on and on.

A less common Nahuatlism is used to refer to a 'tub,' the large round metal object for washing clothes (or taking weekly baths). *Cajete* derives from Nahuatl *caxitl*, meaning an earthen bowl-like vessel. This meaning is retained in Mexican Spanish today. But the reference has changed substantially in modern New Mexico where *cajete* is the dominant word for 'tub' in the Traditional Spanish area. The more Mexican term *tina* characterizes the Border Spanish area.

A revealing case of the process of borrowing a word from another language is seen in Map 7-9, which displays the responses for 'buzzard' or 'vulture.' Of principal interest here are two variants derived from the same Nahuatl word. The *chupilote* variant (black circles) is typical of the Traditional Spanish area as we see clearly on the map. The *zopilote* variant (open squares) that is characteristic of Mexico occurs here especially in the areas of immigrant influence even



Map 7-9 'Buzzard'

though the very recent *aura* (open squares) dominates in the extreme south. Both of the loanwords derive from Nahuatl *tzopilotl*, with the initial affricate /ts/ that doesn't exist natively in modern Spanish. It may be that in the early period of the borrowing process these were competing forms. One adapted the Nahuatl /ts/ to

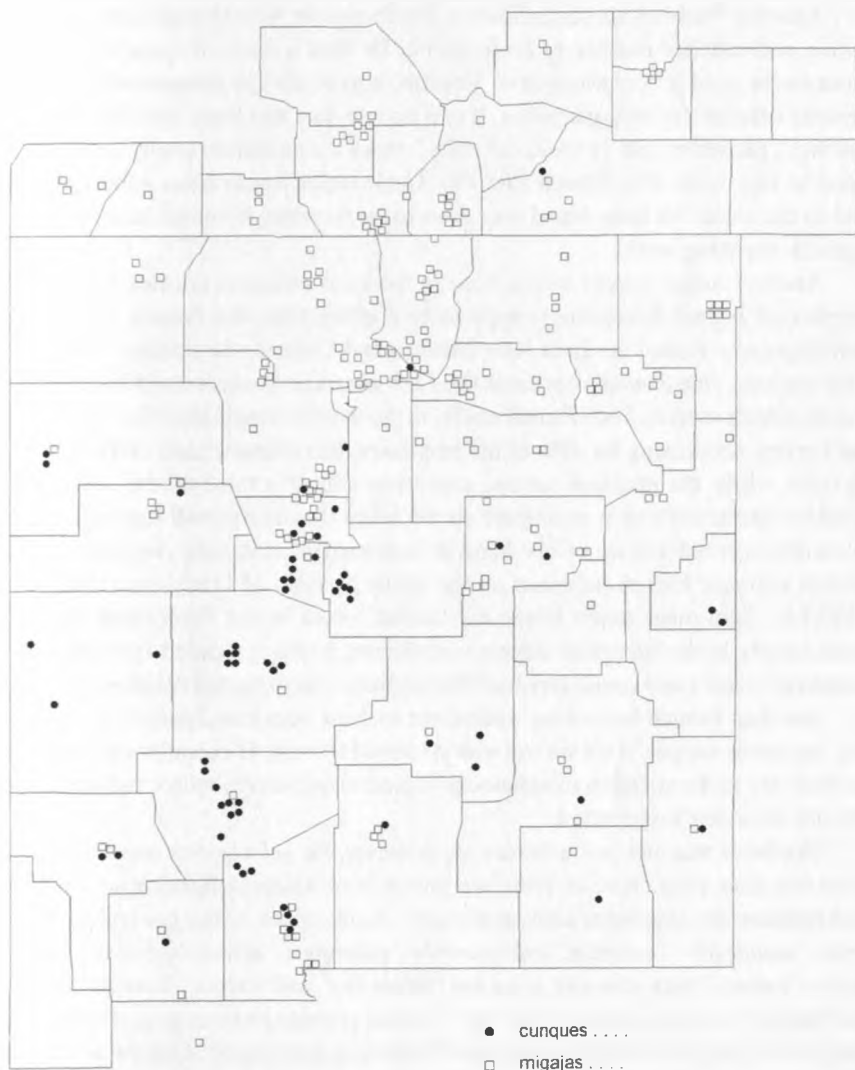
the closest Spanish affricate /č/, thus *chupilote*. The other adapted the /ts/ to the simpler alveolar fricative /s/, thus *zopilote*. (I'm unwilling to speculate on the possibility that the latter derives from an earlier Spanish alveolar affricate phoneme, precursor to modern dialectal /θ/.) The fricative variant won out in Mexico while the affricate won out in New Mexico—at least for a while. Map7-9 suggests that *zopilote* is encroaching strongly into Traditional Spanish territory. It remains to be seen whose family values will prove more powerful.

Another Nahuatlism that reveals similar intrigue concerns our survey responses for 'string' (e.g. to tie a package). Though *cordón* dominates across New Mexico, two Nahuatlisms, *mecate* and *íchte*, survive in northern and rural New Mexican Spanish. *Mecate* is a straightforward adaptation of Nahuatl *mecatl*. It happens to be the usual term in Mexico, but it was offered as a first choice by just 52 of our consultants. *Íchte* is still less common, offered by only 20 persons, but it is especially interesting because of its form. The Nahuatl term is *ichtli* with a syllable final affricate /č/, which represents a phonological difficulty for Spanish speakers. The Atlas Lingüístico de México (Lope Blanch 1990-2000) shows various reflexes of that syllable-final consonant in Mexico—making the first syllable /iš/, /is/, or /iks/. They found just one case of /ič/ smack dab in the middle of the Nahuatl speaking area today. The adaptation we find in northern New Mexico is unique. It makes the <ch> pronounceable by adding a following vowel so it occurs in syllable-initial position: *í-chi-te*. Again, the different realizations of the loanword may reflect early variation in the borrowing process.

So much for the early extraterritorial influences on my hero. New Mexican Spanish also developed in situ. The first linguistic contacts here were with various Indian languages, primarily the Pueblo communities scattered along the Rio Grande and feeder rivers on which the Spanish speakers initially settled. New Mexican Spanish incorporated very few borrowings from the Pueblo languages or other local languages. A century ago, Aurelio Espinosa reported that in his 'vocabulary of fourteen hundred dialect forms peculiar to New Mexican Spanish' only about ten were of local Native American origin (1909:56). The situation seems not to have changed in the one hundred years since his study. Rubén Cobos (2003: xii-xiii) documents 23 such words, but about half of these refer exclusively to Native American cultural phenomena.

The most widely adopted loanword of local Native American (apparently Pueblo) origin is the use of *cunques* for 'coffee grounds.' With 222 responses, this term is the overwhelmingly preferred variant throughout our survey region and even extends into northern Mexico. Only 23 consultants offered the standard option *asientos*.

But such broad distribution of a local Native American loanword is exceptional. Most display very restricted distributions. An example is the other meaning



Map 9-2 'Crumbs'

of *cunques* 'crumbs' (elicited with a picture of cookie crumbs). The two principal responses for this variable are shown on Map 9-2. The great majority preferred *migajas*, marked with open squares. *Cunques* (black circles) was the choice of only 64 persons, distributed in an unusual fashion centered on the southern Río Grande.

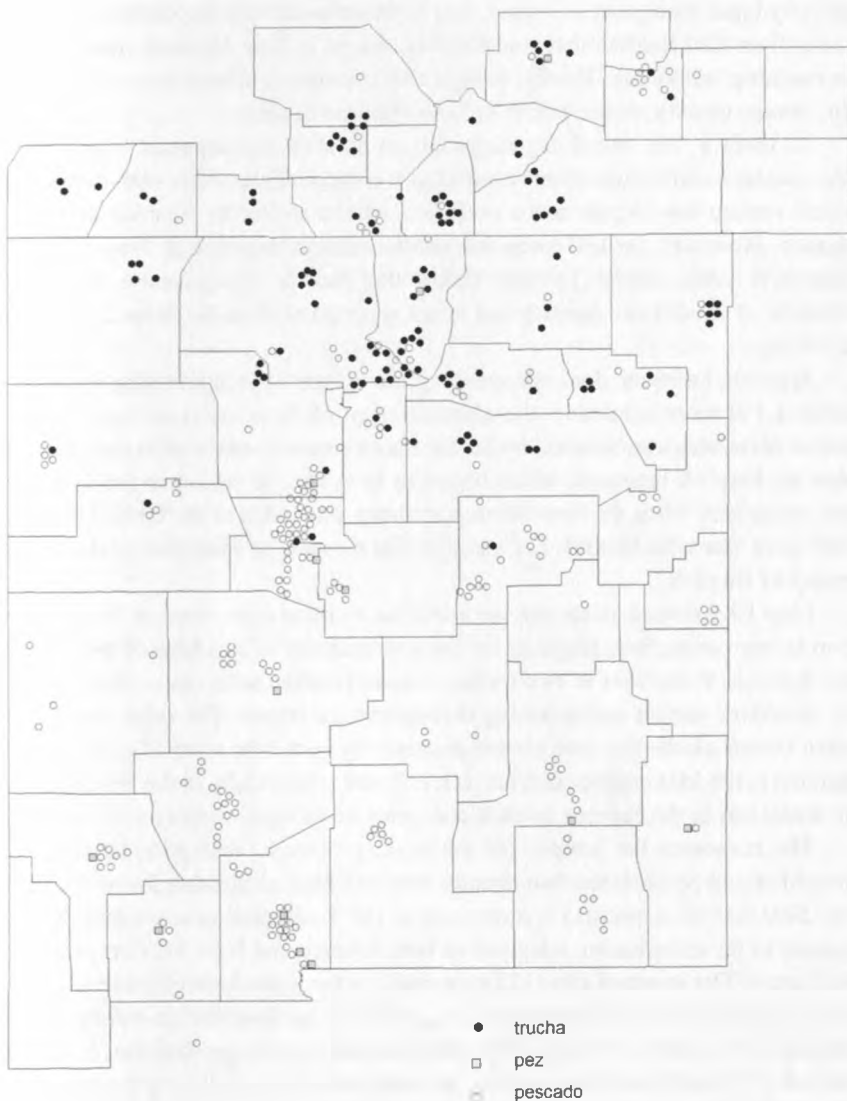
Another Pueblo loanword shows a distribution in the same general area but with a still smaller number of preferences. To label a stack of 'pancakes' most consultants used a borrowing from English, almost always *panqueques*. But 14 persons offered the term *guayabes*. It is a curious fact that these two Pueblo borrowings, *guayabes* and *cunques* 'crumbs,' show a distribution pretty much confined to the lower Río Grande (the *Río Abajo* region south from Albuquerque) and to the west. We have found *guayabes* to be documented nowhere else in the Spanish speaking world.

Another minor impact on my hero in the local setting is attested by a small number of French borrowings, apparently coming from the French fur traders who regularly visited northern New Mexico and Colorado beginning in the late 18th century. One example concerns the New Mexican Spanish word for 'skillet.' *Puela*, which derives from French *poêle*, is the most common term for 'skillet' in our survey, accounting for 48% of the responses. It is characteristic of Traditional Spanish while the standard *sartén*, garnering almost a third of the responses, blankets the south and is prominent in the other Border Spanish regions. *Puela* is another special feature of our hero. It is documented in only one other place of still stronger French influence, in the Brule Spanish of Louisiana (Holloway 1997:94). Two other minor labels for 'skillet' occur in the Traditional Spanish area, mostly in the speech of elderly consultants, *horno* (extended from its usual meaning 'oven') and *comal* (another Nahuatlism with extended reference).

Another French borrowing distinctive to New Mexican Spanish is *chamuz* for 'bedroom slipper.' This variant was preferred by only 41 consultants, confined exclusively to the northern mountainous region of our survey where the impact of French intrusion was greatest.

Our hero was not just a borrower, however. He (*el idioma*) or she (*la lengua*) was also quite creative. Thus, we find in New Mexican Spanish a variety of independent developments such as the use of *almendras* as the general term for 'nuts,' *santopiés* 'centipede,' *cuerpoespín* 'porcupine,' *arrear* 'drive (an auto),' *ganso* 'turkey,' both *piso* and *jerga* for 'throw rug' and 'carpet,' *huesito sabroso* for 'ankle,' and *chile de perro* for 'sty.' Let me provide just one map illustration. Map 8-6 displays the widespread use of *trucha* as the generic term for a 'fish' in the northern half of our survey (marked with black circles). *Trucha* is the word for a specific fish, 'trout,' in most varieties of Spanish. The stimulus in this case was a distinctly non-trout fish. It was also a live fish, accounting for the fact that a few generally more educated speakers responded with *pez* (gray squares). Note that the dominant term here, even for a living fish is *pescado* (open circles).

Another independent development concerns the terms offered for 'safety pin.' Fully 325 of our consultants offered *broche* for this implement. *Broche* has a variety of meanings elsewhere in Spanish but 'safety pin' is usually not one of them.



Map 8-6 'Fish'

Nevertheless, it is the overwhelmingly preferred term in New Mexican Spanish, especially in the Traditional Spanish area. Three other responses merit brief mention. Fifty-nine persons offered *seguro*, which is more characteristic of Border Spanish as well as Mexican Spanish. It is therefore a more recent immigrant from Mexico, a

perfectly legal immigrant, of course. Just eight senior citizens responded with *fistol*, a relic from Old Spanish that is apparently unique to New Mexican Spanish with the meaning 'safety pin.' Finally, though nine consultants offered *tenaza* for 'safety pin,' *tenaza* usually means 'pliers' in New Mexican Spanish.

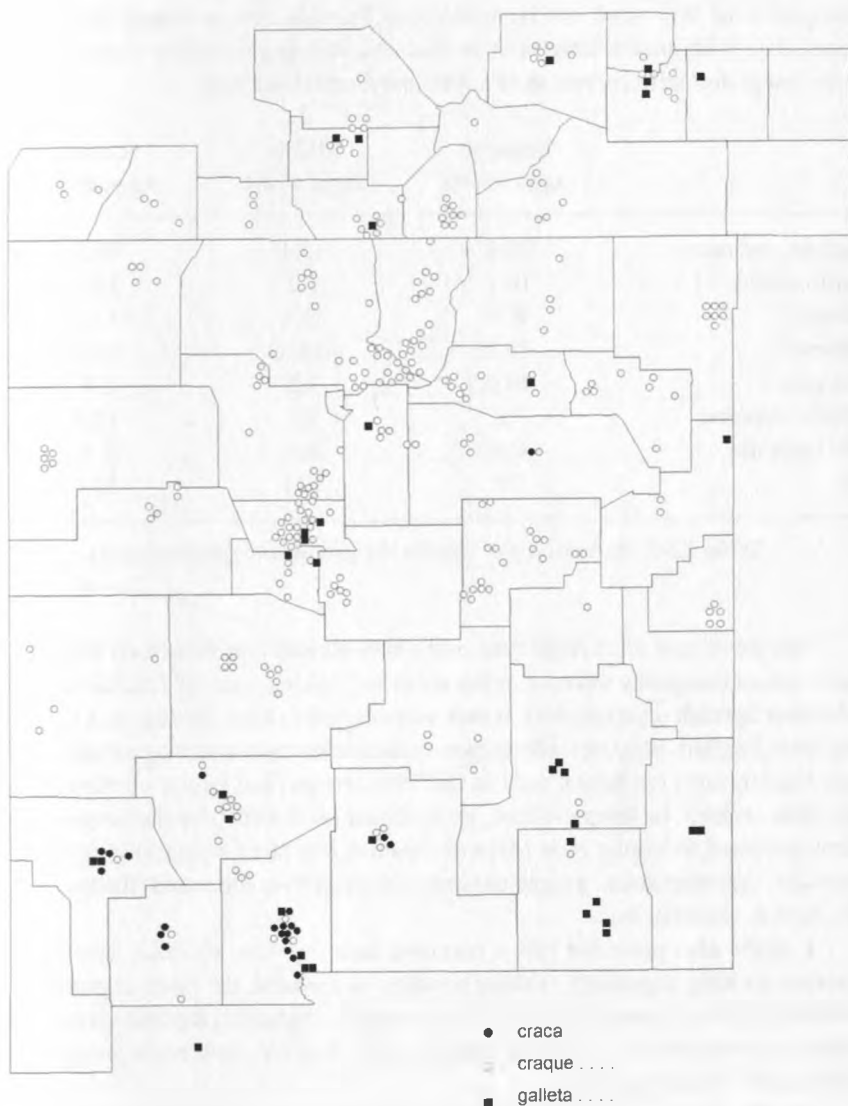
To label a 'bat,' the flying mammal, an innovative compound was created. The standard *murciélago* (itself created as a compound) together with its metathesized variant *murciégalo* is the preferred variant in Border Spanish as it is in Mexico. However, far and away the most common response in New Mexican Spanish is *ratón volador*, literally 'mouse that flies' or 'flying mouse.' It is characteristic of Traditional Spanish and is not reported at all in the Atlas Lingüístico de México.

Spanish, however, does not make significant use of compounding for lexical creation. Far more common is the adoption of words from external sources. In the case of New Mexican Spanish, by far the major external source of vocabulary has been the English language, which began to flow into the region in the 19th century, especially when the New Mexico territory was ceded to the United States in 1848 after war with Mexico. Let me give just a couple of examples of the lexical impact of English.

Map 10-9 demonstrates that the word for a saltine-type 'cracker' is an Anglicism (a borrowing from English) for the vast majority of speakers of New Mexican Spanish. It surfaces in two forms, *craque* (marked with open circles) being the dominant variant and occurring throughout the region. The other Anglicism, *craca* (black circles), occurs almost exclusively in the far south. *Galleta* (black squares) is the Mexican Spanish label. It is found sporadically in the Border Spanish areas, but in the extreme south it competes on an equal footing with *craca*.

The responses for 'temple' (of the head) provide an unexpected Anglicism. New Mexican Spanish had two already well-established Spanish forms for 'temple.' *Sentido* (63 responses) is prominent in the Traditional Spanish heartland. It appears to be an archaism, relegated in both Mexico and New Mexico to remote rural areas. The standard *sien* (125 responses) is the usual form elsewhere. A century ago Espinosa found that there were generally 'no Spanish equivalents for the English words adopted' (1914-1915:246), but that is no longer the case. In spite of the lack of lexical need, the Anglicism *templo* is surfacing all over the state with a total of 49 responses.

Some form from English is far and away the most common label for the men's underwear pictured as boxer shorts. The standard *calzoncillos* and the more rustic *calzones* occur only sporadically even in the Border Spanish region. The three typical forms of the Anglicism are 'shorts,' *shortes*, and *chortes*.' They blanket the survey region and dominate in almost every community. More enlightening than the space issue, the geographical display, is the time issue, the age grading



Map 10-9 'Cracker'

presented in Table 12-5. The use of the unassimilated English term 'shorts' with the final consonant cluster is the most common label among the oldest group. The more integrated term *shortes*, in contrast, is clearly the preference of the youngest group. This table, then, gives us a picture in apparent time of the process of

integration of this word into New Mexican Spanish, first as simply an English word, then with greater integration in each succeeding generation. Curiously, the fully integrated term *chortes* shows little movement over time.

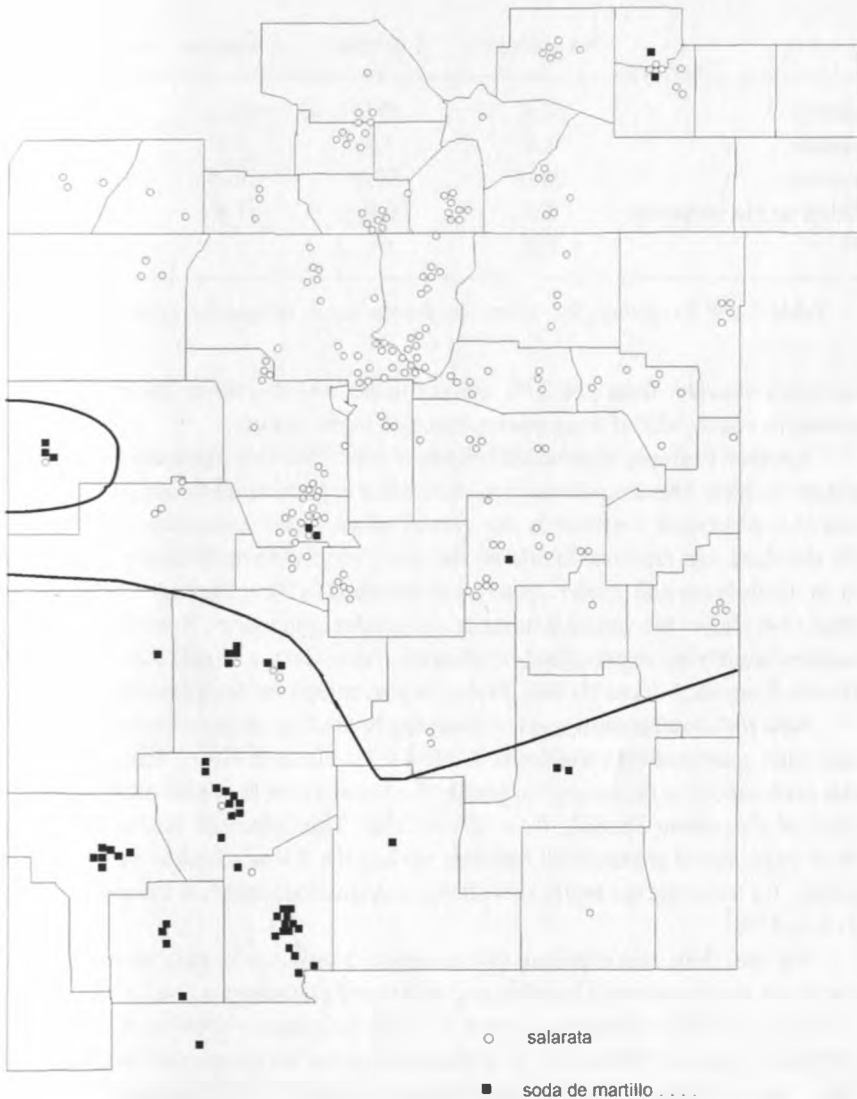
	Younger Ages 15-40	Middle Ages 41-64	Older Ages 65-96
<i>calzón, calzones</i>	10.1	13.4	16.7
<i>calzoncillos</i>	10.1	5.2	14.9
shorts	8.9	25.4	33.3
<i>shortes</i>	49.4	39.6	14.0
<i>chortes</i>	13.9	8.2	8.8
Other response	7.6	8.2	10.5
No response	0.0	0.0	1.8
N	79	134	114

Table 12-5. Responses for 'Shorts' by generation (percentages)

One more case of an Anglicism, and a very curious one, is seen on Map 16-2. *Salarata*, occasionally *salerata*, is the word for 'baking soda' in Traditional New Mexican Spanish (open circles). It may surprise you to learn that this is a borrowing from English. *Saleratus*, sometimes spelled *salacratu*s, was a common American English term for baking soda in the 19th century, and its use continued into the 20th century. In sharp contrast, as indicated on this map by the isogloss, the term preferred in Border New Mexican Spanish (the black squares) is *soda del martillo*, 'hammer soda,' a name obviously derived from the brand illustration on the Arm & Hammer box.

I might also point out that a common term in New Mexican Spanish for another cooking ingredient, 'baking powder,' is *espauda*, the label of preference offered by 89% of our consultants. This is another Anglicism. *Espauda* is an adaptation of *yeast powder*, an earlier English term than has now been pretty much replaced by 'baking powder.'

Not all the impacts on New Mexican Spanish come from other languages and independent developments. An important impact these days comes from more standard varieties of Spanish itself. This interdialectal impact derives principally from exposure to the forces of recent immigration from Mexico and to the broader horizons offered by education in general, but especially through the formal study of Spanish in the classroom. Let's take a look at the association of coursework in Spanish with the lexical item that we first dealt with, 'dress.'



Map 16-2 'Baking soda'

Table 14-9 shows that the more courses in Spanish our consultants reported, the less likely they were to use the old label *túnico*, which declines from 63% among those with no formal Spanish to 46% among those with three or more courses. On the other hand, the preference for the standard Spanish term *vestido*

	No courses	1 course	2 courses	3 or more courses
<i>túnico</i>	62.6	55.7	56.1	45.8
<i>vistido</i>	7.8	3.3	5.3	1.4
<i>vestido</i>	27.0	34.4	36.8	48.6
Other or No response	2.6	6.6	1.8	4.2
N	115	61	57	72

Table 14-9. Responses for 'dress' by formal study of Spanish (percentages)

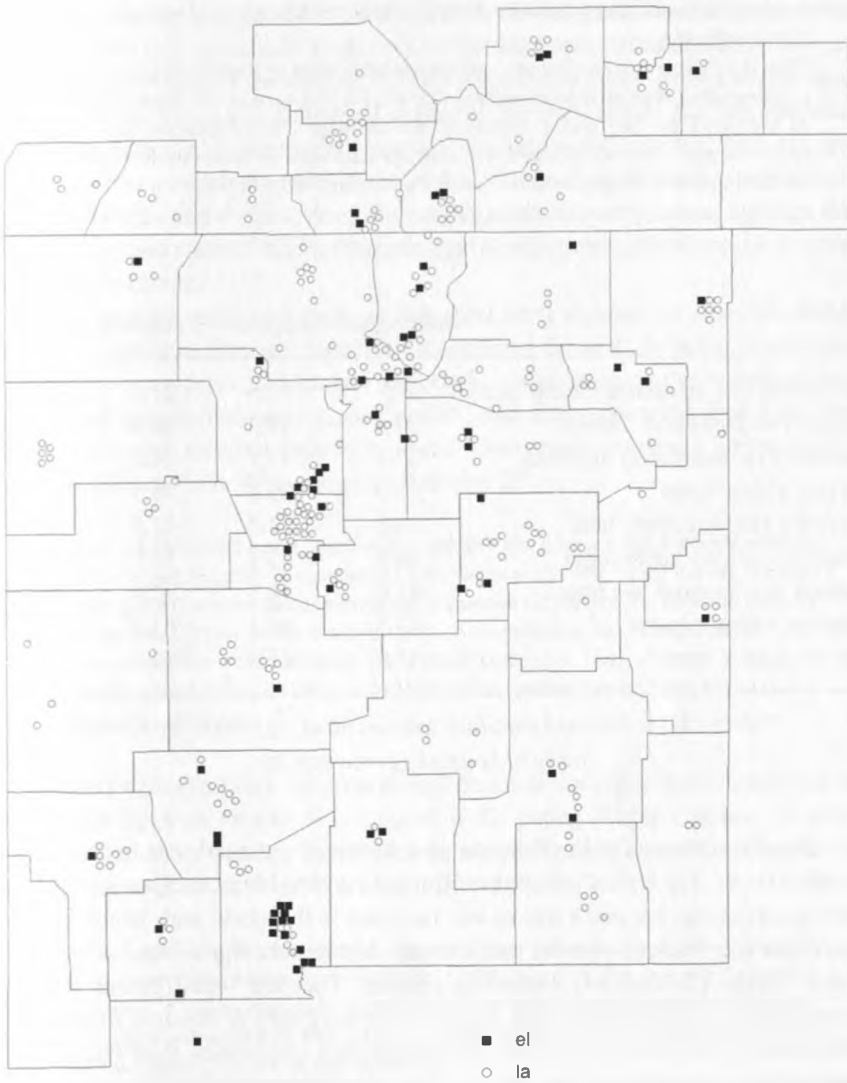
increases sharply, from just 27% among those who had never taken a Spanish course to nearly half of those having three or more courses.

Another example of standard influence concerns the common word for 'language' in New Mexico, *idioma*, which is often metathesized to nonstandard *idomía*. An additional variation is the gender of the word, masculine *el idioma* in the standard, but feminine *la idiomía* for many (doubtless motivated by its ending in *a*). Both form and gender show great variation in New Mexico. For example, Map 14-6 shows the variation in space for gender assignment. Note that the black squares signifying the standard *el idioma/idomía* show a slight association with Border Spanish, but mostly this display is a geographical hodge-podge.

Now let's look at the impact of studying Spanish as displayed along with several other grammatical variables in Table 14-11. The first row of this table shows that preference for the masculine gender for *idioma* increases with each additional level of classroom Spanish, from 8% to 35%. This influence is also clear with other stigmatized grammatical features, such as the 'I saw' variable we considered earlier, for example the fourth row shows a dramatic increase in standard *vi* from 31% to 73%.

We see, then, that exposure to the standard language in the classroom influences not just vocabulary but also grammar (and phonology as well). In contrast, the impact on New Mexican Spanish of other languages—whether Visigothic or Arabic or Taíno or Nahuatl or New Mexican native languages or French or English—has provided only minor contributions to the lexicon. For example, from his study of the sentence structure in the oral Spanish of speakers from Mora, New Mexico, Lope Blanch (1990:31) concludes that

No se observa ninguna simplificación particularmente grave, ni ningún empobrecimiento en la expresión de las relaciones oracionales que no se advierta también en el habla popular de la ciudad de México. La columna vertebral del idioma—su fundamento y esencia estructural—se ha conservado con evidente rigor en



Map 14-6 'Gender of idioma'

esa remota modalidad lingüística de la Hispania perdida que es el suroeste de los Estados Unidos.

[You don't find any particularly serious simplification or impoverishment in the expression of sentential relationships that are not also seen in the popular speech of Mexico City. The spinal column of the language—its foundation and structural essence—has been conserved with obvious rigor in that remote linguistic modality of lost Hispania that is the southwestern United States]

	No courses	1 course	2 courses	3 or more courses
<i>el idioma</i> (vs. <i>la idioma</i>) 'language'	8.3	17.5	21.8	35.2
<i>papás</i> (vs. <i>papases</i>) 'fathers'	27.3	39.3	38.5	56.3
<i>mamás</i> (vs. <i>mamases</i>) 'mothers'	27.8	43.1	44.2	62.0
<i>vi</i> (vs. <i>vide</i>) 'I saw'	30.9	55.4	46.3	72.9
<i>el calor</i> (vs. <i>la calor</i>) 'heat'	35.5	37.3	41.5	52.1
<i>trajo</i> (vs. <i>trujo</i>) 'he brought'	38.9	42.9	50.0	54.9
<i>hemos</i> (vs. <i>hamos</i>) 'we have'	41.0	58.5	70.4	70.1
<i>vio</i> (vs. <i>vido</i>) 'he saw'	43.5	66.1	65.5	72.9
<i>he</i> (vs. <i>ha</i>) 'I have'	45.8	47.4	54.7	62.9

Table 14-11. *Selected standard grammatical responses by formal study of Spanish (percentages)*

But the influence of English over just a century and a half has been massive in other ways. The lexical influence of English on New Mexican Spanish has been strong, of course, but that's true of any language in the world with which English has come into contact over the past century. Much more significant is the family values issue. Children are wonderful animals. They are social beings just like the rest of us, and they love their families. But once they're exposed to a broader world at age five or so, look out! Their peers, their classmates, their friends, and their siblings begin to be the major influence on their social values, and family values from their parents take a back seat. This is especially true of language use. And children everywhere, given the opportunity, latch onto the language of higher social prestige. And it is often the case that within a generation or two the heritage language is lost. That has been the fate of immigrant languages in this country.

And Spanish in the United States is no exception. The only difference from the loss of those past immigrant languages is that the tide of Spanish-speaking immigrants continues to be strong. The swelling raw numbers lead some to believe the

language is being maintained. A cheerleader in this misguided belief is the recent *Encyclopedia del español en los Estados Unidos* (López Morales 2009). In spite of the contributions of some respected and responsible U.S. Spanish researchers, the tone of the volume is delusional optimism, exemplified by the two introductory commentaries by prominent players in the Instituto Cervantes. This massive volume focuses largely on attitudes and beliefs and tends to downplay the findings of virtually all careful research on the language maintenance issue, findings that consistently and unequivocally demonstrate the intergenerational loss of Spanish in the United States.

With specific regard to my hero, it is clear from all kinds of research studies that New Mexican Spanish, especially Traditional Spanish, is being abandoned. During our interviews, consultants frequently commented on the failure of their children or grandchildren to learn Spanish, and many observed that their own skills in Spanish suffered from lack of use. One sample comment comes from a 48-year-old man from Albuquerque (interview 21):

Ahí [en las escuelas] están asimilando a los jóvenes. Como a mis sobrinos mijmoj. Y toda esa generación, ¿me entiende? Que hajta vergüenza les da hablar 'l español por que los acusen que son moja'os, o que son de México. Es racismo. Es una enfermedad. [There [in the schools] they're assimilating the young people. Like my own nephews. And that whole generation, you know. They're even ashamed to speak Spanish for fear of being called wetbacks, or that they're from Mexico. It's racism. It's a sickness.]

Others observed that the Traditional Spanish variety is being replaced by the Border Spanish variety. When asked if the young people continue to speak the local variety of the San Luis Valley in south-central Colorado, a 37-year-old woman from Antoñito (interview 212) responded:

No. Ya—aquí no. Ya, los jóvenes que aprenden español ahora, ah, son gente que se casan con obreros que vienen de California o de Texas, o de Arizona o de México. Y ya es otro dailéctico de, de lo que era aquí. So, está cambiando. Porque está entrando eso. Pus, ya los jóvenes de aquí ya no tienen la idioma de nuestros viejitos. Ya, ya, se está acabando.
[No. Now—not here. Now, the young people who learn Spanish now, uh, are people who get married to workers who come from California or Texas, or Arizona or Mexico. And it's already a different dialectic from, from what was here. So, it's changing. Because that's coming in. Well, now the young people here no longer have the language of our old folks. Now, now, it's disappearing].

The shift to English and abandonment of Spanish is fed by a bunch of myths, some of which are treated in detail in Chapter 2 of our book. For example, many

New Mexicans believe that New Mexican Spanish is not good Spanish, that English is better than Spanish, that Spanish is protected by the state constitution, that Spanish is in no danger of being lost. Another common myth surfaces in the observation by a man engaged in a group discussion in a café in Mora, New Mexico, during interviews for the thirty minute documentary prepared by the Albuquerque PBS station describing our project (KNME 1995). The man says: *Yo tengo tíos y tías que salieron de aquí y hablan español entre ellos. Pero su plebe nunca lo aprendió. Y de grandes les preguntan, "Why didn't you teach me?" Porque no hablan español. Y les da coraje que ellos lo perdieron.* [I have uncles and aunts who moved away from here and they speak Spanish among themselves. But their kids never learned it. And when they were grown they asked them, "Why didn't you teach me?" Because they don't speak Spanish. And they get angry that they've lost it].

This astoundingly widespread myth is that children learn a language because their parents teach them the language. Anyone at all familiar with child language acquisition knows that's a tremendous simplification. A second myth underlying this quote is the belief that parents control the language use of children. This myth seems to motivate such research as that of Velázquez (2009), though she carefully acknowledges that parents provide only one opportunity for the use of the heritage language. In fact, all family values research indicates that the most powerful influence on language use is the larger society. And the most significant societal influence on young people is their peers, a phenomenon seldom examined with such impressive care as the study by Johnson, who concludes that 'children initially acquire their parents' systems but readily change when they form peer groups' (2010:205). It is the children who initiate language change of any sort, including language shift. Parents tend to just follow along, often quite helplessly.

I think even many persons devoted to promoting Spanish and teaching the heritage language believe some of these myths. We may all endorse a 'sociolinguistics of hope' (Martínez 2009), but everyone with an interest in Spanish in the United States needs to recognize the truth of language shift. If we want to promote Spanish in the U.S. or preserve local varieties, we must find our way through the clouds of myth and, as in all things, heed the results of the best research. As John F. Kennedy said: 'The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie—deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. Belief in myths allows the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.'

My advice, therefore, to anyone concerned with the maintenance of Spanish in the United States is: Be uncomfortable! For Traditional New Mexican Spanish in particular, time is short, perhaps only another generation or two. Although the spatial distribution of Spanish in the U.S. has been expanding hugely, the space occupied by Traditional New Mexican Spanish is not only limited but shrinking. And the most challenging issue: Family values are, well, evanescent.

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